

INSPECTION REPORT

NORRIS BANK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Heaton Norris, Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106065

Headteacher: Mrs Berenice Tomlinson

Reporting inspector: Bernice Magson
18143

Dates of inspection: 10 – 11 February 2003

Inspection number: 246552

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Green Lane
Heaton Norris
Stockport

Postcode: SK4 2NF

Telephone number: 0161 432 3944

Fax number: -

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Roy Dudley-Southern

Date of previous inspection: 23 February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This large primary school in the suburbs of Stockport serves an area of mainly private housing. Fewer pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. The number on roll has increased since the last inspection to 300, including 45 children in the reception year. There is little movement of families in the area. Children start school at the beginning of the year in which they are five and, on entry to school, attainment is above that normally expected for children of this age. There are similar numbers of boys and girls in each year group apart from Year 6, which has twice as many boys as girls. Most pupils are of white British origin. There are a small number in each year group representing other ethnic groups, mainly Pakistani or of mixed background. Eleven pupils have English as an additional language but there are no pupils at an early stage of language acquisition. The main home languages include Cantonese, Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu. Since the last inspection the number of pupils with special educational needs has declined and is below average. One pupil has a statement for their special needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, in which pupils work hard and attain above average standards. The quality of teaching is good, and is sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. Teaching is consistently good in the reception classes. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is undertaken mostly by the headteacher. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management and is supported effectively by a committed governing body. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science for pupils by the age of 11, and pupils perform well in national tests
- Teaching and learning are good, and pupils achieve well
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management and is supported effectively by the governing body
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good

What could be improved

- Pupils' skills in independent enquiry
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the senior management team, curriculum coordinators and governors
- Information to parents about their children's learning

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in 1998 and has a good capacity to improve further. Standards have continued to rise in national tests for seven and eleven year olds. In mathematics standards have remained consistently well above the national average for pupils at eleven, and above average in English and science. All the key issues of the last inspection have been addressed. For children in the reception classes there are improved outdoor play facilities to develop children's physical skills. Teaching in the reception year has improved and is consistently of a good quality. The increased numbers of teaching assistants have enabled younger children to work more closely with adults. Planning of the curriculum has improved, in that pupils' understanding and respect of other faiths and cultures is encouraged. Good development has taken place in the provision and

training for information and communication technology; as a result standards are at expected levels for seven and eleven year olds. Throughout school, teachers give greater attention to accelerating pupils' learning and providing additional support to pupils if necessary.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	B	B	B	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	
Science	A	A	B	C	

National test results in 2002 for pupils in Year 6 show that standards remain consistently well above average in mathematics, and above average in English. Since the previous inspection, standards in English and mathematics have improved in line with improvements nationally. Standards in science, while above the national average, are not as high as in previous years, because fewer Year 6 pupils achieved the higher Level 5. Over time the trend of improvement for Year 6 pupils is in line with the national trend. Girls perform better than boys in all subjects, greater than the difference nationally, and with significantly higher attainment in English and science. Results in English and science are average in comparison with similar schools. In 2002 the school's targets for Year 6 pupils were all achieved. Inspection findings show that standards in the current Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. This is good attainment, considering that two thirds of Year 6 pupils are boys and this year there are more pupils with special educational needs. Standards in all other subjects are good. Throughout school pupils with special educational needs and those identified by the school as gifted and talented are making good progress towards their individual learning targets.

The performance of seven year olds in 2002 in national tests is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Trends in test results show consistent improvement over time, particularly in reading and writing. Results are well above those of pupils in similar schools in reading and writing, and above in mathematics. In mathematics the difference between the attainment of boys and girls is greater than nationally. Children in the reception classes make good progress and achieve standards above expected levels in all areas of learning, often before the end of the reception year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, interested in all activities. They show great pride in their finished work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. From their start in school pupils are well behaved in lessons and at play. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils relate well to each other and to adults. Among all pupils there is a good level of mutual respect, tolerance and trust.
Attendance	Very good and well above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually at school.

Pupils' positive attitudes to their learning are a strength of the school. Pupils have good social skills showing trust, honesty and respect for the contribution of all members of the school community.

