

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GLASTONBURY THORN FIRST SCHOOL**

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110400

Headteacher: Mr Philip Scull

Reporting inspector: Elisabeth de Lancey  
22272

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 246996

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 category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4-8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pigott Drive Shenley Church End Milton Keynes
Postcode:	MK5 6AB
Telephone number:	01908 504648
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Hilary Harman
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Glastonbury Thorn First School is a popular school for pupils between the ages of four and eight. It is situated in Shenley Church End, about two miles east of the centre of Milton Keynes. Parents are employed in a variety of manual, clerical and professional occupations, and there is a wide range of housing types in the locality. Most of the pupils live in the surrounding area with a small but significant number coming from further afield, largely because of the school's good reputation. The school is oversubscribed and there is a waiting list. Movement of pupils between schools is much higher than usual: this is partly accounted for by the high mobility of parents in and out of Milton Keynes. The original school buildings have been improved recently and extended to include a library, a computer suite and an enclosed outside area for children in the Foundation Stage. The school is larger than other primary schools. There are currently 337 pupils on roll, which is larger than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are organised into twelve single-age classes, five of which are taught in temporary classrooms. The school moved to a single point of entry in September 2001 and children now enter the Foundation Stage classes at the beginning of the year in which they become five. Whilst the whole range of abilities is represented in the school's intake, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average. Almost all of the children have had pre-school experience. Approximately one tenth of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average, although many choose not to take up their entitlement. There are 29 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs which is well below the national average. They have a variety of specific and moderate learning difficulties, and speech and communication needs. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is small; the percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is believed not to be English is high (7.1%). None of these pupils is at an early stage of language acquisition. After extensive consultations with parents, local schools and the local community, the school became a foundation school in September 2002. Due to current teacher shortages, the school has experienced difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers. A high proportion has been appointed since September 2001. There are, however, strong procedures for their induction and appropriate training opportunities have been identified to address any areas for development. The school is involved in Initial Teacher Training through the programme for School-Centred Initial Teacher Training.

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

This is a very good school with many significant strengths and outstanding features. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is largely the result of the high quality teaching which they receive. The school offers a rich curriculum and gives a strong emphasis to art and design, and music. The staff's strong commitment to continuous improvement and self-critical review has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher and the very good support from key staff, governors and parents ensure that the school gives very good value for money.

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

- The school attains high standards in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and in some lessons it is excellent.
- Assessment procedures are very thorough and the school uses the information very well to ensure that pupils make very good progress.
- Relationships with parents are outstanding and have a strong impact on pupils' learning.
- The school offers a rich and varied curriculum, and the pupils respond very well to the exciting learning experiences they are offered.
- The headteacher's excellent leadership and management is very well supported by the senior management team, subject managers and governors.

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

- There is no aspect of the school which requires significant improvement.

The inspection team endorses the priorities outlined in the school improvement plan which include raising attainment for the more able pupils.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998 and a few weaknesses were identified at that time. These have been addressed very well and all are now strengths of the school. The quality of teaching and learning has improved vastly as a result of thorough monitoring by the headteacher and key staff and high quality training. There are more opportunities for pupils to take individual responsibility, particularly in Year 3; for example, as librarians, as members of the school council, or helping with routine tasks around the school. The new central library, which allows pupils easy access to a very good range of books, has encouraged pupils to use their research skills and these are developing well. Pupils' handwriting has greatly improved and there are excellent examples of pupils writing with a joined, fluent style. Presentation is now very good. Teachers successfully plan practical opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding, in particular in mathematics and science. Standards in information and communication technology have improved and pupils use a good range of programs to support their work in many subjects. Standards of attainment have improved at the end of Year 2 especially in writing, and a higher proportion of pupils now reach the higher than expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has responded promptly to recent initiatives. The literacy and numeracy strategies and the curriculum guidance for children in the Foundation Stage have been implemented effectively and the policy for pupils with special educational needs has been revised to reflect the new code of practice. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in spite of a significant number of staff changes. The capacity for further improvement is very good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	B	B	B	B
writing	B	A	A	A
mathematics	B	B	B	B

