

INSPECTION REPORT

ST BEDE'S CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL

Widnes, Cheshire

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111371

Headteacher: Mrs A Paget

Reporting inspector: B Matusiak-Varley
19938

Dates of inspection: 31st March - 1st April 2003

Inspection number: 247111

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Appleton Village Widnes Cheshire
Postcode:	WA8 6EL
Telephone number:	(0151) 424 3386
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Thomas Ellard
Date of previous inspection:	1 st December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Bede's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Junior School is situated in Appleton, near Widnes town centre. It caters for pupils aged seven to 11 years. It is an average sized school with 268 pupils on roll, 128 boys and 140 girls. Fifteen per cent of pupils (average) are entitled to free school meals. Twenty-nine per cent (above average) have special educational needs (SEN), ranging from emotional and behavioural difficulties to learning difficulties and three per cent have statements of SEN; this is above average. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school received its Investors in People status in 1996 and has retained it. It has also attained Activemark (Gold), Healthy Schools Award and has been recommended for the Artsmark Gold award. Socio-economic circumstances of pupils attending the school are average, but attainment on entry is just below average as identified in previous inspection findings.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an excellent school which provides a very good quality of education for its pupils and prepares them very well for their next stage of education. Standards are above average in all other subjects and information and communication technology (ICT) and well above average in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is very good and all groups of pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils are a credit to the school. They are maturing into responsible citizens who care deeply about those less fortunate than themselves and they have a very strong sense of compassion and moral justice. Their attitudes to learning are excellent because teachers ensure that learning is exciting, vibrant and firmly rooted in the context of everyday living. The school has an excellent ethos which is underpinned by true Roman Catholic values of deep respect for one another. The leadership and management of the headteacher, governors and key staff are excellent and the school rightly deserves the excellent support it receives from the community and parents. The school provides very good value for money and is a credit to the parents, governors, community and local education authority.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. In all other subjects, standards are above average.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning because of the very good teaching and very good learning opportunities provided for them.
- All pupils receive excellent care, both pastorally and academically.
- Assessment procedures and their use to inform the next steps of learning are excellent.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and governors are excellent. This results in very good systems for school self-evaluation, establishing a very clear educational direction for the school.
- Partnership with parents is excellent. Parents are seen as true partners in their children's learning.

What could be improved

There are no significant areas for improvement. The school has a comprehensive development plan which it should continue to implement.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1997 and since then it has made very good progress. This is due to the professionalism and dedication of the staff and headteacher, who relentlessly strive to improve on their previous best performance. The school makes excellent use of the expertise of the local education authority's link adviser who has helped the school grow from strength to strength. School self-evaluation is very good and, as a result, appropriate targets have been identified for staff performance management, which is proving to be very effective. All points for improvement identified by the last inspection have been addressed, standards are continuously rising and excellent assessments are now in place. Teaching has improved, there is no unsatisfactory teaching and the curriculum is very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual,

moral, social and cultural development is now excellent. The school has maintained its many strengths, such as partnership with parents previously identified in the last report. It is very well placed to sustain continuing improvement because the constant quest for excellence underpins all of its work.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	B	A	A
mathematics	B	C	B	B
science	A	A	A	A

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

In the Year 6 national tests for 2002, the school achieved very high results. Standards were well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics, both in comparison with all schools and similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels was well above average in English and science and was broadly in line in mathematics. Inspection findings show that standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and above average in ICT and all other subjects. All pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment due to the excellent use of assessment, test analysis and monitoring of standards. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects was broadly in line with the national trend. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. These pupils are hungry to learn. They are naturally curious and the school fosters a climate of <i>"it's cool to be clever"</i> .
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils are very polite, courteous, mature and considerate in their behaviour towards each other and adults.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils organise aspects of their own learning, execute their responsibilities with care and diligence and are very keen to help out in a range of contexts, such as collections for charities. Pupils have very good research skills.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils love coming to school and attendance rates are above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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.

