

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Bournes Green Junior School**

Thorpe Bay, Southend on Sea, Essex

LEA area: Southend-on-Sea Unitary Authority

Unique reference number: 114786

Headteacher: Mrs C Holliday

Reporting inspector: Kath Beck  
10090

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2002

Inspection number: 247489

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ladram Road Thorpe Bay Southend-on-Sea Essex
Postcode:	SS1 3PX
Telephone number:	01702 587913
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. B. Wadley-Smith
Date of previous inspection:	26 <sup>th</sup> January, 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>23</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bournes Green is a large junior school catering for children aged seven to eleven. There are 291 children on roll. Many children come from the infant school that shares the same site. 58 more children have transferred from other schools, joining in Years 3 to 6. Overall, there is an equal number of boys and girls. 44 children come from ethnic minority backgrounds. 33 children have English as an additional language and that is higher than in most schools. None are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The children speak Urdu, Hindi, Cantonese and Punjabi. Three children are eligible for free school meals and this is well below the national average. 20 children are identified as having special educational needs and this is below the number usually found in schools of this size. No children have a statement of special educational need. A few children have profound, multiple learning or severe learning difficulties. Others have specific learning, emotional, behavioural or physical difficulties. The school is popular and oversubscribed. Attainment on entry is very good. The inspection focused on children's attainments in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and the school's provision for the arts.

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

Bournes Green Junior is a highly effective school. Standards of attainment are very high. Leadership and management, the quality of teaching and children's attitudes to learning are excellent. Parents hold the school in very high regard. The school provides excellent value for money.

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

- Very high standards of attainment.
- Excellent leadership and management.
- Very high quality teaching that inspires and motivates children to do their best at all times.
- Children's attitudes are excellent.
- Excellent provision for children's cultural development through the arts.
- Highly successful attention to ensuring that all groups of children benefit to the full from what the school has to offer.
- The partnership with parents is excellent.

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

There are no major issues for the school to address.

*The school has many strengths and the school development plan is guiding development really well.*

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

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. The key issue, concerning reports, has been dealt with fully. Challenging targets for the number of children to reach the nationally expected levels of attainment<sup>1</sup> in Year 6, have been met each year and often exceeded. High standards in English, mathematics and science in comparison to all and similar schools have been sustained over five years. There have been considerable improvements in the provision for information and communication technology. This has raised knowledge and skills significantly among the staff and children, as well as raising standards. The school gained the School Achievement Award for the rapid increase in national test results in 2001 from the Department of Education and Skills. There are more learning support assistants giving very effective help to children with special educational needs. Administrative support has increased and is very good, allowing staff to concentrate on their teaching. The increased number of lunchtime supervisors ensures a happy time for all the children. There have

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<sup>1</sup> Expected level of attainment at age eleven is Level 4. The higher level of attainment is Level 5. A very high level of attainment, Level 6, is expected at the end of Year 9 in secondary schools.

been significant improvements to the building and gardens so that there is an attractive environment in which children can learn.

## 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	A*	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A	B
science	A*	A*	A	A

**Key**

well above average      A

above average            B

average                    C

below average            D

well below average      E

\* indicates exceptionally high standards that place the school within the top 5% nationally.

This is a school that is doing really well for all its children. In English and mathematics most children, at the end of Year 6, reach the higher National Curriculum level 5 and a few reach level 6. These are standards often found in secondary schools. In English, the number of children reaching higher levels of attainment means the school's performance is within the highest 5% nationally. In 2003, there are changes to the national tests for children aged eleven. Schools will not be able to enter children for level 6 papers and this may impact upon the average points score on which the grades in the table above are calculated. The school has sustained high performance in comparison to all schools nationally and similar schools over a long period of time. Inspection evidence shows that when mathematics results from 2002 are analysed in detail, the school was very close to performing much better than those with children from similar backgrounds. The difference, in the average points score, between an A and a B grade was minimal. The school has met and often exceeded the challenging targets set, in agreement with the local authority, for the number of children to reach nationally expected levels or higher levels of attainment at age eleven. In 2003, it is expected that 90% of children will reach national standards, or higher, in English and 86% in mathematics. The school is on course to meet these targets as lesson observations indicate very high levels of attainment. In addition, children's attainments are very high in music, art and design and information and communication technology. The school offers children many opportunities to use their initiative and express their ideas. This means written work is really imaginative and poetry is sensitive and thought provoking. Children's artwork is exceptional in its quality. They use a wide range of materials and combine skills and techniques in inventive ways, sometimes incorporating information and communication technology into their work. The orchestras, choir and music lessons allow children to develop and show their high level skills in performance, appraisal and composition.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Children do their best at all times. They are eager to learn and take pride in their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. There is a very calm environment so that children can learn without interruption.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Staff and children show very high levels of mutual respect. Children are trusted and this enables them to be responsible, mature and sensible young people.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are very good.