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

Results in the 2002 National Curriculum Tests for seven year-olds were well above average in writing and above average in reading and mathematics compared to all schools and schools who take pupils from similar backgrounds. These very good test results have been maintained over the past three years. Standards in writing are a particular strength. They are continuing to rise year by year. In reading and mathematics pupils' overall performance over the past three years has been one of improvement and the school has received an achievement award as a result. The school has met the targets it set for pupils' performance in Year 2002. Very good quality assessment data indicates that pupils in Year 2 are making very good progress. Many are already achieving the levels expected of pupils of their age at the end of Year 2. They are set to meet the school's challenging targets for 2003. Inspection findings support these assessments. Although girls perform slightly better than boys in the national tests, in line with the national picture, both boys and girls do better than boys and girls nationally.

Children in the Foundation Stage make a very good start to school. They make very good progress in all six areas of learning and are likely to reach the national goals by the time they enter Year 1, some will exceed them.

The school is meeting the needs of different groups of pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs are progressing extremely well. There are particular strengths in pupils' achievements in art and design and music.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are happy to come to school and respond enthusiastically to the rich range of learning opportunities they are offered. They take great pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are friendly, polite and considerate. They behave very well in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are confident and self-reliant. They thrive in the school's positive and supportive ethos. They show respect for different viewpoints and are sensitive to the feelings of others.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Foundation Stage	Years 1 – 2	Years 3
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching is very good and there are some examples of excellent teaching. This high quality teaching makes a significant contribution to the high standards the pupils attain. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good, there is high quality teaching in English and mathematics and some teaching in a range of subjects is outstanding. Teachers have a very good understanding of literacy and numeracy. Basic skills are taught well, and imaginatively reinforced through other subjects of the curriculum. The school has gained an award for the teaching of basic skills. Staff make effective use of information communication technology across the curriculum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; pupils benefit from sensitive support and, as a result, make rapid progress and achieve very well. Staff manage pupils very well and sustain very good relationships with them. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and staff have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Teachers make lessons interesting and exciting through their enthusiasm and by their use of a variety of methods. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and confident when responding to new challenges. Teachers' planning is very good, they are clear what they want pupils to learn and different activities are planned to ensure that work is matched to pupils' varying needs. In the best lessons teachers offer stimulating and imaginative activities which challenge the pupils to achieve high standards and promote pupils' independent learning. They use questions well to help pupils to recall their previous work and to help them gain good knowledge of their own learning. Skilled learning support assistants work very well in partnership with teachers. Individual target setting based on teachers' marking and assessments helps children to know how well they are doing.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the teaching of basic skills, but this is not at the expense of other subjects. The curriculum offers many interesting and stimulating learning opportunities and there is a very good range of additional activities outside the school day.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Support for these pupils is very well planned by the co-ordinator and this helps these pupils to make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for all aspects of personal development is very good. It is evident in all areas of the school's work. The school is very successful in promoting pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and personal development are exemplary and help staff to provide very good support for pupils. Pupils' health, safety and welfare are given high priority.

The school's links with parents are very effective and an outstanding strength of the school. They are involved in many aspects of school life, and are widely consulted. They are kept very well informed about new developments and their children's progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. All members of staff are given a clear lead by his personal example and vision for the future. The deputy headteacher and key staff work very well together. They are a committed team who make a strong contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a deep commitment to the school. They are very well-organised and well-informed. They provide the school with very effective support, guidance and critical evaluation.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school has a very wide range of arrangements for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of its provision.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The resources available to the school are very carefully deployed and educational priorities are appropriately funded. Spending decisions are made according to the principles of best value.

## 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>• Their children enjoy coming to school.</li><li>• The school expects their children to work hard and they make good progress and attain high standards.</li><li>• Their children are helped to become mature and responsible and their behaviour is good.</li><li>• The school works closely with them, keeps them well informed and responds well to their suggestions and concerns.</li><li>• The school is very well led and managed.</li><li>• Teaching and homework arrangements are very good and contribute well to pupils' learning.</li><li>• They like the ready access to the teachers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are no significant areas where parents felt that improvements were required.</li></ul>

The very positive comments made by parents are strongly supported by the inspection evidence.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The school attains high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.**