The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school with examples of excellent practice. Teachers are very skilled practitioners who love their craft and have a passion for ensuring that all pupils achieve their very best. The teaching of English, mathematics and ICT is very good; basic skills are taught very well and pupils

are consistently challenged to push themselves in developing new insights and understanding. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils: *“only the best will do”*. Great care and attention is given to choosing resources which engage pupils’ emotions. Pupils hang on their teachers’ every word because they do not want to miss any important explanations. Lessons are fun, interesting and lively. Support staff make a very valuable contribution to pupils’ learning and, as a result, pupils are very well motivated because they feel secure in learning. Pupils learn very well because staff specialisms are used very effectively throughout the school. Team teaching enables staff to learn from one another. The school is a highly effective learning community where teamwork is excellent. Teachers use humour very effectively and pupils want to learn because they see learning as fun. Clear routines and practices are well established and this has a positive effect on pupils’ learning. Teachers promote a love of learning through an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, visits, visitors and residential trips. The teaching of pupils with SEN is very good overall and these pupils quickly overcome their difficulties.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is very well planned with clear identification of subject-specific skills and is broad, balanced, relevant to the needs of the pupils and enriched with interesting visits, visitors and residential trips. This makes learning real for the pupils. Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils are swiftly identified and receive well organised support that helps them to settle to learning and make very good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Excellent. The teachers make very good provision for the pupils’ all-round development. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities for reflection and learning about the multicultural nature of our society. The school very effectively enhances the pupils’ awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues through its very well developed religious education programme, the principles of which underpin all aspects of the school’s work.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. Child protection procedures are excellent and the school ensures that pupils have an excellent level of pastoral, spiritual and academic support.

Partnership with parents is excellent. The school holds regular meetings and consultations with parents and sees them as true partners in their children’s learning. Parental newsletters are a true joy to read.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher is an inspirational and dedicated leader who embodies the school’s mission statement of celebrating life and learning. She ensures that the school’s commitment to valuing each individual’s uniqueness is apparent in all aspects of school life. She establishes a very clear educational direction and is very ably supported by her deputy, assistant headteacher and key staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors are true critical friends of the school who carry out their duties conscientiously. They have a very good oversight of the school and endeavour to keep the parents and wider community fully informed through the excellent newsletters.
The school’s evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school’s analysis of its strengths and areas for improvement is very thorough. Excellent analysis is undertaken of test and assessment data to inform planning for improvement.
The strategic use of	Excellent. The headteacher goes to great lengths to secure funding for her

resources	pupils so that they can have the best start in life. The staff and governors make prudent use of their budget and are successful in ensuring that they get the best possible value from spending and other decisions.
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children attain high academic standards. • Children love coming to school and are very well cared for. • The headteacher and staff are very approachable. • The school makes excellent provision for their children's all-round development. • Behaviour is very good. • Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. • Parents are made to feel welcome, newsletters and reports are very informative. 	

Inspectors whole-heartedly agree with parents' positive views and share the parents' delight with the school. There were no negative comments.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science and their achievements in relation to their prior attainment are very good. In all other subjects, standards are above average.

1. On entry to school, assessment information indicates that pupils achieve above-average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this is not evident in their work in the early part of Year 3 and in the current cohort of pupils well over a quarter have some learning difficulties. Tests administered by the school at the start of Year 3 indicate that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is below average. Due to very good teaching and learning based upon rigorous revisiting of basic skills, all pupils make very good progress and, by the end of Year 4, are achieving standards expected for their age in literacy and numeracy. From Year 4 onwards, pupils' rates of progress increase dramatically because, having mastered basic skills, they are then able to cope with challenging learning opportunities.
2. Since 1999, standards have been improving year upon year in English, mathematics and science. In 2002, in comparison with all schools and similar schools, pupils attained standards which were well above average in English and science and above in mathematics. Taking the three years (2000 to 2002) together, the performance of pupils in all core subjects exceeded the national averages for their age. There was no gender difference in attainment and the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects was broadly in line with the national trend. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels (Level 5) at the end of Year 6 was well above average in English and science and broadly average in mathematics where a minority missed getting the higher levels by one or two marks.
3. Inspection findings show that, by the end of Year 6, standards are well above national averages in English, mathematics and science and are above national averages in ICT and all other subjects. Pupils' achievements, including those who are higher attainers and those with SEN, are very good in relation to prior attainment. This is largely attributable to:
 - the excellent learning opportunities provided by the staff for their pupils, which include a very broad range of visits and visitors and excellent extra-curricular activities;
 - excellent monitoring of teaching and learning with very effective performance management clearly focused at raising standards, resulting in excellent staff development;
 - the implementation of a very comprehensive programme of continuous training for teachers;
 - very good use of specialist support provided by the local education authority's link advisor;
 - excellent opportunities given to staff to team-teach, making good use of their subject specialisms;
 - excellent use of assessment;
 - very comprehensive school self-evaluation;
 - very detailed curriculum planning;
 - very good teaching and putting pupils in ability groups in Years 5 and 6 for the teaching of English and mathematics;
 - very effective use of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum; and
 - very good deployment of staff to help all groups of pupils learn quickly and effectively.
4. By the end of Year 6, all pupils are very well prepared for their next stage of education. They are very confident happy learners who relish challenges and are not afraid to have a go. They take homework very seriously and read widely. They speak knowledgeably about a wide range of authors and are particularly fond of Shakespeare. Pupils read fluently and expressively. They write beautifully, choosing their words with utmost precision, for example, when writing about dream catchers, one pupil in Year 5 wrote "In my dreams I can paint laughter, catch smiles, stroke the stars, catch shadows, walk on water and read snowflakes". A Year 6 pupil, working on characterisation wrote "Margaret Lawley is a lady in waiting to our gracious majesty the queen. Her appearance is past her prime shown by the time marks on her face and hands, yet still she is a gracious woman".