Children are keen to get to school, as there is much to interest and challenge them. The trust and respect between staff and children gives them the confidence to do their best at all times. Often children are required to work in small groups and make decisions. They listen to different points of view and



carry out discussions in a mature manner. High quality attitudes and values contribute significantly to children's progress and attainment.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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 very high quality teaching has a significant impact on children's attainments across the curriculum. In all year groups, English and mathematics are taught very effectively. Teachers know the children very well and encourage them to take pride in their pursuit of academic excellence and high personal achievement. They allow children to use their initiative and make many decisions about their work so that it is original and imaginative. There are many opportunities for children to use and apply different skills across the curriculum, especially those of literacy and numeracy. Often activities are linked to real life situations and this makes learning really purposeful. The school meets the needs of all children very well. Children with special educational needs have very clear individual education plans that are often incorporated into lessons. Learning support assistants provide very good additional help in small group work. The special educational needs coordinator also gives very good, targeted support to individuals. Children who are gifted or talented are given many opportunities to develop their skills in English, mathematics, art and design, music and sports. Children with English as an additional language respond very well to teachers' high expectations and often do better than their friends. Through high quality teaching, children make rapid gains in knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. Tasks set demand a great deal from children's intellectual, physical and creative effort. There is a wide range of activities, written, practical and oral, that meets the different learning needs of all the children.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	In all year groups, children enjoy an excellent rich, varied and engaging curriculum that is relevant to their daily life.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Children's individual education plans are very clear and are written in a way that children can understand. They know what they need to do to improve and work very hard to achieve their targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	All speak English fluently and there is no specific provision for these children.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This aspect is central to the school's purpose. Provision for children's cultural development is excellent through the arts and promotion of understanding of life in a multicultural society. Provision for children's spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its children very well. Pastoral care takes into account children's individual needs. Progress of all children is tracked really carefully so that work meets their needs.

Parents are right to be really proud of the school and all it offers. They also raise substantial sums of money that are used to improve resources, especially information and communication technology, to raise standards. They also support their children with homework and transport to out of school events and attend many interesting curriculum meetings. The school is very successful in promoting all aspects of children's abilities through a very rich and engaging curriculum that values each child's

achievements highly, not only in English, mathematics and science, but also music, the arts, humanities<sup>2</sup> and sports.

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<sup>2</sup> history, geography and religious education

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The commitment to the pursuit of academic excellence and high personal achievement in an atmosphere of the Christian values of trust and respect are evident in all aspects of the school's work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors have a broad range of expertise that they use to benefit the children. They have a very good view of the long-term development of the school and fully meet all statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school evaluates the performance of all the different groups of children thoroughly and uses the information very effectively to sustain very high standards.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Money is directed specifically to priorities in the school development plan. A high carry forward figure has been substantially reduced and is benefiting the learning environment and resources in information and communication technology.

The strengths in leadership stem from the calm and determined approach of the headteacher that ensures the school's aims are carried out in all aspects of its work. Children come first. Governors and staff work very well together to benefit the children. Members of the senior management team and subject leaders receive time and support to carry out their duties effectively and so impact standards. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The leadership and management.</li> <li>• Very good teaching.</li> <li>• Children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Children's behaviour.</li> <li>• They can approach the staff to discuss issues confidently.</li> <li>• Children are encouraged to work hard, do their best and become mature young people.</li> <li>• The way the school works closely with parents.</li> </ul>	No significant areas for improvement were identified.