1. The school's assessments of pupils entering the school in the Foundation Stage show that children enter the school with a wide variety of skills but overall their attainment is below average. They make a very good start to school and make very good progress. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage the majority of children are on course to achieve standards that are at least in line with those expected of children nationally in all areas of learning. They show high levels of confidence and motivation, rapidly absorb new knowledge and extend their understanding as a result of the high quality teaching they receive.
2. Results in the 2002 National Curriculum Tests for seven year-olds were well above average in writing and above average in reading and mathematics compared to all schools nationally and schools who take pupils from similar backgrounds. These very good test results have been maintained over the past three years.
3. Pupils attain well at the higher level (Level 3). About one-third of all pupils attain the higher levels in reading and mathematics and one-quarter attain the higher level in writing. In comparison with all schools nationally and schools who take pupils from similar backgrounds, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 is well above average in writing, above average in mathematics and average in reading.
4. Standards in writing are continuing to rise year by year. In reading and mathematics pupils' overall performance over the past four years has been one of improvement. Although girls perform slightly better than boys in the national tests, both boys and girls do better than boys and girls nationally.
5. Inspection evidence reflects this picture. Opportunities for pupils speaking and listening, reading and writing are included in all lessons. In English, current standards for seven year-olds are above average overall, though they are better in writing than in speaking and listening and reading. Pupils write well, for a range of purposes and a variety of audiences and there are very good opportunities for pupils to use and improve their writing skills in other subjects. For example, in history, pupils imagine being Florence Nightingale and write detailed reports of her journey to the Crimea, sequencing events correctly, paying very good attention to the 'setting' and making good use of relevant vocabulary in their work. In science, they describe the similarities and differences between plants and animals and in design and technology they present very good evaluations of their work.
6. In Year 3, pupils develop their knowledge of punctuation, use speech marks accurately and the most able are beginning to use more complex structures such as subordinate clauses and paragraphs. Their spelling is good and their handwriting is well formed.
7. Their writing is often imaginative and pupils make effective use of figurative language. For example one pupil wrote:

*It sounded like the air was whispering, "Open the door....open the door..."*

8. Pupils enjoy reading a good variety of books including stories, poetry and plays. When reading in a literacy lesson, pupils follow the text and have a good understanding of what they read. They often use the books they read to give them ideas for their writing. For example, after reading *The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark* by Jill Murphy pupils in Year 2 were asked to think how the baby owl felt on his first flight. One pupil wrote,

*My heart beat fast as my wings spread out wide...I saw the fish glimmering in the winding river and the lights of the city sparkling bright.*

9. Pupils read enthusiastically and accurately. This is because teachers demonstrate how to read expressively and present reading as a worthwhile and enjoyable activity. They read a good range of fiction and non-fiction books and pupils in Year 3 read with fluency and understanding. The most able are avid readers and enjoy reading the Harry Potter stories by J K Rowling, animal tales by Dick King Smith and books by Jacqueline Smith and Roald Dahl. Most pupils are well supported at home and reading diaries are used well to record pupils' progress.
10. By the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics are above average. Pupils are developing good mental strategies and are working confidently with number bonds to 20 and beyond. Their knowledge of place value is good. Pupils show a very good understanding of number patterns. They double numbers to 20 and beyond accurately and the most able are good at identifying patterns and using them effectively to help them double larger numbers. When asked to partition numbers pupils do so accurately, eager to explain their methods of calculation and contribute their answers. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the properties of simple shapes and use standard and non-standard units to measure length and mass.
11. By the time they reach Year 3 pupils confidently work with three and four digit numbers. They understand the importance of explaining their strategies clearly and appreciate how others can contribute ideas which will extend their learning. Pupils recognise the importance of zero and use it appropriately. They have a sound understanding of the equivalence of simple fractions and read time in different notations. Good use is made of computer programs which allow pupils to sort and gather multiples of ten and to draw and derive information from block graphs. In all year groups pupils use simple mathematical investigations to solve problems relating to the current class theme. The skills learned in mathematics are applied well in other subjects, such as science, history, information and communication technology and music. In these lessons, pupils use data handling skills to present information, or to calculate time values in a musical score.
12. In science, standards are better than those found nationally and the pupils make good progress in developing their scientific skills. Pupils learn to investigate, deduce and test answers and record in a scientific manner. They investigate their own predictions when analysing materials and tabulate their findings carefully. They have a good understanding of a fair test and the conditions necessary for this; for example, when they test waterproof materials. Pupils set up simple experiments; for example, to find out whether plants need light and water and record their observations appropriately in text, diagrams and tables. They construct simple closed circuits and identify simple faults. In discussions, experiments and review, pupils help each other to clarify their scientific understanding.

