

INSPECTION REPORT

**WITTON CHURCH WALK CE (A) PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Northwich

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111389

Headteacher: Mrs M Wilkinson

Reporting inspector: P B McAlpine
21552

Dates of inspection: 11-12 November 2002

Inspection number: 247113

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Walk
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Cheshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend P Dawson

Date of previous inspection: 23 February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is of above average size. There are 285 full-time pupils, organised into nine classes, four containing pupils from different year groups. A further 46 part-time pupils attend a nursery class, either morning or afternoon sessions. Year groups vary in size and there are bulges in the Reception year, Year 1, and Year 3. The pupils come mainly from the immediate neighbourhood. National surveys show the locality has pockets of significant deprivation. More than 98 per cent of the pupils are from white United Kingdom families, with the remainder from mixed minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal, 16 per cent, is about average. The proportion has fallen since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils listed with special educational needs, 11 per cent, is below average; most have moderate learning difficulties but there are also pupils with dyslexia, autism, hearing impairment, and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual time of admission or transfer is below average. The proportion of pupils entering the nursery with typical or better attainment for their age is below average in most years, with a sizeable group of pupils with relatively undeveloped language and communication skills. These pupils generally catch up during their time in the nursery and, in the past two years, attainment on entry to the Reception year has been broadly average overall. Previously, school records show that attainment on entry to the Reception year was below average; the trend is one of improvement. There have been significant changes in teachers since the previous inspection. The school has Beacon status.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Pupils are happy, eager to learn, and behave very well. Their academic achievements are generally good compared to attainment on entry. Test results in mathematics are excellent, good in science, and satisfactory in English. More children are attaining the nationally expected level than did so at the time of the previous inspection and the amount of high attainment in mathematics has increased three-fold. The teaching is good. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. The school is united around the headteacher and there is good capacity to improve. The management of the school by all with responsibility is leading to continuous improvement. Taking into account the achievement of the pupils, the standards they attain, and the average cost of educating each pupil, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in Year 6, the oldest age group, have risen significantly over recent years and the latest test results were excellent in mathematics.
- The attitudes of the pupils are well above average; their behaviour is very good.
- The teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are very good.

What could be improved

- The standards and achievement of pupils in writing.
- The provision for outdoor play in the nursery and Reception classes.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in February 1998. Since then, improvement has been good. Test results in Year 6 have improved significantly, although more needs to be done in writing. All of the national initiatives aimed at improving the curriculum and raising standards have been implemented with satisfactory or better effectiveness. Beacons status has been acquired. Response to the key issues raised by the previous inspection was very positive. Standards in design and technology have improved significantly from poor to above average. The large class sizes in Years 2, 3 and 4 have been partly resolved, particularly in Year 2. Reducing class sizes further is outside the control of the school while the present buildings are used. Curricular planning is detailed and fully meets requirements. Assessment procedures in core subjects are now good.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The broad picture is of good improvement in standards since the previous inspection. A particularly noteworthy success is the increase in high attainment compared to 1997. The picture, however, is not consistent, showing more variable and lower overall performance in English than in mathematics. Results in 2002 were very high in mathematics, being in the top five per cent of schools nationally; this was excellent. Compared to most schools, the proportion attaining a higher than expected level was about double in mathematics, slightly better in science, but about a quarter lower in English. It is this variation in high attainment in particular that is responsible for the variations in the table above. These variations are largely caused by differences in teaching and curricular effectiveness between subjects, with mathematics being very well taught and writing in particular being ineffectively taught at times. The overall results in 2002 in Year 6 were much better than similar schools. Compared to attainment when aged seven, the achievement of the Year 6 pupils tested in 2002 was very good in mathematics but below average in science and not as good as it should be in English, reflecting the shortcomings in writing. In the main, boys and girls are doing equally well in mathematics and science but the girls do better in English.

