

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTH BENFLEET FOUNDATION PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Benfleet

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115262

Acting Headteacher: Mr Dominic Carver

Reporting inspector: Mr Tom Shine
24254

Dates of inspection: 28th - 29th October 2002

Inspection number: 247546

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Road South Benfleet Benfleet
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cannon Eileen French
Date of previous inspection:	12 th -15 th January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

South Benfleet Foundation is a mixed two-form entry primary school and caters for pupils aged four to 11. There are 420 pupils on roll, which is well above the average size. The roll is very stable as very few pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual planned times. Children who are five in the autumn term enter the reception on a full-time basis in September, whilst those born in the spring term onwards attend part-time in the autumn and full-time in the following January. There are 33 children in two of the three Reception classes who attend part-time this term. When children enter the Reception, their attainment is broadly average, although it tends to fluctuate from year to year. The majority of pupils are drawn from white UK backgrounds with very few from minority ethnic groups. Only seven pupils come from homes where languages other than English are the mother tongue, such as Cantonese, Bengali, Gujarati and Campuchian and only two of these are in the early stages of English acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) at less than ten per cent is below average and there is only one with a statement of SEN. Although the social backgrounds of pupils are broadly average, the proportion entitled to free school meals at about seven per cent is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

South Benfleet is an effective school where pupils achieve high standards and where pupils with SEN and the few pupils beginning to learn English also achieve very well. All pupils achieve these high standards because of the high quality of teaching with most of the work being sufficiently demanding. The acting headteacher leads his staff well and is supported effectively by the governing body. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the time pupils are in Year 6, their standards in English are well above average and are above average in mathematics.
- Teaching is very good, notably so in Year 6.
- The acting headteacher and key staff provide good leadership, are committed to high standards and are supported well by the governing body.
- Pupils with SEN are supported very well, enabling them to make similar progress to their peers.
- Pupils have very good attitudes, relationships and good behaviour, enabling them to learn well.
- The school cares very well for its pupils and supports them very effectively.

What could be improved

- Progress in design and technology (DT) has been unsatisfactory since the last inspection.
- The library area and the range of non-fiction books are inadequate.
- The outside play area for reception children is inadequate and both playgrounds for other pupils lack variety and are unexciting areas.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in January 1998, it has made good progress in addressing most of the issues previously identified. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and music have improved considerably and the planning of and the quality of the curriculum are now good. Teachers regularly check on their pupils' progress and generally use this knowledge to match the work to their pupils' abilities. This includes matching the work to the abilities of above average pupils – a weakness identified at the last inspection – although not all teachers are equally consistent in applying this good practice. Most importantly, the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and standards have risen in English, mathematics and science. Provision for pupils with

SEN is much better than it was. Standards in design and technology still remain below those expected nationally. The school is well placed to improve further.

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	A	B	A	A
mathematics	A	B	A	A
science	A	A	A	A

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The 2002 national test results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 were well above those in schools nationally and also when compared to schools in similar circumstances. In these tests, significantly more pupils achieved the higher Level 5 than in previous years. Taken together, the trend in the school's results since 1997 in these subjects has been above the national trend. Although these are very good results they are still below the targets set for this year group. The school concedes that these targets were very ambitious and unrealistic. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing in 2002 were well above the national average and were also well above those in schools in similar circumstances. In mathematics, standards were above average both compared to the national results and to those in similar schools. The trend of the results of pupils in Year 2 since 1997 has been broadly in line with the national trend in reading and above it in writing and mathematics.

Children make good progress in the Reception classes as a result of the good teaching overall and are on course to exceed the early learning goals in most of the areas of learning. Some aspects of physical development are progressing at a slower rate because some of the outdoor provision is inadequate. In Year 2, pupils are likely to be reading at above expected levels, by the time they are ready to enter Year 3. Standards in writing and mathematics are also above those normally expected and all pupils, including those with SEN and the very few pupils with English as an additional language, are achieving well. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they are benefiting from very good teaching in this year group and standards in English are well above those normally found and all pupils are achieving very well. In mathematics standards are above average and all pupils are achieving well. In Years 2 and 6 standards in music are broadly in line with those expected. In ICT although there were few lessons seen, pupils have clearly benefited from the opening of a relatively new computer suite and the use of the technology in other lessons suggests that standards have improved and are broadly in line with expected standards. There is little DT in the school suggesting the subject is insufficiently emphasised; as a result, standards are below those expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school.	These are very good throughout the school, helping pupils learn very well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms.	This is good in and around the school, including lunchtimes and in the playground. There was one pupil excluded last year.
Personal development and relationships.	Relationships are very good both between pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils show thoughtful consideration and respect for others.

