

INSPECTION REPORT

AVONDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Darwen, Blackburn

LEA area: Blackburn and Darwen

Unique reference number: 119294

Headteacher: Mr G Tennant

Reporting inspector: A C Davies
3639

Dates of inspection: 27-28th January 2003

Inspection number: 247989

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Durham Road
Darwen

Postcode: BB3 1NN

Telephone number: 01254 703449

Fax number: 01254 760085

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: John Bentley

Date of previous inspection: January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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11472	M Beale	Team inspector
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Avondale is a large primary school situated in the town of Darwen in Lancashire. There are 391 pupils, aged between 4 and 11, attending. It serves an established community, which is mainly made up of families that have resided in the area for some time. The vast majority of pupils are white although 20 pupils have English as an additional language. Two of these are at early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to school meals free of charge matches the national average. There are fewer pupils than average on the special educational needs list but 2 have statements for special needs. When they first start school the vast majority of children have personal, social and academic skills that matches that expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. All pupils are helped to achieve to their potential because more able pupils are being challenged effectively and less able pupils are provided with good support. The teachers are energetic and hard working, resulting in pupils having a real sense of joy and enthusiasm about the way they learn. The headteacher is very much the heart of this school, being extremely well respected by staff, pupils, parents and governors. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher has successfully built a very strong leadership team, which is helping all staff work together to maintain high standards.
- The staff have successfully engendered a love for literature amongst pupils, helping them to be enthusiastic readers.
- Teachers use very effective methods to capture pupils' interest thereby helping them learn effectively.
- Pupils' make very good progress and achieve well in mathematics as they move through the school.
- Children are provided with a very effective start to their education in the reception classes.
- The pupils take a great deal of pride in their work, willingly take on added responsibilities and are a pleasure to spend time with.

What could be improved

- More consistency in the use of specific learning targets with individual pupils across the school.
- More emphasis given to developing pupils' thinking skills when planning work across the curriculum.
- Greater emphasis placed on extending pupils' vocabulary to further enhance the quality of pupils' written work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1998 and it has made very good progress since that time. Standards have steadily improved over the past five years with far more pupils, at the end of Year 6, attaining beyond the level expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is

much better with all the teaching seen during the inspection being at least good, compared with satisfactory last time. The leadership is now much better with the staff working far more effectively as a team. The main areas for development identified in the last report have been dealt with very well, with the achievement of more able pupils now being a strength.

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

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

Standards have steadily improved due to the very good progress being made by more able pupils and those pupils who are either on the special educational list or just outside the list. The national test results for Year 6 pupils confirms this, with attainment being well above average in English and mathematics in 2002. The present Year 6 is maintaining this strong position. There are strengths in the pupils' reading, with Year 2 pupils attaining either well above, or above the national average in the past two years. Standards in reading are slightly better than those for writing, mainly because pupils tend to be unadventurous with their written vocabulary. Pupils are enthusiastic readers who have developed a real love for literature by the time they are in Year 6.

Standards in mathematics are impressive. Pupils cope very well with problems because they have a secure understanding of number and they are able to respond positively to the brisk pace of the mental and oral work at the beginning of most lessons. The pupils' scientific enquiry skills are very well developed and pupils, from an early age, cope with investigations that require them to set up tests to check their ideas out. There is very effective use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects.

When children start school the majority have personal, social and academic skills that match those expected for their age. The good progress they make in the first year at school sees the vast majority attaining the learning goals anticipated by the time they finish the reception year. A significant number are attaining beyond the learning goal by this time. The good progress continues as pupils move through Years 1 and 2, with pupils gaining confidence in their reading and mental and oral skills in mathematics. As they move into Years 3 to 6 they make even more progress with more able pupils being effectively challenged and achieving very well. This is the reason why so many pupils attain above the expected level for their age in the Year 6 national tests.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils feel a deep sense of pride when they do well. They clearly enjoy their lessons and they passionately care about their school and strive to reach perfection.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The quality of learning is helped by the way pupils settle quickly to their lessons, are courteous, polite and a pleasure to be with.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The maturity that pupils showed during a meeting of the school council exemplifies the way in which pupils are delighted to respond to additional responsibility.
Attendance	Good. This is above the national average and pupils are punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is of a good quality and helps pupils to learn effectively. All staff are very confident in teaching literacy, numeracy and ICT. This is helping the challenge for more able pupils to be very good. In each lesson, there is very good consideration given to the needs of pupils of different ability with tasks being well organised and managed to ensure that all pupils' learning builds on what they knew previously.