**The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and in some lessons it is excellent.**

13. The staff's enthusiasm for education and their determination to make learning fun inform their practice. This has been recognised by parents and is confirmed by this inspection. During the inspection, teaching was judged to be excellent in five lessons, very good in nine lessons, and good in the remaining lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. High quality teaching was observed in English and mathematics, and there was some outstanding teaching in all year groups, and in a range of subjects across the curriculum. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The high quality of the teaching makes a significant contribution to the very good progress pupils achieve, and to the eagerness and excitement they have for their lessons.
14. Teachers and learning support assistants have excellent relationships with their pupils that underpin the effectiveness of the teaching. The caring manner with which they manage pupils helps each of them to recognise how much they are valued. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated, eager to do their best and confident tackling new tasks. Staff encourage pupils to play an active part in lessons. They invite them to answer questions or explain how they have arrived at their answer, and then praise them for the efforts they have made. This engenders pupils' confidence and helps them sustain their concentration. For example, in a Year 2 numeracy lesson, a pupil explained his addition by stating, 'Double ten add six add four is 30. You see, six and four is ten and double ten is 20. So ten and 20 make 30.'
15. Teachers plan their work very carefully in their year groups, and draw up very well constructed lessons. They identify what they want pupils to learn and share this with them at the beginning of the session. For example, teachers use 'WALT', a cartoon character, to indicate 'We Are Learning To ...' Teachers display this objective throughout the lesson and return to it at the end to reinforce and assess pupils' learning, and to encourage them to evaluate their own work. This promotion of pupils' understanding of their own learning is further reinforced by the teachers' insistence that pupils use their individual literacy targets to assess their written work.
16. Teachers open their lessons by making very effective use of their excellent questioning techniques to help pupils recall previous work and build links into the lesson. This ensures all pupils are engaged, as questions are phrased appropriately to reflect the full ability range of the classes, and to help pupils consolidate their knowledge and refine their understanding. A teacher in the Foundation Stage, for example, invited the young children to help her correct her 'mistakes' in matching the names of the days of the week. The brisk pace of lessons is a measure of the very high expectations staff have of their pupils. This includes the quality of work, behaviour and precision of their explanations. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils asked to identify suitable materials for clothing were required to justify their choices and explain their discarding of the remainder.
17. These high expectations extend to the promotion of pupils' independence and their acquisition of independent learning skills. This ranges from the youngest children following classroom routines without supervision, through pupils using a dictionary or thesaurus and being able to distinguish between them, to pupils reaching an appropriate conclusion from their findings when undertaking an investigation. In a Year 2 English lesson, for example, a pupil pointed out that 'assemble' could be used instead of 'make' by commenting, 'I know because I found it when we used the thesaurus.' Teachers work hard at consolidating pupils' basic skills. At every opportunity, teachers ask pupils to read, calculate, spell, self-correct, or reflect on what they have suggested.

They reinforce the importance of basic skills through their own example, whether demonstrated through their own very good subject knowledge or written work. The high quality provision for information and communication technology is used effectively to support pupils' learning.

18. Learning support assistants are very well supported by teachers. Detailed guidance to help them during lessons, informs them about the lesson's purpose and advises them on the learning opportunities to be developed. During the lesson and at its end, assistants record their observations and the pupils' performance, so that their progress can be tracked and individual support identified. This thoroughness and commitment are measures of the excellent partnerships which exist throughout the school, and consequently, the pupils with whom the learning support assistants work make very good progress in their set tasks and are offered very good guidance.
19. The school is successful in raising the achievement of all its pupils and learning support assistants have specialist roles to play in this. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and fully included in all aspects of the school's rich curriculum. They achieve very well and work very positively towards the appropriate targets set for them in their well-constructed individual education plans. Staff make effective use of information and communication technology, carefully selecting programs to motivate pupils, offer them structured practice and reinforce their learning. As part of the school's continuing drive to raise standards, this year assistants are working with Year 2 and Year 3 higher attaining pupils to offer them further challenge and to deepen their understanding.
20. Good examples of effective marking were seen throughout the school. Pupils are given useful guidance to help them improve their work and set targets for future learning. This extends to written assessments of their work which explicitly state what they have attained. These practices complement the school's effective use of homework to help consolidate pupils' learning and reinforce their understanding.