Attendance.	This is broadly in line with the national average. Not enough is done to discourage parents taking holidays in term-time.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very good

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

Teaching is very good. All lessons were at least satisfactory and over eight out of ten were good or better. It has improved since the last inspection when although it was satisfactory, some lessons were unsatisfactory. In the Reception classes teaching is good, with much of it being very good. Teachers' planning is very clear, showing very secure knowledge of children's needs. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have a good grasp of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and teach these skills well. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good and is notably so in Year 6 where it is of a consistently high quality. Throughout the school, teachers have good relationships with their pupils and by the time they leave the school pupils are learning very well. Some teachers are less secure in their subject knowledge of DT. In music, the co-ordinator has had a significant impact on raising standards since the last inspection and has improved teachers' planning. In ICT, teachers are becoming increasingly confident in their knowledge and expertise and pupils' standards are improving accordingly. A new co-ordinator for SEN ensures that these pupils' needs are met very well. A few pupils in the first stage of English acquisition receive good support and make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum.	Good overall. Curriculum planning, including planning in music, has improved since the last inspection, but weaknesses remain in DT. Planning in the Reception classes is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs.	Very good. The co-ordinator and teacher assistants provide very effective support. Pupils' individual education plans are of an exceptionally high standard.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	Very good. The school receives funding for two pupils who are in the early stages of English acquisition and uses it effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development.	Good for pupils' moral, social and cultural development and good overall. Satisfactory for spiritual development. The governors have recently approved the publication of a detailed race equality policy.
How well the school cares for its pupils.	The school provides high levels of care and looks after its pupils very well.
How well the school works in partnership with parents.	Parents think highly of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff.	The acting headteacher and two assistant heads provide good leadership and effective management, doing well to maintain high staff morale, pending the appointment of a permanent headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities.	Good. The governors are very supportive and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. The chair, SEN and finance governor are knowledgeable and there is a bursar employed on a part-time basis to monitor the school's finances.
The school's evaluation of its performance.	Good, overall. The quality of pupils' work in English and mathematics is regularly checked and teachers' planning is monitored effectively.
The strategic use of resources.	Good. The school uses its funds well for pupils with SEN and EAL. It makes sensible spending decisions and reviews the benefits appropriately.

The school has a very good, recently opened, ICT suite but the library and outside play areas are inadequate.

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. They make good progress. Behaviour is good. Teaching is good. Pupils are expected to do well. The school is well led and managed. It helps their children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The right amount of homework. The information about pupils' progress. The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. Inspectors disagree with parents as they found homework to be appropriate and the range of activities outside lessons to be good. They agree with parents who consider that the school reports are issued too late to allow a meaningful discussion with the class teachers to take place.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

By the age of 11, standards in English are well above average and are above average in mathematics.

