

# INSPECTION REPORT

**PARK STREET CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

St Albans

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117452

Headteacher: Mr G R Sturgess

Reporting inspector: Chrissie Pittman  
18275

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 247784

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Branch Road Park Street St Albans
Postcode:	AL2 2IX
Telephone number:	(01727) 872158
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Ruth Ward
Date of previous inspection:	24 <sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This popular school is situated on the southern outskirts of St Albans in Hertfordshire. It caters for 215 boys and girls between the ages of three and eleven years in mixed ability classes. It is about the same size as other primary schools and admits approximately 30 pupils every year. Most of its pupils come from the immediate catchment area, which is a mixture of owner-occupied homes and social housing. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is below average. The number of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is low. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below the national average. Baseline assessments show that pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average.

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

This is a very good school. The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher has placed an emphasis on identifying and tackling even the smallest of weaknesses; this has resulted in the provision of a very good education for the pupils. He is very well supported by his efficient deputy. The school has some excellent features. The attention paid to developing pupils as responsible members of society has led to outstanding attitudes to work and excellent personal development and relationships on the part of pupils. The teaching, overall, is very good. The aims and objectives of all the staff are firmly targeted on raising standards. This is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Most generally achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment at age seven. The school responds very well to the challenges it faces. It has made very good improvement and generally sustained high standards since the last inspection. The school is well governed, self-critical and cost effective. It provides very good value for money.

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

- The very good teaching in the school promotes standards that are usually well above average. The teaching of mathematics and music are particularly good.
- Pupils achieve very well because they have clear targets set for them. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good.
- The headteacher's leadership is excellent. The school is very well led and managed at all levels, including the involvement of governors who regularly monitor and support the school.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding; they have excellent attitudes to their learning and in their personal relationships as a result of the very good provision made by the school for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A very good level of care is provided for all pupils.

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

- The Foundation Stage curriculum has insufficient opportunities to develop children's independent learning and personal initiative. This adversely affects the pace of their progress, particularly for the more able pupils.

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

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

The school has made very good improvement since its previous inspection in 1997. Overall standards for eleven-year-olds have been well above average. Attainment has also been improved for seven-year-olds this year, although reading skills are still weaker than writing or mathematics. The school has already identified this as an area for development. The headteacher reacts swiftly to perceived weaknesses and this has led to a significant improvement in the quality of teaching, management, curriculum provision, assessment and monitoring. Most of the weaknesses identified in the previous report have been addressed and changed to strengths. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching and nearly one in four of the lessons seen during the inspection were excellent. However, curriculum planning for children in the

reception class still does not adequately promote children's independent attitudes by increasing opportunities for them to exercise choice. Although curriculum planning, teaching and learning are now very well monitored and there are very good procedures for assessing pupils' achievement, pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 are insufficiently targeted to ensure that they make similar progress to those in Years 4, 5 and 6. The school has identified this as an area for improvement through its very effective programme of targeting and monitoring individual pupils. Given the excellent quality of its leadership and the commitment of its staff, the school is well placed to improve even 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	D	A	B	B
mathematics	C	A	A	A
science	D	A	A	B

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

Most children, when they start school, are attaining standards in line with expectations, although some are below average. They make good progress in the nursery and, by the time they reach Year 2, their attainment is well above average in writing, above average in mathematics and at the expected standard for reading. By age 11, pupils are usually attaining standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above the national average and above average when compared to similar schools.

Results over the last three years show that girls outperform boys in English but boys do better in mathematics at age seven. At age eleven girls outperform boys in all the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils with SEN achieve very well. Standards of work seen, in both infant and junior classes, confirm the standards suggested by the test results and most pupils are making very good progress. Although children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress, overall, the climate for learning is better in the nursery. Similarly pupils make better progress in Year 2 than Year 1. The school, appropriately, sets challenging targets for its performance and is usually successful in achieving them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning, to school and to each other are excellent. They try very hard, enjoy learning, are highly motivated to succeed and readily take part in all school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, well mannered and show respect for property. There is hardly any evidence of bullying or disruptive behaviour. This helps to create a very good learning environment. There were no exclusions in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Relationships throughout the school are very positive and older children support the younger ones. Most are patient and courteous with a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They show a great deal of respect for the opinions of others.
Attendance	Good. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall with examples of excellent teaching. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. There is a positive ethos for learning in most classrooms. The best teaching is in mathematics and music and in Year 6, where it is particularly effective in meeting the needs of all pupils regardless of the subject being taught. Teaching is least effective in the reception class, where work is sometimes too directive, and Years 1 and 3 where it is sometimes not well matched to pupils' capabilities, particularly for the more able pupils.