**Assessment procedures are very thorough and the school uses the information very effectively to ensure that pupils make very good progress.**

21. Throughout the school there are comprehensive systems in place to keep a check on pupils' progress, including those with special educational needs. Detailed records are kept and used to chart academic progress, personal development, behaviour and attendance.
22. The very able deputy headteacher provides very clear direction for this aspect of the school's work. Through her leadership and management she has ensured that assessment procedures are rigorous. Teachers assess how well pupils have achieved in lessons. Pupils have individual target books which are used to discuss progress with them, and they are set challenges in discussion with their teachers and parents. This helps parents and pupils to know what they need to do to improve; raises pupils' expectations of what they can achieve; and enables teachers to measure pupils' progress over short periods of time.
23. Soon after children start school in the year following their fourth birthday assessments of children are undertaken and these are used effectively to identify and to meet the children's individual needs. This information is used well by staff to plan activities that help children develop across all areas of learning.

24. Teachers use various assessment tests, which include the national statutory tests at the end of Year 2 and the national non-statutory tests at the end of Year 3. Very effective use is made of information from tests and assessments of pupils' work to inform teachers how well their pupils are achieving, to guide their planning and help them evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. The analysis of tests is thorough. Comparisons are made with the attainment and progress of similarly aged pupils in other classes and, where appropriate, with the attainment of pupils nationally and pupils who attend similar schools.
25. The school makes very effective use of its system of progress books to provide a record of pupils' achievements at regular intervals during their time in school. Pupils are very proud of these books which are beautifully presented and illustrate their very good progress across a range of subjects.
26. Good procedures are in place for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs and fully comply with the revised code of practice. Pupils' individual education plans closely reflect the provision identified in their statements; these clearly outline the action the school should take and where appropriate the support other agencies should provide. Teachers, learning assistants and parents regularly meet with the special educational needs co-ordinator to review the progress pupils are making towards meeting their targets. This enables all pupils to participate fully in the life of the school.

**Relationships with parents are outstanding and have a strong impact on pupils' learning.**

27. The very good links with parents reported in the previous inspection have been further strengthened. For example, in addition to opportunities for children and their parents to make a series of introductory visits to the school, the school has recently introduced home visits before children are admitted to the Reception Classes. As a result children settle into school quickly and the partnership between home and school is well-established.
28. Parents' views in the pre-inspection meeting, the results of the parents' questionnaire, and discussions during the inspection, indicate that they are highly satisfied with all aspects of the school's work. They are particularly appreciative of its openness and warmth. They feel the school is a welcoming place where they are encouraged to be fully involved in all aspects of their children's education. They experience it as a friendly, caring community where their children are encouraged to work hard and behave well and where they are helped to grow in responsibility. Parents appreciate the good quality of the teaching and the high standard of leadership provided by the headteacher. They feel that the school works closely with them. They like the ready access to the school and praise the way that the staff make themselves available to parents, so that any issues are dealt with immediately. They applaud the rich range of activities in which their children are involved. Parents report that they are well informed about the school's arrangements for homework. They like the home-school book which provides a two-way communication between home and school.
29. Parents are very satisfied with the information they receive about their children's progress, in particular the targets which identify the next steps in their children's learning. Opportunities to discuss these targets during parents' evenings are highly appreciated. The annual reports give parents a clear indication of what their children can and can not do and include pupils' own evaluations of their achievements.