In Year 2, the seven-year-old age group, results in 2002 were average in writing but below average in reading and mathematics. This, nevertheless, was an improvement compared to 2001. Results in Year 2 fell sharply after the previous inspection, reaching a very low point in 2000; they are now recovering strongly. The results in Year 2 were better than similar schools in reading and writing and were the same in mathematics. Very few Year 2 pupils attained highly in 2002, though this was consistent with their attainment when aged four; overall, the Year 2 pupils achieved well over the three years after their entry.

Current standards in Year 6 are well above average in mathematics and average in reading and science but below average in writing. In Year 2, current standards are above average in mathematics and average in reading and writing, showing improvement on summer 2002. Standards in the Reception year and the nursery are average, higher than records show this time last year, with good progress being made. Standards in design and technology, a weakness at the previous inspection, have improved considerably and are now above average. The targets for 2002 were met in Year 6. The targets for 2003 for Year 6 pupils are lower than in 2002, based on their prior attainment when in Year 2 in 1999, and are not challenging enough.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are interested and attentive in lessons and try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Almost all of the pupils behave well all of the time.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are courteous. Social skills are well developed and pupils work well together. Relationships within the school are very good.
Attendance	Well above average. Pupils arrive early, in the main, and punctuality is good.

No bullying or oppressive behaviour was seen and none is reported. One boy was excluded during the reporting period; correct procedures were followed.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is good overall. It has been sustained in quality since the previous inspection and is better than the current national picture. The teaching is good in English, apart from the teaching of writing, which is not consistently effective, and good, at times very good, in mathematics. Numeracy skills are very well taught. Literacy skills are taught satisfactorily overall. Reading skills are well taught but writing skills are taught with mixed effectiveness. The teaching is meeting the needs of all pupils effectively in mathematics. Many pupils with average attainment on entry do exceptionally well in mathematics and almost all pupils with low attainment on entry catch up with expectations in this subject. In English, the learning needs of most pupils are met in reading, with particularly effective support for low attaining pupils, but learning needs are not consistently met in writing, where high attaining and below average attaining pupils sometimes do not achieve as much as they could.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is well planned and taught, with a good emphasis on providing lessons that interest and motivate the pupils. All relevant statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils' needs are identified early. Parents are kept informed. The learning support assistants are trained and work with the pupils with satisfactory effectiveness.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for social development is very good. Provision for moral development is good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Child protection procedures and the arrangements for health and safety are given good priority.

Good efforts are being made to identify pupils with special educational needs and pupils who are gifted and talented. Too much of the provision for pupils with special educational needs involves withdrawing small groups of pupils from lessons when this is not always necessary or to the advantage of the pupils concerned. Working conditions in the hall, where pupils with special educational needs are often taught, are not ideal and at times hinder learning because of distractions. Class teachers do not always monitor the work of the learning support assistants enough or check sufficiently that learning targets are being met. The anti-racist policy is effectively implemented. Parents think very highly of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The educational direction to the development of the school is clearly established by the headteacher and well supported by the staff. There is a strong corporate spirit and good capacity to succeed. Staff members with delegated responsibility carry out their duties effectively and make a good contribution to the improvement of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are actively involved in the life and work of the school. All relevant statutory requirements are met.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The procedures are well established, with a good range of systems for measuring performance: test results are analysed; lessons observed regularly; teachers' planning reviewed; and pupils' work scrutinised.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The governors are suitably forward looking and anticipating long-term needs effectively. Their improvement plan is implemented rigorously and drives the development of the school. The procedures for spending money follow closely the identified needs and improvement priorities. The school lives effectively within its means.

Best value principles are effectively applied. Income and expenditure are not significantly different from the average for primary schools. Funds have been allocated by central government for the building of a new school. Final approval of the rebuilding plans is awaited. The current budget surplus amounts to seven per cent and is larger than the majority of schools. It is earmarked for developments once the plans for a new school are approved. The turnover of teachers is high; almost all have been appointed since the previous inspection; half have been appointed in the past three years. This potentially difficult situation is managed well by the headteacher and governors. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. Teaching spaces are cramped. The pupil-to-teacher ratio is well above average. Although there is money in the budget to employ an additional teacher, there is no available teaching space. Class sizes in the juniors are larger than typically found, particularly in Year 6. The facilities for pupils in the Foundation Stage to learn through physical activity outdoors is unsatisfactory and insufficient for the nationally agreed curriculum for this age group to be taught in full.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • The work hard and make good progress. • The good quality teaching. • The caring, child-centred values of the headteacher and her staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arrangements for homework. • Progress made by pupils in the Reception classes.