1. Standards in English are well above the national average in Year 6 and broadly reflect the very good results achieved in the national test results in 2002 when a higher than usual proportion achieved the higher Level 5. The pupils are benefiting from the consistently high quality of teaching in this year group. In mathematics standards are above average – not quite as high as the well above standards achieved in the 2002 tests, when again a significant proportion achieved the higher Level 5. Before the tests last year, intensive preparation and booster classes made a very effective contribution to raising standards. However all groups of pupils are achieving very well and making very good progress.
2. Throughout the school, teachers give all their pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), frequent opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills. In Year 2, pupils speak increasingly clearly and confidently. They respond well to their teachers' good questioning that allows them to speak at length and elaborate on their answers, using full, correct sentences. In one Year 2 class for example, in a lesson that focused on the use of time to structure a sequence of events, one pupil was able to say, *"After a while the boy knocked over the boxes"*, whilst another said, *"Suddenly the sweets fell into the trolley"*. In the parallel class in Year 2 in the final session of an English lesson, the pupils showed that they had used cues from the context, the letter sounds and illustrations to make sense of the story 'Hamster Hero', one of the main objectives of the lesson. In response to their teacher's questions, *"How do you think Matilda escaped?"* and *"Why was Sam pleased with his friend?"* they were able to say respectively, *"Sam left the door open"* and *"Because he found his hamster"*. By the time pupils are in Year 6, the majority of pupils speak clearly and confidently and take part enthusiastically in a debate for and against the notion that animals should be kept in zoos. One pupil confidently argued the case against zoos saying, *"Captive animals are usually used for entertainment, but people don't think of their welfare"*. Another pupil offered an opposing point of view: *"If an animal is sick it will get better treatment in captivity and also will receive a balanced diet."* Another pupil followed up this train of thought saying, *"If an animal becomes ill in the wild it will probably die, whereas in captivity it would receive the best medical attention"*. The teacher encourages the use of technical vocabulary with one pupil talking about 'the animal's natural habitat'. In the parallel class the pupils were confident enough to criticise constructively their teacher's model introductory paragraph, which she had posted on the white board, asking, *"What do you think of that?"* One boy commented politely, *"It's a bit boring"*, whilst a girl said, *"It's not interesting."* One of the aims of the school is to 'provide the necessary tools to communicate with ease and fluency'. By the end of Year 6 this aim is being achieved well.
3. In Year 2, at a relatively early stage in the academic year, pupils are reading at broadly expected levels. Pupils in Year 2 have had the benefit of the introduction of an effective reading project a few years ago. This, together with good teaching, has helped to push up standards and pupils are on course to be reading at above expected levels, by the end of their time in Year 2. However, these levels are not as high as the 2002 test results for pupils in Year 2 would suggest when they were well above average. The school points to the current Year 2 cohort being a weaker group than that of last year, with fewer higher attaining pupils and more below average. All pupils are achieving well. Inspection confirms that, taking into account the age difference, the current Year 3 is a relatively stronger group. In Year 6 pupils read very well, with most of their skills being above average. Most pupils read reasonably fluently, accurately and with expression. Pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy reading. One pupil said, *"I read after homework"*, whilst another said, *"Before I go to bed I read every night"*. They are able to name their favourite authors, such as J R Rowling, J R Tolkein, and R L Stein. Pupils have good reading records with appropriate targets such as, 'Say how a novel affected you and how you rated it.' Although pupils are using computers and the Internet appropriately for their projects, their library skills are underdeveloped, as the library is too small and not an appropriate area in which they could be developed.

4. Work in pupils' books in Year 2 indicates that their writing is above average, overall. Most pupils have a good understanding of the need for full stops and capital letters and use punctuation accurately. The writing of average and above average pupils is well organised, imaginative and clear. Pupils use appropriate and interesting vocabulary in writing stories. Most pupils' handwriting at this age, contains accurately formed letters and is consistent in size. Pupils' work completed in the first half of the autumn term indicates their writing is not yet joined. In a lesson with a small group of SEN pupils with learning difficulties from this year group, the SEN co-ordinator led the group well in placing vowels in words such as h-a-t and c-u-t and in extending their technical vocabulary, using concepts such as consonant and phoneme. In Year 6, work in pupils' books reveals that the overall standard is well above average. In this year group above average pupils choose imaginative vocabulary and use words precisely with one pupil writing, *"It was a cold, misty Saturday night with fresh chilly air and spooky surroundings."* Pupils whom the school describes as 'average' often use adventurous vocabulary with them typically writing, *"As the car drove off, a big flash came from the old abandoned cottage. 'We are not going there again,' said a voice."* Both these groups of pupils use punctuation such as commas, apostrophes and inverted commas accurately. Below average pupils use commas and full stops in sentences accurately. Most pupils write good, accurate and balanced reports on controversial issues such as homework. The handwriting of the majority of pupils is good and above average.
5. Numeracy is emphasised well and by the time pupils are in Year 2 standards generally are above average. Most pupils make good progress over time in developing their skills, especially in mental mathematics. In one lesson observed, most pupils were very confident in recognising odd and even numbers and knew several ways of determining whether a number was odd or even. Work in pupils' books shows they make good progress in developing their concepts of number and shape; for example they recognise shapes such as pentagon, octagon and hexagon and understand 'clockwise' and 'anti-clockwise'. Most pupils are able to add and subtract to 20 and beyond and are able to place numbers in order up to 100. In Year 6, pupils have a good grasp of mathematics in general and numeracy in particular. Two lessons were observed both on practising measuring and drawing angles using a protractor. Both lessons were preceded by short warm-up sessions during which pupils showed good mental agility in mathematics. Pupils showed good progress in understanding that the sum of the angles in a shape should add up to 360 degrees and had good knowledge of appropriate vocabulary such as acute, obtuse and reflex. Work in pupils' books is well presented and contains accurate diagrams. It ranges from decimals, fractions, pie charts, tables and bar graphs, to problem solving involving doubling and halving and multiplying two-digit numbers by both two-digit and three digit numbers. Their work indicates that pupils are able to apply their knowledge and learning to related problems.