Children in the reception classes are able to develop their creative skills because of the way staff give priority to creative tasks. One of the most impressive features in the reception classes is the way in which staff organise their resources so that children who are not working directly with adults are still being challenged by the tasks they are given. Practitioners are then able to focus on small groups of pupils and help to move their learning forwards. In Year 1 and 2, good teaching of the skills of reading and mental mathematics enables pupils to learn effectively. The teaching is at its best in Years 3 to 6, where teachers' high expectations of pupils is enabling all to achieve well.

The pace of the lessons, throughout the school, is very demanding. This, intermixed with the interesting ideas and tasks that the teachers come up with, helps pupils to be highly motivated. This way of working has helped pupils develop a love for literature and cope with problem solving activities in mathematics. The use of learning targets with individual pupils is not yet consistently implemented throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Pupils make good use of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. There is good attention to providing pupils with opportunities to work creatively. The school is starting to consider how to use pupils' thinking skills across all subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school has very secure systems in place to support pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. These pupils' needs are recognised at an early stage and appropriate support is provided for them.
Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language	Good. The school ensures that these pupils are able to make the same rate of progress as other pupils in the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The way in which staff capture pupils' interest and the opportunities for them to enjoy literature is helping to develop pupils' spiritual, cultural and moral awareness. The way in which the school expects pupils to take on added responsibility is aiding their social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school's child protection procedures are satisfactory. The school has good systems in place for tracking the progress of pupils. There is some inconsistency in how learning targets are being used to help focus pupils' attention on what needs improving.

Parents are extremely supportive of the school. They receive good quality information from the school and appreciate the way staff go out of their way to see them if they have a problem. Reports to parents, about the progress being made by their children, are very detailed and clear about what each child needs to do next.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has his hand on the pulse of this school and provides strong leadership. He is very well respected by staff, parents and pupils. The staff work very effectively as a team and this is helping everyone put emphasis on maintaining high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The knowledgeable governors have appropriate systems in place to check on the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. In-depth analysis on test results and regular scrutiny of pupils' work is helping the school recognise areas of strength and areas that could be improved. The quality of teaching is checked regularly and its impact on the pupils' learning is measured effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school has very good measures in place to check the impact of its spending decisions on standards and provision. It seeks the best possible value from all its resources with very good deployment of

	staff, to help pupils achieve to their potential, being a key factor.
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PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher is a very effective leader and sets the standards for others to follow • The quality of the school productions. • The standards of behaviour. • How hard working the staff are. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major negative issues were raised in the parents’ meeting or on the questionnaires.

Parents appreciate that their children attend a very good school and they are keen to emphasise this. The questionnaire return from parents was very positive and the inspection team can see why. The school has much to be proud of and parents have quickly identified with a school that gives high priority to pupils’ achieving and behaving well. The quality of school productions is very good. The school is very well regarded in the community and parents appreciate the efforts of all to make it so.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- **The headteacher has successfully built a very strong leadership team, which is helping all staff work together to maintain high standards.**