The inspectors agree with all of the positive views expressed by parents. The arrangements for homework were investigated and found satisfactory. The homework policy is appropriate. There is no evidence that the arrangements are implemented inconsistently; the views of parents were brought to the attention of the headteacher who will monitor the implementation of the policy. Pupils in the Reception classes make good progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in Year 6, the oldest age group, have risen significantly over recent years and the latest test results were excellent in mathematics.

1. Since the previous inspection, the overall trend of improvement in test results in Year 6 has been above the national trend. A good improvement is in the proportions of Year 6 pupils attaining or exceeding the nationally expected level in all subjects tested. In English, where improvement has been slowest, the proportion has risen from 75 to 84 per cent, an overall improvement of 12 per cent. In mathematics, the improvement is from 75 to 97 per cent, which means that a quarter more pupils are attaining the expected level than did so in 1997. In science, the proportion has increased by almost half. The most significant improvement is in the amount of high attainment in mathematics where the proportion attaining the higher level has risen from 18 per cent in 1997 to 53 per cent in 2002, an improvement of almost 200 per cent. The 2002 results were better than 2001 in mathematics but not as good in English; they still fall within the overall trend of improvement.
2. Results in mathematics in 2002 were very high in Year 6, being in the top five per cent of schools nationally; this was excellent. Almost all of the Year 6 pupils either attained or exceeded the nationally expected level in mathematics and all of them made or exceeded the expected amount of progress over the four junior years; this is very good indeed. The proportions attaining a higher level were about double the national average in mathematics. When account is taken of pupils attaining the higher level as well as those at the expected level, the improvements in mathematics are excellent.
3. The results in 2002 were much better in all subjects than schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for a free meal. In mathematics, when compared to their attainment in 1998, when aged seven, the achievement of the Year 6 pupils in 2002 was well above average. In 1998, when in Year 2, the results for these pupils were well above average in mathematics and more than a quarter of them attained a higher level. Over the four-year period they spent in the juniors, the proportion eventually attaining a higher level in 2002 when in Year 6 was double the proportion attaining a higher level in 1998 when in Year 2. This indicates very effective teaching for these pupils between 1998 and 2002 and very good long-term progress in this subject. In 2002, the Year 6 boys and girls did equally well in mathematics. Both boys and girls were about six months ahead of the typical boy or girl nationally.
4. Current standards in mathematics in Year 6 are not quite as high as previous test results but are still on course to be well above average by the end of the school year. More than 80 per cent of the pupils are on course to attain or exceed the expected national level by the end of the school year. Nearly one pupil in five is already exceeding the expected level. In current work, the Year 6 pupils demonstrate secure understanding of thousand, hundreds, tens and units; and use the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division competently when solving problems, both mentally and on paper. They accurately calculate time in different parts of the world, often doing the calculations mentally; show good knowledge of negative and positive numbers; and decimal notation. In Year 5, most pupils already have a good understanding of hundreds, tens, and units and can carry out relatively advanced calculations mentally. They can plot coordinates using the x and y axes; understand negative numbers; and use decimal notation.
5. Current standards in Year 6 in reading are average; about 80 per cent of the pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level by the end of the school year and more than a third are likely to attain a higher level. The vast majority of pupils in Year 6 can read textbooks and worksheets with confidence and accuracy and can read information books for study purposes. The higher attaining pupils read fluently and accurately books of adult difficulty. In science, the substantial majority of the pupils are on course to attain or exceed expectations, with about a third likely to attain a higher level.

