

INSPECTION REPORT

BLEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blean, Canterbury

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118356

Headteacher: Mr K Oliver

Reporting inspector: Mrs S D Morgan
1355

Dates of inspection: 14th –15th October 2002

Inspection number: 247879

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whitstable Road Blean Canterbury Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr A McCulloch
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Blean primary is a large community primary school with 386 pupils in Years 1 to 6. Currently, there are 49 pupils in the reception classes. This figure will rise to 67 next January due to a further intake of children. The school is oversubscribed and most classes have more than 30 pupils. The number of boys and girls is similar overall. Many children who attend the school live some considerable distance from the village, for example in the town of Whitstable. Almost all pupils are white, with about five per cent of pupils coming from a range of other ethnic groups. Almost five per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language with a few at an early stage of learning English. A very small number of Traveller pupils attend the school. In most year groups there is a turnover of around ten per cent of pupils. This is mainly due to parents who have to move, owing to changing work or study commitments. Pupils are mostly from above average socio-economic backgrounds. Just over two per cent of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals, which is below with the national average. Assessments carried out by the school indicate that the attainment of pupils on entry has been declining, and is currently average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, at just over ten per cent, is well below the national average. Around one per cent of the pupils, a below average proportion, have a statement of special educational need. Most pupils' special needs relate to learning, communication or medical difficulties, although a small number have physical disabilities. Significant staff turnover has taken place with over a third being appointed during the last two years. The school is involved with national initiatives to promote sports.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. It has a very caring ethos, which values everyone. Relationships are excellent and both staff and pupils work hard. The quality of teaching is very good, pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, reach standards that are above national expectations. The headteacher and senior managers provide very good leadership. They have been effective in identifying areas for development and taking appropriate action. This has led to significant improvement in many areas of the school's work during the last two years and raised standards. For example, the most recent results in the end of Year 2 national tests indicate considerable improvement. The school now provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Overall, results in national tests at the end of Year 6 are above average.
- Teaching is very good, with many strengths and this helps pupils achieve well.
- The school provides a very good range of educational opportunities for pupils, with high quality enrichment for pupils of all levels of attainment.
- The promotion of a very caring ethos, which values everyone in the school community and creates an environment in which pupils truly enjoy learning and behave very well.
- The headteacher and senior managers provide very good leadership. Supported by governors, they have been effective in implementing developments, which have led to significant and rapid improvement.

What could be improved

- No major issues were identified during the inspection.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. It has made very good improvement since then, and particularly following the appointment of the headteacher. He has successfully built upon existing strengths and dealt with a number of aspects of the school's work that required improvement. Staff now work as a cohesive and effective team and morale is high. The quality of teaching has improved with a significantly higher proportion of lessons being very good or better. This is having an impact on standards across all subjects. Governors are now fully involved in the work of the school and in planning future developments. The key issues identified in the last report have been dealt with systematically. For example, opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their information and communication technology (ICT) skills have been extended and provision for the teaching of religious education now meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils are now provided with a range of opportunities to undertake investigations and research, for example in science and history. A strong commitment for further improvement is shared by the school community. 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	B	A	B	C
mathematics	B	A	B	D
science	B	B	C	D

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

Results in the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 6 were similar to those of previous years. The trend of improvement for all three subjects is broadly in line with the national rate. Overall, results in 2002 were above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 5 was well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Results were average for schools of a similar type. However, only around three-quarters of the pupils who took the tests had been in the school in Years 1 and 2. Also, a higher proportion of pupils than in previous years had special educational needs. These factors led to a slight decline in results. When results are compared to pupils' prior attainment in national tests at the end of Year 2, they show that, overall, pupils achieved well, even though there has been significant staff turnover in the last two years. The school did not meet the challenging targets set for results in English and mathematics. Targets for future results are appropriate and have been based on careful analysis of the school's assessment of what pupils have achieved so far. They show that in 2003 pupils are expected to improve on the above average attainment of the past few years.

Overall, the most recent results in national tests at the end of Year 2 were well above average and show improvement. In English, after a period of some decline, an above average proportion of pupils gained the expected level and the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 3 rose to well above average. In mathematics, all pupils gained the expected level (these results are in the highest five per cent nationally), and a well above average proportion gained the higher level, again showing an improvement on the previous year. Teacher assessments in science were also well above average. When compared to those of similar schools, results were well above average. Considering their starting points pupils' achievements are very good in Years 1 and 2, reflecting the recent improvements in teaching and learning.