- 1 This large primary school has an unusual management and leadership structure. The school does not have a deputy headteacher but has opted to form a 'Leadership Team' system, consisting of the headteacher and four senior teachers, to lead the school. This is effective because of the way the headteacher delegates responsibility to the four senior teachers, on the leadership team, who represent the views of their colleagues. This system has been established for a few years and is well accepted by the staff. Arrangements for performance management have been enhanced by the organisation and help all staff to have a direct line of contact if they have issues about their teaching or management role in the school. There are weekly leadership meetings involving all five in the leadership team. The meetings help the school with assessing its priorities and provide a forum for regular, and in-depth, feedback to the headteacher about issues arising.
- 2 The headteacher recognises that this system helps him to establish strong leadership. He is very aware of all that is happening in the school and is able to make informed decisions about issues that need to be dealt with by him. He has a great deal of faith in his leadership team and will only intervene in situations when it is agreed that this is the best form of action. The leadership team system has helped to focus greater 'whole school' attention on maintaining high standards. Each member of the leadership team is very clear about her responsibility in setting priorities for the area of the school for which they have direct responsibility. In this way there is cooperate understanding of whole school issues by all staff working with different age groups. It has also led to all staff feeling valued and to all staff believing that they have a voice in the way the school is being led.
- 3 In addition to the successful leadership team system the headteacher has developed a very effective administration team. This team helps to take away from the headteacher any unnecessary involvement in day-to-day management issues. The team is very experienced and expert. They have developed excellent administration systems and have made very good use of technology to enable them to be effective and efficient in their role. This delegation has helped the headteacher to be released from any unnecessary administration tasks enabling him to concentrate more on professional matters concerning teaching and learning and make him more accessible to staff, pupils and parents.
- 4 One of the major benefits of the leadership system is the effectiveness of the procedures used by the school to check on standards and teaching and learning. Each of the team has responsibility for checking on the quality of teaching under the performance management system. There is therefore regular and valuable feedback provided to all staff, including classroom assistants. The leadership team sets annual numerical targets so that all staff are aware of the expectations that the school has for each year group. There is good use made of national test results, as well as internal tests, to help focus teachers attention on areas that need greater attention and to set appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve. There is an annual 'Standards Report' presented to the staff by the headteacher. This is a summary of all the information collected by the leadership team.

- 5 Subject leaders also have a very important role to play in the school's evaluation of its performance. The subject leaders have a half-termly focus, which includes checking teachers' planning, scrutinising pupils' work and observation of taught lessons. The feedback from subject leaders to the leadership team helps to form the basis of the school improvement plan. The governors play their part in helping the leadership system be effective. They have improved their systems significantly since the previous inspection with far more direct involvement now being evident. They have good knowledge of the school's performance and have created very effective committee arrangements to ensure that they are able to understand what is happening in the school.
- 6 The team leaders, subject leaders and governors therefore provide the headteacher with very effective and valuable information that enables him to make incisive decisions. As a result the headteacher is at the heart of all that is happening in the school. His own manner and approach with staff adds to the strength of the school's leadership. He is very experienced and expert in analysing when he needs to take action. He has a great deal of faith in his leadership team and this is well founded because of the way he set out to create the system that now exists. The overall impact is one of considerable strength in the school's leadership and management style. This has ensured that the school has put appropriate focus on pupils attaining very well and in maintaining high standards. This is a feature of the school. When compared with the previous inspection this shows very good improvement.
- **The staff have successfully engendered a love for literature amongst pupils, helping them to be enthusiastic readers.**
- 7 Standards in reading are very high. This is confirmed by the very good national test results for both 7 and 11-year-olds. There has been a significant improvement in reading standards for 7-year-olds in the last three years with the school's results being well above the national average in 2001 and above average in 2002. Comparatively few pupils at the age of 7 have failed to attain the expected level for their age. The performance of boys has matched that of girls, which is not in keeping with the national picture.
- 8 In Years 3 to 6 there is very good progress being made and this is reflected in the very good national test results for 11-year-olds. The 2002 test results were well above the national average. Over a third of all pupils attain above the expected level for their age and very few are not attaining the expected level. There has been steady improvement over the years. The girls' performance is better than boys at the age of 11, indicating that girls have made very good progress, which is more rapid than that of boys, in Years 3 to 6.
- 9 From early on pupils are helped to enjoy reading. There is very good attention to helping pupils read unfamiliar words. They use phonics effectively to help them sound out words and they quickly recognise the simple, as well as the more complex, sounds contained within words. They also learn to comprehend what they read by reading on, and working out what the unfamiliar word might be. Although there is good attention to teaching pupils the specific skills involved in reading, teachers pay good attention to ensuring that pupils enjoy books. In one lesson, for example, the classroom support assistant worked effectively with a lower ability Year 1 group during a reading session. She introduced a puppet of the main character and encouraged the pupils to read extracts in the 'voice' of the main character. This worked well in helping the pupils to read with expression and enthusiasm.

