

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ROBERT PEEL LOWER SCHOOL**

Sandy, Bedfordshire

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109522

Headteacher: Mrs F Godfrey

Reporting inspector: Mr P Evans  
20737

Dates of inspection: 31<sup>st</sup> March – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003

Inspection number: 246918

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dapifer Drive Sandy Bedfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Parsons
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 8</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>9 - 14</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>14 - 15</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>16 - 20</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Robert Peel Lower School is a larger than average school situated in Sandy, Bedfordshire. It provides education for pupils aged 3 to 9 years of age. Two hundred and eighty one pupils, 145 boys and 136 girls, attend the main school. Fifty-seven children attend the school's nursery part time, 24 in the morning and 33 in the afternoon. The great majority of pupils live in the area close to the school which is made up of local authority and privately-owned housing. The proportion of pupils identified as being eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. There is an above average proportion of pupils on the school's special educational needs register, although the percentage with a statement of special educational need is below the national average. The school has a higher proportion than most schools of pupils for whom English is an additional language, a small number of whom are at the early stages of learning English. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below what is expected for their age. The new headteacher has been in post since January 2003.

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

Robert Peel Lower School is a good school overall. It promotes very good personal development, and relationships between pupils and between pupils and their teachers are excellent. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and contribute to the high standards they achieve at the end of Year 2. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school, which contribute a lot to pupils' learning. The leadership and management of the school are sound overall. However, the new headteacher gives the school good leadership and a clear educational direction.

In view of its context, the standards that it achieves, the level of education that it offers to all its pupils and the money that it spends, the school provides good value for money.

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

- The strategies for teaching English, literacy, mathematics and numeracy are good and contribute well to the standards that pupils achieve at the end of Year 2.
- The development of skills in information and communication technology and the way that they are used in other subjects are very good.
- Provision in the nursery is very good and provides a very good base for pupils' future learning.

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

- The standards that pupils reach at the end of Year 4, because they have been affected by staffing difficulties.
- Systems for checking how pupils are progressing because they are not yet fully developed.
- The school does not have high enough expectations of pupils' standards of presentation, including handwriting.

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

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

The school was last inspected in December 1997, when it was judged that there was a need to enhance the confidence of all staff in teaching design and technology, music and information technology, and to develop the role of the subject co-ordinators to allow them to monitor the work of their colleagues. The progress made in both these areas has been good. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen steadily since the last inspection. In spite of staffing difficulties which have affected the standards that pupils reach at the end of Year 4, they make good progress from the time that they enter the school until they leave. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The capacity to improve further is good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2, based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	B	B	B	A
Writing	B	A	A	A
Mathematics	D	C	B	B

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

On entry to the school's nursery, children's levels of attainment are below expectations for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, and as they move into Year 1 the great majority achieve the targets for children of their age in all six areas of learning, as set out in the national Early Learning Goals for the foundation curriculum.

In the 2002 national tests for seven-year-olds, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2, the expected level for their age, was well above the national average in writing and above average in reading and mathematics. Standards in science, according to teacher assessments, were above average. Standards in the 2000 national tests in reading were above average and have remained at this level, rising in line with the national trend. The 2000 results were above average in writing; they rose to well above average in 2001 and remained at this high level in 2002. The school's results in mathematics in 2000 were below average; standards improved in 2001 to average and further improvement was made in 2002 to above average. In 2002 the percentage of pupils achieving the higher than expected Level 3 in national tests in writing was above the national average. It was above average in reading and just above average in mathematics.

When comparing the school's 2002 results of national tests for seven-year-olds with those in schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals, they were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics.