Furthermore, when writing about the Titanic, one child in Year 5 wrote “Dear Diary, I’m on the Carpathia, I cannot describe my feelings. The cries of people surrounding the ship echoed through the night sky. It was so emotional, tears ran down my face”.

5. By the end of Year 6, pupils are very competent mathematicians who calculate fluently using all four number operations. They are encouraged by the very good teaching of this subject to tackle a problem by seeing it in their head, using a wide range of mental strategies as a first resort. Pupils are very good at problem-solving because plenty of opportunities are provided for them to undertake practical examples of this work. They organise their work and record it in a variety of ways and explain and justify their methods and reasoning. For example, three pupils representing their school at the Halton Stadium spoke confidently to adults about their cross-curricular mathematics project called “More than a match”. The stadium manager was so impressed with them that he suggested they should return for a job in his marketing department when they leave school. This type of learning is typical of this school; teachers and pupils are pioneers of life-long learning skills which are used in practical situations.
6. In science, pupils have very good experimental and investigative skills. They can make predictions, test their hypotheses fairly and present their results in a variety of ways, including using ICT. There are strong links with the local science and technology college; expertise is shared and, as a result, pupils are hooked on learning. For example, when learning about microbes, they know what happens to strawberries when they are left for a period of time in different conditions. They know about forces, electricity, magnetism, how sound is made and what winter pansies need to grow. They have produced some excellent bar charts, line graphs and pie-charts to show the components of rocks.
7. In ICT, by the end of Year 6, all pupils can create a multi-media presentation which includes images, sound and text linked to subjects, such as geography, history and science. Year 6 present a diary account of their European experiences (visit to Paris) using Microsoft Powerpoint. Pupils can use spreadsheet modelling in order to produce their own worksheets with formulae set up to calculate the area and perimeter of rectangles. They can effectively and extensively use the Internet, narrowing searches for research and applications across the curriculum. Pupils can copy and paste from the Internet into Microsoft Word and Publisher and can edit their results. Using control programs, they can program a house security system with a floodlight and house-lights that come on after dark and go off in the morning. Pupils can annotate their flow charts and explain the operation of systems in terms of inputs and outputs.
8. In all other subjects, pupils attain above-average standards. They are talented singers, musicians, artists, gymnasts, dancers, historians and geographers, with particular strengths in their awareness of citizenship and global issues. Pupils are given excellent learning opportunities by a very hard-working and dedicated staff. The very high standards that these pupils attain are a clear indication of the successful way in which all groups of pupils, including those with SEN, are prepared for the demands of secondary education.
9. Since the previous inspection standards in all subjects have improved, especially in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT.

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning because of the very good teaching and excellent learning opportunities provided for them.

10. Teachers love their craft and the school is a buzzing learning community where pupils are hungry for knowledge. They cannot wait for lessons to start and, during lunchtimes, many pupils attend the reading club run by one of the Year 6 literacy teachers. Here they read avidly, sharing snippets of excitement relating to amusing passages found in their books. In the youngest classes, pupils are given opportunities to act out stories which they relish. They realistically portray Goldilocks’ feelings about trespassing into the bears’ house. Pupils see learning as great fun because the teachers are true guiding partners in the learning process. For example, in a Year 6 art and design lesson, the two teachers team-teaching joined pupils making clay pots whilst being in role as owners of a garden centre who needed to meet the demands of its clients. Teachers happily joined in discussing the intricacies of patterns and guided pupils to take risks and respond more creatively to their work.

11. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is very good with examples of excellent practice. During the week of inspection 22 lessons were seen, of which seven were excellent, eight were very good and seven were good. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in most year groups, but especially in Years 5 and 6. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and their expertise is shared among all staff. One teacher commented "You can't help but learn because there is always somebody to ask". The teamwork at this school is tremendous. Teachers care for one another; the less experienced have excellent mentors in the more established staff who, in return, gain from aspects of new methodology that the younger teachers have learnt at college. Staff's subject specialisms are used to best advantage, for example, the music and ICT co-ordinators work alongside staff developing their practice. This has a very positive effect on the high standards attained throughout the school.
12. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and ICT is very good, as is the teaching of basic skills. Consequently, pupils see the purpose of learning and are committed to improving on their previous best performance. This is reflected in the excellent standard of presentation of their recorded work. Pupils' exercise books are a delight to look at. They are neat, very well illustrated and demonstrate the great attention that is paid to layout and presentation.
13. Teachers have very good planning skills. They measure the learning needs of all groups of pupils, due to the excellent use of assessment. They make clear links with work that pupils have previously covered in literacy and numeracy, which helps all to feel secure in their learning. For example, by the end of Year 6, pupils have very good knowledge of letter writing, because they have learnt about content, layout and endings in their literacy lessons. This knowledge is then applied to religious education where pupils' books demonstrated that they had put their learning into practice. Whilst studying the life of Alfred Nobel, one pupil ended her letter saying "So, dear people, as I end my letter to you I would like to tell you to look after, love and care for the earth as I did and remember me as the creator of peace".
14. Teachers offer excellent explanations; they take account of pupils' questions and responses. Pupils who have SEN are very well supported by highly dedicated support staff who know their learning needs well. A very good range of methods is used to support their learning, ranging from individual work, group work, learning using their senses and visualisation skills. Pupils use ICT very effectively to find out answers to questions. They are taught basic skills very well and are given very precise instructions as to how they can tackle the learning they are given. This helps them feel secure and contributes to their excellent attitudes. There is "no stress" in learning. The school fully lives the vision of the patron saint of the school, St Bede, who said *"It was always my delight to learn and to teach"*. Staff are joyous; they, themselves, love coming to school and are only too happy to try new methods to develop their practice. They are very good at providing the *"big picture"* for intended learning; they describe the outcomes for their pupils by saying *"When you learn how to do this, you will be able to ..."* or *"You need to learn this because ..."*. So, for example, in a Year 5 geography lesson which contributed very well to pupils' moral development, the class teacher encouraged pupils to think about the difference of wanting something and needing something, to help pupils understand the issue of sustainability in a global economy.
15. Teachers give very good demonstrations and this helps pupils to apply their skills in a context which demonstrates what they have learnt. For example, in a Year 5 art and design lesson, the teacher wanted the pupils to capture the essence of movement. She showed them various pictures by Edgar Degas, Giacometti and Picasso and explained how pupils use their bodies in dance. Only then did she give them appropriate materials to design sculptures to show movement. She mixed humour very effectively by telling them not to plaster one another's arms! The use of humour in lessons is widespread throughout the school. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, the teacher was very keen for pupils to use correct punctuation in their writing; jokingly she said to the pupils "It's no good saving up your capital letters and full stops for your pension!" At this the pupils burst into laughter and dutifully used correct punctuation in their writing.
16. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning because the experiences provided for them are rich and stimulating. For example, in an excellent literacy lesson in Year 5, pupils were learning about characterisation using the stimulus of 'The Highwayman'. The teachers and support staff dressed up in period costumes and, using drama, enabled pupils to develop skills of empathy, characterisation,

questioning and moral decision making. All groups of pupils were transfixed when the Highwayman explained that when he met Bess for the first time, "his heart was a flutter at such a vision of loveliness."

