

INSPECTION REPORT

THORLEY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bishop's Stortford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117230

Headteacher: Mrs E Simpkin

Reporting inspector: P B McAlpine
21552

Dates of inspection: 20-21 January 2003

Inspection number: 247743

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Park Lane
Bishop's Stortford

Postcode: CM23 3NH

Telephone number: 01279 654496

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Harrison

Date of previous inspection: 16 March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is of average size. It is popular with parents and over-subscribed. There are 195 full-time pupils organised into seven classes, each containing one year group. A further 36 part-time pupils attend a nursery unit in the mornings only. Pupils are admitted to the nursery and to the Reception class twice a year, at the beginning of the autumn and spring terms. A local authority special educational needs support unit is based at the school; no pupils attend this unit as all its services are provided off-site. The immediate locality has few indicators of social or economic disadvantage and the proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well below average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times of admission or transfer is low. About one pupil in seven is on the list of pupils with special educational needs and this is less than the majority of schools. Included in this proportion are four pupils have statements of special educational needs; this is a typical number for a school of this size. The difficulties faced by those with statements and others with significant special educational needs cover a broad spectrum; they include dyslexia, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication, physical difficulties, and autism. About nine per cent of the pupils are from minority, mainly mixed ethnic backgrounds; this is above average. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language, four per cent, is above average; the other first languages spoken are Cantonese, Finnish, German, and French. Most of the pupils with English as an additional language are competent bilinguals and speak English fluently. No pupil is from a refugee family. The attainment of pupils on entry to the nursery and the Reception classes covers a full range but the overall picture is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. Pupils achieve well. Standards in core subjects rise from broadly average on entry to above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. This represents very good educational value added. The performance of Year 6 pupils falls within the top 25 per cent of schools nationally. The teaching is regularly good in quality, at times very good, and is motivating the pupils to give of their best. The leadership shown by the headteacher is high quality. She has united her staff and is well supported by the governing body. There is good capacity for continued improvement. The cost of educating each pupil is above average. Even so, the high standards attained represent good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics, and science.
- Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are very good.
- The teaching is good overall, with a significant amount that is very good.
- The leadership and the management are very good overall; the leadership of the headteacher is excellent.

What could be improved

- The effectiveness of the provision in the Foundation Stage, although satisfactory, lags behind that in the other year groups.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The previous inspection was in March 1998. Since then, standards have improved in Year 6, rising in English, mathematics and science from average to well above average. At the same time, standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have risen from average to above average. The behaviour of pupils has improved significantly and is now very good. All weaknesses in behaviour management have been remedied. The teaching has improved, particularly in Years 3 to 6, where all the weaknesses of a few years ago have been remedied. The weekly lesson planning is of good quality and day-to-day assessment information is used effectively to provide work that is well matched to the different learning needs of pupils. The provision for information and communication technology and the teaching of experimental and investigative science are good. During a period of four years, the school has improved its general effectiveness from satisfactory to very

good; this is very good improvement overall.

STANDARDS

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

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

The standard of current work in Year 6 is well above average in English, mathematics, and science and this is consistent with the test results for this age group in 2002. The overall standard on entry to school is average in most years and so, compared to attainment on entry, the results achieved by Year 6 in 2002 were very good. The educational value added by the school is considerably greater than typically found. Results in Year 6 in 2002 were better in English and mathematics than in schools with pupils from similar social and economic backgrounds, and were much better in science. Earlier weaknesses identified by the previous inspection amongst Year 6 pupils in reading, science, and design and technology have been remedied. Standards in English, mathematics, and science have risen considerably since the previous inspection, with current work continuing that trend. Overall, standards in Year 6 are rising faster than the average rate of improvement nationally reflecting the effectiveness of the teaching and the well-organised curriculum. The targets for Year 6 were exceeded in 2002, making the targets for 2003 seem less challenging than they were when set some time ago. The targets for 2003 should be revised upwards.