Teachers are knowledgeable and learning targets are clear and understood by the pupils. Teaching in English and mathematics is good because pupils are grouped by prior attainment and the teaching focuses on the pupils' needs more effectively. Teachers take good account of pupils' progress and build on the work done by targeting them individually and assessing their work regularly. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school and very well in Years 4 to 6. This enables a large proportion of pupils to achieve higher than expected standards for their age. Most of the pupils throughout the school are well challenged by their teachers to achieve the standards they are capable of. Music is particularly well taught as the music teacher has good music skills and a very good knowledge of the subject. Information and communication technology (ICT) is also well taught across the school and good use is made of the school's ICT resources. Pupils with SEN receive very effective support in lessons and, as a result, make very good progress.

The result of the very good teaching is very good learning where pupils gain new knowledge and understanding faster than expected. Pupils work hard and concentrate well even when the teaching is not particularly inspiring. Older pupils usually have a good knowledge of their learning and know what to do to make it even better.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. There is a good range of relevant tasks in all subjects and good opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning. The curriculum is well balanced and considerably enhanced by a range of activities such as music groups, choir, orchestra, chess and computer clubs as well as competitive and non-competitive sports and games outside school hours.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with SEN receive effective support in lessons and make very good progress in relation to the targets on their individual education plans. Gifted pupils with particular aptitudes are identified and well supported.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	A very small number of pupils speak an additional home language. Good assessments of their needs are made and they are supported well in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The academic and pastoral aspects of pupils' development are linked very well. Very good procedures are in place for child protection and



	there are very thorough systems for ensuring the health and safety of pupils. There are good procedures to assess how well pupils are achieving.
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Curriculum planning in the infant and junior classes is good. However the curriculum for the Foundation Stage is variable. It is very good in the nursery where children are encouraged to learn through play and activities are matched to the different ages and capabilities of the children. In the reception class the planning is too rigid, the work lacks variety and is not such fun, and the more able children are not always sufficiently challenged to become independent learners. There is insufficient teaching support in this class to deliver the curriculum effectively.

#### 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 provides excellent leadership. He knows what the school does well, where its weaknesses are and how to improve them and has established a good ethos of striving to improve. The management of the school is extremely well focused on improving standards and supporting all pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is shrewd, effective and well aware of best value principles. Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil their statutory duties very well. They are very supportive of the school and take an active interest in forward planning and its day-to-day work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Data is used very well to monitor the school's performance. The school Improvement Plan is very well conceived. It is the result of a thorough process involving audits, monitoring and sharp evaluations of the school's performance. Actions to bring about improvement are planned and implemented without delay.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The targeting of funds to areas where there is the most need of improvement has been very effective. The school manages its finances very well, ensuring it gets the best value for money when committing resources or spending school funds.

The school's accommodation is ingeniously used so that all the available space is utilised for teaching and storing resources. Additional support staff are deployed very effectively and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. However, there is insufficient teaching support in the reception class.

#### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are happy with almost all aspects of the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The range of activities provided outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all the positive views expressed by parents. This is a very good school. Although most parents expressed no real concerns about the performance of the school, a few would like to see more activities outside lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Inspectors do not agree this is a necessity but admit that improved provision in this area would enhance the school's very good ethos.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**The very good teaching promotes standards that are usually well above average. The teaching of mathematics and music are particularly good.**