Inspectors agree with all the parents' positive comments. These aspects have a significant impact on children's attainments and the school's success.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Very high standards of attainment.**

1. The focus for the inspection was on standards in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and provision for the arts. In lessons observed in English and mathematics, in Year 6, children's attainments are very high. The school has very challenging targets for the percentage of children to reach nationally expected and higher levels of attainment in these subjects in 2003 and is on course to reach them. Children's attainments are also very high in information and communication technology and the arts.
2. In national tests for children at the end of Year 6 in 2002, the school's performance in comparison to all schools was very good in English, mathematics and science. When compared to schools with children from similar backgrounds, the school did very well in English and science. One child reached a very high level of attainment, normally found in Year 9 in secondary school, in English. In mathematics, the school did well. When the results are analysed in depth, it is clear that the school's performance was very close to a higher grade. The difference in the average points score between good and very good was minimal. Two children also reached the very high level of attainment in mathematics.
3. At the time of the last inspection, girls out performed the boys. The school has worked on this and there is now little significant difference in the attainments of boys and girls. The school tracks children's progress very carefully. Children from ethnic minority groups often out perform the other children. Those with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and many reach the nationally expected standard.
4. Speaking and listening skills are excellent. Throughout the school children are articulate. In Year 6, children have an extensive vocabulary. They use this to good effect in their conversations and written work. Children listen very carefully to their teachers and their classmates. In this way they gain a considerable amount of new knowledge and skills. In turn, the children think deeply about what is being said and contribute effectively to class discussions, expressing points of view in a mature way. In group work, children discuss their varying points of view sensibly often having to come to a joint conclusion. For example, in an English lesson, children had to work in pairs to write a poem in the style of William Shakespeare. This was based on a section from 'A Midsummer's Night's Dream.' They helped each other with the ideas and refined them to achieve outstanding results. For example, one poem began, */// tip toe around you in your dreams.*
5. Children read very well and this helps them in their work across the curriculum. It also assists with homework when they write book reviews and carry out research as part of their classroom projects. In information and communication technology, children read the instructions on the screen easily and this contributes to their rapid progress in the subject. Children read a wide range of literature and non-fiction books. They express their opinions of them and justify them in a confident way.

6. The standard of written work is also very high. As at the time of the last inspection, the quality of children's poetry is outstanding. This is because children are encouraged to be reflective, express different moods and find the best way to express their ideas. They read a lot of poetry too and think about what it means for them. Basic skills of spelling, handwriting and punctuation are taught to a high standard and children apply these really well. The presentation of work is very good as children take pride in doing their best work all of the time.
7. In mathematics, in Year 6, children have a very good grasp of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They apply these really well to problem solving. Many children have rapid recall of mental arithmetic and can calculate quickly and accurately high numbers, such as  $12 \times 15$ . The curriculum, the use and application of mathematics, number and algebra, shapes and measures, is taught thoroughly and meets children's needs. In Year 6, children often work on problems that require the application of skills across the mathematics curriculum. For example, in one lesson observed, children constructed a line graph to record and work out average travelling times over different parts of a journey to a holiday destination. Much of the children's work is based on real situations like this and that makes learning purposeful. Mathematics is also incorporated into other subjects, such as science, design and technology as well as information and communication technology.
8. Many children have computers at home and this helps them to achieve very high standards in school in information and communication technology. The school builds on this successfully so that children acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding. Many children have knowledge and skills beyond that set out in the national guidance for teaching the subject and so teachers devise many different challenging activities. All staff have undergone training to raise their knowledge. Each teacher now has a laptop computer so that they can practise new skills immediately. They use these often in their day-to-day work.
9. By Year 6, children use information and communication technology as a 'tool' to aid their work. Their knowledge and skills are so good they can sit at the computer and complete complex tasks with little or no reference to the teacher. In homework, children demonstrate very high levels of attainment, not usually seen in primary schools, in information and communication technology. In one project about Southend Pier, one child created a time line, using the length of the pier as the line, with imported pictures tracking its history at appropriate points. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to raise standards in other subjects, such as art and design, music, religious education, science, mathematics, literacy, history and geography. In music, children use a computer program to compose their own tunes. Children with high levels of musical attainment are shown how to include chords and harmonies in their compositions. This program means children can appraise their efforts, and those of their classmates, and refine and improve their work easily.
10. Children's attainments in the visual arts, music, and literary appreciation are reported under the provision for children's cultural development through the arts.
11. Some of the factors that contribute to the children's very high attainments are:
  - excellent leadership and management;
  - and very high quality teaching;
  - thorough coverage of the curriculum for each subject;
  - children's excellent attitudes and very good behaviour;
  - good resources and support from the parents.