The attitudes of the pupils are well above average; their behaviour is very good

6. The pupils' attitudes to school and to lessons are very good overall. Responses to the parents' questionnaire show that 97 per cent of parents think their children like school, which is a very high proportion, with two thirds expressing this view very positively. The inspection found nothing to contradict this view. Pupils in the nursery and Reception classes are confident, settled and quickly engage with activities. They are willing to leave parents and enter classrooms at the start of sessions and this acceptance of school lasts for all of the school day. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils respond very well to the teaching, showing excitement and interest in the learning together with eagerness to complete tasks and produce accurate work. This enthusiasm in lessons continues throughout Years 3 to 6. Pupils have very positive views about the school and the teachers. In discussions, those spoken to thought highly of the teachers and appreciated their caring attitudes. They like lessons and do not want to miss any subject.
7. Relationships with teachers are very good. In part, this reflects the positive yet assertive methods used to manage pupils' behaviour. Praise is regularly given, invariably accompanied by the reasons for the praise, which effectively provides examples for others to emulate. The good relationships also reflect lessons that consistently aim to be practical and exciting and make alive the subjects being studied. Pupils are given good opportunities in lessons to make decisions and so develop self-responsibility and independence. In a good information and communication lesson in a combined Year 2 and 3 class, the pupils had to work collaboratively to program a robotic toy, making it travel specific distances and turn in particular directions. The work was challenging but also very good fun. They discussed each other's ideas, listened to explanations, and were willing to test out their friends' ideas of to see if they worked.
8. The very good attitudes to school reflect the generally good, at times very good, quality of education provided. In a good English lesson in Year 5, a group of pupils worked collaboratively to write clear instructions for making bread. They shared ideas well, with good levels of cooperation and willingness to listen to the views and ideas of others. The pupils in this lesson were very enthusiastic about their work. This reflected the strong emphasis placed by the teacher on practical and first hand experiences. The pupils had experienced bread making in a previous lesson and this had given them rich experiences and the language necessary to complete the writing task confidently and with a powerful sense of achievement. Others in the lesson, who were writing instructions for sowing seeds, were handling compost, seeds, and other materials as they identified the order in which tasks were to be completed. Good use was made of individual white boards and a large interactive white board to test out ideas for sentence and paragraph compositions, modifying or abandoning the wording for the instructions as necessary. All of which helped to make learning real, rich in content, quickly understandable, and memorable. In the process, pupils learned how to work with others cooperatively, sometimes to show leadership, and on other occasions to respect and accept the ideas of others. This example is typical of many of the lessons seen.
9. The overall standard of behaviour is very good. No bullying or misbehaviour was seen in lessons or at playtime. However, one pupil was permanently excluded within the past year. In assembly, all pupils show courtesy and respect for the beliefs of others. The pupils say that there is no bullying or oppressive behaviour and did not raise any concerns during their discussions with inspectors. Almost all parents think behaviour is excellent. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents said that positive values are promoted, particularly in social contexts, and bullying has been almost eradicated. School initiatives, such as the buddy scheme and the school council, are popular with pupils and taken seriously by them. The good emphasis on extra-curricular activities and residential visits not only helps the 'feel good about school' factor but is effectively contributing to the social development of pupils.
10. Current attendance at 95.6 per cent is well above the national average, reflecting much lower authorised absence and little unauthorised absence. Many pupils arrive early for school.

The teaching is good

11. The teaching is good overall. The overall standard has been sustained since the previous inspection, despite considerable changes in personnel, and the amount of good or better teaching has increased in line with the national trend. About half the lessons are good, about a further quarter are very good, with the remainder satisfactory in quality. No teaching is unsatisfactory. The range and quality of teaching is slightly better than

the national picture, particularly the amount of very good teaching. The teaching in English and mathematics is good overall, although in English, the teaching of writing is not always as effective as it should be. Writing apart, the teaching places strong emphasis on phonics and other basic skills. The small amount of teaching seen in other subjects was good in science, information and communication technology, art and design, physical education, and design and technology; the latter was a weak subject at the time of the previous inspection so improvement here has been good.