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 or better in three out of four lessons. In the reception it is of a consistently good quality because teachers provide children with purposeful and challenging activities, based on a good understanding of what they can do and a good knowledge of an appropriate curriculum for children of this age. From their entry to school, children's strengths and weaknesses are identified and strategies introduced to help them develop new skills, while working in an attractive learning environment. During the inspection very good teaching took place in classes which included pupils in Years 2 and 6, and they are achieving well. An excellent lesson in mathematics was observed in Year 6, where pupils made rapid gains in their learning because of the clarity of the learning objectives and the teacher's explanation about them. In all good lessons teachers manage pupils effectively and encourage positive attitudes to learning. Lessons are planned thoroughly and a variety of approaches are used to make activities challenging and exciting. Most teachers give good attention to the prior attainment of pupils when planning lessons so that higher attaining pupils are challenged to extend their analytical skills and the contributions of less confident pupils are valued and celebrated. The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make good progress. The quality of teaching in mathematics is strong and numeracy skills are taught well. In literacy good attention is given to the teaching of grammar. Through good planning, literacy and numeracy are used effectively in other subjects. All teachers manage question and answer sessions skilfully. Most teachers give particular attention to the choice of resources so that learning is supported through practical examples. When teaching is less successful, it is a result of learning being directed too closely with fewer opportunities for independent enquiry by pupils. The depth and pace of learning are insufficient for these pupils because activities are not built on an assessment of previous skills and knowledge.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. Very good attention is given to the inclusion of all pupils to maximise their full potential.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good and pupils make good progress towards their individual learning targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. A strength of the school is the provision for cultural understanding and appreciation of wider world communities. Planned provision is made for personal development in most subjects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school cares for its pupils well in a warm and friendly environment. Procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Assessment procedures are good and used well in planning to ensure learning tasks are challenging for pupils of all abilities.

During the school day there is a good range of activities to enrich the curriculum. Extra curricular clubs are limited, but are extended by many additional activities, for which pupils have to pay. The school has

a good partnership with parents. Most parents are interested in the work of the school and take an active role in helping to raise funds.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management, and creates an effective learning environment. Monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken mostly by the headteacher, and is limited to English and mathematics. The roles of the deputy headteacher and senior management team are under developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors fulfil their statutory duties well and give good support to the school. They hold the school accountable for its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The school has a good overview of its work and sets realistic targets for further improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Teaching and support staff are deployed effectively, and resources are used well to support and extend learning in all subjects.

Financial planning is good and used effectively to support school priorities. The principles of best value are applied. Good use is made of the accommodation. The recent developments in the outdoor play areas offer attractive learning experiences and are appreciated by pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like coming to school • The school expects children to work hard • The school is well led and managed • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems and concerns • The teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partnership with parents • Information to parents about the progress of their children • More appropriate homework for pupils of differing abilities • A greater range of extra curricular activities open to pupils without monetary payment

Inspection findings endorse all parents' positive views about the school. Inspectors judge that the partnership with parents is good. However, they agree that information to parents about children's progress and homework provision could be improved. The school provides a limited range of extra curricular activities, and the commercially run activities that require payment do not provide equal opportunities for all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science for pupils by the age of 11, and pupils perform well in national tests

