

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HINDSFORD C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Atherton

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106441

Headteacher: Mrs L Apps

Reporting inspector: Mrs J E Platt  
11565

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> October 2002

Inspection number: 246594

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 controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lodge Road Atherton Greater Manchester
Postcode:	M46 9BL
Telephone number:	01942 882409
Fax number:	01942 886007
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Houghton
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a voluntary controlled Church of England school for boys and girls between four and 11 years. It is smaller than many schools having 201 pupils on roll. Most pupils are from white ethnic groups and no pupils need support for learning through English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average (22 per cent). Forty nine pupils (24 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is also above average. Most of these pupils are assessed as having moderate learning difficulties. Four pupils have formal statements of need. The school has a high turn over. Pupils often leave the school and then return at a later stage and this disrupts the progress of these pupils. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds but the area served by the school includes pockets that are socially and economically less favoured than the national picture. Attainment on entry to the school is below average.

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

This is a good school with some very good features. It provides a stimulating and supportive environment that leads to a happy community. Teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress. Standards in Year 6 are above average in mathematics and science and average in English. Management is very effective and the headteacher is constantly searching for ways to improve the school. Consequently, the school has clear sighted aims for the future. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in mathematics are good throughout the school. In Year 6, standards are also high in science and information and communication technology.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and leads to pupils being enthusiastic learners.
- The school is led with great determination by the headteacher, with effective support from staff and governors.
- The curriculum is very carefully planned to meet the needs of every pupil. It includes many exciting experiences and is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- Opportunities for pupils' spiritual and cultural development are excellent and for their social and moral development are very good.
- The school cultivates a strong partnership with parents.

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

- Standards in writing throughout the school.
- Procedures to assess pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The presentation of pupils' work and the attention teachers give to the work in pupils' books.
- Pupils' attendance, which is below average.

*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 very good improvement since it was last inspected in October, 1997. Results in national tests have improved. This has been recognised nationally and the school has received two School Achievement Awards. Standards in mathematics have significantly improved in response to better teaching and improved planning. The school gives a lot of attention to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and pupils are now confident speakers and listen attentively to each other and their teachers. Standards in English have improved but writing still needs further attention. The presentation of pupils' work remains a concern. Teaching has improved and is now good. This has had a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning, which are now much better and pupils show a genuine interest in all the school offers. Older pupils now play a very active role in school, are eager to learn and are very proud of

their school. Behaviour has improved because teachers apply the school's

behaviour policy consistently. The curriculum for music and religious education has been enriched and in lessons seen the learning was good. The improvement in information to parents is impressive and it is now excellent.

## 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	C	C	E	E
mathematics	B	D	C	B
science	A	B	B	A

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

These results show that standards in national tests in Year 6 vary very much from year to year. This is linked to the high level of pupil mobility in the school, which can disturb pupils' learning, and the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs. In 2002, results in English were well below average compared to both all schools and similar schools, and were not high enough. Standards were better in mathematics and science and show that pupils are doing better than expected compared to similar schools. In science, 100 per cent of pupils reached the level expected for their age and a third of the pupils exceeded this level, which was a significant achievement. Current standards in Year 6 are now above average in mathematics and science. Achievement is good. Improvements have been brought about by more detailed planning, more adult support in lessons and better teaching. Overall, standards in English are now satisfactory and most pupils make satisfactory progress. However, writing remains a weakness and standards are below average.

The trend in results for pupils at the end of Year 6 has been broadly in line with the national trend. It is very difficult for the school to set targets because many pupils start or leave the school at different times throughout the year. Targets for 2003 are realistic in English and mathematics. Pupils are likely to achieve them and possibly exceed them in mathematics.

In 2002, the results of national tests in Year 2 were satisfactory in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. These results are much lower than previous years because the group included a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Current standards show a return to high standards in mathematics. Achievement is good and overall standards in Year 2 are above average. Standards in reading and writing are satisfactory. Overall achievement is satisfactory but it could be better in writing for the higher attaining pupils.