12. The pace of learning in lessons is generally good in the nursery and Reception classes. This good pace is sustained in Years 1 and 2. Although the Year 2 pupils are shared between two mixed-age classes, the pace of their learning does not vary significantly between these classes. This finding is also applicable to all other year groups that are shared between classes. The pace of learning in Years 3 to 6 is good overall, being particularly quick in Years 4 and 5. The pace of learning in mathematics is consistent in the main, with relatively quick progress in the early and middle junior years. Learning in reading is also consistent. The pace of learning in writing varies, with not enough progress currently being made in Year 6. The school has looked at the learning made by different attainment groups and is providing more support for low and high attaining pupils than was the case two years ago. This extra support generally makes good use of national initiatives, such as early literacy support, additional literacy support, and springboard mathematics. These initiatives are being implemented effectively.
13. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 1, the teaching systematically and efficiently increased pupils' knowledge of 'more than' and 'less than', including the use of the symbols > and < while retaining their interest and enthusiasm throughout. The teacher's explanations and questions were very clear and she was very much in tune with the responses of the pupils, rephrasing her questions, or tackling the ideas from a different direction, if she detected any sign of misunderstanding. She used simple resources such as a whiteboard very effectively, asked pupils to act as scribes, and varied her voice, sometimes whispering and sometimes being very loud but good humoured, with all of these stratagems helping to retain the pupils' attention and keep them actively engaged. She made very good use of constructive praise, explaining clearly what pupils were doing correctly, and so boosting their self-esteem and willingness to try new challenges.
14. Where teaching is good, the learning needs of the vast majority of pupils in the lesson are satisfactorily met. The planning and the structure of these lessons appropriately includes sufficient shared work, individual and small group work, together with commentary designed to help pupils know how well they are doing, so that all pupils to learn at the expected pace and learning is efficient. Work is generally well matched to learning needs. In good lessons, the teachers ask challenging questions and target these at particular attainment groups. Explanations are clear and informative, helping pupils to understand new ideas being taught. Praise is used constructively, so that all pupils learn from the good practice of others, and behaviour is assertively yet fairly managed.
15. In a good science lesson in a combined Year 2 and 3 class, the teacher captured the attention of the pupils by talking about her personal interest in butterflies and moths acquired during her childhood. She cleverly introduced relatively complex ideas, linked to scientific methodology used in classifications, in a manner that was relevant, absorbing, and very informative. The pupils then embarked on a classification activity in small groups that involved considerable collaboration between pupils, with much to decide about relevant characteristics of the creatures being classified. Through discussions with the teacher, the pupils were able to refine their classification structures, introducing sub-classification where necessary, and ended the lesson feeling very satisfied with their achievements.
16. In a good English lesson in Year 4, the teacher's extensive subject knowledge and expertise helped him to manage the plenary at the end of the lesson very effectively. Through very effective questioning, he enabled pupils to demonstrate their knowledge of past and present tense of verbs, including their use of 'ed' as an ending, and of irregular changes to verbs such as 'catch'. The discussion the pupils had about irregular changes in verbs was useful in consolidating their understanding. At the end of the lesson, the pupils were left feeling that they had achieved something worthwhile and had evaluated their improvements in relation to their personal targets.
17. Pupils generally work hard in lessons and finish their work on time. The methods that the teachers use are mostly effective, though improvements in teaching writing are necessary. Time and resources are used well.

Support staff are used effectively in most lessons; a few exceptions are discussed elsewhere. The practice of withdrawing pupils from lessons for extra support should, however, be reconsidered. Some of the withdrawal is unnecessary, as the support could be provided just as effectively in the classroom and would not draw so much attention to the fact that some pupils have difficulty. The withdrawal groups are taught in the hall, often with two or three being taught at the same time. Their attention and concentration are regularly disturbed, for example, by people travelling through the hall to get to classrooms and by dinner ladies setting out tables for midday.