Teaching is very good overall and is particularly good in Year 6.

6. At the last inspection teaching was satisfactory overall, but nine per cent was unsatisfactory. Teaching has therefore improved significantly, as during this inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching and a much higher proportion that was good (45 per cent) or very good (41 per cent) compared to the previous inspection.
7. In the Reception classes the children benefit from the quality of teaching which is never less than good, with much of it being very good. The teachers plan well together and as a result of this effective collaboration their planning is very clear with each activity being comprehensively prepared and organised. The early learning goals are clearly identified and the well thought-out activities have a very beneficial impact on the children's learning. Teachers' planning takes account of the needs of the children's varying abilities in the class, including those with SEN and higher attaining children. The teachers and the teaching assistants have a check-list for each area to ensure that all the children experience the activities fully. These teachers use clear and skilful questioning to develop children's speaking and listening skills. Support staff, including the nursery assistants and learning support assistants, are well deployed. In some lessons the teachers made good use of volunteer parent helpers who were very effectively employed. In all the Reception classes, teaching is built upon warm, trusting relationships in which the children feel secure and become eager to learn. As a result and because of the good teaching, children make good progress in most of the areas of

learning and build well upon the broadly average levels of attainment when they enter the school. By the time they are ready to enter Year 1 the children in this cohort are likely to exceed the early learning goals in all the areas of learning and will have been well prepared to embark upon the National Curriculum. The exception is in some aspects of physical development, where provision for outside play activities is inadequate.

8. There are a number of very positive features in the best teaching. Most teachers have a good grasp of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and teach these skills and other aspects of English and mathematics to all groups of pupils well. These include the needs of pupils with SEN and the few pupils learning English as an additional language. Teachers in Year 6, in particular, have good knowledge of these subjects and teach them very well.
9. All teachers have clear learning objectives and these are shared with their pupils, such as in the debating lessons in Year 6, 'To write a balanced report of a controversial issue'. These clear objectives are part of the good planning in nearly all of the lessons observed. Good use of questioning is also a common feature of the best lessons, with one of the teachers asking, "*What do we mean by 'controversial'?*" With a number of pupils giving sensible suggestions, including, "*It has two sides to it,*" the teacher was able to establish that her pupils had a good understanding of the language being used and that they were ready to undertake the debate. Good questions were not reserved solely for the beginning of lessons, but were peppered throughout appropriately, including the end of lessons when the teacher drew the main teaching points together and established the level of learning. At the end of an English lesson in Year 2 for example, the teacher asked the class, "*What have you done today that you didn't know before?*" in response to which pupils offered sensible contributions, confirming to the teacher that the main learning objectives had been achieved. All lessons are well managed. Most teachers create a purposeful working atmosphere in which all pupils are fully involved, enjoy the interesting lessons and are well behaved. In a few otherwise satisfactory lessons, where pupils' concentration was less focused than in the majority of lessons, this was because the work was not challenging enough particularly for the higher attaining pupils.
10. The quality of marking is variable but is generally good. In the best examples it is very detailed and sets individual targets so that pupils know what they have to do to improve their work. For example, in a Year 2 pupil's mathematics book, the targets are, 'read, write, count numbers to 100 and order them'. Targets are stamped when achieved. Separate marks are given for 'purpose and organisation', 'style' and 'punctuation'. Most marking is thorough with regular encouraging comments showing pupils how to improve their work, with a pupil being told, "*Remember – look at how many tens and ones you need to add on*". Not all marking is up to the level of the best. A minority is rather perfunctory and consists merely of ticks and crosses with no indication to the pupils of how to improve.

