

INSPECTION REPORT

ST BRENDAN'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Harwood, Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105246

Headteacher: Mrs A Thornton

Reporting inspector: Mike Carter
20714

Dates of inspection: 25th – 26th February 2003

Inspection number: 246465

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brookfold Lane Harwood Bolton
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Telephone number:	(01204) 333133
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rt Rev Mgr J L Mallon
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd February 1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Brendan's Roman Catholic Primary School is situated to the north-east of Bolton and serves the Roman Catholic community of St Brendan's Church as well as some Catholic families living further away. The number of pupils has grown since the last inspection and is now 193 of which 90 are boys and 103 are girls. Seven are from ethnic minority backgrounds, although all speak English as their first language. Two pupils are entitled to free school meals currently. This, one per cent, is below the national average but does not reflect the wide range of the pupils' socio-economic backgrounds, which are average overall. Some of the children attend a private playgroup that is run at the school prior to starting in the Reception class. The children's attainment on entry is average overall in relation to the expectations for their age. There are few children entering the school with above average attainment in reading and writing skills. The number of pupils with special educational needs has grown significantly since the last inspection and, although still below average, there are now 24. However, eight of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs and this is well above average. The needs of these pupils are varied but include specific learning difficulties such as autism and dyspraxia.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Brendan's is a good school. The teaching is good and the pupils learn well. They are interested, well motivated and make good progress. By the end of Year 6 they achieve well and results in the national tests are above average and well above average in science throughout, where there are good proportions of pupils with high attainment. The school works hard to maintain standards in all the subjects and this supports the pupils' learning in basic skills. The school's leadership and management are good overall and help maintain standards of teaching and learning. The governors have a good overview of the school's work and are keen to use its finances efficiently. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in science are well above average throughout the school. In information and communication technology and music, standards are also above average and in English and mathematics they are above average by the end of Year 6.
- The pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships are very good and they behave well.
- The overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The leadership and management have helped the school to improve and promote good teaching.
- The school cares for its pupils well and ensures their welfare at all times.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing for pupils by the end of Year 2 lag well behind those for reading and too few achieve above the expected level.
- There is a lack of consistency in the challenge provided for higher attaining pupils.
- The provision for reception children to learn outdoors is weak.
- The information provided for parents has weaknesses.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998. Since then standards as shown in national test results for Year 6 pupils, have fallen slightly although they are still above average and well above average in science. For pupils of both Year 2 and Year 6, the results have fluctuated, although usually remained above average. However, the trend has not kept pace with the rising national trend. This is partly because of a recently increased proportion of pupils with special educational needs and fewer high attainers than in 1998. Throughout the school, standards in science have remained strongest. The main

issues identified in the last report have helped the school to improve its provision. Handwriting is taught more systematically and standards have improved. Standards in art and design have improved and are now good at the end of Year 2 and satisfactory at the end of Year 6. There has been a programme of training for teachers in subjects other than English, mathematics and science and while standards in most of these subjects were not inspected, in music they remain good and in information and communication technology they have improved and are now good. Procedures for checking up on the pupils' progress have improved and work is more closely matched to the pupils' needs. However, on some occasions, the higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

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	B	B	C
mathematics	A	B	B	C
science	A	A	A	B

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

The standards shown in the 2002 Year 6 national tests were above the national average in English and mathematics and well above in science. In comparison with similar schools these results were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The results also show that since they were in Year 2 these pupils achieved above the average in English and mathematics and well above in science. However, standards have fallen slightly since the last inspection. While still remaining above average overall, the trend in the school's results has been below the national trend, partly because there are more pupils with special educational needs and fewer with high attainment. The work of the current pupils in Year 6 is good in English, mathematics and science where there is a good proportion of high attainment. These findings indicate that the pupils achieve well overall since most start the school with attainment that is no better than average for their age. The school's target for the percentage of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics was met in 2002 and is slightly lower for 2003. In English the 2002 target was not met and is more challenging for 2003. However, progress is on course for the 2003 targets to be met.