## **Excellent leadership and management.**

12. As at the time of the last inspection, the leadership and management of the school have a significant impact on standards. The school's aims and objectives provide a very clear educational direction. They are to pursue academic excellence and high personal achievement within a calm atmosphere of trust and respect. These aims and values are shared really well and realised in all areas of the school's work. The interests of the children come first. All aspects of their abilities are promoted through a very rich, wide-ranging and engaging curriculum. A very strong commitment to equal opportunities means that each individual, whether a member of staff or a child, is valued highly. As a result, there is a very positive ethos in which teachers can enjoy their work and children can learn with confidence.
13. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the promotion of excellent attitudes to learning are central to the school's purpose. This can be seen especially in the provision for children's cultural development and in lessons. Children are often asked to reflect on what literature, art and music mean for them. Assemblies provide many opportunities for reflection. Lessons across the curriculum provide the chance for children to reflect on the awe and wonder of the natural, historical and artistic world. Provision for children's moral and social development is a strong feature within all aspects of the school day. Lessons feature many opportunities for children to work together without constant supervision and make important decisions about their work. Children are fully aware of right and wrong and adhere to the school rules. Displays around the school are cared for very well. Children really appreciate the successes of others.
14. The strengths in the leadership stem from the headteacher's calm, determined and strong approach to teamwork, successful implementation of national initiatives, a continued drive to raise standards and ensuring high quality in children's work. The responsibilities delegated to the senior management team and subject leaders are carried out very effectively. Staff receive some time free from class teaching to concentrate on their roles. This sustains a very strong commitment to the promotion of high standards and improvements in the school's provision. The school development plan is a very thorough document that drives the priorities for improvement. Its current priorities include further developments in provision for information and communication technology and enabling teachers to meet the challenging targets for the percentage of children to gain and exceed the nationally expected levels of attainment for each year group.
15. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities fully. The key issue from the previous inspection was dealt with thoroughly. Governors have a wealth of expertise that is used to benefit the school very effectively. They visit frequently and are fully involved in monitoring its work. They observe teaching, discuss developments in subjects with the subject leaders and monitor and review school policies to ensure they are implemented fully. The committee structure works really well so that governors' responsibilities towards the children, curriculum, staffing, premises, finance and health and safety are met. Governors work closely with the headteacher and staff to shape the direction of the school. They are fully aware of its strengths and areas for development. Governors appraise the work of the headteacher each year and set performance targets that are often exceeded. In 2001, the school received a School Achievement Award for the increased number of children reaching expected or higher standards. The school faces a significant challenge in 2003, as primary schools can no longer enter children for the very high level 6. This will impact upon the school's average points score and the grades awarded to compare its performance against all schools nationally and similar schools.

16. National test results are analysed in detail and the information gained used to make changes and bring about further improvements. The progress of children in each year group is also checked regularly. This ensures that the challenging targets, that are part of the school's performance management system and set out in the school development plan for each year group, are met and often exceeded. Senior staff and subject leaders check the quality of teaching and learning. Information from the lesson observations is shared in staff meetings. Minutes of these meetings show decisions are made specifically to benefit the children. Staff are keen to support each other and share their expertise. Improvements in standards and teaching and learning in information and communication technology, have come about through:
- improved resources;
  - strong commitment to training;
  - willingness to help each other with the application of new skills;
  - teachers' increased use of computers in their day to day work.
- High standards in music and art and design also stem from the sharing of expertise in these subjects throughout the school.
17. National initiatives are evaluated fully and amended as appropriate to meet the needs of the children. This has enabled long serving staff to remain highly motivated and enjoy their teaching. New staff are inducted very effectively and their ideas valued. Teachers who have recently retired from the school, with particular skills in science, return to assist teaching it on a regular basis. Supply teachers know the school and its policies and procedures really well. These factors mean the school maintains high quality and consistency in teaching, learning and standards of attainment.
18. There is close liaison with the infant school that shares the same site. This enables the teachers to build on what the children know and can do when they enter the school. Year 3 teachers and the special educational needs coordinator visit the Year 2 classes to get to know the children and discuss issues with the teachers. In addition, Year 2 children visit the junior school so that they are familiar with the classroom and surroundings. This smooth transfer has much to do with the high standards in each year group, as no time is lost settling children into new routines or finding out about their levels of attainment.
19. Finances are directed specifically to the school's priorities so that they are resourced very well. Purchases are made within the framework of a strong commitment to the principle of best value. The number of learning support assistants has increased since the last inspection. The special educational needs coordinator oversees their deployment very well. The learning support assistants give very good additional help to children with particular needs, sometimes in class or in small groups. They ensure that the individual education plans are carried out very effectively. Feedback from the learning support assistants about the children's progress to the teachers and special educational needs coordinator is used really well to review progress and make changes. This thorough work makes a significant contribution to the school's very high standards. In view of these standards, the very high quality of education offered and the school's costs, it provides excellent value for money.