Leadership and management are very good

18. The leadership and the management of the headteacher, together with all staff with responsibility and the governing body, are collectively very effective. The headteacher is providing strong, incisive leadership. She is aiming for a school with high standards where everyone, adults and children, are acquiring the skills and motivation for life-long learning. She is establishing a united staff, with teamwork well developed and with effective delegation. Morale is very high. The headteacher is creating a high-performing team of teachers, committed to evaluating their work and improving where necessary. She leads effectively by example, showing willingness to take on responsibility and to work with children. Overall, there is well-shared commitment to improvement and a good capacity to succeed.
19. The systems and procedures used to manage the school are well developed and constitute good practice. The management structure is clearly established. Those with responsibility understand their roles and carry them out effectively. Rigorous systems are in place to monitor, evaluate, and develop teaching. The headteacher and others with delegated responsibility regularly observe the teaching, identify good practice as well as individual targets for improvement. Performance management is well established, an integral part of the systems for monitoring and improving teaching, and effectively linked to the training programme; non-teaching staff are included. Planning, children's work, assessment records, value-added indices, and progress targets form part of the procedures used to evaluate performance, with outcomes helping to inform development targets. The good improvements in test results in Year 6 since the previous inspection point to the overall effectiveness of these systems.
20. The school development plan is a comprehensive document extending over four years. It provides a detailed direction to the work of the school, embodies much good practice in its layout and contents, and is firmly rooted in school self-evaluation. The targets for improvement embodied in the plan are relevant to the needs of the school. Although it is noted elsewhere that the agreed targets for raising test results in English and mathematics in Year 6 are not as challenging as they could be, the detailed and individual targets for pupils used in lessons and in development planning are very relevant to individual need and appropriately challenging. One of the current priorities, raising standards in art and design, is having a good impact on teaching and learning within the school. So too is the priority to increase the amount of high attainment in Year 2, though more needs to be done here, particularly in reading and writing.
21. The governing body's involvement in the life and work of the school is good. An appropriate range of governors committees is established. They have a clear understanding of the main strengths and weakness of the school and what must be done next to improve.
22. Almost all of the teachers have been appointed since the previous inspection. Half of the teachers have been appointed to the school within the last three years. The number of teachers leaving and joining within the past two years, about a quarter, is above average. A temporary teacher fills one post. Despite this change to the teaching staff, the headteacher has managed to maintain the quality of teaching and produce a very well motivated work force.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The standards and achievement of pupils in writing

23. Only 53 per cent of the Year 6 pupils attained or exceeded the nationally expected level in writing in the 2002 tests and this was not as good as the majority of other schools. Only half the pupils made the progress they should between the ages of seven and eleven; this was poor achievement. Only those with average attainment when aged seven made satisfactory progress. Significantly, almost all of the pupils with slightly below average attainment when aged seven, yet managing to achieve the expected national level when in Year 2, did not make enough progress in the junior years to repeat their success when aged eleven. Equally telling, almost all of those who did very well when aged seven, and exceeded expectations, failed to make enough progress to exceed expectations when aged eleven. The records kept by the school show that much of the ground lost by these pupils occurred when they were in Years 3 and 4. The teachers in those year groups have since changed.
24. The weaknesses in writing have been identified by the school and action is being taken, though more needs to be done. Current work shows inconsistent progress between classes. Pupils are making good progress currently in Years 3 and 4, and there is a strong emphasis on independent writing in these year groups. The emphasis on independent writing is not as strong in Years 5 and 6, with low attaining pupils receiving insufficient opportunities to compose sentences, paragraphs, and extended passages of writing in English lessons, and in other relevant subjects, by themselves. In Year 6, the writing of about half the year group is consistent with the expectations for their age, a proportion that remains below average. Those at satisfactory levels can organise their ideas and sentences consistent with the demands of a chosen genre. They can use paragraphs and can generally spell and punctuate accurately. Lower attaining pupils have more difficulties than they should with composition, often unable to write sufficiently at length to meet expectations; spelling, punctuation, and handwriting are weak. The presentation of work in Year 6 is sometimes untidy and shows insufficient interest or motivation.
25. The current standards in Years 3 and 4, if continued into Years 5 and 6, indicate that the school is on course to higher standards in writing in Year 6 by 2004; but this is by no means guaranteed. The effectiveness with which the teachers use shared and guided writing methods is satisfactory in the main but these methods are not used often or consistently enough or targeted sufficiently on the identified weakness that pupils have. The pupils' work and teachers' planning show that opportunities for extended independent writing are relatively infrequent in some year groups and not planned sufficiently in all subjects where writing occurs. Lessons too often ignore the need to provide work with different levels of challenge for pupils with different attainment. Much of the support for low attaining pupils in writing leads to pupils being withdrawn from the classrooms and, in practice, this is not always appropriate because the pupils miss relevant work and are sometimes given tasks that lack challenge and fail to interest them.