For pupils at the end of Year 2, the 2002 national test results showed that standards were well above average in reading but below average in writing and mathematics. This was a steep fall from the previous year's results, particularly in writing and largely because of a group of low attaining pupils. The performance of girls is significantly higher than that of the boys at this age. Standards of the current Year 2 pupils are better and the work seen was good in reading, mathematics and science and average in writing. Inspectors found that standards in handwriting and information and communication technology have improved and are now good throughout the school as they are in music, where the standard of singing is particularly high. Standards in art and design have improved and are now good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. This inspection did not evaluate standards in other subjects. Pupils in the Reception class are mostly on course to meet the expected standards in the areas of learning seen, with good attainment in speaking and listening.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are keen to take part in all the school's activities and are well motivated to learn. They make good efforts to improve their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school is very orderly and purposeful and the pupils are well trained in good manners. Any occasional bullying is dealt with quickly. No pupils were excluded in the last reporting year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils grow to have very good relationships with each other and with adults. They are pleased to take on responsibilities and the Year 6 pupils have many opportunities to do so. Although a school council is planned, there are currently fewer responsibilities for younger pupils.
Attendance	Very good. In the last reporting year there was no unauthorised absence and the attendance rate was well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good throughout the school. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and this is an improvement. Teaching in Reception is good and is well planned to help the children achieve the appropriate early learning goals. However, insufficient provision is made for the children to learn outdoors. Throughout the school, basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well to the majority of the pupils. Teachers use questioning well to help pupils extend their thinking and knowledge. The pupils are told what they are to learn so they become aware when they have succeeded. Teachers manage their classes well and provide mostly interesting lessons with varied activities. Consequently behaviour is good. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and are often provided with good support in working towards their individual targets. Expectations are usually high. However, the proportion of very good or excellent lessons is lower than at the last inspection. In a few lessons, the high attainers are not given work at a high enough level and so they achieve less than they could. For example, in writing lessons for Year 2, worksheets are often used that limit the higher attainers' progress. While the checks made on pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection, the day-to-day systems sometimes miss identifying what the higher attainers already know and can do. Overall, the teaching of English, mathematics and science is good for Years 3 to 6 and in Years 1 and 2 it is good in reading, mathematics and science and satisfactory in writing, where higher attainers have too few challenges. In handwriting, the pupils learn to write with a good style throughout the school but these skills are sometimes forgotten in other lessons. Marking often helps the pupils to improve and because there are good relationships, the pupils learn well and want to succeed.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is broad and meets National Curriculum requirements fully. It is enriched well with visits, visitors and a good number of extra-curricular activities. The provision made for gifted and talented pupils is less well defined. A good feature is the shared, whole-school planning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The code of practice is implemented fully and the pupils have effective support and make good progress. Teachers plan for these pupils well, helping them to work towards the targets set in their individual education plans. They make good progress partly because their self-esteem is maintained well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good provision is made for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and good provision for their cultural development. Assemblies contribute well to these aspects and lessons in several subjects also raise the pupils' awareness and help provide opportunities to develop moral understanding and social skills. For example, lessons in physical education and personal, social and health education are planned to provide learning in working together and sharing ideas.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The pupils' welfare is strongly promoted by the headteacher and teachers. There is no formal system for recording the pupils' personal development, but their needs are well provided for. The school is generally a safe and secure environment for learning. Many tests are used to help track the progress of each pupil's attainment and targets are set for the next learning. Teachers do not always identify the needs of higher attainers enough.