Inspection evidence shows that standards in information and communication technology are now well above expectations when pupils leave the school. Information and communication technology is used very well to teach other subjects, and standards in design and technology, art and design, and religious education are above expectations by the time that pupils leave the school. Standards in all other subjects are at least in line with national expectations. The standards that pupils achieve in national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 4 are not as good, for their age, as those achieved by the same group of pupils at the end of Year 2. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make the same progress throughout the school as their classmates. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language are well catered for and make very good progress overall.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to attend school and are enthusiastic about the work they undertake.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of all pupils, both in and out of classrooms, is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The relationships between pupils and between pupils and their teachers are excellent.
Attendance	Less than satisfactory. Attendance is below the national average.

Relationships in the school are of the highest level and pupils' behaviour is always very good. Attendance is below the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Sound

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

During a short inspection, few lessons are observed. Overall judgements are based not only on the quality of teaching seen in lessons but also on evidence gained from looking at pupils' past work.

Twelve lessons were seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching in one lesson was excellent and in six more it was very good. In four lessons the quality of teaching was good and it was sound in one. The quality of teachers' planning is very good in most classes. The quality of marking is very good in the Foundation Stage and in the infants, and it is used very well to guide pupils on how to improve their work. Written comments often include guidance for pupils, showing how well they are doing. This contributes very well to their very good knowledge and understanding of how well they are learning. In Foundation Stage and infant classes, all teachers and learning support assistants have very good expectations of how well pupils will achieve.

Assessments of how well pupils progress are gathered by teachers and learning support assistants and a summary of this information is passed on to the next class. However, this information is not used to clearly show how well pupils achieve as they pass through the school. This does not provide all the information to teachers that they should have and is a contributory factor in the low expectations for pupils' attainment, in some junior classes.

Evidence from looking at the work of junior pupils shows that, in some classes, the quality of marking and the level of expectations of the standards that pupils will achieve are not as high as they are in the rest of the school.

Throughout the school, expectations of the presentation of pupils' work, including their handwriting, are not high enough.

The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school offers a wide-ranging, well-balanced curriculum, which is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school ensures that all pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from teachers and learning support assistants to enable them to make the same progress as their classmates.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The school does all that it can to ensure that these pupils make the same progress as their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is excellent. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and provision for their cultural development is sound. The very good overall standard of provision has a very positive impact on the way that pupils learn.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Sound. Strategies for pupils' pastoral care are very good. However, the procedures for checking how well they are progressing are not developed well enough to track how well they are doing as they move through the school.

The partnership between the school and parents is very good. The school has sound procedures for promoting good attendance. The headteacher is aware that the school needs to conduct a full health-and-safety risk assessment.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound. The new headteacher provides good leadership and clear educational vision for the school. There is a growing level of partnership with all staff and with the governing body.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They make a sound contribution in shaping the educational direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound. The school's priorities are developing well under the new headteacher, and the strategies for achieving the school's targets are being formulated well.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of strategic funding and ensures that it is spent appropriately.

The leadership and management of the new headteacher are good. At present she does not have a deputy headteacher, but an appointment has been made for September 2003. Teamwork throughout the school is developing well, as is the partnership between the headteacher and the governing body. The school applies the principles of best value soundly. The accommodation is good and very well maintained by the excellent caretaker. The school library is well stocked and resources for teaching and learning are good overall.

## 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>• They are comfortable about approaching the school with any questions or problems.</li><li>• The quality of teaching in the school.</li><li>• Their child like attending school.</li><li>• The high expectations that the school has for their children.</li><li>• The good progress their children make at school.</li></ul>	

Inspection evidence largely supports the positive views of parents who attended the meeting and completed the questionnaires. However, expectations for pupils' achievement are not as high, in some junior classes as they are in the rest of the school. A small minority of parents expressed concern over the information they receive about the progress that their children make and the range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school. Inspection evidence shows that the information provided for parents, particularly about their children's progress, is good. The range of extra-curricular activities offered is also good for a school of this type. On these two points, inspection evidence does not support the concerns of this small minority of parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**The strategies for teaching English, literacy, mathematics and numeracy are good and contribute well to the standards that pupils achieve at the end of Year 2.**