30. The wide range of information they receive from the school is highly valued by parents. The school prospectus is well presented and explained to parents at familiarisation sessions before their children enter the school. Newsletters are regular and informative and keep parents in touch with the day-to-day life of the school. The governors' annual report to parents fulfils statutory requirements and details the school's development during the year.
31. The school places a high priority on securing the involvement of parents in their children's learning and staff work hard to give them support to achieve this. Parents appreciate the well-presented leaflets giving them information about the topics their children are going to study, and the written guidance on how they can help their children to read and write. Curriculum workshops for parents and other meetings for example, about starting school, are well supported. These, together with very attractive displays and exhibitions of children's work, ensure that parents have a good understanding of the curriculum and how it is taught, and gives them good opportunities to celebrate their children's successes.
32. Parents play an active and valuable part in the life of the school. A considerable number of parents are involved during the school day in a variety of ways. They are happy to help in the classroom, with outdoor activities, visits, fundraising and links with the community. Parents are invited to open assemblies, and these are very well attended. There is an active Friends' Association. Their hard work and dedication are much appreciated by staff and governors. Parents' involvement enriches school life and enhances children's learning.

**The school offers a rich and varied curriculum and the pupils respond very well to the exciting learning experiences they are offered.**

33. The quality of the curriculum offered to pupils is a strength of the school. The school has given careful consideration to planning a broad curriculum that is stimulating and relevant, involves all children and engages their interest. It fully reflects the diverse community from which the pupils come and gives them a valuable insight into the wider world. It provides regular opportunities for pupils to enjoy exciting experiences and to deepen and extend their learning. As a result, the pupils are keen to learn and participate eagerly in all aspects of school life.
34. All of the National Curriculum subjects are taught in a systematic way that builds effectively on pupils' previous learning. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very effectively to promote high standards in English. Teachers are particularly successful at developing pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, and enabling them to use and improve them in other subjects. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established and fully adapted to meet the needs of pupils, many of whom attain standards higher than the national average. In these lessons pupils work well in pairs and in groups sharing resources and supporting one another.
35. The school places a strong emphasis on the development of the performing and visual arts and provides a wealth of high quality experiences in these areas. They are given excellent opportunities to perform in assemblies and in the school's Christmas and end-of-year productions. All the pupils in Year 3 learn to play the recorder. Musically gifted pupils are given the opportunity to learn the violin. Pupils are very keen to join the choir, which at present has around 70 pupils. They sing joyfully in school, perform further afield in public festivals, and are preparing to broadcast on local radio. Last year, the choir raised a substantial sum of money for the local hospital's 'Special Care Baby Unit' by singing Christmas carols at the local shopping centre. These worthwhile

opportunities help foster pupils' confidence and self-esteem and develop a very good sense of audience and occasion.

36. Displays of pupils' art and design are of a very high quality. They reflect art techniques from a range of cultures and demonstrate pupils' skills in using a very good range of media to express their ideas. This includes the use of computers as artistic tools. Pupils' work is highly valued and at least one example of their work is attractively displayed during the term. This reflects the way in which the school celebrates the attainments of each pupil. Pupils respond very well to these opportunities to be creative, they are proud of their achievements and eager to point out and talk about their work.
37. The school welcomes many visitors each year to help enrich and enhance the curriculum. For example, pupils' studies of Ancient Greece were enlivened by an actor who performed a day in the life of a citizen of Ancient Greece. Carefully planned educational visits also make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The school has very good links with the community and enjoys the support of a number of local businesses.
38. The provision for pupils' personal development is much better than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are involved in the routines of the school and love to help. Older pupils talk knowledgeably about their duties as librarians and speak with great enthusiasm about their involvement in the decision making processes of the school through the school council. This provides pupils with good opportunities to use their initiative and contribute to school improvement. Parents and teachers appreciate its value in helping pupils to consider the needs of others and make decisions that benefit the whole school community. Pupils share, for example, their ideas about outdoor play provision and have suggested ball-play areas and playground equipment. They have successfully organised events to fund this additional provision.