The school is keen to work with parents to provide an effective partnership. Parents help their pupils at home well and support the school in other ways, for example, by raising funds. A few parents help in classrooms. Parents are generally happy with the information provided for them and most are able to talk with teachers when needed. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents miss some statutory information. Reports about each pupil's progress are satisfactory but sometimes do not include enough information about making improvements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and deputy provide strong leadership and promote a team approach and an effective level of discussion about raising standards through high quality teaching. Co-ordinators promote their subject well but play little part in checking teaching and standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors often visit the school and, by joining lessons, gain a good overview of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. There are minor omissions from the information provided for parents but all other statutory duties are carried out well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Many checking-up activities are carried out well by the headteacher and deputy, including analyses of test results and lesson observations. Each subject co-ordinator provides suggestions for the development of their subject for the school development plan but the process for making whole school evaluations is too informal and has not identified inconsistencies in meeting the needs of higher attainers.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Staffing, resources and the accommodation are used well and the school is concerned to get the best value for money in all its major expenditure. Governors are active in assessing the future financial situation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The children like school.• Behaviour is good.• The teaching is good.• There are high expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The way the school works with parents.• The information parents get about their children's progress.• Ways for parents to raise questions.

The overriding view of most parents is that they are proud that their children attend the school, which has a good reputation. The inspection team agrees with all the positive points raised by parents but the information the school gives parents is in need of some improvement. There are a good number of ways in which parents can air their views and the teachers are very approachable.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in science are well above average throughout the school. In information and communication technology and music standards are also above average and in English and mathematics they are above average by the end of Year 6.

1. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 the pupils' attainment in science is well above average. The 2002 National Curriculum test results for Year 6 pupils were well above the national average. They showed that just over half the pupils achieved the level higher than that expected for their age and very few did not achieve the expected level. The teachers assessed the pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 as above average with nearly half achieving the level above that expected and extremely few not achieving the expected level. This good picture is reflected in the standards of the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils.
2. When compared with similar schools the test results are also above average in science. There is variation from year to year between the girls' and the boys' results but overall the difference is not significant. Unlike English and mathematics, there has not been a drift in science standards, which remain well above average. The pupils make good progress throughout the school and those with special educational needs also make good progress because of the good support they receive from the teachers and the classroom support assistants.
3. The older pupils plan and carry out scientific tests ensuring they are fair. They use their good knowledge to make sensible predictions, control variables and draw conclusions that enhance their scientific knowledge. They ask and attempt to answer well founded questions such as "Do very thin wires affect a bulb's brightness in an electrical circuit?" Year 5 pupils form good generalisations and definitions such as friction being "a force between two moving surfaces". At Year 2 they can also draw good conclusions, such as "the harder you push, the further it travels."
4. Science standards are well above average because of the good teaching. In several lessons seen, the teachers asked challenging questions and promoted a practical approach to solving questions. In most lessons, but not all, they provided interesting tasks that extended the thinking of the higher attainers well. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and promote the use of the correct vocabulary. Teachers usually support the pupils with learning difficulties well; sometimes through less demanding tasks; sometimes by providing easier formats for written recording; and sometimes by deploying classroom support assistants to help them.
5. Standards in reading are above average throughout the school and a large majority of the pupils show a love of books and a good understanding of the text. From an early age they learn a good range of ways to read new words and they gain a good understanding of how to use non-fiction books to find information. In writing, standards are satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and good by the end of Year 6. Too many worksheets are used that limit the pupils' progress in expressing their own thoughts by the end of Year 2. This reduces the proportion of pupils with high attainment. However, by Year 6 the pupils have more opportunities to write at length, sometimes in other subjects and are more able to express their thoughts and feelings in writing.
6. In mathematics, standards are above average throughout the school and this is largely because of effective teaching based on the National Numeracy Strategy. The pupils learn number facts well and use these to help solve calculations and problems. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection but the proportion of pupils with high standards is slightly lower than it was and slightly lower than the national average.
7. In information and communication technology, standards have improved significantly at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 since the last inspection. They are now above average due to the improved confidence of teachers, the degree of staff training, a secure programme of study and a rigorous system of recording the pupils' achievements. The provision of computers has also been augmented by a new computer room.
8. Standards in those aspects of music seen are good and the school's good reputation for singing is well justified. The singing of the mixed-voice choir is very good. The pupils are very well in tune, in

time and respond very well to being conducted. They are aware of how to stand and how to project their voices well. They express a love for the music and show good understanding, for example, through their natural use of dynamics and sustaining of notes.