1. On entry to the school's nursery the overall attainment of children in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development is below what is expected for children of this age. This is shown by the tests and assessments carried out by the school shortly after children first join the school. The progress they make is very good in the nursery and good in the Foundation Stage overall in both these areas of learning. The school's nursery provision is dealt with in more detail later in this report.
2. Throughout the Foundation Stage there is a good focus on the development of children's communication, language, literacy and numeracy. This gives them the knowledge and understanding that they need to apply to other areas of their learning. The way that children are taught is holistic. The topics that they undertake often involve them learning in several subjects at once, and this is particularly true of English and mathematics, which are included whenever they occur naturally in the subject matter being studied. The curriculum is very well structured so that all children are able to begin to develop an understanding of how they learn.
3. In a good lesson in a reception class, children were seen undertaking well-structured group work in reading. They did puzzles, which increased their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds and built their confidence in reading simple words. In the same lesson they showed that they could read instructions to "add one more" and they then added single digits together, almost always giving correct totals. In this lesson children showed that they were on target to meet the Early Learning Goals in reading and mathematics by the time they enter Year 1.
4. The building of personal and social skills is also an area which the school prioritises in these early years, and children develop excellent relationships, both with their classmates and with their teachers and learning support assistants. They begin to understand how they learn and, as they move through the Foundation Stage, they begin to work well with others, both collaboratively and cooperatively. Children's behaviour is always very good in these situations. These skills contribute well to their learning in literacy and numeracy.
5. Children who are identified as having special educational needs are given very good support and make very good progress in the Foundation Stage. They each have individual education plans, with short-term targets which enable them to make very good progress.
6. The few children for whom English is an additional language are also given very good support. Not only are their skills in all areas of language and literacy developed well, but also the high-quality care of all adults in the school enables them to develop self-esteem and self-confidence. This in turn enables them to make the same progress as their classmates.
7. In both the infant and junior departments of the school, the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been well implemented. Teachers' planning is very good in most classes and teachers in these classes have high expectations of the attainment of all their pupils. In the infant classes the levels attained in the Foundation Stage are built upon very successfully. By the time that they undertake national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, many pupils reach standards which are above the national average.
8. In the national tests in 2002 the standards that pupils reached in reading and mathematics were above average. Standards in the writing tests were well above the national average. The percentage of pupils who reached the higher than expected Level 3 in all three tests was above the national average. In reading it was almost ten per cent above the national average, and in writing

over 20 per cent higher. During the past three years the school has sustained a good level of improvement in reading. In writing and mathematics, improvement has been very good.