Current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics, and science and consistent with test results in this age group in 2002. Weaknesses in writing identified by the previous inspection, and showing themselves again in the 2002 test results, have largely been remedied in 2003 by actions forming part of the current phase of school development. Standards in the Foundation Stage, comprising the nursery and Reception classes, are broadly average in each of the nationally agreed areas of learning although personal and social development varies and a few pupils have limited skills in this area. Provision in the Foundation Stage has been disturbed in recent times by staff turnover. The situation is now settling down, with promising developments made by current teachers, but the progress made by the pupils, particularly in the Reception year, although steady, could be better.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like the school and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Almost all of the pupils behave well in lessons and at playtime. Middy is civilised.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The oldest pupils display mature attitudes. They apply values and principles to daily aspects of their lives and are courteous and respectful of others in the main. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good.
Attendance	Average. Nearly all pupils attend regularly and are punctual.

One boy from a white United Kingdom family was excluded temporarily during the reporting period. Correct

procedures were followed. Registers and registration procedures meet statutory requirements.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Quality has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is better overall than the typical picture nationally. Pupils are well motivated and nearly all of them make or exceed the progress expected of them. Much of the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is high quality and there are instances of high quality teaching in all age groups. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in relation to their difficulties. Pupils from minority ethnic and mixed ethnic backgrounds make good progress and their learning needs are met. The teaching in English and mathematics is good. Planning in Years 1 to 6 is detailed and effective. Lessons are purposeful. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall although the balance between direct teaching to large groups, guided work in small groups, and independent activity is not well established, particularly in the Reception year.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Lessons are interesting and relevant to pupils' learning needs. All subjects are taught. Yearly and termly planning promotes good continuity and progression in learning for all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. The school has appropriate regard for the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Record keeping is adequate. Individual support for pupils is generally good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. No extra provision is currently made. Pupils with English as an additional language are strongly bilingual, in the main, and do not need extra support. Pupils from minority ethnic and mixed-ethnic families are making good progress in the core subjects and their attainment matches pupils from white United Kingdom families.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision permeates all aspects of school life. Collective worship meets requirements and there is good provision for pupils to learn about Christianity and other world religions. Morality is specifically developed through subjects such as history. The development of good social skills is well supported by the school council, delegation of responsibility to pupils, and residential trips for older pupils. Different cultures are specifically explored in art and design and music as well as history and geography.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Typical of most schools. Child protection procedures are good.

Good systems are in place to assess attainment and track the progress that pupils make. A written policy on race equality is being implemented effectively. Senior management is aware that it needs to develop systems to analyse attainment and achievement of pupils by ethnic group but has not yet established efficient procedures. The procedures for maintaining registers of attendance meet statutory requirements and the arrangements for promoting regular attendance are satisfactory. The partnership with parents is good. Nearly all parents think that the school is effective and has improved over recent years.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The headteacher is providing a clear sense of purpose and direction to the work of the school. The teachers and others who work at the school are united around the headteacher and provide her with good support.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. An appropriate range of committees is established. Governors are fully involved in the life and work of the school. All relevant statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Evidence of performance from a range of sources is rigorously gathered and used and all teachers and governors are involved.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school development plan is of high quality and shows detailed, manageable strategic planning.

A large budget surplus at the end of 2001 has been spent in 2002 on modernising the buildings. The current surplus amounts to just over two per cent of the total budget and is not excessive. Best value principles are applied consistently to purchases and when reviewing the success of expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like the school and work hard. • The behaviour of pupils is good. • The good standards attained by pupils and the satisfactory progress they make. • The good teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents think that pupils could be pushed harder in mathematics and reading. • A number of parents think that homework is inconsistent. • Some parents think insufficient extra-curricular activities are provided.

The inspectors agree with parents that children like school; behave well; attain good standards; make good progress; and that teaching is effective. Inspectors do not agree with parents that pupils could be pushed harder in mathematics and reading; they find that the level of challenge provided by teachers in these subjects is good. Inspectors find the extra-curricular provision satisfactory and typical of many schools but that the homework is not always challenging enough. A good feature of the homework policy, however, is that expectations are shared with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics, and science