**Very high quality teaching that inspires and motivates children to do their best at all times.**

20. As at the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching is very high and remains a critical factor in the very high standards achieved. During this inspection, teaching was very good or excellent in almost 80% of lessons across Years 3 to 6. Almost all the teaching observed was at least good. Excellent teaching was observed in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, art and design and music.
21. The features of this very high quality teaching are:
- inspirational activities that capture children's interest and motivate them to do their best at all times. For example, in one mathematics lesson, children were challenged to invent their own ways of calculating the differences between activities occurring at a range of times and explain them;
  - many opportunities for children to use their initiative and apply creative skills. This helps them to concentrate for long periods and produce a lot of work;
  - the provision of tasks that link knowledge and skills across the curriculum and to real life so that learning is purposeful;
  - very high expectations of what children can achieve. These challenge children to apply intellectual effort and persevere. They enable them to work independently confident in the skills they need to use.
  - excellent relationships, allowing children to learn in a very positive, trusting atmosphere where they learn to respect different points of view;
  - teachers showing enthusiasm for teaching and learning, recognising children's successes and demonstrating a real sense of humour that makes learning fun. Challenging questions ensure that children concentrate hard;
  - excellent subject knowledge that is shared with the children and colleagues to ensure consistent high quality teaching throughout the school. In this way children acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding very quickly. This allows teachers to challenge children to much higher levels of attainment;
  - thorough planning that builds on what children have learned before. Planning is amended to take into account aspects that children learn quickly so that they can move on and not repeat work that is too easy;
  - the needs of gifted and talented children, those from the ethnic minorities or who have special educational needs are met very well so that they make the best possible progress. Targets in children's individual education plans are incorporated into lessons;
  - different teaching methods that allow children to learn new knowledge and apply skills in a variety of ways. For example, children are engaged in written, oral and practical work in a balanced way during each lesson;
  - children are managed very well so behaviour is very good;
  - time, learning support assistants and resources are used very effectively so that children spend the maximum time learning through engaging activities;
  - lessons have a very clear structure. Teachers ensure that children know the purpose of the lesson and review their progress throughout. Children are invited to share their work and this is evaluated to bring about improvements in the work of other children. Homework is used very effectively to enhance progress;
  - work is marked carefully and in accordance with children's individual targets for improvement. This gives the children a very clear idea about how well they are learning and what they need to do to improve.

## **Children's attitudes are excellent**

22. Children's attitudes to school are excellent as there is much to capture their interest and challenge them. Attendance is very good as a result. Children's interest and involvement in activities are very high as they experience success. In an art and design lesson in which children designed and made clay fairy tale castles, they became totally absorbed in what they were doing. All, including those who are not as confident in the subject, achieved very highly and were really pleased with their success. In all lessons observed, children listened attentively to their teachers and their classmates. As there is a calm, supportive atmosphere in school, children with special educational needs feel confident to try their best in whole class and small group sessions.
23. Children take a lot of pride in presenting their work neatly and imaginatively and respond to their teachers' high expectations of them in a cheerful and happy manner. Relationships are excellent. Sometimes children joke with the teachers in a mature and sensible way, maintaining high levels of trust and respect for values and beliefs. Children are very polite to each other, adults and visitors. They have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. In class, group and paired activities, children show considerable respect for a range of views and readily share resources and ideas. Teachers give children a great deal of personal responsibility for their behaviour, decisions about their work and the chance to use initiative. Children value this a great deal. They really enjoy their responsibilities as house captains or vice house captains, taking care of the grounds, preparing equipment for lessons, clearing away and looking after the younger children.
24. Behaviour is very good in lessons and during break times and lunchtimes. In assemblies, behaviour is excellent, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Children participate fully in assemblies and appreciate the successes of other children spontaneously. There was no evidence of bullying at the time of the inspection. All children are fully integrated into the school. Those with physical disabilities are involved in all activities. Children take considerable care to see that they are part of their games and general life of the school.
25. These excellent attitudes contribute to the very positive learning atmosphere in school. Children can learn without interruption. These factors also contribute significantly to the very high standards achieved.