- 1 Since the school was last inspected, pupils at 11 years of age have achieved standards which are consistently well above average in mathematics. These high standards have also been achieved each year in science, apart from in 2002. The trend of improvement in all subjects is broadly in line with the national trend. In mathematics in 2002 almost twice as many pupils achieved the higher Level 5 than nationally, and very few pupils did not achieve expected levels. In English and science more pupils achieved the higher level than nationally. In the last reporting year girls performed significantly better than boys in English and science, matching the national trend in English.
- 2 When children enter school, most have standards above expected levels for their age in most areas of learning, although in mathematical development standards are closer to average. Most children have good skills of imagination, shown in their play and craftwork. A small number of children have difficulty with pencil control or fitting together smaller construction pieces. A few are still learning to take turns and share the teacher's attention with others. Children make good progress towards each stepping stone of the early learning goals appropriate for children of this age and, by the age of six, they achieve above expected levels for their age in all areas of learning. They can remember instructions for making a Chinese lantern, play together happily, and have a good vocabulary and skills of observation, such as in describing a sphere: knowing that "it goes round and round but only has one edge."
- 3 Standards in speaking and listening and in reading are high throughout school. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to share ideas together. From Year 1, they contribute confidently to discussions and describe out of school experiences logically. Already they are using skills of authorship to make their writing more interesting; for example, in describing a giant "as so, so, so hungry." By Year 2, pupils understand and use suitable technical vocabulary to describe their activities. The School's Council is a popular debating chamber for pupils in Years 3 to 6. They learn to explain their ideas logically and become persuasive in their discussions. Year 6 pupils have good understanding of the structure of a balanced argument and use vocabulary maturely to describe their points and evoke emotion in discussion or in written work. In one very good lesson, as they brainstormed ideas, pupils contributed excitedly to defend their opinions, that "mobile phones should not be used in school" and responded well under pressure. Pupils enjoy reading and have good knowledge of a range of children's classics. They have average library skills for their age, although most prefer to use the Internet for research. Visits to theatres and pantomimes are some of the "best parts of school", according to Year 6 pupils.
- 4 Pupils' standards in writing are high at the age of seven and, by 11, their writing is well constructed, with a mature style. Standards of spelling are inconsistent, affecting the quality of some work. Although in each year group pupils learn sets of words, some pupils are not transferring these skills to writing tasks and 11 year olds still spell common key words inaccurately. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to use language skills across the curriculum, although this is not consistent in all subjects. For example: in a very good science lesson, Year 2 pupils wrote independently about their construction of an electrical circuit. They made good use of technical vocabulary in their scientific reports. Good accounts have been written in history about the life of Henry VIII.

Yet older Year 5/6 pupils in a history lesson on children of the Aztecs had research opportunities curtailed by the teacher when information was provided for them on an information sheet.

- 5 Pupils' skills in number are very good. They enter school with standards just above expected levels and make good progress throughout school. Pupils quickly learn to enjoy mental arithmetic and speedily recognise number patterns. In lessons they learn at a rapid rate. When asked to describe coinage up to 10p, higher attaining Year 1 pupils described a variety of ways to make 10p and then spontaneously added all coins on the number board to make a grand total of 30p. By Year 2, pupils can double or halve numbers accurately, eager to explain their methods of calculation. They are developing understanding of mathematical terms, such as "one more" or "one less" and, if unsure of correct terminology, use good descriptive vocabulary to explain their ideas. For example: one pupil unsure of the term "oval" described it as "an Easter egg shape." By the age of seven pupils have good understanding of time for their age and can estimate time and plan activities appropriately.
- 6 From Years 3 to 6 pupils are developing skills of accuracy and speed in calculating their times tables. They manipulate numbers quickly to ease the process of calculation and check their answers carefully. Year 6 pupils have very good knowledge of number; for example, they use negative numbers, record in decimals and fractions and understand proportions and averages. Learning of shapes and measure is good. When asked to describe a playdough shape, one reception child answered "I know it's a pyramid because I've seen a big blue pyramid near my nursery." Year 2 pupils label most two and three dimensional shapes and Year 6 pupils are skilled at naming right angles and acute and obtuse angles in rotational symmetry. Less successful are pupils' skills in problem solving. Too often they rely on teacher direction and are hesitant in using known skills to investigate numbers further. Year 6 pupils manipulate numbers accurately, explain their calculations logically and check calculations efficiently using a variety of mathematical skills.
- 7 In science, pupils learn to investigate, deduce and test answers. They are excited by science and concentrate well. In Year 2, they begin to understand the meaning of a fair test and can record their answers in a scientific manner. Pupils have good attitudes to science and cooperate well in group work. Year 6 pupils combine work in mathematics, information and communication technology and science. They use line graphs to show the force created by objects; use decimal notation to predict and measure; and are learning to use scientific equipment, such as a force meter to measure force in "Newtons". In computer lessons they create spreadsheets to record data. All age 11 pupils know how to record simply a scientific test, and work is mostly neatly presented, although often with scientific terms spelt inaccurately. Pupils are biddable and eager to succeed. However, only a minority of the Year 6 have higher order scientific skills, are confident to review their results and make adjustments to make calculations more accurate.

Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well

- 8 Throughout the school the quality of teaching is of a good standard overall. Most teachers manage their lessons well and have established a strong work ethic. As at the time of the last inspection, good teaching is founded on good relationships which exist within the school. Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and encourage pupils' very positive attitudes to their learning.