9. The pupils are gaining skills and understanding in music well because the teaching is good. There is a good amount of musical expertise amongst the staff that is shared well and supports the good teaching. The lessons are carefully planned to provide a wide range of activities and a good pace to the pupils' learning. For example, in a lesson for the Years 1 and 2 pupils, there were a number of rhythm and singing activities in which the pupils showed a good sense of pulse and sang well. They then played pitched percussion instruments, collaborating well in groups to follow simple graphic scores. In another Year 3 lesson, the pupils identified a rhythmic pattern in Beethoven's 7th Symphony and the pupils went on to compose their own rhythm using crotchets and quavers correctly.
10. A weakness in music lessons is that too little difference is made in the tasks to provide challenging activities for the highest attainers, or the older pupils when classes are taught together. However, there is a good number of opportunities for pupils to perform music, as well as visiting musicians and the school has a history of well-regarded concerts. There are also recorder and choir sessions which are extra-curricular activities. However, some parents would like opportunities for pupils to learn orchestral instruments and the school is planning to provide these.

The pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships are very good and they behave well.

11. The pupils enjoy school and feel they are learning well. By the end of Year 6 they are well-spoken and mature. This is partly because of the way that their self-esteem is promoted throughout the school and how the teachers' questions help them to articulate their views. There is a good number of responsibilities provided, especially for the oldest pupils, who carry them out very conscientiously. For example, a number carry out prefect duties to help ensure that movement around the school is orderly.
12. The pupils' learning is supported by their very good attitudes. They want to learn and the usually good methods of teaching help to maintain their interest and their desire to succeed. They are also supported well at home and most parents read with their children and help them with homework, such as learning tables. In many lessons the pupils work in groups or pairs and they learn to collaborate well, sometimes helping each other, when appropriate. They are particularly helpful to those pupils with learning difficulties. The teachers generally mark the pupils' work well providing both encouragement and suggestions for improvement. This helps the pupils' to make good efforts and their work is usually neat and well presented, although sometimes their good handwriting skills are not used in all their written work.
13. The pupils are trained well in politeness. They speak well to adults and to each other. Although the pupils' personal development is not recorded, the pupils are well known to the staff. The headteacher and deputy take a strong lead in helping any pupils with difficulties. Behaviour is good because consistent expectations and procedures are maintained well by the staff. A school council is being planned but teachers listen to the views of the pupils enabling them to feel valued. In these matters the school's Christian ethos is strong. From an early age, there are good opportunities for the pupils to learn to make friends, partly in lessons where work often involves collaboration or respectfully listening to others' views and partly on the playground where there are opportunities for friendship and caring for others.

The overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

14. The provision for the pupils' personal development is very good overall. It is very good for spiritual, moral and social development. It is good for cultural development, where there are a number of occasions in which the pupils share expression of the arts from other cultures than their own, for example, by singing African songs. The cultural traditions of Britain are represented well and visits and visitors help to extend the pupils' awareness. However, there are fewer opportunities for the pupils to understand the rich mix of cultures forming modern, multicultural life.
15. Assemblies give many opportunities for the pupils to gain spiritual awareness. They often "move the

heart" and give the pupils time for prayer and reflection, which the pupils do with reverence. Assemblies and lessons, particularly those in personal, social and health education, also provide for self-reflection and thinking about the school community and the needs of others. Lessons in religious education involve studies of other religions and, through these, the pupils gain a sense of tolerance and support for others. Discussions about the school's charitable work also support the pupils' development of morality. In all these issues the school's practice is founded well in its aims. The role models that staff provide help the pupils to recognise the importance of the school's ethos and to assume its values.

The provision made for pupils with learning difficulties is good.