In the reception class, children learn successfully in all areas of the curriculum and achieve well in relation to their varying starting points. Most children reach the expected level by the time they reach Years 1. Pupils' current achievements during Years 3 to 6 do not fully match the very good teaching seen during the inspection but work

seen in all year groups indicates that standards are improving due to very well planned and managed lessons. Overall, in Years 1 and 2 current standards of work in English, mathematics and science are well above average and in Year 6 above average. In ICT they are average. In other subjects, there is evidence of good standards and pupils achieve well. The range of written work and research in other subjects, such as history and science, is good. Throughout the school, the presentation and range of pupils' written work is very good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils show a real interest in work and are extremely positive. Pupils of all ages respond very well to the school's strong community and caring ethos.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respect the staff, appreciating the calm and encouraging management of their behaviour in lessons and around the school. There have been no exclusions during the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils are mature and confident, mix extremely well and work together very effectively in pairs and groups. They accept willingly the excellent opportunities to exercise responsibility.
Attendance	Very good. Parents respond well to the school strong emphasis on regular and prompt attendance and pupils like coming to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the lessons observed and was good or better in just over four fifths. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, particularly as the proportion of very good and excellent teaching has increased. Pupils' learning reflects the overall quality of teaching. Many strengths were seen in teaching throughout the school. The planning of lessons to meet the varying needs of pupils is a real strength and enables pupils of all levels of attainment to make good progress. In lessons, teachers had high expectations of what pupils could achieve and consistently encouraged and praised them. This led to pupils' working hard and trying to do their best. Throughout the school, teachers' very good subject knowledge and very good use of learning support staff were particular strengths, which enabled pupils to make very good progress. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and teachers organise and manage classroom activities very well. Pupils settled to tasks quickly and concentrated very well. This enabled them to complete the tasks set and often move onto more complex activities. Teachers effectively extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of lessons. Arrangements for homework are good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. A very good range of activities is provided. Whilst recognising the importance of English and mathematics, the school attaches appropriate importance to the development of all aspects of pupils' learning. A wealth of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Very good links with the local and wider community make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Staff are well trained in the best ways of helping pupils who have specific needs. Support staff have considerable expertise, which they use to good effect.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English receive good support in class and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The clear and well-respected behaviour code underpins the excellent social and very good moral provision. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good and continuing to develop well. Pupils have an impressive range of opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Child protection procedures and training for staff are of good quality. Policies for dealing with bullying and attendance are very good, as are reward systems and procedures for recording good and bad behaviour. Staff know the pupils very well. Assessment of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory and being developed very well.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents have a very positive view of the school, and a very effective partnership between parents and the school has developed in a comparatively short time. Parents are very positive in their support of school events. Information provided for parents is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management provided by the headteacher, senior managers and co-ordinators are very good. The headteacher has successfully introduced many initiatives. These include a focus on training for both teaching and support staff. He has successfully worked with all in the school community to create a positive learning environment in which the quality of teaching has improved and standards are rising.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Effectively. Governors have become knowledgeable and increasingly effective over the last two years. They are now well trained and this has enabled them to take a full role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is effective in evaluating areas of strength and where development is needed. For example, through analysis of test results, it has successfully focused on improving the spelling of younger pupils. Through regular monitoring of pupils' work, areas for development are identified and guidance and support given to staff.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Finance, learning resources and teaching and support staff are used very well to support pupils' learning. The school applies the principles of best value well.

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 school and make good progress. • Behaviour is good and the school helps their children become mature and responsible. • Teaching is good and the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school is well led and managed. • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents raised issues both in written responses and at the parents' meeting, but none was significant to most parents.

Parents expressed considerable support for the school. They commented particularly on a number of improvements that had been made since the appointment of the headteacher. Most, but not all parents were positive about the provision that is in place to ensure that class sizes in Years 1 and 2 are not above 30. Also a concern was raised about the suitability of some work in the reception classes. The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed. The inspection team found the provision made for groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 visiting "Rainbow" class to be good. Teaching, pupils' behaviour and leadership and management were found to be very good. The quality of the curriculum and teaching and learning in the reception classes were found to be very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Overall, results in national tests at the end of Year 6 are above average.