## **Excellent provision for children's cultural development through the arts**

26. The school now makes excellent provision for children's creative development through the arts. This represents an improvement on the very good provision noted in the last inspection. In visual art, music and literary appreciation, standards reached by the eleven year olds are very high when compared to those in schools nationally.
27. The overall arts programme, in lessons and through a strong extra curricular programme, makes an excellent contribution to the children's cultural development. It is a feature of this provision that children learn to appreciate the artistic achievements of the past as well as the present and to value the multicultural variety of creative activity in today's world.
28. Staff and children are rightly proud of the quality of the visual artwork. Displays of outstanding quality around the school celebrate the children's achievements in this area. Children explore a rich variety of materials as they create images and designs, learning about colour, line, form and texture. The tasks they undertake are imaginative and engaging and the work that results is original and is of a very high standard. For example, in making delicate images of spring blossoms, children observed the natural world in close detail, making sophisticated use of fine brushes and watercolours to record what they saw. In paint, pastels and collage they recorded the progress of the school's roof repairs. Using translucent white tissue paper laid over dark silhouettes, Year 6 children captured, vividly, the sensation of fog in an urban landscape. In an excellent sequence of work, some children created their own designs after studying the work of William Morris. They put their designs into the computer, printed repeats of them and transferred these to fabric. This they then made into attractive cushion covers.
29. There are special strengths in the fired clay work the children produce. For example, they made full-sized masks as from the classical theatre, representing an identifiable range of emotions. These were fired, but wisely left unglazed in order that the expressions could be seen more clearly. In another imaginative activity, delicate sets of pencil drawings of elephants were later translated into powerful three-dimensional studies in grey clay. The children benefit particularly from the opportunity to work on a large scale in this medium.
30. Children also learn about how artists of the past saw and recorded their world and about the creative work of other contemporary societies and communities. Some have studied in detail the work of Picasso and of the potter Clarice Cliff. They have learned about the use of natural materials and distinctive patterns, in aboriginal art. They experiment by using aspects of the styles of other artists in some of their own work.
31. This broad and enriching programme has equipped children with a very good range of skills and knowledge, from which they can make mature choices when they want to express their own ideas and feelings in their work. Art and design lessons are taught really well by staff with a very good appreciation of the demands of the subject. Teachers with high level skills in art share this expertise with their colleagues so that a high standard of teaching is maintained throughout the school.

32. Lessons are planned to enable children to learn new skills that they can apply. This allows teachers to plan interesting and productive activities and to question and challenge children as they work, in order to improve their efforts. For example, in one high quality lesson, children learned how to use pastels to illustrate the eyes, feathers and characteristics of owls. The teacher gave very clear demonstrations and explanations that enabled children to complete work of very high quality. The children captured the 'glassy wide eyed look' of different kinds of owl listening out for their prey. In one picture, the feathers look so real the viewer wants to touch the picture to feel their softness. In another excellent lesson, children learned much about the way to use large amounts of clay effectively to construct imaginary fairy tale castles. Teachers place strong emphasis on developing cross-curricular skills. These imaginary castles then became the stimulus for children's story writing.
33. The school's strong commitment to the visual arts extends into community activity. A collection of children's work has recently been on public exhibition at a local gallery and children from the school regularly win prizes in local painting competitions.
34. Music continues to make a rich contribution to school life. Nearly half the children learn to play a musical instrument, taught by an extensive team of visiting instrumental teachers. The school boasts two orchestras, several recorder groups, a choir and a brass ensemble. During the inspection one of the orchestras, consisting of thirty children and several adults, practised seasonal music for Christmas. This was performed to a very high standard. Three talented young players demonstrated a short performance on the electric guitar. This too was to a very high standard for children aged nine and eleven. Children sing really well. In assemblies, for example, children sing enthusiastically, tunefully and with sensitivity to the changing moods of their text. In one outstanding assembly, the school choir, of about eighty children, performed a modern orchestrated version of a traditional nursery rhyme collection. The quality of choral singing was quite exceptional and gripped the whole audience. Children regularly perform during school assemblies and concerts and play and sing at local public venues, including hospitals and supermarkets! This motivates them to practise often and to reach very high standards that are appreciated by a large audience.
35. Through very well planned and taught lessons, children develop skills in reading, writing and improvising music. They appreciate the musical activities of others, both past and present. In one excellent lesson, children studied some popular music from the 1970's. This was related to a cross-curricular study of Britain since the 1930's. The lesson focused on how the music made its impact, through tone, rhythm, speed, mood and instrumentation. They also discussed some of the ways in which such music differs from that which is popular today. This was a vibrant and engaging lesson, challenging the children intellectually and deepening their musical appreciation. Classroom lessons of this quality, together with a rich and varied programme of club activities, enable children to develop high levels of confidence and control in music. The musical life of the school makes a profound impact on the cultural development of the children and is a significant strength.