16. There has been a recent significant increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. Although this proportion is still below average, the number of pupils with a statement is well above average. There are good procedures and the school meets fully the most recent code of practice concerning provision for these pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of the current procedures and the quality of support and this is similar to the findings of the last report.
17. Pupils with special educational needs maintain good self-esteem and confidence because they are supported well by class teachers, support assistants and by their peers. They are fully included in all the school's activities and the tasks they are given are adapted well to their needs. Most of their learning takes place within the classroom under the guidance of their class teacher. With very good guidance from the co-ordinator for special educational needs, the teachers write these pupils' individual education plans helping them to know clearly about the learning needed next. It also helps the teachers to check up on how nearly the targets in these plans have been met. However, the progress of pupils with special educational needs is not recorded in National Curriculum levels for them as a group. While there are sound procedures for checking up on each individual pupil's progress, the overall effectiveness of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is not evaluated or reported to parents in the governors' annual report or prospectus.
18. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved fully at each stage and they support their children's progress at home because of the good communication and regular information that the school sends. Several parents have been delighted at the way in which their child's needs have been met. Occasionally, the individual education plans are not kept up to date or do not have a time-scale for targets to be met. However, there are good relationships with external agencies and the school's expenditure exceeds that provided for pupils with special educational needs. In all the lessons seen, the pupils with special educational needs were learning well. Often this was because of the support they were given, which sometimes involved a greater use of computers. In just one lesson, their learning was slowed because they were less able at recording their thoughts. This is usually overcome through the extra help of special sheets that provide more prompts. Overall, the provision for these pupils is good and they make good progress.

The leadership and management have helped the school to improve and remain effective.

19. In keeping with the school's aims, the headteacher gives a high priority to promoting good quality teaching and learning. This is developed through a strong team approach. Teachers usually plan together and discuss the outcomes of the pupils' learning and test results. The headteacher and her deputy regularly check the teachers' planning, test results and observe lessons. Teachers are told of the outcomes individually and general issues are raised in the regular staff meetings. They may lead to areas for improvement for inclusion in the school development plan. Such systems have successfully helped to promote good teaching although the needs of the higher attaining pupils are not yet met fully.
20. Co-ordinators of English, mathematics and science also review the planning and scrutinise samples of the pupils' work each term. There is a good number of tests used to chart the pupils' progress each year. However, the co-ordinators of most subjects have few means to evaluate the standards overall for their subject or the quality of provision in lessons. Some of this is done by informal discussion and some by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In English and mathematics particularly there are clear systems and helpful co-ordination, although they have not yet stemmed the drift in standards at the end of Year 6. The degree of staff discussion supports whole school self-evaluation and together with the headteacher's oversight, it leads to priorities for school

development. The current development plan is comprehensive and has improved since the last inspection but lacks clear targets by which its progress can be checked.

21. The headteacher has successfully led improvements based on the issues raised in the last inspection. Day-to-day checks on what the pupils have learnt are recorded. Teachers have had training in the teaching of art and design and standards have improved. A rigorous scheme is used for teaching handwriting and most pupils' work is well presented, although they sometimes forget the skills they have learnt in handwriting lessons, when recording other subjects. The action plan stemming from the last report is now completed, but progress on the plan is not reported in the governors' annual report to parents.
22. Governors support and oversee the school's work well. They provide a sound overview of developments and several governors are closely involved with school life on a regular basis. Consequently, they have good independent means of reviewing the school's strengths and weaknesses and the progress of the priorities in the school development plan. They have a good oversight of the school's finances and work hard to get the best value from the budget. The school provides good value for money because of its good effectiveness in helping the Year 6 pupils to achieve better than expected standards from the test results when they were in Year 2. The governing body reviews the school's performance, although not in sufficient detail to analyse the reasons for the results fully, for example, the drift in English and mathematics standards at Year 6. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are helpful but omit some information that is statutory.

The school cares for its pupils well and ensures their welfare at all times.