1. The 2002 test results in Year 6 were well above average in English, mathematics, and science. The results in English and mathematics were better than schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, and much better in science. The overall trend of improvement from 1998 to 2002 was above the national trend. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and mixed ethnic backgrounds are all making good progress and attain standards that match those of pupils from white United Kingdom families. Girls did better in English than boys; on average, they were about three months ahead. In other subjects, there were no significant variations in the attainment or progress of pupils of different gender.
2. In English in 2002, 91 per cent of the pupils in Year 6 attained or exceeded the nationally expected level; this proportion was much larger than the typical school and an improvement on 2001. Nearly half the pupils exceeded the expected level, which was much better than most other schools. Differences in standards between reading and writing were less pronounced in Year 6 in 2002 than is typical nationally and results show an improvement compared to the previous inspection.
3. Achievement in reading was very good among the Year 6 pupils tested in 2002. Nearly all pupils had made or exceeded the nationally expected amount of progress over the four junior years and about a third had made more progress than was expected. Current standards in reading in Year 6 are well above average. Almost all of the pupils read confidently, fluently, and accurately for pleasure and for study purposes. They are largely independent in their reading and able to tackle unfamiliar words competently. They have well-developed tastes in fiction, enjoying books such as 'Tom's Midnight Garden' and preferring authors such as J K Rowling. High attaining pupils can read books of near adult level of difficulty, such as 'The Railway Children'. They show very good understanding of main themes and an appreciation of the skill of the author, for instance, that of introducing the main characters efficiently and interestingly in the opening chapter of a novel.
4. Achievement in writing was very good among the Year 6 pupils tested in 2002 and slightly better than in reading. Almost all pupils made or exceeded the expected amount of progress between the ages of seven and eleven including nearly a half who made even faster progress. Current standards in writing in Year 6 are well above average. More than two-thirds of these pupils are already attaining or exceed the expected level, including about one in four who are exceeding expectations. Many of those currently below average are not far behind. Almost all of the pupils can organise their writing to suit the purpose, whether that is a poem, story, letter, or report. Pupils with average or better attainment are generally consistent in their use of punctuation and spelling. The higher attaining pupils use complex sentences, separate clauses with a comma, and use paragraphs. Almost all work is presented at an acceptable standard, handwriting is generally legible and joined, and there is an appropriate expectation that work is accurate and corrected where errors occur.
5. In mathematics in the 2002 tests, almost all of the pupils in Year 6 attained or exceeded the nationally expected level; this proportion was much larger than the typical school and an improvement on 2001. About a third of the Year 6 pupils in 2002 exceeded the expected level, which was better than many other schools. Results in mathematics in 2002 were much higher than the previous inspection and the overall trend in the subject has been one of good improvement. Achievement was excellent among the Year 6 pupils tested in 2002. All of them had made or exceeded the nationally expected amount of progress between the ages of seven and eleven and about a third exceeded the expectation. Particularly noteworthy, the large proportion of pupils with below average attainment in 1998, when aged seven, was not repeated in 2002, when aged eleven; all of these pupils had caught up and attained the nationally expected level, reflecting the effectiveness of the teaching.
6. Current standards in mathematics in Year 6 are well above average. About nine in ten pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level by the end of the school year with a third likely to exceed expectations. These pupils have good problem solving skills. For instance, nearly all

of them can quickly establish the calculations they would need to make when working out how many weeks and days they had been alive. They can carry out calculations using all four operations mentally, on paper, and with a calculator using large numbers and decimals, and show quick recall of the relevant multiplication facts for their age group. All of this is already consistent with the standard expected by the end of the year and the higher attaining pupils can, for example, complete calculations to three or more decimal places and understand negative numbers.

7. In science in 2002, all of the pupils in Year 6 attained or exceeded the expected level; this proportion was much larger than the typical school, in the top five per cent of schools nationally, and an improvement on 2001. Two-thirds of the pupils exceeded expectations, which was very high and significantly better than most other schools. Results in 2002 were much higher than the previous inspection; the trend is one of strong improvement. Achievement was excellent. All of the Year 6 pupils had made or exceeded the expected progress since the age of seven and more than half had made faster progress. Current standards in science in Year 6 are well above average. Almost all of the pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level by the end of the year, with about half likely to exceed expectations. The pupils can, for example, measure forces in Newtons, investigate the effect of different forces, and make well founded predictions. In life processes and living things, they have good knowledge of a range of plants and food chains, and can use appropriate identification keys to categorise the plants and animals they find. They have good knowledge of dissolving, evaporation, soluble and insoluble materials, and reversible and irreversible changes. The depth of their knowledge is better than the expectation for their age.

Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science

8. The 2002 test results in Year 2 were well above average in mathematics, above average in reading, and average in writing. Current work shows an improvement in reading and writing, reflecting the development priorities of the school.
9. In reading in 2002, 90 per cent of the pupils in Year 2 attained or exceeded the expected national level, including more than a third who exceeded expectations; these proportions were better than the typical school. Current standards in reading are similar to 2002. Most pupils are well launched into reading. They are familiar with a relatively large number of words that they recognise by sight and are acquiring the phonic skills necessary to tackle unfamiliar words.
10. In writing, 80 per cent of the pupils in Year 2 attained or exceeded the expected level in 2002. This was considerably smaller than the typical school and prompted action by the school. Current standards in writing in Year 2 are above average and show that the action taken has been successful. Those with typical or better attainment can write at a good length for their age and communicate meaning well. They are beginning to use longer sentences with clauses connected with words such as 'because'. They use capital letters to start sentences with reasonable consistency though punctuation is sometimes erratic. Spelling is generally good for the age, with most pupils willing to attempt longer words independently. The writing of high attaining pupils is often imaginative and clear. They begin sentences in a variety of ways and connect clauses with increasingly complex and subtle forms, such as 'after that'. The writing of low attaining pupils has adequately organised content but shows inconsistency in letter shape and size and in the use of punctuation.
11. In mathematics in 2002, all of the pupils in Year 2 attained or exceeded the expected national level. This proportion was larger than in 2001 and much larger than the typical school, being in the top five per cent. Nearly half the pupils exceeded expectations, which is high compared to other schools. Results in mathematics in Year 2 have significantly improved since the previous inspection. The biggest improvement was in 1999, with steady improvement each year since then. Current standards in mathematics in Year 2 are above average. Almost all of the pupils know the basic number facts to 20 and apply this knowledge to calculations involving addition and subtraction. For example, they were able to say quickly what is added to 13 to make 20. They are beginning to understand that numerals have different values depending on their place in the number, for example, whether they represent tens or units. The Year 2 pupils are very willing to explain the methods they use and are beginning to choose those that are more efficient. One boy could explain that when adding $8+3+2$ he first added

8+2 because he knew that made 10 and knew that 10+3 was 13. This reasoning and application of number knowledge is more sophisticated than expected for the age group at that time of year.

12. Current standards in science in Year 2 are above average. The vast majority of pupils have well developed knowledge of experimental and investigative science; life forms and living things; materials and their properties; and physical processes. For example, they have knowledge of foods necessary for human growth; describe a few of the properties of common materials; can make simple electrical circuits; and distinguish push from pull forces.

The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are very good

13. The pupils enjoy school and like lessons. This is the view of most parents and inspectors fully agree. In a good lesson in Year 2, the pupils were eager to answer during shared work. They talked responsibly to their partners when asked to discuss the different meanings of words that sounded the same and instantly focused attention back on the teacher when the task was complete. Throughout this lesson, pupils sustained their interest and completed their work quickly and on time. This was typical of all lessons in Years 1 to 6. The personal and social development of pupils in the nursery and Reception classes varies more than is the case elsewhere in the school and some of the four-year-olds have little awareness of acceptable boundaries. The mainly good behaviour and attentiveness of older pupils shows the effectiveness of the teachers in motivating the pupils and teaching them how to behave well at all times.
14. The start of the school day is business-like and calm with pupils entering classrooms and quickly settling to work. Behaviour in the canteen at midday is very good. The pupils are orderly, know and accept the routines, and show good manners. This mainly reflects the strong systems established by the headteacher and her staff to manage the pupils. Staff training has been provided in recent times and positive, assertive methods are used. These methods include agreed rules and sanctions plus rewards for those who conform, accompanied by clear explanations of why the rewards are being given. An effective feature of arrangements at midday is the use of Year 6 pupils to monitor the younger age groups. Responsibilities here are very well accepted and relationships between monitors and other pupils are very good indeed. Midday supervisors are well briefed. No bullying, aggressive or racist behaviour was seen and pupils report none. Parents report a small amount of bullying and say that the school is very effective in dealing with instances. Behaviour is monitored very effectively, with significant incidents recorded in detail.