Children in the Reception class get off to a flying start to their education, responding well to a focus on practical activities. Considering that many start school with below average attainment, their achievement is good. By the time they move into Year 1 many have reached the level expected for their age.

Pupils with special educational needs benefit from effective adult support which enables them to play a full part in school life and make good progress.

In response to improved resources, staff training and better planning, standards in information and communication technology have improved and are now good in Year 6. The school places considerable emphasis on art and design and examples of work on display are of high quality.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school and are eager to be involved in the activities they are set. Pupils do not always give sufficient attention to the final presentation of their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school they play happily together.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own learning, which leads to confident, mature pupils in Year 6. Relationships are good. Pupils respect each other and older pupils often help the younger ones.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is below the national average. Too many parents take their children on holiday in term time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory and three-quarters of the lessons observed were good or very good. Teaching is consistently good and often better in the Reception class. Consequently, learning is good and children receive a secure foundation to their education. Teaching in Year 6 is very good. Tasks are challenging and lead to much new learning taking place.

The teaching of mathematics is good and teachers are very confident teaching numeracy skills. Practical activities and brisk openings to lessons capture pupils' enthusiasm and they are eager to try out their problem solving skills.

The teaching of English is satisfactory overall. Teachers effectively promote speaking and listening skills, which have raised pupils' confidence in all subjects. The teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory overall, but teachers do not develop pupils' writing effectively. They do not have high enough expectations of the presentation of work. Marking of work does not pick up sufficiently on spelling and punctuation errors in literacy and other subjects. Consequently, pupils are not using the skills taught in literacy lessons in their independent writing.

Teachers plan carefully so that the needs of pupils with special educational needs are fully met. Adult support is used effectively to help pupils meet the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are sensitively helped in small groups and they thrive in this caring atmosphere.

In the best lessons teachers use a variety of approaches that make learning fun for pupils. This was not always the case in Years 1 and 2 when the pace of lessons was not always brisk enough and pupils' concentration waned and so learning was less effective. A strength in most lessons is teachers' relationships with their pupils, and behaviour management is good. Throughout the school, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology across the curriculum, which greatly enhances pupils' skills.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is rich and relevant to the pupils. The school has maintained a very good balance between developing pupils' academic, creative and physical skills. Opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities are excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The unobtrusive support for these pupils ensures they participate fully in school life. The focus on practical activities is very helpful for these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. This provision makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Spiritual development is excellent. Teachers promote an appreciation of nature and a curiosity to learn more. Social and moral development is very good. Opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures are excellent. Pupils learn the importance of living in a multi-ethnic society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Procedures for child protection are in place and the school gives careful attention to pupils' health and welfare. Systems to assess pupils' progress are good in English and mathematics but procedures are not fully in place in other subjects.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher is an exceptional leader full of enthusiasm, always searching for new ideas to move the school forward. She is well supported by all staff who work together as a very effective team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are good friends of the school and are fully committed to providing the best for the pupils. They are involved in all aspects of the school, which ensures they are well informed about the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There is effective evaluation of assessment data to identify areas needing attention and to set the school targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very effective use of all available resources. The headteacher actively searches out extra funding and this has led to many improvements in the school. The school applies the principles of best value well in spending and other decisions it makes. Money is spent prudently with a clear link to the effect it will have on standards.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like school.</li><li>• Behaviour in school is good.</li><li>• Teaching is good.</li><li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of work pupils do at home.</li><li>• A closer relationship with parents.</li><li>• The information they receive about their children's progress.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents. The school works very closely with parents and, through effective use of the journals and the good quality reports keeps parents well informed about their children's progress. The inspection team feels that the amount of homework is good and the school allows pupils sufficient time to complete this work.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Standards in mathematics are good throughout the school. In Year 6 standards are also high in science and information and communication technology.**