1. Pupils' attainment is what they know, understand and can do at a particular point in time e.g. at the end of Year 2 or Year 6. Pupils' achievements are the progress they make in relation to their initial attainment. Therefore, a child starting school with low attainment may achieve well but still not reach the nationally expected standard of attainment. Where the school's results in national tests are compared with similar schools, these are schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

2. Over the past four years in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, pupils have consistently attained results that have been above or well above average. Overall, results in 2002 were above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 5 was well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Results were average for schools of a similar type. However, only around three-quarters of the pupils who took the tests had been in the school in Years 1 and 2. Also, a higher proportion of pupils than in previous years had special educational needs. These factors led to a slight decline in results. When results are compared to pupils' prior attainment in national tests at the end of Year 2, they show that, overall, pupils achieved well, even though there has been significant staff turnover in the last two years.

3. Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop very well throughout the school. They are provided with a range of opportunities to put forward ideas. At the start of lessons, they listen carefully to instructions and show a keenness to both ask and answer questions. In Year 1, pupils sharing news spoke out clearly when relating the events of the previous weekend. When describing entertainment at a party, they used interesting vocabulary, such as *chuckle*. Pupils took turns to share a news item and the rest of the class listened attentively. They spoke with confidence when describing objects, using full well constructed sentences during a *show and tell* session. In Year 6, pupils listened very carefully to Shakespeare's *All the World's a Stage* and discussed the meaning of the language, showing good understanding.

4. In the 2002 English National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, almost 90 per cent of pupils attained the expected level 4 and over two fifths reached the higher level 5. Pupils attain well above average standards in reading throughout the school. The reading skills of younger pupils are systematically developed both in school and by taking books home each day. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils followed well the story of *The Tiger who came to tea*. During discussion they showed very good understanding of the story and were able to relate the events accurately. By Year 2, almost all pupils show a good knowledge of the sounds letters make and are able to identify accurately the number of sounds in words such as *baby* and *leap*. Year 3 pupils are confident readers and can explain the meaning of words such as *during*. They have a good understanding of the final sounds of words such as *nk*, *ch* and *ng*. By Year 6, pupils read a range of books and develop a wide reading vocabulary. For example, they followed well the Shakespeare text read by their teacher and showed very good comprehension skills in their answers to questions based on the archaic language used. Pupils' very good reading skills make a significant contribution to their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

5. By the end of Year 2, pupils sequence stories and write in full sentences. They use a good range of vocabulary, for example when describing the scene when waking up at the beginning of the Great Fire of London. They understand that a good sentence has to make sense, give information and use correct punctuation. In their writing, they applied these principles very well, using dictionaries to check on the

spelling and meaning of words. By the end of Year 6, nearly all pupils produce extended pieces of writing and have the skills expected for their age in punctuation and spelling. Higher-attaining pupils show flair and imagination in their very fluent writing and use a very good range of vocabulary and expression. Pupils produce a wide range of writing, for example producing storybooks to share with younger children. Pupils of all levels of attainment are writing their own novels. They pay good attention to the correct detail of a book including cover, design, chapter headings and the blurb to give a flavour of the content and the comments of critics. Well above average standards of writing contribute positively to pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum, for example, in history and science.

6. In the 2002 end of Year 6 mathematics tests, over 80 per cent of pupils attained the expected level and almost a third gained the higher level 5. Teachers consistently develop pupils' skills through the use of a combination of mental arithmetic, basic skills and problem solving. This enables pupils to use their knowledge well when solving problems. For example, pupils in Year 2 used a variety of methods to calculate the correct change when purchasing various items. They calculated measurements and weights accurately and presented their work very well. By Year 6, pupils use a good range of mental strategies for calculations and can quickly use them to solve problems. Pupils work confidently with large numbers, for example working out a range of methods using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to calculate five and six figure numbers. Pupils' mathematical vocabulary is extended well both in lessons and through good displays in classrooms.