The acting headteacher and key staff provide good leadership, are committed to high standards and are supported well by the governing body.

11. The acting headteacher has held this post since May when the former head became too ill to work and is the substantive deputy head. The former head subsequently died from her illness in August after 18 years in the post and following these unfortunate circumstances the acting head has done well to sustain high morale when it might otherwise have been depressed. He has a very calm manner and is respected well by the staff. He is supported effectively by the two assistant heads. Together they have been successful in ensuring continuity and stability in procedures and practices, whilst making marginal changes as appropriate and with the authority of the governors, where significant financial implications are involved. For example, three additional learning support assistants have been appointed on temporary contracts, together with some additional support for SEN and site management. Above all they are committed to high standards.
12. Although the school looks critically at how it is progressing, particularly in checking on the quality of planning and pupils' work, documentation shows there is insufficient focus on improving teaching standards in English and mathematics through regular observation. The monitoring forms indicate that there is no common format and much of the comments regarding the lessons observed tend to

be too descriptive with insufficient emphasis on judgements about the quality of teaching. The school is aware of the need to raise the few satisfactory lessons up to the quality of the best. However, with the overall quality of teaching being very good and during the interim period, pending the appointment of a permanent head, this is not an issue of the highest priority.

13. The governing body is very supportive and aware of the school's main strengths and weaknesses and is effective in acting as a helpful, but 'critical' friend. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. The school is fortunate in being able to attract members to the governing body when on occasion there is a vacancy. The chair of governors is very committed and knowledgeable; for example, in interview before the inspection, she was able to identify the areas for improvement that ultimately have been indicated in this report. She understands that the appointment of a permanent headteacher is the major challenge and takes this task very seriously. The governor for SEN and the chair of the finance committee also take their responsibilities seriously and lead their areas well. The chair of governors believes the school to be very good. This is a view with which parents strongly agree.

Pupils with SEN are supported very well, enabling them to make similar progress to their peers.

14. At the time of the inspection there were just under nine per cent on school action and school action plus according to the new legal requirements for SEN. This is slightly less than the latest figures available for the county average. These pupils are given an individual education plan (IEP) that is reviewed regularly to assess pupils' progress and the school has decided to maintain a register of SEN for these pupils. In addition there are 44 pupils – just over ten per cent – that are identified as 'giving concerns.' Five of these, either newly identified or new to the school, are about to go onto school action. There is a full-time special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) who gives very effective support to all SEN pupils, including those 'giving concerns'. He is ably assisted by a learning support assistant who supports a pupil with a statement of SEN for about half the week. In addition, she also gives effective support to two pupils in the very early stages of learning English, (funded by the Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Grant) for five hours each a week. Approximately five other learning support assistants give both general support and effective support for SEN as directed.
15. The SENCO is very experienced, knowledgeable and well informed. The school identifies pupils' needs early and the support provided by both the SENCO and class teachers, assisted by the learning support assistants, is very effective and relatively generous. Most class teachers regularly identify SEN pupils in their planning which is very good. The SENCO takes the lead in writing pupils' IEPs in conjunction with the class teachers. He also heads up review meetings with parents, in partnership with the class teachers and parents are generally given two weeks notice of review meetings. The quality of pupils' IEPs is exceptional. They contain very well written and achievable targets that relate appropriately to the pupils' identified needs. The SENCO typically takes small groups out of the classroom for intensive and effective support. His teaching is very good. The SENCO and class teachers are sensitive to the need to vary the timetable to ensure that pupils are not consistently withdrawn from the same lessons.
16. The school works effectively with outside agencies provided by the local education authority. These include services for SEN and the school psychological service. The school is entitled to five sessions a year from the psychological service and in addition receives effective support from an assistant psychologist.

Pupils have very good attitudes, relationships and good behaviour, enabling them to learn well.

17. Two of the aims of the school are to 'Guide children towards self-discipline and logical and orderly ways of working' and to 'Encourage the children to co-operate, care for and consider others'. The school is successful in achieving these aims. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. When children enter the school in the Reception classes, they are made very welcome and this lays a good foundation for the very good attitudes that they develop as they progress through the school.