The provision for outdoor play in the nursery and Reception classes

26. The school is aware that current provision for pupils in the nursery and Reception year to learn through play outdoors is unsatisfactory. The nursery children have access to an enclosed outdoor space but the range and quality of the resources, both fixed and portable, is insufficient to provide a full and challenging range of learning experiences. The Reception year pupils only go out to play when others in the main school do so and they have no separate resources to use. They do not have access to the enclosed area used by the nursery. The very limited resources mean that the nationally agreed curriculum for the Foundation Stage cannot be taught in full, and this is unsatisfactory.
27. The headteacher and governors are reluctant to spend the large sums of money necessary to bring provision up to the recommended standard until a new school building is completed as they feel any expenditure before then will be wasted. The location of the nursery and Reception class together with the outdoor space will change under the proposed re-building of the school. At present, the pupils do not have access to suitable resources for physical development. In particular, they have very little opportunity to explore and develop the physical skills needed to climb over, under and through large apparatus except when using the school hall, which is not often enough each week to meet all of their learning needs. In addition, there is very little use of outdoor space to extend knowledge and skills in each of the other nationally agreed areas of learning. The

teachers' planning for learning through physical activity outdoors is not well developed and this means that insufficient use is made of the limited resources that are available; this should be remedied quickly.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

28. Standards have risen faster than other schools over recent years but the improvement is not uniform between subjects. Low standards in writing in particular are holding back standards in English and, for this reason, increasing the proportion of pupils who attain the expected national level or exceed it is the main challenge for the school. The headteacher and her staff, with the support of the governing body, should:

- ❑ increase to the national average the proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the expected level for their age in writing by;
 - ensuring as far as is possible that all pupils make the expected progress between the ages of seven and eleven;
 - providing relevant training for teachers where this is necessary, to increase the effectiveness of shared and guided writing methods and any other method used to teach writing;
 - increasing the frequency and range of opportunities for extended independent writing in English lessons and by planning in detail the opportunities that arise for such writing in other subjects;
 - improving the effectiveness of extra support provided for pupils whose attainment in writing is low;
(Discussed in paragraphs 23 to 25)

- ❑ bring up to the standard recommended nationally the quality and the range of provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage to learn through physical activity outdoors by:
 - increasing the quality and range of relevant resources, paying particular attention to large scale resources;
 - planning in detail the daily use of the outdoor facilities in accordance with the nationally agreed curriculum for the Foundation Stage.
(Discussed in paragraphs 26 and 27)

NB Both of these issues are already identified by the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
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	0	6	12	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	23	46	31	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	285
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	47

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	32

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	26	16	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	24	25
	Girls	12	15	13
	Total	34	39	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (85)	93 (95)	90 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	26	25
	Girls	14	14	13
	Total	37	40	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (78)	95 (80)	90 (90)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	20	18	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	20	20
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	32	37	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (97)	97 (95)	97 (95)
	National	73 (72)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	20	20
	Girls	17	17	18
	Total	33	37	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (100)	97 (97)	100 (97)
	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	282	0	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	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)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.9
Average class size	32

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	177

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	34
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	554,909
Total expenditure	572,535
Expenditure per pupil (based on 307 pupils)	1,865
Balance brought forward from previous year	56,601
Balance carried forward to next year	38,975

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	331
Number of questionnaires returned	157

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	35	1	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	46	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	46	7	2	6
The teaching is good.	73	26	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	29	5	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	23	3	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	27	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	54	34	6	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	63	34	1	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	34	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	34	6	0	5

Other issues raised by parents

Parents raised no other issues.