7. Pupils' skills and knowledge in science are now being well developed as they progress through the school. Up until recently, pupils had been provided with insufficient opportunities to undertake the experimental and investigative aspects of the subject. This has had an impact on the results in national tests, which are below those of English and mathematics. The school recognised this weakness and has taken appropriate action to ensure that pupils regularly plan and carry out investigations and record their results. This is having a positive impact on the standard of work observed in lessons and in pupils' books. In a Year 2 class, pupils were making observations relating to the melting of ice. The teacher discussed what would make the experiment fair and how to carry out the investigation. Pupils were asked to make predictions and record what happened. In a Year 4 class, pupils had devised their own exercise programmes to investigate the relationship between pulse rate and physical activity. Working in groups, pupils decided on the equipment to be used and set it up. They then carefully timed the activities and recorded the results. In discussion, pupils showed that they understood the need to carry out an investigation more than once to check if results were reliable. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils understand and use vocabulary such as *molecule* and *particle* when undertaking an investigation on solutions. They are able to make predictions, understand what constitutes a fair test and record their results accurately.

Teaching is very good, with many strengths and this helps pupils achieve well.

8. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. All of the lessons observed were satisfactory or better. Over eight out of ten were good or better and over a half were very good or excellent. Teachers have high expectations of what each pupil can achieve. They are enthusiastic and committed. Despite a number of staffing changes, the headteacher has been successful in ensuring that the quality of teaching has continued to improve. Staff with a good range of subject expertise and skills have been recruited and this is having a positive impact on standards. In discussions, staff commented that they were always able to get advice and guidance from colleagues who have particular subject knowledge. This culture of sharing helps ensure that subjects are well taught throughout the school.

9. Specialist skills are also well used. For example, a teacher with expertise in music works regularly with a number of classes. Other staff with particular expertise in subjects such as religious education have provided good guidance to ensure that all aspects of the syllabus are fully covered. Emphasis is placed on staff improving their skills, and where these have needed development, for example in aspects of ICT, a programme of training has taken place. Subjects are regularly reviewed throughout the school and pupils' books are regularly monitored to identify areas of strength and areas that require improvement. The quality and quantity of work in pupils' books indicates that teaching is consistently very good. This leads to pupils achieving well over time. Parents commented positively about the quality of teaching and the high expectations of staff. Year 6 pupils said that they really liked the school because the teaching was good.

10. Teachers plan work very carefully to meet the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment. In the reception classes, teachers develop children's social skills by ensuring regular opportunities are provided to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and *role-play*. Children are encouraged to become independent and make decisions through choosing some activities. A broad range of activities is planned throughout the school with an emphasis on developing and applying pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Lesson planning for English, mathematics and science is detailed and consistent between classes in the same year group. This helps ensure that work is systematically covered and that new work builds on pupils' previous learning. Work is well planned to meet pupils' special educational needs. Targets on individual education plans are clear and used by staff. Support staff are well trained, knowledgeable and teachers make very good use of their expertise. Good communication between teaching and support staff is a strong feature. Pupils' progress is carefully considered before planning future work. This thorough planning makes a significant contribution to the progress of these pupils. Teachers also make very good use of support provided by parents and other adults. These helpers work with groups of pupils in lessons such as ICT and listen to pupils read.

11. Teachers show considerable enthusiasm in lessons and work hard to ensure that they involve all pupils. Pupils respond positively. For example in a Year 3 history lesson on the results of Boudicca's revolt, the teacher's introduction was lively and interesting. This, coupled with careful questioning and praise, led to pupils confidently using specialist vocabulary and putting forward ideas. They were keen to close their eyes and picture the scenes they were going to write about. The teacher created a positive learning environment, which was well resourced to support pupils' learning. The emphasis placed on extending pupils' vocabulary in lessons such as history, ICT and mathematics is a strength and helps promote good standards.

12. At the start of lessons, teachers clearly explain the work that has to be completed. This means that time is used effectively. For example, in a science lesson, pupils were planning an investigation and the teacher set clear time limits for activities and reminded pupils of how much time had elapsed. Pupils responded well by discussing what had to be done and allocating tasks. Pupils' books are regularly marked with helpful comments on the good aspects of their work and what could be improved. Year 6 pupils said that their work was regularly marked and that the targets set were helpful. Parents commented that homework is regularly set and marked and teachers value pupils' efforts. Value is also placed on pupils' work through good displays, for example of art work in the corridors and hall.