23. Systems for child protection, first aid and promoting the health and safety of pupils are good. The governors ensure that procedures meet recommendations and local guidance. The senior management team is alert to the pupils' interests in terms of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff are regularly reminded of the need for vigilance and of the procedures to overcome any risks.
24. The pupils are well cared for in terms of their social, emotional and academic development. There are many opportunities for the pupils to express themselves and share any anxieties. Staff often enquire of the pupils how they are getting on. The headteacher takes a personal interest, giving individuals much time and getting to know them and their families well, often offering support. Children with learning difficulties are particularly well supported. The school's mission statement and aims are clearly practised through the care and attention given to the pupils' welfare.
25. In order to track the pupils' academic progress, a series of tests are regularly used and the results are recorded in order to evaluate each child's progress. The pupils' work is marked generally well, giving the pupils encouragement and offering suggestions for improvement. Day-to-day checks on what the pupils have learnt are often recorded as part of an evaluation of the general learning. The achievement of aspects of each level of the National Curriculum in each subject is also recorded. In these ways, systems for assessment have improved since the last inspection. However, they do not accurately enough identify what higher attainers know and can do already but they do contribute to the forming of targets for the key objectives for each pupil's next learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in writing for pupils by the end of Year 2 lag well behind those for reading and too few achieve above the expected level.

26. The 2002 National Curriculum test results in writing at the end of Year 2, were below average and well below the average for similar schools. This was largely because few pupils reached the level above that expected for Year 2 pupils. Although slightly better this year, a similar picture was found for the current pupils of Year 2 and standards are not high enough. Results have varied considerably since the last inspection and the Year 2 standards are not as high as they were then. Although there are more pupils with special educational needs than previously, the number who did not reach the expected level for their age in 2002, was slightly lower than average nationally.
27. Standards of handwriting have improved and much of the pupils' work is neatly presented. However, in their work in other subjects the pupils sometimes forget to use the skills they have gained in

handwriting lessons. The pupils are learning the skills of spelling and punctuation satisfactorily. The weakness in writing mainly concerns the pupils' standards in phrasing sentences well to clearly express themselves and interest the reader. By the time they are in Year 2, the pupils have gained good skills in reading and in expressing themselves articulately. These skills are not matched by their writing abilities.

28. The teaching seen was often very good but lacked challenge for higher attainers in writing. Lessons clearly captivated the pupils' interest and teachers managed the pupils' behaviour and activities very well. Teachers use guidance from the National Literacy Strategy well and their good knowledge helps them to choose good texts that are interesting and relevant to the pupils' needs. However, there are too few opportunities for the pupils to write freely to express themselves, because worksheets that limit the pupils' choices and thinking are used too frequently. In this way teachers do not make writing tasks sufficiently challenging for the higher attaining pupils and consequently test results show few with above average attainment.

There is a lack of consistency in the challenge provided for higher attaining pupils.

29. The teachers' expectations for the majority of the pupils are usually high. Most parents think that their children are expected to learn at a good level. However, in a significant proportion of the lessons seen during the inspection, too little difference was made in the tasks for the higher attaining pupils and so they lacked sufficient challenge. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the pupils quickly learnt and understood the terms 'vertical' and 'horizontal'. The tasks provided did not extend the learning of the higher attainers, who showed signs of boredom. In the planning of several lessons, there was a difference identified in the tasks to be provided for pupils of different ability. However, this difference was often not sufficient in terms of the level of thinking and learning demanded by the tasks. Additional tasks are often more of the same level of learning.
30. The proportions of pupils with high attainment varies from year to year and this is at least in part due to the inconsistency with which teachers set demanding work. One important reason for the drift in English and mathematics standards is a fall in the number of pupils achieving above average results. The inconsistency in the level of challenge provided for higher attainers has not been identified through checking systems sufficiently well. The school is aware of the need to consider the progress of gifted and talented pupils but improvements in provision have not yet been made.

The information provided for parents has weaknesses.