- 10 Year 2 pupils are able to select a full range of books, which include books from different parts of the world. Their reading is fluent and expressive and they understand the conventions involved in reading a play or a poem. They cope well with fiction and non-fiction books and show good understanding of handling different types of texts. These pupils read regularly at home and can talk with knowledge about a range of authors.
- 11 Year 3 and 4 pupils read with expression and accuracy. They are confident when reading aloud and employ a full range of strategies when working out unfamiliar words. They are quick to change their expression to suit the needs of the book they are reading. This is something that the school gives very good attention to and is working well in helping to generate enthusiasm amongst the pupils. Years 5 and 6 pupils build on the firm foundation that they are given to widen their reading experiences. They develop their expressive reading to points of being dramatic when reading aloud and know exactly how to hold their audience's attention. They read from a full range of fiction and non-fiction, which include plays, poems and narrative texts written by classical authors, such as Dickens and Shakespeare. By Year 5 and 6 pupils have developed preferences for the type of author they enjoy. They describe in some detail why they enjoy these authors and show very mature attitudes when expressing their choices. One pupil described how a certain author 'took him off into a fantasy world that made him feel brave and indestructible'.
- 12 The school does much to help build up this level of enthusiasm and maturity. The regular use of the well-stocked library, for example, plays a major part in helping the pupils have regular access to a full range of excellent books. The school have employed a librarian who plays no small part in helping pupils to choose appropriate books and engages them in conversation about their reading habits. In addition, the quality of lessons where there is a focus on reading, is helping in the generation of enthusiasm. By the time pupils arrive in Years 5 and 6 they can talk with a great deal of fondness about books they have read. They do so showing much enthusiasm and they have developed a life-long love for reading.
- **Teachers use very effective methods to capture pupils' interest thereby helping them learn effectively.**
- 13 The quality of teaching is making a very good impact on the learning of pupils. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Throughout the school, but particularly in Years 3 to 6, teachers successfully generate an enthusiasm amongst the pupils. They successfully use interesting methods to capture their pupils' interest and seek unique ways of motivating pupils, as was seen in a Year 4 literacy lesson when the interactive board was used to good effect. During this lesson the teacher used the computer to highlight important phrases and words from a familiar text so that the pupils were clear about how to collect relevant information in note format from a text they had presented to them.
- 14 Throughout the school there is very good attention to the needs of pupils of different ability. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, the teacher successfully challenges more able pupils by ensuring that they use the correct vocabulary when setting out an argument. In this lesson the teacher uses terms like, 'counter argument' and 'conclusion' to help pupils clarify their thinking. Resources in this lesson were very well organised so that the pupils' prior knowledge was taken into consideration. The 'task cards' on each table were carefully organised and exceptionally well presented so as to provide challenge for more able pupils and provide an

element of support for the less able. The improvement to attending to the needs of more able pupils is a significant change for the better since the previous inspection.