1. The teaching is very good and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching in most of the lessons seen was good, very good or excellent. Just over a third was satisfactory. This is a considerable improvement on the quality of teaching observed at the time of the previous inspection when one in 10 lessons were unsatisfactory.
2. Teaching is excellent or very good in a significant number of lessons in the school, most notably in mathematics and music. Teaching is satisfactory in the reception class, where it is sometimes too directive, and in Year 1 and Year 3, where more able pupils are not always challenged enough. There are certain features that are common to many of the very good lessons and they provide clues to ways in which the satisfactory lessons could be improved. The start of the most successful lessons is particularly significant. The beginning of the lesson is usually brisk, lively and challenging; it immediately makes pupils think. In mathematics, where many of these lessons are found, there is always a demanding 'mental starter' to engage pupils in thinking about numbers and the relationship between them. The teacher is indicating, from the outset, that he or she expects pupils to work hard but also there is enjoyment and satisfaction to be gained from such learning.
3. Teachers' high expectations, obvious from the start, are maintained as lessons continue. In an excellent music lesson for the junior pupils, nearly all read the music notation while they played out the beat accurately. A great sense of fun was inspired by the teacher and the lesson encapsulated a real love of music in the pupils. All the pupils, regardless of ability, achieved a high standard.
4. Once teachers have gained pupils' full attention they keep up the momentum, often with a series of short, focused tasks so that there is no opportunity for pupils' concentration to flag as was demonstrated in an excellent art lesson with the Year 6 teacher. Usually there is little need for obvious management of pupils; behaviour is very good and there are excellent relationships, based on mutual respect, between pupils and teachers. When necessary, however, teachers are quick to notice and deal with any straying of attention or lack of effort. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make and say that the teachers do well to help them become mature and responsible. The curriculum is planned to match the needs of all year groups and most teachers monitor and adapt their planning to take account of pupils' progress and capabilities.
5. Lessons usually provide a very good atmosphere for learning. Pupils have the confidence to try things out, attempting an ambitious answer or putting forward an opinion, secure in the knowledge that the reactions of both teacher and fellow pupils will be sensitive and supportive. The teachers also use resources very effectively in their lessons. This is best illustrated in the nursery. Here the planning encompasses all the areas of learning and the work children have to do is disguised effectively as 'having fun'. The activities are interesting and the children are totally captivated. All areas of the nursery are well used; resources are inventive and make the pupils' learning more meaningful.
6. The results of the very good teaching are standards that are well above average. Pupils join the school with average levels of attainment; they leave with results that are usually well above average. This is very good achievement. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment achieve very well at the school.

**Pupils achieve very well because they have clear targets set for them. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good.**