9. When the results of tests in 2002 are compared to those in similar schools, they are well above average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. These results are a considerable achievement for the school. Inspection evidence shows that these standards are set to continue in the tests to be taken by the present pupils in Year 2 later this year, and that standards in literacy and numeracy are on target to be average by the time that the present Year 4 pupils leave the school.
10. Many lessons in other subjects are planned to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and to expand the words that they use in specific subjects such as science and ICT. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to speak to wider audiences in the classroom and in assemblies. Teachers and learning support assistants constantly encourage pupils to speak in extended sentences and to use appropriate vocabulary in subjects such as science, art and ICT. By the time they reach the end of the infants, they are very good speakers and always listen intently to their teachers and to each other. This continues to develop in the junior classes and these skills are above average by the time that they leave the school.
11. As in earlier years, much of this achievement is because of the way in which subjects are taught. Literacy lessons are used to teach other subjects. For example, in a very good literacy lesson in Year 2 the teacher skilfully combined the development and use of flow charts with a scientific study. The basic information to be used in the flow chart was on the life cycle of a frog. Pupils understood the information from their earlier studies and all were able to contribute. Their vocabulary linked to the scientific study was extended as they used new words from a reading list linked to the subject. This lesson successfully linked pupils' learning in literacy skills with their scientific learning, and developed their mathematical skills of sequencing.
12. The introduction to this lesson also made a good contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual development. The teacher referred to the assembly that they had attended earlier on the theme of "Kindness". She encouraged pupils to contribute a wider range of examples based on the theme and their own experiences. Pupils were first guided to reflect on what they understood as "kindness" and then to explain their own ideas to the class. Pupils spontaneously bowed their heads whilst reflecting and developed their thoughts before sharing them with the class. The teacher skilfully led from this very productive session into the main theme of the literacy lesson. This is one of many examples of this approach being used in the school.
13. Handwriting is taught throughout the school and by the end of the infants many pupils have achieved a good joined, cursive style in their handwriting books. A few do transfer this successfully to their written work.
14. From looking at pupils' past work and from the attractive displays of their work around the school it is clear that the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching literacy, numeracy and other subjects is another major reason why pupils reach the standards that they do. They use computers to word process their prose and poetry. They write reports and compile lists of instructions, for example, for making a perfect sandwich in science. In Year 3, pupils design "wanted" and "missing" posters, and in Year 4 they use the "Junior Pinpoint" program to develop pie charts and bar graphs from data that they gather on the characteristics of the class. Pupils generate 3D graphs to show shadows in their scientific study on light.
15. As in the Foundation Stage, pupils' learning benefits well from the school's practice of linking learning in several subjects, whenever possible. The contribution to pupils' overall levels of attainment made by the way that they are taught the skills of literacy and numeracy is good.

**The development of skills in information and communication technology and the way these are used in other subjects are very good.**

16. At the time of the last inspection in 1997, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were judged to be in line with national expectations by the time that pupils left the school. However, it was judged that staff confidence in teaching ICT was in need of further development. Since then, all teaching and support staff have undertaken training financed by the New Opportunities Fund.
17. Inspection evidence shows that the standards achieved by pupils in ICT at the end of Year 2 are well above those expected nationally, and all pupils make very good progress. This is also true of pupils in Year 4 as they leave the school. Expectations in the subject have increased sharply since the time of the last inspection, and the standards now achieved represent a very good level of improvement.
18. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in the school's work in ICT. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported and make the same progress as their classmates. Pupils of all ages and abilities regularly use computers in other subjects such as English, mathematics, science, history, geography, music, religious education, and art and design. For example, in a good religious education lesson in Year 1, the very good ICT suite was used by the class to "click and drag" pictures from the Easter story to put them in the correct sequence. Pupils' cultural development was promoted well as they compared this Christian story to those of Islam and Judaism. The teacher promoted pupils' literacy and ICT skills by consolidating their knowledge and understanding through good questioning.
19. The youngest children are introduced to computers in the nursery. This not only develops their personal and social development but also their knowledge and understanding of the world. In their mathematical development they follow on-screen instructions to position objects on the screen. The school thus combines ICT with mathematical development and the use of certain literacy skills. This is one of many very good examples of the approach to learning in several subjects at once. It is seen in many areas of pupils' work and contributes strongly to the good and very good standards that they reach.
20. While there are planned lessons which are entitled 'ICT', this does give a false impression. ICT is not usually taught as a stand-alone subject but is very well integrated into the curriculum as a means of teaching other subjects. For example, in one such lesson in an infant class, pupils combined very good learning in ICT, literacy, and art and design. They designed a "Get well" card for Granny from "Little Red Riding Hood". They each combined text and graphics in their cards and printed them after manipulating the images on screen so that the printed outcome was easily folded to make the finished card. The teachers' planning showed links with the National Curriculum programmes of study in English, information and communication technology, and art and design. During the lesson the learning objective was well developed and all pupils succeeded in creating their own card. The teacher also took the opportunity to review pupils' knowledge and understanding of the use of the mouse to navigate through icon-driven menus and reminded pupils, where necessary, of the sequence of operations for saving their work. The classroom teacher and learning support assistant also focused very effectively on developing pupils' vocabulary in ICT. Vocabulary connected with their literacy topic was also developed very successfully, as they were encouraged to develop caring words and phrases for inclusion in their card.
21. This combined learning in literacy, because the teacher and support staff insisted on pupils' use of appropriate vocabulary, with reinforcement of some ICT skills and the learning of new ones. Skills in art and design were well developed as pupils worked thoughtfully to produce appropriate images for their cards. Because it avoids breaking pupils' learning into falsely-compartmentalised sections, this approach has a significantly positive effect and, wherever possible, is used throughout the school. This holistic approach, from the youngest age, has a very positive impact on pupils' learning throughout the school and the standards that they reach in ICT by the end of Year 2 and Year 4.