The teaching is good, with a significant amount that is very good

15. The teaching is good overall. Ninety-five per cent is satisfactory or better. This overall proportion is the same as most schools. However, it includes 38 per cent that is good and a further 38 per cent that is very good. When these latter characteristics are taken into account, the broad picture is better than the typical school. The teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection at all levels and particularly the amount of high quality teaching in Years 3 to 6. The improvement is largely attributable to the management of the headteacher and the well-developed systems she has established for monitoring and supporting the development of teachers. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, and science, with the previous shortcomings in Years 3 to 6 having been fully remedied. Literacy and numeracy are well taught. The teaching effectively supports the learning of all pupils. Pupils with low attainment on entry often catch up with national expectations by the time that they transfer to secondary education. Many pupils with average attainment on entry excel themselves, particularly in mathematics.
16. All of the satisfactory or better teaching is characterised by a strong sense of purpose and shared targets. The teachers are enthusiastic about the subjects they teach and the pupils catch this enthusiasm. The planning is generally detailed, with the learning objectives clearly identified, particularly in Years 1 to 6. Most lessons are very well planned, providing a solid platform for the effective teaching. Plans show separate targets for pupils with different learning needs and work appropriately matched to varying levels of attainment within a class. Pupils understand their targets and work hard to achieve them. Good use is made of learning support assistants, whose work is directed towards helping pupils overcome specific difficulties.

17. Where teaching is very good, the teachers' well-developed subject expertise enables the questions and comments of pupils to be handled effectively and sensitively. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 6, the questions gradually increased in difficulty, challenging the pupils to think carefully and for a sustained period. In a very good English lesson in Year 5, the questions were cleverly used to encourage discussion between the pupils about adapting texts to the needs of different audiences. A good feature was the use of follow up questions to extend pupils' comments and develop their thinking.
18. Methods are very effective. Ideas and knowledge are introduced progressively during shared work, with the pace of explanations and demonstrations being brisk so that there is momentum to learning. Good use is made of equipment and resources, such as individual white boards, to make the learning practical and easy to follow. In a very good science lesson in Year 4, the pupils' study of the human body was made relevant through the use of a letter from a manufacturer of clothes seeking information about limb sizes to help with the making of a coat. The pupils were actively involved in devising an appropriate survey, collecting and analysing measurements. Not only did they learn about scientific methodology, they acquired practical knowledge of the human body and of measurement.
19. All of the teachers support common goals. The headteacher has established very good systems to check regularly on the quality of teaching and involve teachers in developing the effectiveness of their work. Lessons are observed, with notes taken, leading eventually to discussion and agreed targets where these are relevant. A strong team spirit has been created, with teachers united behind the headteacher and anxious to excel.

The leadership and the management are very good overall; the leadership of the headteacher is excellent

20. The overall quality of both leadership and management has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She directs most of her energy to creating a high performing team of teachers and is currently successful in this aim. The educational direction to the work of the school is clear and well supported by the school community. The needs of children are always paramount and this fundamental tenet of primary education underpins the main policies. Teachers and others with delegated responsibility understand their roles and carry out their duties well though a few are newly in post and need more time to get up to full speed. Parents are very satisfied with the quality of leadership and management.
21. Management systems and procedures are generally very effective. The school has a comprehensive and relevant set of aims that are firmly embedded in its life and work. The policies of the school are clearly communicated and understood by the teachers and pupils. The staff handbook, for example, is a very useful document. It is specific, contains much good practice, is easily understood and typical of the guidance provided.
22. The school development plan has been written after a rigorous review of progress since the previous inspection. Conclusions in the review are well supported by evidence and, because of this, are very credible. The targets are relevant to the needs of the school and are measurable. Action to achieve targets is effective. Writing, for example, is one of the identified areas for improvement and the findings of the inspection are that standards in writing are at least good and rising. Most subjects have detailed action plans; this is good practice. Costs, responsibilities and time scales are clearly identified. The strategic planning covers three years, currently to 2005. The school budget and development priorities are linked. There are detailed budget projections to 2005 with various cost scenarios. Overall, school development and strategic planning are excellent.
23. School self-evaluations systems are well developed. Senior management is using a good range of evidence sources to evaluate the effectiveness of the school and is reaching conclusions that are justified by the evidence. The systems for school self-evaluation include monitoring the teaching and the use of value-added measures. A rigorous programme of lesson observations by the headteacher and others with senior management responsibility leads to all teachers being observed regularly, with appropriate support and guidance being provided where necessary. The headteacher devotes more

than a day a week to this aspect of her responsibilities; this is good practice. Teachers do not see lesson monitoring as an imposition but as an essential part of their development; this is very good. Systems are also in place to review the work of sample children and check this for completeness against curricular planning; again, very good practice.