1. The results of national tests in mathematics in Year 2 have been well above average since 2000 and current standards reflect these results. Considering many pupils start in Year 1 with average standards in mathematics these standards represent good achievement. Many pupils are working at levels much higher than expected for their age. Test results have varied more at the end of Year 6 because of the differing abilities of the groups in each year. In 2002, standards were similar to the national average but were above average when compared to similar schools. Standards have risen and are now above average. Reasons for this improvement include:
  - better teaching because teachers share good practice. The result is that teaching is consistently good;
  - additional adult support in lessons so that all are fully involved;
  - detailed analysis of test papers and then adjustments made to the curriculum to tackle any weaknesses;
  - collaborative planning leading to more continuity of learning as pupils move from year to year;
  - very effective tracking of pupils' progress and prompt support for those needing extra help.
2. Pupils in Year 2 are confident solving problems mentally. They enjoy counting forwards and backwards in 10s and the higher attaining pupils count in 30s. They accurately count on in 10s from a given number. For example, they know that 186 is 10 more than 176 and then continue the sequence. A review of pupils' work shows that pupils know the main properties of two dimensional shapes and put weights in the correct order competently. They use mathematical terminology in their responses. These skills are developed by effective teaching in Years 3 to 6 which gives pupils confidence and encourages them to articulate their thinking. Pupils begin to offer suggestions about how to use different methods to solve problems. Pupils in Year 6 successfully work in larger numbers, fractions and decimals. In the opening to lessons they are quick with responses and count on, using decimal numbers. They know what to add to a decimal number to make it into a whole number. Higher attaining pupils are able to express decimals as fractions, although this task is difficult for the other pupils. There is an increase in the number of pupils working at above average levels because of the challenging work set for them. These pupils are extending their understanding of number patterns into negative numbers and are confident with multiplication and division using three digit numbers.
3. Numeracy skills effectively support learning in other subjects. For example, in science, pupils use their numeracy skills in their investigations and record their findings in different tables.
4. Standards in science have been above average in national test results for eleven-year olds since 2000. Compared to similar schools, results were well above average and show that pupils have been achieving standards higher than expected. These standards have been sustained and the current Year 6 pupils are working at above average levels. A review of pupils' work shows pupils are confident in all aspects of

science. They understand the importance of the water cycle on the environment. Most know how to set up an experiment to make it fair and record their findings in different ways.

5. Standards in information and communication technology have improved because additional adult support is available. As a result, pupils can go to the information and communication technology suite to support their learning in other subjects. Year 6 pupils log on confidently, select from a menu, start work independently and then save their work to their personal file or print as required. They research for information and have established e-mail links with a school in Sri Lanka. Pupils have good word processing skills and are confident editing their work on screen. They use spreadsheets and produce graphs from data. Teachers plan effectively to use information and communication technology in other subjects. For example, in art and design pupils create pictures of very high quality and in English pupils publish simple newspapers with graphics, photographs and text in boxes.

**The overall quality of teaching is good and leads to pupils being enthusiastic learners.**

6. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Almost all of the teaching seen was at least good and no teaching was less than satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, teaching was good and better in 92 per cent of the lessons seen and in 25 per cent the teaching was very good. In these lessons teachers challenge the pupils and especially in Year 6 the focus on extending the learning of the higher attaining pupils has been most effective in raising standards.
7. Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class because teaching is consistently good. A wide variety of approaches makes learning fun and leads the children on to want to learn more. The imaginative way of teaching mathematics leads to effective learning. Children learn to count playing games, such as hop scotch and pegging numerals in the correct order on a washing line. These activities also enhance social skills as children learn to take turns and help each other. Children enjoy sharing a story with a friend because the teacher encourages this at the start of the day and many already have favourite books. They are quickly learning letters and sounds through a variety of practical activities. Clay is used to make letter shapes and the teacher encourages the writing of simple words using magnetic letters. A strength in the teaching is the collaboration between the teacher and support staff. As a result, all play a full and active part in lessons and children benefit from working in small groups. Staff use questions effectively. In a lesson observed these encouraged children to describe what they saw, felt and tasted when handling a variety of fruits. All staff have a good knowledge of the needs of these young children and know when to stand back and encourage independence and when to offer sensitive support. Consequently, children feel safe and happy and teaching provides a firm foundation for future learning.
8. In the rest of the school teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and offer good advice to pupils as they work. This is especially good in the teaching of information and communication technology and staff are confident solving any problems and setting challenging tasks that extend pupils' learning. Numeracy skills are taught very effectively. Introductions to lessons are brisk and challenging and keep pupils on their toes as they have to solve problems and then explain their methods. This is an improvement since the last inspection and teachers now focus on teaching specific strategies to extend pupils' number skills.