These attitudes are reinforced by the overall good quality of teaching in the Reception classes and those in Year 1 and 2 and the very good quality of teaching for the older pupils. In one of the Reception classes for example, the teacher shared some examples of good and thoughtful work that encouraged the children to want to do equally as well. Clear and skilful questions probed the children's understanding and made them think about what they were learning and helped them enjoy learning. These selected examples are only a few from many. Teachers' expectations that their pupils will do well has a positive impact on learning, contributing effectively to their general level of confidence. Most pupils take pride in their work and present it well. They are confident and eager to go to school. They concentrate well and only in a few lessons that were less stimulating did their attention wander. In the questionnaire responses and at the meeting, parents said they were happy with the attitudes of their children and believed they liked school.

18. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. These are very good throughout the school, helping pupils learn very well. Pupils show all adults appropriate respect without being in awe of them. In the Reception classes children play well together at appropriate times in lessons and throughout the school all pupils, including those with SEN and the few pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), work well together and are happy to take their turn on the computers in the classrooms. Pupils relate well to each other and there is no discrimination, for example, of pupils who are withdrawn for SEN tuition.
19. In the responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting, parents believed behaviour is good. Inspection confirms they are right to think so. Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and is often very good. This is because the pupils concentrate well as a result of the high quality of teaching that interests and engages them in what they are doing and the very good relationships that have been built up. During lunchtimes and in the playground behaviour is also good as pupils are supervised very well, despite an outside environment that lacks stimulation and is unsatisfactory.

The school cares very well for its pupils and supports them very effectively.

20. The school provides high levels of care for its pupils based on the very good relationships pupils have with all staff. It is a caring and supportive community, having a positive and friendly atmosphere, encouraging children to become mature and feel valued and secure. The curriculum is well provided with subjects to support them well such as personal, social and health education and circle time where pupils are able to discuss a wide range of personal and general issues important to them, such as the environment and bullying. The staff know their pupils very well, are good role models and pupils have respect for them. All members of staff are fully committed to pupils in their care and all pupils benefit from very good attention to pastoral care. Both within the classroom and in the support groups for SEN, staff are effective in establishing a supportive environment. As a result, pupils feel secure and are encouraged to develop their self-esteem and confidence. In classes, they receive very good support from learning support assistants. The lunchtime supervisors provide a high level of care.
21. Due regard is paid to child protection issues and to health and safety. There is a keypad system on main doors and visitors to the school are asked to sign a visitor's book in the entrance hall. A secure metal fence has recently been installed around the perimeter of the school to prevent intruders. An appropriate number of staff has been trained in first aid. The school has excellent first aid arrangements and for dealing with pupils with allergies and medical conditions such as diabetes. All medicines are clearly labelled and well organised.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Progress in design and technology (DT) has been unsatisfactory since the last inspection.

22. At the last inspection, attainment in DT was described as being below national expectations in Years 2 and 6. There were a number of weaknesses identified in the last report including:

- inadequate planning, with no policy or scheme of work for the subject and consequently National Curriculum requirements were inadequately covered;
 - no assessment policy;
 - some weak teaching; and
 - inadequate resources.
23. Although there has been some progress in some of these areas, progress has been unsatisfactory in DT, overall. There is a policy and the school has adopted the scheme of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), but teachers' individual planning indicates it is variable, with there being generally insufficient opportunities for pupils to evaluate familiar products. In addition, their planning does not ensure that pupils' skills are developed progressively throughout the school. Although it frequently links with other work being undertaken, this does not ensure a progressive development of skills. During the inspection two lessons were observed, both in Year 5, where standards were in line with those expected in one and below those expected in the other. Although teaching was satisfactory in these lessons, teachers' planning and the lack of time allowed for the subject suggest these are weaknesses in some teachers' subject knowledge. Whilst the time for DT is allocated in blocks to allow a project to be undertaken in depth, the lack of work in the school, which is much less than that normally found, or evidence of previous work indicates that there is not enough time allocated. The school now has adequate resources to teach the National Curriculum requirements. However, they are relatively inaccessible because they are poorly stored.

The library area and the range of non-fiction books are inadequate.