**The headteacher's excellent leadership and management is very well supported by the senior management team and governors.**

39. The headteacher's excellent leadership and management, and his infectious enthusiasm for learning have secured the support of staff, governors and parents in creating a school in which respect at all levels is both mutual and involving. In this, the headteacher is ably supported by an innovative deputy, dynamic senior management team and deeply-committed subject leaders. The excellent communications within the school, between staff and governors and with families have brought into being a whole community of people who have full confidence in their own understanding of what the school achieves and who take pride in the part they play in that success. The outstanding teamwork within and between the staff and governors, and their recognition of parents' equivalent expertise in securing pupils' positive development, underpin the school's achievements. It is through these elements that the school has demonstrated its commitment to sustaining high standards and securing very good progress for all its pupils.
40. One of the key factors, in the school's success in raising standards, is its excellent and transparent monitoring system. Procedures are open to everyone and findings are shared to improve practice for the benefit of all of the pupils. Individual confidentiality is respected but, such is the dedication of the teachers and the mutual trust they have in each other, no one is inhibited from sharing concerns or seeking support from colleagues. Within the monitoring system, teachers monitor and are monitored; consequently, they all recognise the different expertise required for each task and have

confidence in the sensitive and professional response of colleagues. Classroom observation, the major component of the school's comprehensive monitoring procedures, is formally structured and includes a clearly focused written report; detailed feedback incorporating strengths and developments of both teaching and learning; and provision for confidential wider dissemination as part of whole-school evaluation. Subject leaders monitor effectively pupils' work and teachers' planning, according to agreed criteria. They undertake annual audits to gauge current practice; track proposed implementations and plan future priorities; and take responsibility for budget management. The special educational needs co-ordinator's high quality management ensures that pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified and effectively supported in their learning. Her time is very well used to assess pupils' progress, guide staff and liaise with outside agencies. These procedures ensure that targets are precisely phrased, individual plans are regularly updated and pupils receive appropriate support.

41. Complementing its monitoring is the high priority the school places on effective professional development for all staff and governors, whose training is linked directly to priorities in the school's highly efficient improvement plan. The teachers' individual professional development is met partly through the school's successful implementation of the national initiative for performance management. However, the staff have decided to continue with their successful, established procedures for annual professional reviews to further inform their own professional development. This is open to all staff and underlines the school's commitment to the valuing of all members of its organisation. This is taken on a pace with the introduction, this year, of performance management procedures for learning support assistants.
42. The well-informed governors have a clear understanding of the school. They work closely with the staff and share training sessions with them. They make good use of the advice and guidance they receive from the headteacher and the subject leaders to develop the work of their committees. New governors are fully supported, too, through the school's commitment to governor induction. Governors are regular participants in the life of the school and use their time there effectively. After designated visits they submit written reports to the governing body to further improve its practices. They bring a breadth of experience and expertise to the school, and the governing body draws effectively on these individual strengths to ensure its legal obligations are fulfilled successfully. Individuals have accepted the role of nominated governor for various aspects of the curriculum; for example, literacy and special educational needs. A further group carries out appropriately their responsibilities for performance management. They successfully fulfil their role of critical friend and that of monitoring standards; as a result they are fully aware of the school's success in meeting the needs of all its pupils and in admitting all pupils eligible to attend. They have a clear vision for the school and agree relevant priorities for improvement while ensuring that strengths are maintained. Their successful practices are underscored by effective financial management and adherence to the principles of best value.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

43. There is no aspect of the school which requires significant improvement.

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

44. No major weaknesses were identified. The inspection team endorses the school's current improvement programme as outlined in the school improvement plan. These include raising attainment for the more able pupil and consolidating the good gains made in information and communication technology.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	9	6	0	0	0	0
Percentage	25	45	30	0	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 five percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	323
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	16

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

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	39	34	73

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	38	38
	Girls	32	32	32
	Total	66	70	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (92)	96 (95)	96 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	36	38	39
	Girls	32	32	33
	Total	68	70	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (92)	96 (94)	99 (92 )
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
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
No ethnic group recorded

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

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
206	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
6	0	0
6	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 – Y3**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y3**

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	252

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2
	£
Total income	566,274
Total expenditure	537,198
Expenditure per pupil	1,669
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,465
Balance carried forward to next year	52,541

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

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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 42.4%**

Number of questionnaires sent out

337

Number of questionnaires returned

143

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	12	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	79	19	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	82	17	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	76	23	1	0	1
The teaching is good.	90	9	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	21	3	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	9	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	81	17	0	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	92	8	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	84	12	1	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	29	11	1	15