9. Pupils' behaviour in lessons has improved because teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. Control is firm and positive and based on the very good relationships that exist between all staff and pupils.
10. In response to the last inspection teachers use a variety of imaginative approaches to make lessons exciting for their pupils. This has greatly improved pupils' attitudes to learning and many are developing skills of personal study and show a great sense of determination to improve. The last inspection identified a weakness in the teaching of religious education when lessons failed to interest pupils. This is no longer the case. In the lesson seen in Year 6 activities included exploring the significance of Diwali through art, model making of lamps and research on the Internet. This was a very effective lesson which led to much new learning.
11. A very positive feature in most lessons is the very effective use of support staff. Many have been trained and so bring specific expertise to the school. This is very useful in the information and communication technology suite because advice is readily available to pupils. The support for pupils with special educational needs is also carefully planned with support staff playing an important part in supporting groups. Consequently, these pupils make good progress because they fully understand their tasks. The additional pastoral support is very effective in providing a few pupils with the extra help they need to learn how to manage their behaviour. They gain an understanding of what is acceptable in class.

**The school is led with great dedication by the headteacher with effective support from all staff and governors.**

12. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is fully involved in school life, including recently serving in the local McDonalds as part of a fund-raising activity. This involvement has earned her the respect of all and parents are unanimous that the school is well led and managed. The headteacher has set high standards for the school and has shown determination to create an environment that stimulates pupils so that they feel involved and want to learn. This has been most effective in resolving the concerns in the last inspection and as pupils have gained in enthusiasm so academic standards have started to rise.
13. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and all staff. The management of numeracy and literacy has been very effective because time has been available to analyse test results, observe lessons and review work. As a result, co-ordinators have a good overview of their subjects and have been able to offer advice, share good practice and adjust the curriculum when a weakness has been identified. For example, the school's focus on raising standards in speaking and listening through the use of drama has been most successful in raising pupils' confidence to speak in front of an audience. As yet, the co-ordinators of other subjects are less well informed because they have had limited time to gain an insight into the areas of development for the subject.
14. The governors offer good support to the school. There is no doubting their commitment to the school and their determination to raising standards and improving the education for the pupils in the school. They are regular visitors to the school and this enables them to fulfil their roles as critical friends. Governors are linked to subject co-ordinators and have observed lessons being taught as part of their own development. Consequently, governors know what is going on in school and have a secure understanding of its many strengths as well as areas for development.

15. The school's plan for improvement is a collaborative document involving staff and governors. All meet together and work in small groups discussing progress over the previous year and recording future priorities. Discussion is based on the school's on-going procedures for self-evaluation that provide a clear agenda for future development. This information is then scrutinised by the senior management team and a draft policy reviewed, adjusted and agreed by all. This process makes the document a good vehicle for improvement as all are committed to the agreed priorities. Spending is linked to these priorities. The school has clear plans to spend the current surplus of funds to further enhance the school buildings. A significant strength in the headteacher's management is her ability to search out additional funding. This has led to many improvements in the building which is now a very attractive school including the outdoor playing areas.
16. The headteacher and governors give close attention to the principles of best value. The school consults with parents before any major changes so they know they have their support. This was effective when making decisions about lunchtime clubs and a change in uniform. The driving force of the headteacher and her ability to see the next challenge to be overcome has brought about many improvements. Considerable thought is given when spending and checks are carried out to see that work and resources are good value. Test results are analysed and compared with similar schools as part of the school development process.
17. The school has a very short and to the point school motto. *Our best, always, everywhere.* This is displayed everywhere and is clearly reflected in the daily life of the school.