17. Teachers use time, resources and ICT very well. In a particularly effective mathematics lesson in Year 6, the teacher provided very good opportunities for problem solving by using very well prepared resources. All groups of pupils calculated ticket costs, reading data from charts and applying the four rules of number very accurately. They made very good gains in learning because the teacher developed their thinking skills by giving them first-hand experience of reading data accurately and recording calculations. Teachers' marking is very good. It is regular, thorough, provides pointers for improvements and is respectful of pupils' efforts. For example, one teacher wrote "*Thank you for such a lot of thoughts.*" This helps pupils feel valued and contributes very positively to pupils' self-esteem.
18. The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. Learning opportunities provided for pupils are excellent. Pupils in all year groups go on a residential visit and the curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities which contribute very positively to pupils' personal, social and academic performance. Artists, musicians, sculptors, clergy and illustrators, to name but a few, are very frequent visitors. The school rightly prides itself in modelling excellence and this has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Every opportunity is provided for pupils to reflect on the magnificence of God's presence in our lives and to teach them the principles of the Roman Catholic faith. As a result, pupils are leaving the school being very well equipped to cope with the demands of everyday life. For example, when writing about 'Lessons for Life', one Year 6 pupil wrote "that as a parent, it would be very important to teach children about being sensitive to the needs of others regardless of their race or creed, not to be violent as this solves nothing and to respect yourself." Pupils study a range of major faith religions and compare practices, customs and celebrations. A visit from Sister Josephine, selling "snowflakes" representing children, prompted pupils to help underprivileged children from Medjugore in Yugoslavia, by buying the snowflakes. Excellent provision is made for pupils to understand their role as citizens who can contribute to making the world a better place.
19. Overall, the ethos for learning is exceptional. Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection in developing teachers' planning, providing a wide variety of writing opportunities, challenging above average attainers and developing pupils' skills of independent learning.

All groups of pupils receive excellent care, both pastorally and academically. Assessment procedures to inform the next steps of learning are excellent.

20. As well as maintaining its very high levels of effective support and guidance, the school has made very good improvement in developing assessment procedures which are now excellent. Very effective analysis is undertaken of pupils' assessment on entry to the school which provides an accurate baseline for teachers to plan the next steps of pupils' learning. Pupils' achievements in all subjects are very effectively monitored by staff who keep meticulous records of their strengths and weaknesses and deploy support staff very effectively to help pupils overcome their barriers to learning.
21. A particular strength is that staff are very knowledgeable in assessing the progressive development of subject-specific skills and know precisely how these correlate to National Curriculum level descriptors. As a result, teachers' assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do are very accurate. All staff know their pupils very well and have a clear understanding of how they learn best. They ensure that pupils' strengths are built upon and also provide a range of opportunities to develop their weaknesses. This is clearly demonstrated by the very effective marking of pupils' work and meticulous target setting. Pupils are very clear as to what it is that they need to do to improve. Support staff are fully informed of what is required of them to raise pupils' attainment. The excellent relationships that exist among all staff and pupils contribute highly to a climate of trust and respect that permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils feel secure and are not afraid to ask for help, both academically and emotionally. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that all staff are fully aware of any difficulties pupils might face; this is demonstrated by the excellent provision of courses for staff's professional development. Attendance procedures are excellent and attendance is very good, it

is above the national average. The very good attendance rates contribute to the extremely high standards that these pupils attain.

22. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are excellent. All staff are very well informed and the school is ever vigilant of pupils who are a cause for concern. Checks on equipment and accommodation are regularly carried out and several staff are trained first-aiders. There is no bullying or oppressive behaviour of any sort throughout the school and the excellent level of pastoral and academic support these pupils receive contributes to the very high standards that all groups of pupils attain.

The leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and governors are excellent, resulting in very good systems for school self-evaluation, establishing a very clear educational direction for the school.