13. Throughout the school there is a clear expectation that pupils will work hard and do their best. Pupils respond positively. Work in their books shows care and is invariably neat and well presented. In lessons, even the youngest pupils settle to work quickly and without fuss. When they have finished a task, they automatically ask for, or move onto the next pieces of work or extension activity. The result is they produce a considerable amount of work in their books which is of good quality.

The school provides a very good range of educational opportunities for pupils, with high quality enrichment for pupils of all levels of attainment.

14. The curriculum is very well planned to provide a rich and stimulating range of activities. Available curriculum time is used well to ensure good coverage of all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Staff take care to make the work interesting, for example linking science investigations to physical education activities. A good range of resources is used to support pupils' learning. Good quality computer resources are now available and used regularly by all classes to develop pupils' skills and knowledge. Very good links are made between subjects and the promotion of literacy and numeracy. For example, pupils collect information in science, and use their numeracy skills to record and represent it using tables and bar charts. In Year 4, pupils' paintings on the theme of *sun and sea* were used effectively to stimulate pieces of descriptive writing. Teachers consistently provide opportunities and encourage pupils to use specialist subject vocabulary, and good displays of key words are in evidence in classrooms. In history, very good opportunities are provided for pupils to carry out research using books and then write accounts of events. For example, in a Year 3 lesson studying Boudicca's revolt, pupils discussed the short and long term results and then were given the choice of writing an account or a letter from the viewpoint of a Celtic or Roman survivor. In ICT, pupils' graphics skills are developed and used effectively to support their work in history. After studying the construction of houses built at the time of the Great Fire of London, pupils in Year 2 carefully drew them using a graphics package.

15. Careful planning ensures that work is both varied and relevant and consistently develops and applies basic skills. Good provision has been made for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to ensure that class sizes do not exceed 30. The creation of *Rainbow class*, which pupils attend on a rotational basis, provides an opportunity for pupils to work in a smaller group. Very good planning and regular contact between teachers ensures pupils complete the same work as the main classes in subjects such as literacy and numeracy. However, the *Rainbow class* also provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop other skills in subjects such as art in a small group situation. In discussion, pupils talked with real enthusiasm about the time they spent in the class, whilst others said they were looking forward to joining the class during the year.

16. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Particular strengths of the provision are the good quality on-going training provided for all school staff, and the level of expertise that is evident. Information is regularly shared as teachers and support staff discuss pupils' needs and how they are to be met. During discussions with teaching and support staff, good teamwork was identified as a significant strength in the school's special needs provision. Effective sessions are run by the special needs co-ordinator before school to improve pupils' writing skills. Lunchtime sessions are also run by learning support assistants to improve pupils' communication skills. This very good provision means that pupils with special educational needs often reach the expected levels in national tests. The school has also identified pupils with particular talents and aptitudes and is developing a range of groups and resources to meet their needs. A member of the senior management team is co-ordinating developments and has received training. Extension activities are now available in each class and a Year 6 reading group for *more able* pupils has been set up. Parents of higher-attaining pupils can get advice during a *surgey* session on how they can best help and support their children.

17. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good for pupils from Years 1 to 6. Parents commented very favourably about the range of activities provided outside of lessons. A very wide

choice is provided each day, including lace making, short tennis, recorders, drama and hockey. Pupils are enthusiastic about the activities, and groups are well attended. A range of visits and visitors enhance pupils' learning experiences and add breadth to the curriculum. Very good use is made of a number of contacts the school has in the wider community to provide learning opportunities. For example, a local baker has demonstrated bread making and local musicians give instrumental lessons in school. Visits are also arranged, for example to the local theatre and the school has close links with the University of Kent. Good links with a local secondary school have been effectively used to develop the investigational aspects of science for older pupils. Pupils are provided with opportunities to take part in residential visits, for example in Year 5 to Flatford Mill and in Year 6 to the Isle of Wight. Very good provision is made for pupils' social and moral development. For example, circle time provides opportunities for discussion of a range of issues and health education is timetabled for older pupils.