**The curriculum is very carefully planned to meet the needs of every pupil. It includes many exciting experiences and is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.**

18. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to provide a curriculum that will stimulate pupils and so improve their attitudes to learning. This has been very successfully achieved. A rich curriculum is planned carefully so that the balance between academic, creative and physical activities is very good.
19. The over-riding focus of the curriculum is on learning through relevant and practical activities. This is very evident throughout the day as every space in the school is used and pupils are busy in purposeful learning activities. The information and communication technology suite is always a hub of learning as pupils can access this resource at any time and adult help is always available. The spaces for creative work are rarely empty and teachers and support staff are full of imaginative ideas which make learning great fun. Examples of work are of high quality and the school's expertise in art and design has been recognised by the nationally recognised 'Artsmark'. The school library is an amazing example of artwork with metal shapes of fish magically interwoven with coloured lights. Pupils were involved in designing and making this sculpture which is now a protected piece of art.
20. Teachers follow detailed planning guidelines so that learning builds effectively on pupils' previous attainment. By carefully linking topics, lessons are more relevant to pupils and this maintains their enthusiasm for learning. For example, autumn has been a focus for art lessons as well as literacy. This has led to some imaginative language. One pupil wrote *leaves smiling everywhere*.

21. The school is very aware that many children start school with a narrow vocabulary or lack confidence in expressing their ideas. To enhance these skills the curriculum includes drama and role-play. This was very effective in a very good drama lesson for Year 6 pupils when, through role play, they gained a real insight into life in the mines in Victorian times. Lessons encourage sharing ideas with each other and at the end of lessons pupils are given the opportunity to tell the class about their work. This is effective in extending their confidence to speak in front of an audience.
22. Pupils with special educational needs receive carefully planned support. Literacy and numeracy lessons are organised at different times for each year group to maximise the use of support staff. As a result, pupils with special educational needs receive support when it is most needed. This careful planning ensures that pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
23. Significant attention is given to pupils' personal and social development. Sex education and information about the use and misuse of drugs are dealt with in the formal curriculum as well as in a week devoted to personal development. This is an exciting week of events and visits, and targets citizenship as well as promoting healthy lifestyles.
24. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of high quality extra-curricular activities. These include an enrichment programme for pupils identified as gifted or talented in a specific area. These pupils can participate in weekly brass, percussion and woodwind sessions, additional mathematics' activities as well as art and sport. These activities are also available for other pupils and clubs include art, baking, gymnastics, drama, information and communication technology and music.
25. An exciting range of visits and visitors enriches the formal curriculum. This includes the residential visit to Robinwood which is an activity holiday and very popular with the pupils. Visitors include authors, puppet theatre, musicians and artists who provide many exciting tasks that grab pupils' enthusiasm as well as extending their skills and knowledge.

**Opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are excellent and for moral and social development are very good.**

26. The entrance to the school alerts visitors to the school's celebration of art and design. The beautiful mosaic and the sculpture of a hind are just a few examples of the exciting experiences planned for the pupils. These features are evidence of the overall excellent opportunities provided for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

#### *Spiritual development*

27. Provision for spiritual development is excellent and is clearly represented in many aspects of the school. The focus on encouraging pupils to be involved in the school and in accepting responsibility for their actions has led to pupils growing in maturity. Music plays a part in many lessons to set the scene at the start of the day or to leave with a celebration as school closes. This seeps through into other classes and establishes a real feeling of belonging to a community. Each class starts the day with its own act of worship. These often include a quiet time for reflection, which was particularly effective in Year 3 and prepared the pupils sensitively for the start of the



day. Teachers value pupils' ideas and encourage curiosity. In Year 1, the teacher has introduced the pupils to a character called Maisy who writes to the pupils. This has captured their imagination and increased their desire to write. One higher attaining pupil was eager to share her experiences with Maisy and wrote *I have a pet dog her name is Lucy*. Lessons include imaginative activities to ensure a positive response from the pupils. This was very effective in a literacy lesson in Year 6 when there was a gasp from the pupils as the teacher slowly revealed the text '*Leisure*' by W H Davies because it is currently being used as an advertisement on television.