7. When children join the school in the nursery many are achieving standards in line with what is normally expected for children of this age in most areas. Most make very good progress in the nursery. They make substantially less in the reception class, but overall their progress is satisfactory; by the time they enter Year 1 attainment is just above the expected standard for most children. From a slow start in Year 1 pupils make significant progress in Year 2 and are attaining standards that are well above average in writing, above average in mathematics and average in reading when compared nationally. In the last three years standards have risen from below to above average overall for pupils aged seven. Pupils achieve significantly better by the age of 11. In the last three years, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have been improved from below national averages, overall, to well above the national norm. Pupils of this age usually achieve results that are also above average and sometimes well above, when compared to schools in a similar context to their own. Given that pupils start from a relatively average baseline on entry to the school, the large majority manage every year to consistently achieve well above average standards by the end of Year 6; this is very good achievement.
8. Part of the reason for this very good level of achievement is the secure way that teachers and senior staff monitor and target every pupil. There are effective assessment procedures in place that enable teachers and support staff to measure how well each pupil is doing so that realistic targets are set for them, particularly for older pupils. These targets are shared with the pupils so that they, and their parents, understand what is expected and at what stage in the year. For example, the pupils are assessed at the end of each year using nationally standardized tests. In addition to this, teachers keep assessment diaries in their classrooms, which can be accessed by other teachers and support staff. Their lesson plans have assessment information or planned activities that aim to assess how well a group of pupils is working in any particular aspect of the subject. Reading and spelling tests are undertaken regularly and results are recorded for every pupil so that they can be grouped by attainment for their English lessons. Similarly, in mathematics and science, a standardized test is administered at the end of each unit so that the pupils can be grouped by attainment on a stage-by-stage basis. The headteacher and staff regularly hold meetings to look at the pupils' books so that every teacher and learning assistant understands how to measure National Curriculum levels in, say, writing or numeracy. All of these ongoing assessments are recorded. In this way, what the pupils are expected to achieve, and at what stage in the year, is clear to the pupils, to the staff who teach and support them and to their parents.
9. In an excellent art lesson in Year 5, for example, the teacher used her assessment of a pupil's work to illustrate to the class how it could be improved. Her use of constructive criticism encouraged other pupils to evaluate their own and others' work more meaningfully. The teacher provided good challenges in the objectives she set for the lesson and pupils responded well. The aim of the lesson was clearly reflected in the targets set for all the pupils; namely, to look beyond technical accomplishment towards the expression of mood and feeling. This in turn encouraged the pupils to develop good making skills. In a very good English lesson in Year 6, every pupil, including those with SEN, made very good progress in understanding how newspaper articles are put together to emphasize certain aspects. The strength of the lesson was the teacher's knowledge of every pupil, which was informed by her excellent record keeping and monitoring of their progress. In this way teachers are able to accurately measure each pupil's progress and help them to achieve their targets. The planning demonstrates what is typical of most of the planning in the school: the attention given to individual targets and the close scrutiny of their progress. These are features of most classes with the exceptions of Years 1 and 3, where work is sometimes not well matched to pupils' capabilities, particularly for the most able pupils.
10. The school makes good provision for pupils with SEN. They are taught very well and their progress is monitored closely. The school has effective systems to identify, assess and monitor pupils with SEN from an early stage. All make very good progress because they receive very good support in lessons and when they are withdrawn for additional work with learning support staff. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. Pupils' targets, progress and achievements are shared with parents in order to maximise their support and co-operation. The

school has also begun to identify those pupils who have particular talent in an area or subject or are gifted.

11. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) keeps very good records of pupils' progress. An SEN teacher is also specifically assigned to work with children who have SEN and plans work which is particularly challenging for these pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons. In an excellent literacy lesson observed in Year 2, for example, pupils were taught learning strategies to help them remember: a 'model' lesson as it showed pupils making discernible progress. Learning support assistants record how well pupils respond during class discussions and then share this information with the class teachers. This enables teachers to provide specific work for individuals and groups in future lessons. Throughout the school, individual education plans are reviewed regularly by the SENCO, SEN teacher and class teachers. Pupils' progress is tracked and monitored to plan the most appropriate support and work to extend their learning further. In this way the school regularly reviews its plans and adapts the teaching to meet the needs of all the pupils. Procedures appropriately meet the requirements of the revised Code of Practice.

**The headteacher's leadership is excellent. The school is very well led and managed. The governing body is actively involved in monitoring and supporting the school.**

12. The feature that stands out in the leadership of the school is the complete absence of complacency in all areas of its work. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Parents say that the headteacher is never satisfied and is always seeking to improve the school; this is certainly true. He is respected by his staff and trusted by the pupils. This is one of the main reasons for the success of the school and its increasingly good reputation in the community. The deputy headteacher is also totally committed to the school and provides very good support helping the headteacher to monitor lessons and support teachers and pupils. The staff make a cohesive unit. They believe that they are very well supported by senior colleagues in their efforts to raise standards. Monitoring reports show that the school is self-critical and evaluative of its practices. There are many examples of this approach in action. Each year there are SATs reviews where co-ordinators are held accountable for examination results in their subjects. In areas where there have been relatively less successful results, such as reading at Year 2, the school is quick to take effective action.
13. Very effective monitoring is clearly defined by the headteacher and governors. It is aimed at helping the school to be clear about how well the teachers teach and how well the pupils are learning. This includes the monitoring of subject co-ordinators. There is a good balance of expertise amongst the staff and their very good subject knowledge enables them to review the impact each subject is having on pupils' achievements and progress. Curriculum co-ordinators produce 'position statements', which are then put into the school's improvement and management plan, so that priorities can be established over the long and short term. A thorough review of the school's curriculum planning has led to improvements in the standard of ICT. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have undertaken a school-wide evaluation, with a focus on improvement. This has given a clear educational direction to the work of the school. It welcomes external assessment of its work and performance. Recently it has achieved the Young in Hertfordshire Quality Standard (achieved May 2002).
14. The governors are knowledgeable, experienced and very committed to the needs of the school and its pupils. With the help of regular reports from the headteacher, they monitor the school's strengths and weaknesses very well. This gives them a clear insight into the work being done and the progress that the pupils are making. The resources of the school are good. They are well used and easily accessible. In particular, ICT resources have been improved so that all the pupils have regular access to computers and new technologies such as the Internet.
15. Financial planning is very good and the budget is used very well. The school's strategic improvement plan is very well set out. It identifies the right priorities and success criteria which are arrived at through careful audits, reviews and effective monitoring. Targets for improvement are clearly costed so that governors and staff are able to judge their effectiveness. The targeting of