24. The governors are fully involved in the life and work of the school and their overall effectiveness is better than typically found. A noteworthy arrangement is the strategic planning group formed by the chairs of each of the governor committees plus the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and chair of governors. This group has oversight of school development. Relevant statutory requirements are met and compliance with national guidance and recommendations is satisfactory. Staff turnover has been very high. Two-thirds of the teachers have changed in the last two years. This has been managed effectively by senior management and governors, who have established strong working policies to recruit and retain suitable teachers. The income and expenditure per pupil is well above average, mainly because of the extra funds to manage the special educational needs unit based at the school. Expenditure is controlled tightly and best value principles are applied consistently.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The effectiveness of the provision in the Foundation Stage, although satisfactory, lags behind that in the other year groups

25. The quality of the curriculum provided in the Foundation Stage, which comprises the nursery and Reception classes, is just adequate. The effectiveness of the provision has been constrained by staff recruitment and retention issues in recent years and currently lags behind that of the rest of the school. Present staffing has good capacity for improvement though teachers are still finding their feet, particularly in the Reception class, and the management and coordination of the Foundation Stage as a whole needs consolidation. The curriculum is insufficiently planned as a continuous key stage and not enough thought has been given to continuity and development of learning between the two classes. Some activities are not always clearly linked to the stepping stones for early learning contained in the nationally agreed curriculum for the Foundation Stage. The balance between direct teaching, guided work, and independent activities is not well established, particularly in the Reception class, and the educational purpose of independent work is not always clear. This is largely a legacy from previous years. The shortcoming in provision and curricular planning is recognised by the headteacher and her staff and action is being taken to bring about improvement, with the appointment of the current teachers being part of that strategy.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

26. The effectiveness of the provision in the Foundation Stage lags behind that of the rest of the school, largely because of past rather than present teacher recruitment and retention issues. The staffing is now more stable and attention should be directed to bringing the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage up to the same high standard as the rest of the school. To raise standards, the headteacher and her staff, with the support of the governing body, should:
- ❑ improve effectiveness in lessons by establishing a proper balance between direct teaching, guided teaching, and independent activities, particularly in the Reception class;
 - ❑ ensure as far as is possible that independent activities have clearly defined, relevant and achievable learning objectives;
 - ❑ develop the planning for the key stage as a whole so that it promotes continuity and progression in learning from entry to the nursery to the end of the Reception year.

(Discussed in paragraph 25)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	5

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	8	4	1	0	0
Percentage	0	38	38	19	5	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	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	195
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	31

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

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 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	22	8	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	16	22
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	27	24	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (97)	80 (93)	100 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	21
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	27	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (97)	90 (100)	97 (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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	17	15	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	17
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	29	31	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (83)	97 (90)	100 (93)
	National	73 (72)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	17
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	31	31	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (93)	97 (90)	100 (97)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	177	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.9
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	76

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	34
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	496637
Total expenditure	564,820
Expenditure per pupil (based on 216 pupils)	2,615
Balance brought forward from previous year	78,580
Balance carried forward to next year	10,397

Income and expenditure for the SEN unit form part of the financial information because funding for the unit is included in the school budget. These funds are not spent directly on pupils at the school. Some benefit will accrue, for example, because of shared building and energy costs. The SEN unit funding amounts to £114,000 in total, about £528 per pupil.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	231
Number of questionnaires returned	113

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	35	3	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	3	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	47	4	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	49	8	3	4
The teaching is good.	62	36	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	45	10	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	27	7	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	39	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	47	39	12	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	58	31	9	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	35	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	33	23	4	8

Other issues raised by parents

All issues raised by parents are contained in the summary.