- 9 Teachers are skilled at ensuring all pupils can participate in all aspects of the curriculum. During question and answer times, teachers adapt their questioning to provide an appropriate challenge for pupils of differing abilities. For higher attaining pupils, their initial responses are rarely accepted and questions are extended to encourage them to think logically and analytically. Time is given to pupils with special educational needs so that their responses are fully integrated in discussions. In one excellent lesson in Year 6, pupils glowed with pride when they succeeded in tackling difficult challenges, supported through the mathematical exercises by explicit instructions and excellent resourcing. In this lesson on symmetry pupils could see the movement of the tessellations through the use of dual acetates on an overhead projector screen. Through the introduction of a variety of practical activities, a good lesson pace is maintained. The “brain gym” gives time for whole class practical action and individual demonstration, and paired group work keeps lessons lively. Teachers make good use of additional adult help to target individuals and to ensure that activities are inclusive. Less successful are times when pupils are expected to work alone as many pupils prepare to discuss and share ideas, rather than working independently. In some lessons up to half of the class will wait for teacher direction, hesitant to experiment and explore with a range of options.
- 10 The school is anxious to refine good teaching further and, in the school development plan, has prioritised the introduction of strategies to accelerate learning and improve teaching. An action plan has ensured that new developments in the last six months are already undergoing a process of review and refinement. Already all teachers are adept at providing pupils with “the big picture”, so that pupils understand the structure of the lesson and their part in it. Learning objectives are reviewed during the latter part of a lesson and, in the best instances of pupil and teacher involvement, they plot together the direction of further activities. Good lesson reviews celebrate success and include a useful element of critical appraisal by the teacher so that pupils understand how they can do better. Good links are made between teaching points, so that pupils can use cross curricular clues to reinforce learning. Teachers are giving good consideration to the learning environment; for instance, in some lessons music is introduced to sustain concentration or reinforce a lesson theme. Many teachers give better attention to the quality of their displays, providing lists of key words and vocabulary as well as a celebration of pupils’ achievement. In Year 6, for example, lists of scientific vocabulary reminds pupils of appropriate terms, such as “irreversible” or “soluble”, although they do not always use them in their writing.
- 11 In less successful lessons teachers are uncertain of the National Curriculum requirements for their pupils, and activities offer insufficient challenge appropriate for higher attaining pupils. Some timetable arrangements limit, rather than promote, learning. For example: in Year 1 concentration levels were lessened in a number lesson because pupils were expected to sit on the carpet for up to half an hour. The lesson lacked variety and pupils became restless, because previously they had been sitting for a long period of time in a singing lesson. Teachers work hard and plan lessons thoroughly. However, in some lessons time spent on pupil instruction is over long and there is too little opportunity for independent activity. The success of active practical learning activities is gathering momentum and teachers are aware of its impact and the effect on their planning. This is a good development in teaching. Less adventurous lesson tasks are less successful and now seem monotonous to pupils. For example: they find the use of worksheets restrictive and, as a result, their pace of learning is slower, as lessons lack interest and excitement.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and management of the school and is supported effectively by the governing body