The promotion of a very caring ethos, which values everyone in the school community and creates an environment in which pupils truly enjoy learning and behave very well.

18. A very caring ethos, sense of purpose, mutual respect and excellent attitudes and relationships are strong features of the school community and make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. In discussion, pupils said that they liked coming to school and enjoyed school life. The headteacher and staff work hard to make learning enjoyable. Pupils respond very well in lessons and show very positive attitudes and involvement, whether working individually or in groups. This was evident in all classes observed. For example, in a reception class when the teacher showed different musical instruments, all the children listened carefully and followed the instructions to sort them in the correct sets. They were entranced when passing a fur alligator around the group and listened to silence before attempting to pass around the noisiest instrument without making a sound. Later in the lesson, they listened carefully to each other when they spoke during *circle time*. In Years 1 and 2, pupils willingly participate in oral activities and concentrate very well, for example teachers encourage pupils to speak out when sharing news about the weekend and this help pupils feel confident and secure when speaking in front of others. Older pupils settle to work quickly and co-operate well. For example, in a Year 5 ICT lesson pupils were engrossed during a class demonstration of a program that drew plans. They then worked very well in pairs sharing ideas whilst designing an ideal bedroom. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire and those who attended the pre-inspection meeting said that their children enjoy school and behaviour is good.

19. Relationships are excellent within the school. Pupils said that it was easy to make friends and there was always a lot going on in school. They show respect and concern for others and respond with maturity to the responsibilities they undertake. Year 6 pupils especially show a sense of pride in their leadership role in the school and provide kind and dignified role models for younger pupils. The strong social and moral code of the school and good spiritual and cultural development of pupils is clearly evident in their relationships, involvement in their work and very good behaviour. Staff know pupils well and their welfare and development are given the highest priority. For example, they provide very good guidance and support to families of Year 6 pupils who are transferring to secondary schools. The school is very well linked with the local community, extending and promoting pupils' awareness of the world around them and their role as young citizens.

20. Parents are very appreciative of the school and recognise and value the strengths in teaching, management, care and development of their children. They have a very positive opinion of the school. At the parents' meeting there was general agreement that since the appointment of the headteacher communication with parents has improved immeasurably and the school has become very responsive to parents' concerns and suggestions. They mentioned the *open door* policy, the positive way in which parents are encouraged to help in school, together with the increased involvement of the wider

community in the life of the school. Parents value the close and effective partnership they now have with the school which supports and promotes their children's learning and development very well.

The headteacher and senior managers provide very good leadership. Supported by governors, they have been effective in implementing developments, which have led to significant and rapid improvement.

21. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Prior to his appointment, the school had gone through a difficult period due to the long-term illness and subsequent early retirement of the previous headteacher. Since being appointed, the headteacher has developed a school in which staff morale is high and very good teamwork is having a positive impact on standards. Together with senior managers, he has been successful in ensuring that staff, governors and parents share and work towards the same aims. These are based on meeting the needs of all pupils and high expectations, and are reflected in the work of the school where relationships are excellent and all work in close co-operation towards the same goals.

22. A thorough analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, by the headteacher, has resulted in a list of priorities being drawn up and acted upon. These included improving standards in some subjects, such as science, ICT and religious education, updating or writing a range of policies and implementing a performance management programme for staff. These priorities are being systematically dealt with and have led to significant improvements, for example in the quality of teaching which is now consistently very good throughout the school. Senior staff are very effective in their roles. Striving for improvement through self-review is now clearly evident. For example, a weakness in the standard of spelling was identified and a well-structured programme of action has resulted in significant improvement, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Middle managers meet each week to monitor aspects of the school's work, for example by scrutinising work in pupils' books. During the week prior to the inspection they reviewed spelling to check that improvements were being maintained. Careful analysis of school results is now undertaken and information shared with staff. This is then discussed so that appropriate action can be taken, for example improving aspects of the science curriculum such as experimental and investigative work. A programme to track pupils' progress systematically is being implemented and a regular programme of testing has been drawn up to check progress and enable suitable work to be planned. Subject co-ordinators are now effectively monitoring standards in their subjects and are clear about strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers mentioned that the school now had a clear sense of direction under the leadership of the headteacher and they saw monitoring as helpful in developing their skills and improving standards. The school now has a clear commitment to raising standards and pupil' achievement. This can be seen in many aspects of its work, including the quality of teaching and learning and the recent improvement in national test results at the end of Year 2.