31. The large majority of parents feel the school works closely with them. However, a small minority feels this aspect could be better, for example, through improved information. The information for parents is unsatisfactory because statutory requirements for the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are not met fully. The prospectus is well presented and easy to read but omits some information, for example, the details of parents' rights to withdraw their child from collective worship and religious education. The governors' annual report to parents has suitably brief statements but omits a number of details, for example, details of the success of the policy for pupils with special educational needs.
32. Parents hear of school events through letters home and word of mouth. There is no regular general newsletter. The result is that a number of opportunities are missed to keep parents in touch with school events, to celebrate successes, to summarise policies and to help parents to be part of the school community. This is especially so for those who live farther away or who can seldom come to school. There are few meetings held for parents about what happens in school time and several parents understandably wanted to know more about what their child is going to be taught. Parents find teachers generally open, friendly and helpful and they can easily get information about their child's progress.
33. Reports on the pupils' progress are sent home annually and parents find them helpful, although a few feel they lack detail about what stage the child has reached in their learning. There is too little information about what has and has not been learnt and about how improvements may be made. Comments for each subject of the National Curriculum are not always separated and this leads to a lack of clarity.

The provision for reception children to learn outdoors is weak.

34. The opportunities for pupils in the Reception class to learn out of doors are limited because there is weak provision. There is no specific fenced area. There is no fixed apparatus for climbing and few opportunities for a range of activities, for example, through using large wheeled toys or imaginative play. The opportunities for the children to extend their physical development and gain greater skills in their movement are limited. The outdoor space is currently not conducive to learning in all the areas recommended for reception children. There is good access to a playground immediately from the class area and there is a good amount of grassed and surfaced space immediately available. There are some plans for a designated area, but these are currently unlikely to provide opportunities for learning within each of the six areas of learning for these children.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Those issues that the school has already identified are marked with *.

In order to raise standards higher and improve the school's provision, the governors, headteacher and teachers should:

i) raise standards in writing by the end of Year 2,* by:

- providing more opportunities for extended and unaided writing;
- providing more challenging writing tasks for higher attainers; and
- promoting the use of handwriting skills in all written tasks.

(Paragraphs: 26, 27 and 28)

ii) improve the provision for pupils of high attainment by:

- planning for these pupils more specifically across the curriculum;
- identifying and meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils*; and
- checking and recording the progress of higher attainers as groups through the school.

(Paragraphs: 29 and 30)

iii) improve the provision for pupils in the Reception class to learn out of doors* by:

- devising and implementing a plan to provide for outdoors learning in all the recommended areas of learning for children of this age;
- making a safe designated area; and
- checking the use and effectiveness of such an area.

(Paragraph 34)

iv) improve the information provided for parents by:

- ensuring all statutory requirements for information are met;
- improving reports to inform parents about what their children have learnt and how they may improve; and
- giving parents more information about the school generally and what the pupils will be learning*.

(Paragraphs: 31, 32 and 33)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	4	10	7	0	0	0
Percentage	0	19	48	33	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than four 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)	193
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24

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	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	17	8	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	23	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (95)	88 (89)	92 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	23	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (95)	92 (89)	96 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Data relating to ten or fewer pupils is omitted.

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	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	13
	Girls	13	14	15
	Total	24	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (93)	90 (93)	97 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	13
	Girls	15	15	16
	Total	27	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (93)	93 (93)	100 (97)
	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	178	0	0
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	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	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	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: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7
Average class size	27.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	178

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	411,034
Total expenditure	418,554
Expenditure per pupil	2,378
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,261
Balance carried forward to next year	14,741

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.1
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: 29%

Number of questionnaires sent out	193
Number of questionnaires returned	56

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	16	4	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	63	36	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	29	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	50	7	0	2
The teaching is good.	61	34	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	48	13	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	38	11	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	36	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	21	52	20	5	2
The school is well led and managed.	36	48	4	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	45	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	45	2	0	5

Not all responses to questions total 100 per cent, owing to rounding.

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents think that the school's provision has improved through single age classes that are now possible with larger numbers on roll. They also are pleased that the school has improved the accommodation with a new computer room.