- 12 The headteacher is a caring leader who is committed to raising standards and providing an effective learning environment in which all pupils can participate and succeed. She has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and provides very clear educational direction for its work. One of her great strengths is the very good relationship she has developed with pupils, parents and governors. All appreciate her work, trust her judgment and find her approachable. Through her guidance a caring ethos is promoted and everyone is valued highly. Tolerance, honesty, cooperation and mutual respect for others are fostered through the curriculum.
- 13 The school development plan evolves from an honest assessment by staff and governors of previous targets and success criteria, with suggested action plans incorporated into a new document. There is a good cross fertilization of ideas and sharing of the decision making process. External local and national initiatives are included in the school development plan, as necessary. The document includes two or three year programmes of planning. The headteacher is instrumental in ensuring that suggestions of various interested parties are given good consideration; for example, as part of the school development plan, parental requests for safe cycling have been incorporated into a "school travel plan". By the end of the year the school will evaluate the plan's success, beginning with the use of bicycle stores, which are being constructed. The development plan is a working document, which drives forward change and encourages improvements. Its relevance is recognised, professional training evolves from its influence and budget finance is matched to its priorities. There is constant refining of its actions by governors' sub committees in response to monitoring of the planned developments. However, much of the monitoring is undertaken by the headteacher and, for governors, senior management team and coordinators, more formal arrangements are not yet in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the development plan through the use of measurable success criteria.
- 14 The headteacher provides a good example for staff of the leadership of improvements. Initially introduced by the headteacher, the recent focus on accelerating pupils' learning has been acknowledged by staff as a positive step to raising standards. Through the headteacher's influence, training has been given to staff, actions have been planned and success criteria listed. Already the learning environment has improved, teachers plan lessons more clearly focused on the needs of pupils of all abilities and pupils are more knowledgeable about their learning. Progress is monitored regularly by the headteacher.
- 15 The school is an orderly community. Day to day management is efficient, and carefully planned administrative systems ensure that pupils are accommodated in a supportive, secure and creative environment. A rigorous analysis of national and school based data by the headteacher and senior management team provides the basis from which pupils' progress is predicted and measured, and curriculum issues identified. This information is shared with all teaching staff and governors. With the advice of the literacy and numeracy coordinator, targets for improvement are set for each pupil. The headteacher regularly monitors pupils' progress in lessons, and coordinators scrutinise planning and pupils' books.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good

- 16 The headteacher, in conjunction with the special educational needs teacher, identifies very clear, specific and relevant attainable targets for each pupil, which they work towards effectively. There are regular meetings, at which targets are formulated for

pupils and listed in individual education plans. These education plans are of good quality. Parents are regular participants in the process of assessing progress of their children and making school a meaningful experience. Good quality additional support of resources and adult help is provided for pupils, as necessary. The school fully meets all legal requirements for the special needs of pupils, including incorporating changes recommended in the new Code of Practice.

- 17 The staff and governors give high priority to the teaching of pupils with special needs. In lessons and extra curricular activities all pupils are encouraged to participate. Tolerance and patience are evident as teachers persuade pupils to join in discussions, or participate in practical activities. For example: in one excellent lesson the teacher skilfully adapted her questioning for the full ability range and offered praise fulsomely but accurately building confidence and raising self esteem as the lesson developed. The key strength of the lesson was in the clarity of the exposition, aided by the use of excellent resources so that the learning task was clearly explained. As a result learning challenges were extended or simplified, so that there was good pupil involvement in group and individual learning tasks.
- 18 There is very good consideration to ensure all pupils can participate in the curriculum activities. Those with physical difficulty are helped sensitively to join in practical tasks, if necessary. Alternative activities, such as additional swimming, are arranged if required to ensure all pupils have opportunities for maximum learning to take place. Many learning support or booster groups give additional help in literacy and numeracy. Inclusion in these groups is monitored termly as a result of regular assessment of progress. Pupils who are gifted and talented are identified and additional challenges are provided in literacy and numeracy. A coordinator has been appointed specifically to manage the curriculum opportunities for the needs of these pupils, and there is a consistent approach among all staff. Through teacher discussion and preparation of a policy for their education, teachers have a good awareness of their specific needs in lesson planning.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good

- 19 The school states that, *through a positive ethos, it aims to develop the whole person by providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils to maximize their full potential.* This is well met through the very good provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Since the last inspection the school has done very well in sustaining a very positive ethos. It has also worked very effectively to respond to one of the key recommendations of developing pupils' understanding of other cultures. This is now one of the key strengths of the school's provision.
- 20 Racial tolerance, respect and understanding are planned and promoted throughout the curriculum. In the reception class the Chinese restaurant provides good role play opportunities for children to write menu lists, cook and serve Chinese meals and learn about Chinese customs. In Year 2, Indian puppets are available for use in the puppet theatre, and in Year 5/6 Aztec pottery work provides an indication of popular colours and ethnic designs. Throughout school the displays of pictures, traditional designs and artefacts identify and celebrate festivals and customs of various world faiths. Notices on displays written in multi languages raise awareness of the various languages represented among the pupils. The school is mindful of the need to promote the British and European culture too. Year 6 pupils have been learning about Shakespeare's play "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Year 3 have created an art corner to celebrate the work of Monet, whilst younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 have been learning traditional tales such as Cinderella and Red Riding Hood.