funds to areas where there is the most need of improvement has been very effective, ensuring the budget is used efficiently.

16. The impact of the leadership and management is a school where high standards are regarded as the norm; academic standards, overall, are well above average and the personal development of pupils is excellent. This is a very effective school and it provides very good value for money.

**Pupils' personal development is outstanding; they have excellent attitudes to their learning and in their personal relationships as a result of the very good provision made by the school for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A very good level of care is provided for all pupils.**

17. Pupils have excellent attitudes to school; they like their school very much and speak highly of the education they receive. Many spoke with pride about *their* school and the very good relationships they had with their teachers and other support staff. A high level of informal respect runs through the school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how their actions impact on their peers and most have a genuine respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Pupils appreciate the activities that the school offers and support events outside of lessons. Parents praise the school for the positive attitudes of their children and the way the school cares for, monitors and supports them in their personal development.

18. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' social development. The school is very clear about the values and principles it promotes and fosters a sense of community with inclusive values very effectively. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together. Year 6 pupils act as buddies to Year 3 and compile a booklet for them about 'being a junior pupil'. The school council recently suggested a 'bus stop' system where older pupils take it on themselves to be responsible for younger pupils or those who do not have anyone to play with at playtime. Older pupils are given various responsibilities such as setting out the hall for assembly, monitoring in the library and organising the rota for the computer club. The school has developed a very effective way of resolving conflicts and countering attitudes which militate against inclusion and unity. For example, a few Year 3 boys had problems playing football without arguing. Pupils in Year 6 passed on their skills and the problem sorted itself out. Similarly the Year 6 buddies of new pupils who were having trouble understanding the school's expectations were able to help them to 'fit in' more happily. The opportunities provided for pupils to exercise leadership and responsibility are excellent. Older pupils express a sense of personal enrichment through these encounters. This results in a school where pupils relate well to others and work successfully as a team.

19. Provision for spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good and is enhanced through a rich arts and music curriculum, religious education, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and visits to places of cultural interest. The school has a strong social moral code that is respected by all pupils, staff, parents and the community. A well organised system of rewards and sanctions sharpens pupils' perceptions of right and wrong. Pupils throughout the school show the ability to distinguish right from wrong and make responsible judgements on moral issues. Teachers and learning-support assistants, with their sensitive and caring attitude towards the pupils, provide very good role models. The excellent relationships that exist between staff and pupils encourage pupils to discuss issues of a moral nature openly. Spiritual development is encouraged in assemblies where pupils enjoy celebrating their achievements and performing for the rest of the school. In lessons teachers encourage pupils to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference - for example, asking 'why,' 'how' and 'where' as well as 'what'. This, in turn, results in pupils challenging those aspects that constrain the human spirit such as a lack of self-confidence, moral indifference, self-interest and discrimination. The opportunities provided for pupils to explore their own and others' cultural assumptions and values are also very good. Pupils display an openness to new ideas and a willingness to modify their cultural values in the light of new experiences. They discuss and understand images in music, art and literature from various cultures and participate in and respond to other cultural enterprises. The headteacher regularly reminds staff in staff meetings and through monitoring the displays of the need to emphasize the multi-cultural in the light of the school's Euro-centric cultural situation. This very good provision in all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development creates a rich learning and caring ethos where all the pupils flourish.