23. The headteacher has been very successful in improving channels of communication both with staff and parents. He values the contribution made by all staff and, together with governors, they contribute to the school development plan. The current plan is clear, concise and well structured with criteria for the evaluation of success. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection. Good channels of communication have been developed within the school. For example, the headteacher and special needs co-ordinator meet each week with support staff to discuss their work. Support staff are fully involved in the life of the school. They commented that the school encourages them to improve their expertise through attending courses. The positive impact on pupils' learning due to the work of support staff was clear in lessons observed during the inspection. Other staff such as the school

caretaker, administrative staff and mid-day supervisors also make a positive contribution to the work of the school and its caring ethos. The headteacher has been very effective improving communication with parents. Parents now receive good quality written communication, for example regular newsletters. The school prospectus is a very clear and helpful document with good information, such as how parents can help their children at home. Parents commented very favourably about the initiatives implemented by the headteacher and the resulting improvement in staff morale. They made comments such as “there is a real vibrancy in the school now” and “he is accessible and will listen.”

24. Governors spoke very positively about the way in which the headteacher had managed change since his appointment. The comment that change had been very well considered and “was not change for changes sake” was made. Governors mentioned that the headteacher had brought energy and dynamism to the school after a period when development had been constrained due to no permanent headteacher being in post. They said that the school was now a happier place in which staff morale was good, and which emphasised developing the whole person and ensuring that each child achieved their best. They also commented that the role of governors has now changed considerably. Governors had taken part in a self-review programme and identified aspects of their work which required improvement. These were incorporated into a development plan. Governors have improved their expertise by taking part in training and this has enabled them to ask relevant questions about the work of the school and be much more proactive. The inspection team found governors to be very committed, knowledgeable and well informed. They now have formalised procedures and a schedule for making visits to see the work of the school. Governors are fully involved in the development planning process and reviews of progress. Overall, governors are now effective in their role as *critical friends* of the school.

25. Financial planning and monitoring are of very good quality. Very effective financial planning enables the school to employ additional teaching staff, for example to release senior managers for regular monitoring of teaching and learning. Staff training has been given a high priority and a well-planned programme has improved staff expertise in subjects such as ICT and religious education and led to an improvement in standards. Support staff are also well trained and deployed. Effective longer-term financial planning has enabled the school to allocate funding to improve resources. The school has also been successful in gaining funding for five new classrooms to replace old accommodation. Parents commented on the considerable improvement to the fabric of the buildings which had taken place during the last two years.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

26. No major issues were identified during the inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

27. Inspectors found no need to make any recommendations beyond those already in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	12	7	5	0	0	0
Percentage	8	46	27	19	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 about four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	435
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	45

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	21

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	30	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	27	30
	Girls	35	35	35
	Total	61	62	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (84)	95 (85)	100 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	30	28
	Girls	35	35	35
	Total	61	65	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (89)	100 (87)	97 (93)
	National	84 (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	22	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	18	19
	Girls	39	35	39
	Total	57	53	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (89)	82 (81)	89 (92)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	20
	Girls	36	36	36
	Total	54	55	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (81)	85 (87)	86 (92)
	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	401		
White – Irish	5		
White – any other White background	8		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1		
Mixed – White and Black African	0		
Mixed – White and Asian	3		
Mixed – any other mixed background	0		
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3		
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1		
Black or Black British – African	0		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0		
Chinese	3		
Any other ethnic group	2		
No ethnic group recorded	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

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	24.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	305

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	925,434
Total expenditure	920,470
Expenditure per pupil	2023
Balance brought forward from previous year	65,446
Balance carried forward to next year	70,410

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.45

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	435
Number of questionnaires returned	225

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	39	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	48	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	48	2	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	47	12	0	2
The teaching is good.	48	47	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	48	17	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	38	7	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	41	46	10	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	60	36	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	44	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	62	33	3	0	1

* figures may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

Other issues raised by parents

Parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the improvements that had taken place since the appointment of the headteacher.