- 21 Social and moral understanding is encouraged through the effective relationships which have developed between pupils and their teachers. The provision for its development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate and respect the views of others. Time is taken for pupils to talk together and work through any disagreements which may occur. Through the School's Council the needs of others are sought and promoted. Residential visits and day trips give pupils the opportunity to speak and listen to the opinions of others and as they work together to build team strengths. Special assemblies and golden time are celebrations of personal achievement and academic progress. "Everyone needs a friend" a corridor display states. Playground rules, friendship stops and buddy helpers are all encouraged to promote this theme.
- 22 Good opportunities are created for the development of spiritual awareness. In lessons pupils are invited to reflect on the wonder of the natural world, or to appreciate the beauty generated through man's efforts. Silk designs in Year 6 are the culmination of a study of Chinese art, which allow pupils the opportunity to admire the effectiveness of metallic Gutta wax work on silk. Work in religious education introduces pupils to the achievement and contribution of world leaders, for example, the work of Mother Teresa in India and of the story of Darwin and his visit to the Galapagos Islands. The Aztec creation story is compared with that of the Old Testament account, and with the "Big Bang" theory. In assembly time is taken to reflect on personal beliefs and to gain an appreciation of people less fortunate than themselves. For example: the headteacher told the story of a refugee in a new country, linked it to the story of "The Silver Sword" by Ian Serrailier, and in a time of reflection encouraged pupils to value and appreciate friendship and consider their contribution to supporting the needs of others.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Pupils' skills in independent enquiry

- 23 Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They respond well to teacher suggestions and strive to achieve their best work. However, most pupils are hesitant and lack confidence in independent enquiry. For higher attaining pupils speed of learning is restricted by their inability to undertake further investigation without teacher help or suggestion. Cross curricular links by pupils are limited, but developing. In science, for example, Year 6 pupils use their prior learning insufficiently to evaluate scientific outcomes or to introduce more appropriate measures to make testing more accurate. Some teachers are aware of the need to make pupils more independent, building time and opportunity for exploration into lessons. In a very good science lesson in a mixed Years 1 and 2 class, after making an electrical circuit for a robot, Year 2 pupils had a further challenge and opportunity to explore and light up his eyes. As pupils struggled to attach electrical equipment to batteries and lamp holders, very good learning took place. Gradually they realised that a battery could light more than one bulb and, later, that the electrical circuit was broken and lights went out when leads came apart.
- 24 A review of teachers' planning and scrutiny of pupils' work identifies that, in many lessons, the teacher adopts a didactic approach in planning the learning to take place. In mathematics and science there is limited emphasis within the curriculum on problem solving activities. Choices of enquiry and research usually follow teacher instruction in history or design and technology. In some lessons worksheets provide pupils with information, and independent learning is limited. Only in the teaching and learning of skills in information and communication technology are opportunities more open ended, so that pupils become self sufficient and confident. In this subject knowledge and skills are developing well.

Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the senior management team, curriculum coordinators and governors

- 25 Presently monitoring of teaching and learning relies heavily on the headteacher for its effectiveness. Monitoring by subject coordinators, the senior management team and governors is less frequent. As a result there is not a cohesive and consistent understanding and ownership of the curriculum. The school is aware that it now needs to take monitoring of teaching and learning a stage further, to develop a more effective approach.
- 26 Good attention is given to monitoring by the headteacher. She visits classrooms regularly and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in classroom management, teaching and learning. Positive feedback is given to teachers on their teaching. Through the performance management process, teachers discuss developments of chosen priority areas. Monitoring of the curriculum by coordinators is through a scrutiny of planning and in the management of resources. In English and mathematics a scrutiny of pupils' books takes place termly. Overall coordinators have little opportunity to undertake observations in classrooms or offer specialist help to pupils in their learning. Among some teachers there is not a culture of sharing expertise, and others give insufficient attention to their own professional development. There is limited evaluation of planning by coordinators to measure the rigour of the curriculum, or lesson evaluation by teachers to judge the rates of pupils' learning. This is an important area for development, especially when teaching is good overall, and further improvements involve refining strategies, rather than radical changes in approach. The role of the senior managers within the monitoring process is uncertain and occasional weaknesses in teachers' performance or pupils' learning can remain unnoticed or the process of intervention and support can lack rigour.
- 27 At the present level monitoring is not sharp enough to use as part of a formal process of self evaluation or to link it as a tool of improvement to the school development plan. Pupils' progress is analysed by the deputy headteacher, and some trends in performance are noted. This is at a satisfactory level, although recent gender differences in performance in national tests had not been recognised. Inspection evidence indicates that the curriculum is restrictive in that there are fewer opportunities for independent investigation and enquiry in which boys are keenly interested. There is a general overview of subjects taken from data analysis, which is shared with the headteacher and governors. Coordinators have insufficient involvement in this process and do not have an overview. There are some signs of increased involvement by governors. Link governors are appointed for some subjects and invitations have been issued to some coordinators to make presentations to the governing body. The headteacher has introduced governors to information on flows or trends in statistics, so that their knowledge is increasing. As governor committees are becoming more assured in their role, a greater understanding of the uses of monitoring is developing.