### *Moral development*

28. There are very effective opportunities to extend pupils' moral development. In Circle Time<sup>1</sup> pupils have opportunities to learn the skills of making friends and respect for others. The school has been awarded ECO status, which reflects the school's focus on protecting the environment. This has made the pupils' very aware of the role they can play in looking after their own community. They recognise that it is wrong to drop litter and are cross that litter from the local secondary school blows over to their school when they have tidied up. In many subjects, teachers include a message about what is acceptable behaviour and how people's actions affect the lives of others. For example, in religious education, when studying Hinduism pupils are encouraged to think about good conquering evil. This was taught very effectively using the lamps the pupils had made and led to serious thought being given to this topic. Teachers and support staff provide good role models for the pupils through the friendship they share with each other. They extend this to the pupils. When a problem occurs this is discussed with the pupils so they learn how their behaviour affects others and so try harder to abide by the school rules.

### *Social development*

29. The school's provision for social development is very good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work alone or collaboratively in various groups. In music, pupils in Year 5, worked as groups combining rhythm and beat, before playing a simple piece of music as a whole class. This was hard work for many pupils but they maintained their concentration and with the support of others completed the task. Pupils' attitudes to learning music were a weakness in the last inspection and this was certainly not the case in the lesson seen.
30. Pupils have the opportunity to exercise leadership as members of the school council. The group plays a full part in the school and has been effective in deciding on the playground equipment and the imaginative 'rocket' used to store this equipment. These representatives of the school are very forthcoming and keen to participate and contribute to school life. Older pupils help the younger ones by acting as *bully busters* and visit classes to see if there are any concerns. This equips the pupils with the necessary skills of listening to others and helping them to deal with problems. Pupils support many charities and this work increases their understanding of the part they can help in the wider community.

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<sup>1</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person speaks at a time. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

### *Cultural development*

31. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture and the richness of other cultures. Most classrooms have a large mural of a famous artist that is an impressive visual stimulus as well as a celebration of art. In lessons, pupils' knowledge is extended as they learn to paint in the style of many famous artists. In literacy lessons, a wide range of texts are used to increase pupils' knowledge of authors. This was evident in Year 6 and pupils spoke confidently about their favourite books and included classical texts. This knowledge is extended by theatre visits and Year 6 pupils were looking forward to a performance of Romeo and Juliet during the week of the inspection. Musicians from the Halle Orchestra have visited the school and pupils have attended a concert. The school is well known within the community for its interest in music and the school brass band is in much demand to perform locally. The school places a high value on multicultural development because the pupils have little first-hand knowledge of other cultures and faiths. This development is promoted very well through the curriculum, assemblies and visitors into the school. A samba band has performed in school and an African artist helped with the design for the library sculpture. The school has e-mail links with a school in Sri Lanka and this extends the pupils' understanding of another way of life. Pupils learn about other faiths in religious education. This is done in an interesting way using artefacts and information and communication technology so that lessons are interesting and pupils gain a real insight into faiths other than their own.