24. The library is a very small area and quite unsuited to use for personal research or whole class sessions. The school is aware of this deficiency, as it was the intention to include a new library as part of the recently opened fine suite for information and communication technology (ICT). However at the planning stage it was realised that in order to have a suite that could house at least 30 computers, one for each pupil in a class, there would be insufficient room to include a library. Opportunities therefore for pupils to develop their study skills in a quiet area conducive to research are very limited and pupils' skills in locating and retrieving non-fiction books in the library are underdeveloped. In discussion with pupils in Year 6 for example, they were not aware of, or knew how to use, the school's classification system. The English co-ordinator has identified the aim of improving links with the local library to study the Dewey classification system. However, pupils' skills in using computer technology, especially the Internet, are improving well, particularly since the opening of the ICT suite. The governing body is aware of the need for and supportive of, a new library.
25. The range of non-fiction books is also limited. Whilst the school believes there are 'lots of non-fiction books' in individual classrooms inspectors found the range to be no broader than that found in classrooms in other schools with an adequate non-fiction library.

The outside play area for reception children is inadequate and both playgrounds for other pupils lack variety and are unexciting areas.

26. The outside play area for reception children is too small for the number of children who need to use it. Children in the Reception have a dedicated small secure hard play area outside one of the reception classrooms but it is too small for using a range of large toys, except in a limited way on a staggered basis. It lacks a variety of surfaces, for example grass and soft surfaces and there is room for a maximum of five children only to play with wheeled toys. It also lacks colour and other facilities to provide challenge. It does not allow children to take risks appropriate to their age, such as those provided by a sandpit, climbing apparatus or balancing equipment. Some of this equipment is available in the hall, for which the Reception classes are time-tabled. However children do not have access to this equipment on a daily basis, although they have daily access to one of the playgrounds. During these periods they are not given planned activities that offer appropriate physical challenges and learning is not as good as it might be.
27. The playground for other children is just adequate for the day-to-day needs of the pupils, but it lacks

stimulation and variety and is barely adequate for the range of games and sporting activities required by primary school children. There are a few seats and benches for pupils to sit on and except for netball, it is not marked out for playground games, nor is it enhanced by plants and shrubs which could also be used as teaching aids. In discussion, members of the school council, all of whom liked the school very much and were confident, polite and well spoken, agreed that the playground areas need to be improved. One of the aims of the school is to *'keep alive the child's natural curiosity, by providing an attractive and stimulating environment'*. As far as the outside play areas are concerned this aim remains to be achieved. However, the school agrees improvements to these areas are needed and are included in the school improvement plan.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should now:

i) Raise pupils' attainment in design and technology by:

- improving all teachers' knowledge and expertise in the subject, including their planning, to ensure it is taught to a satisfactory level throughout the school;

(paragraph 23)

- providing more teaching time for the subject;

(paragraph 23)

- reviewing the arrangements for storing the resources for the subject;

(paragraph 23)

ii) Improve pupils' library and research skills by:

- expanding the library area;

(paragraphs 3, 24)

- improve the quantity of non-fiction books.

(paragraph 25)

iii) Improve the outside play areas by:

- ensuring that the outside play area for reception children is large enough to house large play equipment and suitable surfaces are provided;

(paragraphs 7, 26)

- providing more variety to the two larger playgrounds, for example by installing appropriate outside furniture and plants and shrubs.

(paragraph 27)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	12	13	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0	41	45	14	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)	N/A	403
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	35

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	25	35	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	23	24
	Girls	31	34	35
	Total	51	57	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (78)	95 (92)	98 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	25	24
	Girls	33	34	35
	Total	53	59	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (92)	99 (97)	98 (100)
	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	31	32	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	26	28
	Girls	28	28	29
	Total	54	54	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (86)	86 (81)	91 (91)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	27	30
	Girls	28	29	29
	Total	54	56	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (83)	89 (78)	93 (86)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
402	1	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
8	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)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.1
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	247

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	948,435
Total expenditure	931,879
Expenditure per pupil	2,224.05
Balance brought forward from previous year	42,135
Balance carried forward to next year	58,690

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	420
Number of questionnaires returned	197

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	35	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	42	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	51	3	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	47	11	1	1
The teaching is good.	59	38	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	45	13	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	32	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	38	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	53	7	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	50	44	3	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	46	1	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	35	22	6	16

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents think highly of the school. Some are not happy with homework or the range of activities outside lessons. Some parents are not happy with when school reports are issued. Parents would like time before the end of the summer term to arrange meetings with the class teachers to discuss their children's progress.