Partnership with parents

- 28 The school aims to maintain close links with parents and has introduced a satisfactory range of measures to develop the partnership with parents. A home/school liaison coordinator is appointed within the school and positive links are encouraged, for example, in the reception year. Parents are keenly interested in the work of the school and have high but realistic aspirations for their children. The good number of parental questionnaire returns and attendance at the pre inspection parents' meeting reflect this interest. Currently parents and grandparents help in school or on visits out; organise

social events and raise funds; and give good support at concerts and sports days. Parents support the school in its homework policy and are involved in the development of the Healthy School's initiative. The school has an open door policy and tries hard to respond to parental wishes. At the start of each year curriculum meetings are held to inform parents of future topics. In line with most primary schools, parents' evenings are held twice annually, with an additional open evening in the summer term. Parents of children with special needs are appreciative that they receive a good level of support.

- 29 However, links with parents could be improved. During the last two years the school development plan has not included any strategies to develop more positive parental links. There is a lack of consistency among staff in the detail of information provided about the intended curriculum or pupils' progress during the year. Children's targets and progress towards targets are not always shared with parents. Annual school reports provide a wide range of judgments on pupil's standards in all subjects but give minimal information on curriculum coverage or targets for improvement. Parents would welcome better awareness in school reports of children's strengths other than academic achievement. For example: achievement in music is not widely celebrated. Additionally, many parents feel opportunities to visit school are limited to formal concerts and parents meetings. Parents of reception children indicated that they would welcome informal opportunities to visit the classroom. Inspection findings support this view.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 30 In order to build on what is already a good education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) Provide pupils with a greater range of opportunities to undertake independent enquiry, especially in English, mathematics and science
 - (2) Develop a more inclusive approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning by:
 - Using monitoring more effectively to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and using this information to spread the very good practice in some classes across the school
 - Ensuring that key members of staff and curriculum coordinators have a clearer overview of standards, and the quality of teaching and learning across the school
 - Involving the governing body more formally in monitoring standards and the quality of pupils' learning across the school
 - (3) Enable parents to have a greater involvement with their children's learning by:
 - Improving the quality of pupils' annual reports
 - Sharing targets for children's progress more regularly with their parents

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	3	11	4	1	0	0
Percentage	5	15	55	20	5	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 five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		300
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		13

FTE means full time equivalent

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		35

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	19	22	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	21	22	22
	Total	40	41	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (100)	100 (100)	100 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	41	41	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	23	18	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	22	22
	Girls	17	17	18
	Total	35	39	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (86)	95 (89)	98 (98)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	21	20
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	34	38	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (86)	93 (91)	90 (95)
	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	266		
White – Irish			
White – any other White background	2		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African	2		
Mixed – White and Asian	3		
Mixed – any other mixed background	11		
Asian or Asian British - Indian			
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	9		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2		
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese	4		
Any other ethnic group	1		
No ethnic group recorded			

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)	12.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25:1
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	211

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full time equivalent

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.5
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)	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

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	633,107
Total expenditure	541,838
Expenditure per pupil	184,927
Balance brought forward from previous year	95,808
Balance carried forward to next year	91,332

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	300
Number of questionnaires returned	145

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	44	6	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	50	6	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	54	6	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	48	14	6	2
The teaching is good.	44	52	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	56	14	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	34	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	39	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	28	57	12	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	61	37	0	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	55	2	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	46	18	4	5