22. Many other examples of this approach to learning were seen in pupils' past work and the very attractive displays of their work around the school; for example, in food technology when they word process a recipe for banana ice cream, and in art and design, and in literacy, when they study art from the Tate Modern gallery and write explanations of the exhibits in the role of tour guides. Pupils have produced three-dimensional graphs in support of their scientific learning about shadows, thus combining ICT, numeracy and science.
23. In an excellent lesson in a junior class, pupils worked in the ICT suite. They combined learning in ICT with music, and art and design. Through very good explanation the teacher enabled pupils to add another layer of sound to the saved compositions which they had previously developed on computers. While most of the class rehearsed in the computer room, the very good learning support assistant took pupils in pairs to record their added sounds within the saved computer tune. In the very good review at the end of the lesson, the class teacher promoted good literacy learning. Pairs of pupils played their additional layer live while the computer played what they had previously composed. Then their recorded music was played back and the class discussed which they felt was better and why. Art and design skills were extended by the use of an on-screen graphical score to promote pupils' understanding of the written recording of their music.
24. These studies, and the many other examples available, combine the use of computers to promote high-level learning in a number of subjects at once, whenever these are naturally linked by the topic matter. Thus ICT is very well integrated into holistic studies involving many subjects. This approach to learning in ICT has a very positive impact on the standards that pupils reach, not only in ICT but also in other subjects.
25. Pupils have very well-developed ICT skills by the time that they leave the school. They switch computers on and off, if necessary, and load programs, using the mouse to navigate through icon-led procedures. They give instructions to a programmable robot, use computer programs to design environments, and can talk about the different applications in a painting programme, for example, the spray-can or the large brush. They combine text and graphics in their writing, and use computers for other uses such as composing and recording their own music.
26. Pupils regularly work extremely well together when required. The computers in each classroom have the same operating systems as those in the ICT suite. This means that, during lessons in their rooms, pupils can continue the work that they undertake in the suite. These facilities are used very well by teachers to promote high levels of learning.
27. The school has made very good progress with its improvement plan for ICT and there is now one computer for every seven pupils in the school. Teachers' planning is usually of a very high level and includes the use of computers in lessons wherever possible. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning and the high standards that they reach in ICT.
28. All classes are timetabled to use the ICT suite regularly and several were seen doing so during the inspection. The overall quality of teaching is very good and it is sometimes excellent. All teachers are fully committed to using ICT to further pupils' learning. Other resources for teaching and learning in ICT include a scanner, printers and a dedicated monitor which is used for whole-class demonstrations. The school is awaiting delivery of interactive whiteboards, which will further improve resources for whole-class teaching and learning. There is a CD/tape/radio available for each class and there are headphones which pupils use well when computer programs have a soundtrack or when they are listening to music or instructional material. The provision of these resources and their regular use have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.
29. Pupils thoroughly enjoy working with computers and all show excellent relationships in the way that they work collaboratively when appropriate. Their behaviour is always very good in these situations and they are very well managed by their teachers and learning support assistants.
30. The co-ordination of ICT has many strengths, which are evident in the standards that pupils reach. Overall the leaders give very good guidance and support to all staff, are continuing to develop the

subject provision very well from an already high level and have a very good action plan for improvement in the future. There is very good monitoring of the quality of teachers' planning and of the coverage of the curriculum and this also has a very positive effect on pupils' learning.