36. Encouraged by the school, most children develop a real love of books, stories and poetry. The daily literacy hour is used very well to introduce them to a challenging and rewarding range of literature. Books by important classical authors, such as Philippa Pearce, are used very effectively to help children appreciate the way authors make choices about the language they use to represent a particular mood or situation. Book Clubs, operating twice a term, are supported very well. They encourage many children to become avid readers by promoting book ownership, while simultaneously enhancing the school's own book stock. A recent 'Book Week', focusing on multicultural literature, is indicative of the school's concern to bring the full range of contemporary writing to the children's attention.
37. The school has a very long tradition of encouraging children to write their own poetry. Its annual school poetry anthology is now in its nineteenth year and provides impressive evidence of the depth of talent in this area. Very high quality teaching, together with opportunities to enjoy a wide range of published poetry, has resulted in many children developing high levels of skill in this area of work. Typically, writing is sincere, original in form and striking. For example, one child wrote:  
*"Winter's eyes glisten like candle light,  
his fingers are ice, gleaming blue,  
his nails an icy white..."*
38. The children also participate, very successfully, in local poetry competitions. Visitors to the school, such as storytellers and visiting theatre groups, further enrich their appreciation of literature. In the summer term, children in Year 6 learn French in preparation for Secondary school. They practice their skills during an annual day trip to France.
39. Taken together, the school's provision for education through the arts significantly enriches the curriculum and helps children discover areas of activity and learning that will benefit them throughout their lives.

**Highly successful attention to ensuring that all groups of children benefit to the full from what the school has to offer**

40. Staff are very alert to the need to check that all the different groups of children on roll make the best possible progress and can play a full part in all aspects of school life. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good. The individual education programmes prepared for them are very precise and their progress is checked regularly. In lessons, work is planned to match their abilities and they have additional support from skilled learning support assistants whenever they need it. Staff keep parents well informed about their child's progress so that they can work together to give maximum help. At present there are two children with physical disabilities in the school and the governors have made a range of building alterations to ensure good wheelchair access to school facilities. In a highly imaginative initiative, an 'Inclusion Week' was held in school. Each class studied a particular area of disability, discovering the obstacles that deaf, blind or physically disadvantaged people might meet in school and in the wider world. They know how people with disabilities make a rich contribution to the community.
41. The school has identified its more able and gifted children. Those with exceptional ability in academic work are able to study to levels of the National Curriculum usually met in secondary schools. English and mathematics lessons are arranged so that work is set to challenge them. There are sometimes after-school club activities designed especially for them and their progress is checked regularly. Children with particular gifts in other fields, such as art, music and sport, are also recognised and provided for and their development is monitored carefully.
42. All the activities the school provides are available both to girls and to boys. The staff check systematically that the opportunities, such as orchestra, instrumental tuition and after-school clubs, attract boys and girls equally. Importantly, close attention is given to making certain boys and girls progress equally well as they move through the school. This monitoring is based largely on a careful analysis of annual test results and shows that, while there are some small variations year by year, neither gender enjoys any significant advantage over the other.
43. A significant number of children in the school are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has proper policies in place to ensure racial tolerance. The school is a very happy and harmonious community with no hint of racial tension. Careful records are kept to make sure children from ethnic minority groups are fully represented in activities, such as instrumental lessons and after-school clubs. While most of the children speak English as an additional language, all are competent and most are fluent English speakers. This said, staff check how well ethnic minority children progress in all subjects and spoken English on a regular basis. This means they can quickly identify any individuals or groups who do not make as much headway as they should. In fact, these checks show that by the time children leave the school, the standards they reach are as high and often higher, than those of others in the year group.
44. Nearly a fifth of the school population arrives part way through the four years of junior school education, rather than at its beginning. The school recognises the risks that disruption in learning might cause these children and it checks their progress very carefully.
45. Overall, the excellent provision the school makes for the different groups of children ensures they all progress really well.