- 15 The way the teachers build on what pupils knew previously is one of the key aspects related to the way work is organised for pupils of different ability. This is seen at its best in the reception class when adult support is carefully targeted at different groups, or individuals, according to their level of understanding. For example, a small group of children were working with an adult to help improve their drawing skills while other activities were carefully resourced so that the work was challenging, despite there being no direct adult support available. The staff are fully aware of using children to learn from each other, as was seen when one child was working with a refugee who had recently arrived in the class. This level of support from other children had been a significant factor in helping the new child settle into the new classroom environment.
- 16 All staff are very confident in teaching literacy, numeracy and ICT. Good teaching of the skills of reading and mental mathematics throughout the school enables pupils to learn effectively. The pace of work in all lessons is very demanding. In a Year 4 numeracy lesson, for example the pupils work with great application and determination as they investigate combinations of numbers that make up a given total. In Year 6, the same level of application is seen as pupils participate in a 'numeracy loop game' where they have to respond, at speed, to multiplication facts involving up to two decimal places.
- 17 In all lessons the teachers share the main learning intentions with the pupils so that they are clear about what they are expected to learn. There is a high level of expectation on all pupils. The teachers continually refer to the objectives as the lesson proceeds. This is helping pupils to be very focussed and is enabling them to give good attention to their learning. The plenary sessions are very effective because there is an emphasis given to 'what the pupils have learnt'. Pupils are therefore able to measure their own success and appreciate what it is they know as a result of the lesson. This was particularly effective at the end of numeracy sessions.
- **Pupils' make very good progress and achieve well in mathematics as they move through the school.**
- 18 Standards in mathematics have been above the national average, for 7-year-olds for the past three years and have been well above the national average, for 11-year-olds for two of the past four years. This strong position is being maintained by the present Year 2 and Year 6 respectively.
- 19 When compared with their attainment when they start in the reception class children make good progress to attain well by the time they are taking the Year 2 national tests. The progress made between the end of Year 2 and end of Year 6 is very good. One of the key factors for Year 2 pupils is that very few pupils do not attain the expected level for their age. By the time they are in Year 6 almost double the national average attain above the expected level for their age. This shows that lower attaining children are achieving well and that more able pupils are being challenged appropriately. The attainment of girls is very impressive in Year 6, signifying that they make very rapid progress in Years 3 to 6.
- 20 The quality of teaching is having a very good impact on the learning of pupils throughout the school. The brisk pace of the mental and oral starter, for example is helping pupils to organise

their thinking. They not only respond at speed to questions posed, but can explain how they arrived at their answers and sometimes offer alternative solutions to the same problem. This good attention to their mental agility is helping them to be very secure in dealing with mathematical problems when there is more than one step involved. Teachers are very effective in organising the work so as to challenge the more able pupils and yet provide good support for the less able. They plan thoroughly so as to take full account of the range of pupils' abilities. Teachers also give very good attention to using specific mathematical vocabulary. In this way pupils are learning to use correct terminology when providing explanations about the way they have worked out their problems.

- 21 Pupils learn effectively because teachers have good knowledge of their prior attainment. There is very effective planning happening and rigorous assessments help all staff to be clear about the needs of individuals, irrespective of ability and age. The fact that many pupils state that mathematics is their favourite subject adds to the quality of learning. Teachers work hard at making mathematics an enjoyable subject as was seen when Year 1 pupils were thoroughly enjoying using strange voices when counting up to, or back from, 100.
 - 22 By Year 2 the majority of pupils cope well with addition and subtraction of 3-digit numbers. Many can 'round up or down' to the nearest 10 or 100. They are also capable of handling a full range of problem solving activities. By the time they are in Year 6 the vast majority cope very well with multi-step problems and can describe to others the methods they have applied to solve their problems. They have a good understanding of work related to probability and can think logically to make sensible estimates about probable answers. They know the properties of most 2D shapes. They can also talk with knowledge about the faces, edges and vertices of 3D shapes. They can round up or down numbers to three decimal places.
 - 23 There is effective use of numeracy across other subjects. This was seen in geography, where pupils had used data handling principles to collect information about street surveys. Year 4 pupils had used their numeracy skills when working on co-ordinates when studying maps. In other areas mathematical skills were well used to help pupils with their measurements in science and design and technology and when drawing up graphs in history.
- **Children are provided with a very effective start to their education in the reception classes.**
- 24 Children in the two reception classes are provided with a very effective start to their education. The adults working with these young children successfully organise each lesson so that all children are being helped to achieve well.
 - 25 There is very good attention to helping children settle quickly into class routines. The use of interesting topics, such as, pirates and teddy bear 'sleep-overs' is helping to generate enthusiasm amongst the children and thereby ensuring that they enjoy coming to school. There is a great deal of attention given to helping children to gain confidence in talking out in front of others. Their self-esteem is raised by the way they are encouraged to create their own personal history books. One child had a picture of himself as a baby and had written underneath, 'When I was a baby I was good at sleeping. Now that I am 4, I am good at sticking and gluing.' There is also good attention to helping children with their early reading and writing skills.