### **The school cultivates a strong partnership with parents.**

32. Parents have very positive views of the school and are unanimous that their children like school. They value the education their children receive including the wide range of experiences available for them. Discussions with parents were very positive and parents say they are fully involved in their children's learning.
33. Many parents play a full and active part in school life supporting in lessons, helping with extra-curricular activities including making toast for the pupils at break time. A group of parents attend the HELP (Hindsford Education Learning Partnership) sessions that welcome parents into school to learn how they can help their children at home. The sessions are informal and enjoyable and parents make games and learn the rhymes their children sing in school. This initiative has led to some parents furthering their own careers through additional training and others are now helping in school.
34. Parents are kept very well informed about what is happening in school through the pupils' journals. These are excellent. They are well presented diaries that record important dates for the year, set out what is to be taught and provide parents with very useful information about the curriculum. Targets are set and the journals keep parents up to date with their children's progress throughout the year.
35. The headteacher and governors value the contributions made by parents to the school community. These adults have a strong commitment to the school and their involvement enriches the feeling of community which is such a positive feature of the school.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

### Standards in writing throughout the school.

36. The 2002 results of national test in English for Year 6 pupils were well below average when compared to all and similar schools. Prior to this, test results had been average and the 2002 results were not as high because of the higher number of pupils with special educational needs in that year. Also, the high number of pupils starting the school at different times in Years 3 to 6 had had their learning disturbed and not all of them benefited from the secure foundation that Hindsford School provides. Current standards are satisfactory overall. Reading is stronger than writing and many pupils reach the level expected for their age and are gaining an enthusiasm for reading. However, standards in writing remain below average and many are not making enough progress. The school has identified writing as an area for development.
37. National test results in writing in Year 2 in 2002 were average when compared to all schools and to schools with a similar intake. Current standards are satisfactory and many pupils reach the level expected for their age. Achievement is satisfactory for most pupils but few pupils are reaching above average standards and higher attaining pupils are underachieving.
38. In Year 2, most pupils are confident about recording their ideas in writing. However, many rely heavily on the spoken word and their writing lacks imagination. Children have been appropriately introduced to letter formation in the Reception class and most have a legible print. Many use their knowledge of sounds in their spellings. For example, a lower attaining pupil was confident writing about his hobby of fishing. He wrote, *Josh cort a little pirch*. A review of the pupils' books shows pupils have written in a range of styles. For example, they have listed ingredients and instructions to make cornflake cakes. However, there was limited evidence of pupils writing sustained pieces of work that are interesting to the reader. One example of work written by a higher attaining pupil was the exception and included dialogue to make a story more interesting. However, there was little evidence of this quality of work and few pupils are confident writers. A review of pupils' work shows that higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and are underachieving. Work is not always matched to the ability of pupils, and this restricts their progress. This was the case in the literacy lesson observed in Year 2. Pupils were cutting up instructions and putting them in the correct order and little independent writing took place.
39. In Year 6, pupils have experienced a wider range of writing and many have a clear understanding of the different styles of writing and have written letters, play scripts, and instructions. They enjoy writing poetry and understand poems do not always have to rhyme. Higher attaining pupils recognise the importance of vocabulary. For example, when writing as a character in *Treasure Island* the pupil changes the word *wimpy* to *scared* because he understands it is more suitable for the style of the story. Pupils are taught to plan their work and so stories are organised appropriately. Many are using paragraphs correctly. However, too many stories have simple endings and rely on dialogue too much. Pupils enjoy working with a partner to share ideas. They suggest improvements but are less effective at checking spellings and punctuation and these errors often go uncorrected. Consequently, pupils are not learning from their own mistakes. Some pupils have difficulty expressing their ideas with precision and lack imaginative vocabulary. Teachers are effective in sharing writing with pupils and this includes pointing out the correct use of grammar and punctuation. However,

pupils are not transferring these skills successfully to their independent writing. The school has a handwriting policy but it is not always followed and although many are joining up their handwriting it is not as neat as it could be.