23. The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent. She is totally devoted to the school community and the pupils in her care and sets very high standards for the school. These are consistently achieved because the programme for staff's continuous professional development is excellent and performance management is very effectively implemented as a result of excellent monitoring of teaching and learning. This is undertaken by the headteacher, local education authority link advisor and several members of key staff (team leaders). The headteacher is an inspirational leader who embodies the school's mission statement of celebrating life and learning. Every individual (staff and pupil) is valued for his/her uniqueness and the contribution he/she can make to the life of the school. The headteacher motivates her staff by ensuring that they work in the best possible conditions with very good quality resources. Staff work alongside other professionals, such as leading drama teachers and subject specialists, enabling them to be creative in their work. The headteacher ensures that staff specialisms are developed and many members of the staff represent the school in local education authority initiatives aimed at sharing best practice, especially in music, mathematics, geography and ICT.
24. The school development plan is an excellent document which is instrumental in moving the school forward. All staff and governors are involved in drawing up the priorities and the headteacher, together with the governing body, closely monitors the action taken for its implementation. The school's systems for self-evaluation are very good and all staff work as a united team in implementing the very detailed action plan. For example, following a slight dip in last year's mathematics results, the school immediately placed more emphasis on improving pupils' problem-solving skills. There was plentiful evidence during the inspection of teachers tackling this effectively in numeracy lessons. The school development plan makes clear what needs to be done, by whom and by when, as well as providing detailed information on associated cost and success criteria. It is regularly reviewed and progress against targets is evaluated. The meticulous evaluation of assessment data by the assessment co-ordinator provides a very valuable source of information for all staff in raising standards even further.
25. A key strength of the leadership is the manner in which the headteacher ensures that teachers' skills are made available to as many pupils as possible. All teachers have a keen appreciation of their roles and responsibilities and the collective enthusiasm of all is reflected in the way that staff execute their duties, always with a smile, dedication and hard work. Key staff fulfil their roles very well; all co-ordinators know the strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects and talk knowledgeably about standards and what they are going to do to raise them even higher.
26. Governors fulfil their statutory duties very well and are excellent at their job of being critical friends of the school. They have produced newsletters for parents which are of an exceptionally high quality. These are regular, informative, colourful and capture the spirit of this excellent school. Due to the excellent leadership and management, the school has been successful in attaining the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark Gold, Investors in People status and is recommended for Artsmark Gold.
27. The headteacher is instrumental in obtaining grants to give pupils the very best learning opportunities. The recent securing of monies to fund the UK On-line Centre has provided an excellent learning resource for pupils, teachers and the local community. Finances are very well managed and governors apply the principles of best value very well. Since the previous inspection, very good improvement has been made in developing governors' knowledge in shaping the direction of the

school and the leadership and management of the headteacher has improved from good to excellent. The school now provides very good value for money.

Partnership with parents is excellent. Parents are seen as true partners in their children's learning.

28. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained its very effective links with parents and the community.
29. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and know that their children are very well looked after. The parental response to the inspection questionnaire was high and overwhelmingly positive. Parents are delighted with the academic standards that their children attain and think that the school plays a vital part in preparing their children to become responsible citizens. A testament to the school's success is that several of the teaching staff's children attend the school and this is viewed very positively by the parents.
30. During the well attended parents' meeting prior to the inspection, parents had only superlatives to say about the school. They were delighted with the quality of information they received, especially the newsletters and annual reports on their children's progress. Several parents commented on the excellent information they receive relating to the provision made for their children when they go on residential trips. Parents are very pleased with the 'open-door' access that they have to school, the provision made for workshops run by teachers informing them of curriculum content and the guidance offered to help parents take an active part in their children's learning. Parents are also extremely happy with the regularity of homework and the excellent provision for extra school activities. They think that their children are very well prepared for secondary school and are delighted with the leadership and management of the headteacher who they rightly feel has made the school such an enjoyable learning environment. One parent commented "If only we had received such excellent learning opportunities when we were at school, life could have been so different".

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There are no significant areas for improvement. The school has a comprehensive development plan which it should continue to implement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should continue to implement its own comprehensive development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

22

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

7

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	7	8	7	0	0	0	0
Percentage	32	36	32	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 four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	268
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	41

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	76

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.16

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.07

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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	48	39	87

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	43	40	48
	Girls	38	37	39
	Total	81	77	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (87)	89 (80)	100 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	40	37	48
	Girls	36	35	39
	Total	76	72	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (80)	83 (87)	100 (94)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	265	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.26
Average class size	33.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	84

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2002
	£
Total income	636,205
Total expenditure	610,503
Expenditure per pupil	2,120
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,702
Balance carried forward to next year	19,624

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	268
Number of questionnaires returned	251

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	27	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	34	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	27	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	59	36	4	1	0
The teaching is good.	80	18	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	37	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	17	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	16	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	67	31	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	83	17	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	23	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	82	16	2	0	0