20. The procedures for ensuring the welfare of pupils are very good and the school has significantly improved them since the last inspection. Procedures for child protection are also very good. The school is inclusive in all its policies. All the pupils have equal access to the school's curriculum and teachers and support staff plan activities that involve and encourage their full participation. Many pupils show the ability to understand each other's feelings and emotions and know the likely impact of their actions on others. All the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, pull together as a team and this is effective in developing a strong sense of purpose and self-worth amongst pupils. The school has very good procedures to assess how well pupils are achieving and parents are very appreciative of this. Each pupil's academic performance is monitored comprehensively. Teachers agree targets with the pupils and the progress made is discussed with governors, parents and the children themselves. There is good use of this information to plan future lessons. Pupils' personal development is very effectively monitored through their close relationship with the staff. The school also has very good procedures for monitoring behaviour; according to the parents, any instances of oppressive behaviour are dealt with immediately and very effectively.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The Foundation Stage curriculum has insufficient opportunities to develop children's independent learning and personal initiative. This adversely affects the pace of their progress particularly for the more able pupils.**

21. When they first come to the school, many children are attaining average standards. Children make good progress from the time they start school in the nursery and, by the time they go into the reception class, many are attaining standards just above expectations. Achievement slows down in the reception class and does not pick up pace until they are in Year 2, when they make very good progress again.
22. One of the reasons for this is that the Foundation Stage curriculum, and the way it is taught, is of variable quality. The curriculum and teaching are very good in the nursery, where the accent is on learning through discovery and play. However it is sometimes too teacher directed in the reception class where learning is often structured towards the formal Year 1 curriculum and there are not enough opportunities for children to take personal initiative and develop their ability to learn independently. For example, work planned for the children in the nursery includes all the areas of learning and is well-matched to their individual needs reflecting their different ages and abilities. In the reception class, planning does not always follow the latest guidelines for the Foundation Stage and work is sometimes not well-matched to the children's capabilities. Learning is fun in the nursery, less so in the reception class. A literacy lesson in the reception class was planned very formally for such young children and all the children did the same exercise. Some could not meet the objective of the lesson as they could not read the words to order the sentences, others finished too quickly. The pace of learning then slowed down markedly as these children lost interest. Activities are often not structured enough in terms of time, resources and challenge to stretch all the children. One reason for this is that there are too few classroom assistants to enable the teacher to ensure that the pupils' time is used more productively.
23. Children in the nursery complete a baseline assessment when they come to the school and when they enter the reception class. However, they are not targeted and monitored as systematically and consistently throughout the Foundation Stage as they are in the junior school. Assessment opportunities are not planned into individual lessons so that teachers can evaluate whether the children are making incremental progress lesson by lesson. Teachers use questioning well to ascertain what the children have understood, but this is not then used effectively to change what is taught next, particularly for the more able children.

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

To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors and senior management team should:

- (1) Improve the curriculum provision for children in the Foundation Stage to ensure that all children, but particularly the more able children in the reception class, make better progress by:
- improving how the activities are planned so as to reflect recent guidelines for the Foundation Stage curriculum;
  - providing more challenging activities for more able pupils;
  - providing more opportunities to develop children's independent learning and personal initiative.

*(Paragraphs: 19-21)*

## PART C : SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	4	5	2	7	0	0	0
Percentage	22	28	11	39	0.0	0.0	0.0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one five 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)	15	182
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	23

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	18	13	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	18
	Girls	10	13	13
	Total	25	30	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (88)	97 (85)	100 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	14
	Girls	12	13	11
	Total	28	31	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (88)	100 (91)	81 (91)
	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	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	13
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	22	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (90)	86 (84)	90 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	22	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (87)	86 (84)	86 (94)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	171	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.2
Average class size	26

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	66

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	49
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	487,277
Total expenditure	492,854
Expenditure per pupil	2,440
Balance brought forward from previous year	28,479
Balance carried forward to next year	22,902

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	211
Number of questionnaires returned	87

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	24	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	67	26	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	40	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	44	8	1	0
The teaching is good.	70	29	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	37	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	22	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	30	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	60	36	3	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	70	30	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	30	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	31	14	0	6