**The provision in the nursery is very good and provides a very good base for pupils' future learning.**

31. The very good teacher in charge of the nursery leads a highly effective group of staff who together provide a very good start for all the children who pass through it. The tests and assessments which the nursery staff undertake with children shortly after they arrive in the school show that their attainment is below what is normally expected for their age.
32. The results of these assessments show that children have various difficulties when they join the school. Some have had very limited opportunities to develop their personal and social skills before joining the school. The nursery staff focus on this area of learning very well and inspection evidence shows that all children make very good progress in socialising and working with each other and with the adults who teach them. For example, in a lively lesson in the stimulating outdoor area adjoining the nursery classroom, children undertook a wide range of activities which promoted their personal and social skills very well. They took turns to "drive" two- or three-seater large wheeled bikes, carrying other children as passengers. Another group of children worked in the "House", re-enacting the story of the Three Bears. Yet another group of children carried clipboards and collected signatures, including those of the nursery staff and an inspector. They intended to invite those who signed to their party. These are some examples of the many very good learning activities undertaken by children in the high quality, very well-equipped outdoor area adjoining their classroom.
33. Inspection evidence gained from this type of observation shows that, by the time that they enter Year 1, all these children are in line to reach the targets set in the Early Learning Goals for children of this age in their personal, social, emotional and physical development. A significant number of children are on target to exceed this level of attainment.
34. The provision in the nursery for the development of children's skills in communication, language and literacy is very good. In almost all activities, all staff focus on the way that pupils speak and they always work very hard to extend children's vocabulary and teach them to use proper sentences. From early mark-making, children learn to form letters and simple words. There are very good strategies for the promotion of pupils' reading skills and all staff use every opportunity to encourage children to read labels or signs as well as using text. By the time that they enter Year 1 almost all children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of their development.
35. Children learn songs and the actions that go with them. In a very good lesson in the school's main hall, they were seen singing favourite songs from memory. The very good teaching supported their undertaking activities linked to the songs, which promoted their creative and social development very well. Other inspection evidence, particularly from displays of children's art work, supports the judgement that in their creative development children will meet the targets in the Early Learning Goals by the time that they leave the Foundation Stage.
36. Children learn the basics of mathematics and numeracy very well in the nursery. From below average standards when they join, they learn to recognise numerals and to count on and back, leading to simple addition and subtraction. In a very good numeracy lesson, children learned to correctly identify "longer" and "shorter". The very well-organised activities promoted very good learning and by the end of the lesson almost all could, for example, "find an object which is shorter than the ship". In the same lesson another group of children worked with various mathematical shapes and a magnetic board. They used their imaginations very well and at the end of the lesson demonstrated the game that they had devised, which involved counting and sequencing of shapes. By the time they enter Year 1, almost all these children will reach the targets in mathematical development and a significant number will exceed them.

37. The visits that they undertake, the visitors who come to the school, and the regular use of computers in their classroom all contribute to children's development of a clear knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Again, they are in line to reach the expected levels by the time that they enter Year 1.
38. Children with special educational needs are identified early and appropriate programs for learning are developed for them. They make very good progress. There are a very small number of children for whom English is an additional language. The nursery staff employ very good strategies to ensure that they have complete access to the curriculum. They make very good progress and are reassured by the very close communication with their parents, who have free access to the nursery classroom at the beginning and end of each session.
39. As children move into reception classes, further care is shown for those children who continue to require, in some areas of their learning, the specialist provision that is offered in the nursery. One of the reception classes is situated beside the nursery, so that these children can readily access the sessions deemed appropriate for their continued development.
40. The teaching and support in the nursery are both very good. The very good nursery provision is the base on which the standards which pupils achieve later are founded. It provides children with a very good start to their education.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The standards that pupils reach at the end of Year 4 have been affected by staffing difficulties.**

41. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 4 reach standards in English, mathematics and science which are in line with national expectations for their age. This is not the high level of attainment that the school should provide, based on pupils' earlier achievement. Indeed, pupils in this year group attained above average standards in reading, well above average standards in writing and average standards in mathematics when they were in Year 2 and took the national tests. During the past two years there have been some considerable changes in the teaching staff in the juniors. New, relatively inexperienced teachers have not been fully supported by the school's mentoring system. Some experienced teachers who were appointed as mentors have not been able to fully provide the level of support required, as they undertook courses and interviews in preparation for promotion. Some teachers have not developed high enough expectations of pupils' performance because of these factors. The school is fully aware of why this has happened. It is working very hard to rectify the situation and is determined that the standards of pupils who leave the school will be raised rapidly as a result of the action that has been taken.

### **Systems for checking how pupils are progressing are not yet fully developed.**

42. All teachers and learning support assistants are involved in checking how well pupils make progress. Targets are set for each pupil and their progress toward their targets is monitored. At the end of each year, summary information is passed to the next teacher as the pupils move through the school. The system for combining this information to show how well any pupil progresses as he or she passes through the school is not yet fully developed. This has been another factor in the low expectations of some teachers in the juniors. However, it also affects pupils in other classes because teachers do not have easy access to information showing how pupils have progressed since they joined the school. This is less than satisfactory.

### **The school does not have high enough expectations of pupils' standards of presentation, including handwriting.**

43. The school has been advised that it concentrated too much on presentation and not enough on creativity. Also, it has identified the finding in the last inspection report, that creativity in writing



was insufficiently developed, as an area to concentrate on, and has done so. However, the last report also judged that the presentation of pupils' work, including handwriting, was a strength of the school. Although handwriting is taught, skills are not transferred into the regular work of enough pupils. Teachers concentrate on what the pupils are writing about but do not pay enough attention to or have high enough expectations of the way that pupils write or present their work. Thus a strength which was identified in the last inspection has deteriorated. Pupils are capable of presenting work well, as is evident in displays around the school. However, this is not expected in their day-to-day work, which does little to promote pupils' self-esteem or self-confidence. While the quality of some teachers' marking is very good, it is not consistently so throughout the school, and opportunities to explain how individual pupils can improve are missed.

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

44. In order to raise standards even further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (i) raise the standards that pupils reach in English, mathematics and science as they leave the school by:
- ensuring that teachers throughout the school are provided with clear information about the progress that pupils have made since they joined the school;
  - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement to successfully build on what they achieve in the infants;
  - ensuring that the quality of all teachers' marking of pupils' work matches the highest standards seen in the school;

*(paragraph 41)*

- (ii) develop and implement a system which uses the present information gathered about pupils' progress to clearly and simply show how well they progress from the time that they join the school until they leave;

*(paragraph 42)*

- (iii) raise expectations, throughout the school, for the presentation of pupils' work and handwriting in their day-to-day work, not just in work for display purposes.

*(paragraph 43)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	12
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	6	4	1	0	0	0
Percentage	8	50	33	8	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	28	281
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	60

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	70

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	24	22	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	23
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	43	43	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (92)	93 (92)	98 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	23	23
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	43	45	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	98 (97)	98 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
Parent/pupil preferred not to say

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
227	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
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 – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	24

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	209

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	33
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45
Number of pupils per FTE adult	19

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	585703
Total expenditure	536130
Expenditure per pupil	1702
Balance brought forward from previous year	27307
Balance carried forward to next year	26470

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
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	344
Number of questionnaires returned	102

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	31	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	40	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	56	4	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	48	5	3	5
The teaching is good.	61	36	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	43	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	25	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	43	44	9	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	43	49	1	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	47	3	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	39	9	1	8

Please note that not all columns total 100 due to rounding, the fact that not all parents or carers respond to every question or do not feel that all questions are relevant to the age of their child.