#### **Procedures to assess pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.**

40. The school has good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' overall achievement in English and mathematics. Teachers review pupils' individual progress every few weeks by discussing an example of work with them and then adjusting pupils' individual targets. These are recorded in pupils' journals so that parents and pupils know how to improve their work. This is working well for the older pupils who informed inspectors they were trying to write in paragraphs, read poetry and use powerful verbs. It is less effective for the younger pupils who are not always clear what their targets actually mean. For example, one pupil felt that his target to *self-correct when reading* meant he had to *use his knowledge of letters and sounds and stretch the word out*.
41. In English and mathematics, the school uses a range of tests to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Effective use is made of this information to spot the pupils who would benefit from additional support. However, this good practice is not in evidence in other subjects. The school is starting to assess attainment at the end of a unit of work but pupils' progress is not regularly assessed resulting in little recorded evidence of their achievement. As a result, teachers do not have a clear picture of what pupils know, understand or what they can do in these subjects. This also restricts the effectiveness of subject co-ordinators as they do not always have a full picture of standards in their subject. For example, in information and communication technology the school lacks a formal system to track pupils' progress or check on the skills they have acquired.

#### **The presentation of pupils' work and the attention teachers give to the work in pupils' books.**

42. The school has a system of giving pupils oral feedback about the progress they are making in lessons. Teachers plan a focus assessment group and inform pupils so that they know their work will be assessed at the end of the lesson. This is effective in checking how well pupils have understood the lesson and extended their learning. It is also useful in extending pupils' confidence in speaking and listening as they share their experiences with others. Older pupils also benefit as they learn from each other. However, this practice leads to some conclusions being too long and pupils' interest starts to wane. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson the conclusion included reference to tasks that had not been completed by all groups. This had limited relevance to some pupils and was not a productive use of this time.
43. The main weakness in the system is the attention teachers give to the work in pupils' books. Other than the assessed examples of work teachers do not mark pupils' work. Consequently, pupils do not always give enough attention to the presentation of their work. Examples in books include untidy work with errors in grammar, punctuation and spellings that are uncorrected. Also, in mathematics work is not always set out neatly and this leads to errors in calculations. These mistakes are not corrected and so it is unclear how pupils are informed about their mistakes or how they can improve their work. Similarly, in other subjects teachers are not checking that pupils' literacy skills are being extended and that pupils are making accurate use of grammar and punctuation.

**Pupils' attendance which is below average.**

44. Overall levels of attendance are below average and unauthorised absence is above the national average. Many pupils have very good attendance records but a minority do not attend well enough to gain maximum benefit from all the school offers. The school has clear expectations of attendance and this is explained clearly in the school's prospectus with a reference to what constitutes unauthorised absence. The school works very hard in co-operation with the educational welfare officer when a pupil's attendance gives cause for concern. However, parents are taking pupils on holiday in term time and this has a big effect on the school's attendance figures.

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

45. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) improve standards in writing by:
  - checking in Year 2 that tasks are sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils;
  - ensuring that pupils transfer the punctuation and grammar they learn in their literacy lessons to their independent writing;
  - ensuring that all classes implement the school's handwriting policy;
- (2) improve assessment by extending the good practice seen in English and mathematics to other subjects;
- (3) improve the presentation of pupils' work by giving closer attention to the marking of their work;
- (4) further promote attendance by making parents aware of the educational implications when their children miss school.

## 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	19

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	12	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	19	57	24	0	0	0

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

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	201
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	45

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	49

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	8	11	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (91)	74 (94)	79 ( 97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (94)	74 (94)	79 (94)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

\* these numbers are not included because the number of boys in the year group falls below 10

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	12	13
	Girls	10	10	14
	Total	16	22	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (67)	76 (63)	93 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	12
	Girls	12	11	15
	Total	22	21	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (51)	72 (58)	93 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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



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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	198	15	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	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	0	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	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	29

**Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	220

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

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

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	424,992
Total expenditure	420,412
Expenditure per pupil	2,113
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,700
Balance carried forward to next year	51,280

Number of pupils per FTE adult	Na
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***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)	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

Number of questionnaires sent out	201
Number of questionnaires returned	71

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	35	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	38	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	39	11	0	4
The teaching is good.	76	23	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	32	4	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	14	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	87	11	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	55	37	6	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	76	23	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	32	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	35	1	0	4

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.