## **The partnership with parents is excellent.**

46. The school's excellent partnership with parents has a significant impact on standards achieved. Almost all the parents responding to the questionnaire or who attended the pre-inspection meeting for parents commented that they would feel comfortable approaching the school about concerns. They are confident that issues are dealt with quickly and positively to benefit the children. In turn, the school welcomes parents, valuing their views, especially in the Home School Reading Record and the substantial support they give.
47. Parents have full confidence in the school and are right to believe that it expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. All staff and parents share the central purpose to value academic excellence and high personal achievement. This is developed within an atmosphere of trust and respect that prepares children to meet the challenges of the wider world. As a result, children really like school, behave well and do their best. Letters, received by the headteacher, reflect the high quality partnership between parents, visitors and members of the community. They show the high level of support the school gives to all, but especially families with children who have particular needs. Children with disabilities have been fully integrated into the life of the school previously. A beautiful garden has been established in memory of a child who had leukaemia. The children take considerable care of this. Parents state this reflects the strong Christian values that underpin the school's work, from which they have taken comfort.
48. Information for parents has improved a great deal. The key issue relating to improving annual reports about children's progress has been dealt with very well. The reports are now really personal to each child. They are informative and include targets for further improvement. Children add their views about how well they have done over the year. Parents are asked to comment about their child's report. Many of their comments are very positive. Parents also responded positively to the homework policy and home/school agreement. The newsletter, 'Lion News', gives parents a clear view of the school's work and successes each term.
49. There is a very active, enthusiastic and supportive Parents' Association that raises substantial sums of money each year. These are used to improve resources, such as the computer suite and so raise standards further across the curriculum. The Summer Ball and Summer Fete are major events that also involve many members of the community, parents and children some of whom have left the school, but maintain a strong affinity with it.
50. Parents are very supportive in assisting children with their homework. This enables children to develop instrumental music skills, spell well, know their multiplication tables and read a wide range of literature. In addition, parents support their children in developing research skills. Some homework involves finding out additional information for projects such as, 'Southend Pier'. Visits to the library and searches of Internet sites add much to children's knowledge and skills to find information quickly. A very high number of parents attend parent and teacher consultation evenings to find out about their child's progress and establish other ways to help them at home. Parents are particularly pleased that children are encouraged to take responsibility for planning out their homework and when it is to be done. They feel this prepares children very well for secondary school.

51. Many parents help in school over the year. Some help in class with artwork, others accompany school trips and give assistance with swimming in the summer term. There is a high level of parental attendance at class assemblies, concerts, sporting fixtures, sports days, swimming sports and book weeks. Children enjoy participating in many competitions that feature as part of community events such as 'Southend in Bloom'. Parents give their children a lot of support so that they are often successful in the competitions. The school invites parents to participate in curriculum events and developments. This includes taking part in 'Healthy Living' weeks and attending 'drugs awareness' evenings that are very informative. These give parents an insight into what their children are learning and also makes them aware of what to look for and do if they suspect problems as their children grow up.
52. The school liaises very closely with parents of children with special educational needs. They are kept informed about the targets in their child's individual education plans and are fully involved in all reviews.
53. This partnership with parents means that children know that their worries will be dealt with quickly and sensitively and this allows them to learn with confidence.



### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

54. There are no major issues for the school to address.

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

55. There are no major areas for the school to improve. The school development plan is guiding improvements really well.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	11	5	2	0	0	0
Percentage	25%	54%	13%	8%	0%	0%	0%

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	291
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	20

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	N/A 33

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	N/A 14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	N/A 4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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 2 (Year 6)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	33	40	73

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	32	32
	Girls	40	32	40
	Total	70	64	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (93)	88 (87)	99 (98)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	31	33
	Girls	40	37	40
	Total	70	68	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (95)	93 (93)	100 (98)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	247	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	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	4	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	20	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: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.1
Average class size	32.44

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001 - 2002
	£
Total income	737,615
Total expenditure	745,305
Expenditure per pupil	2,493
Balance brought forward from previous year	126,451
Balance carried forward to next year	118,762

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.8

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

50.3%

Number of questionnaires sent out

292

Number of questionnaires returned

147

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	19	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	35	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	27	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	44	12	1	1
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	39	5	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	20	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	54	40	3	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	86	14	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	27	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	38	11	1	0