- 26 There is good use of interesting resources to help children engage in mathematical activities. Teddy Bears come into use again as children learn to sort by size and colour. They also go on a bear hunt when children have to use the correct mathematical language as they look ‘under’, ‘over’ and ‘to the left’, etc. There is good attention to their knowledge and understanding of the world by helping children have a sense of time and place. The role-play area was an old Victorian kitchen during the inspection, where children experienced using old appliances. They then go on to design homes for various creatures, such as dinosaurs.
- 27 Children are able to develop their creative skills because of the way staff give priority to this area of their learning. The work on pirates, for example gave opportunity for children to design pirate ships and imagine what it would be like to live on a ship for a long time. Art and music play a prominent role in the lives of these young children with children being provided with several opportunities to respond to different stimuli through painting, collage work and dance.
- 28 One of the most impressive features in the reception classes is the way in which staff organise their resources so that children who are not working directly with adults are still being challenged by the tasks they are given. There is a strong emphasis on following a thematic approach. This works well as was seen during the inspection when ‘cold’ was the main theme. The range of activities provided focused on the ‘cold’ theme, but still ensured that the skill level was organised to take the children’s learning forward at the correct pace. For example, a table-top activity has a North Pole setting and children have to manoeuvre the small figures around, thus improving their manipulative skills.
- 29 There is very good attention to tracking the progress being made by each individual. The effective recording system used, combined with the focused observations made by the staff, help to give a very clear picture as to how children are progressing.

The pupils take a great deal of pride in their work, willingly take on added responsibilities and are a pleasure to spend time with.

- 30 Pupils enjoy attending this school. This is confirmed by the analysis of parental questionnaires, which showed that 98 per cent of parents believe that their children enjoy school. Pupils are undoubtedly very proud of their school and they strive to do well both personally and academically. Their attitudes to school help to create a very positive atmosphere where pupils feel safe and secure. The pupils’ enthusiasm is seen at its best during major productions, which happen regularly at the school. The polished performances give pupils much to be proud of and also give them a strong sense of belonging.
- 31 The standard of behaviour in classrooms is very good and is helping pupils to learn effectively. The teachers are able to concentrate on developing pupils’ academic abilities because pupils are receptive to the work that is presented to them and no time is lost to disruption caused by anti-social behaviour. Pupils are a joy to spend time with. Discussions with pupils revealed that they were used to talking with adults in a mature way and that they played a significant role in offering opinions about the way the school is run. They are courteous, well-mannered and show very good consideration to others. The pupils’ positive attitudes to each other starts from early on, as was seen when one child in the reception co-operated for a lengthy time with a new refugee that had just arrived in the classroom.
- 32 Nominated pupils represent the feelings of their peers through the school council and by being house captains. A representative from every class in Years 3 to 6 attends the regular

meetings. Each meeting is well run and there are agendas and decisions recorded and circulated to all pupils. Although adults attend the meetings, a nominated pupil chairs them and another takes the minutes. During one of the meetings pupils expressed their support for the school council explaining that it provided pupils with a chance to 'air their views'. The pupils believe that action is taken on all sensible issues raised. They explained that there had been changes made as a direct result of the school council's views being put forward to the headteacher and other senior members of staff. The pupils who attended the school council were very articulate and were well prepared if they had a point to make. They also were prepared to discuss issues in a very mature manner and accepted that others did not always uphold their views. This was seen when they debated the issue of class pets and road safety.

- 33 Apart from the school council pupils have many opportunities to take on additional responsibilities. There is a house captain system in place with Year 6 pupils given the opportunity to take on the role. The older pupils play a significant part in helping to set up the hall before an assembly and are then expected to clear equipment away after it is finished. Pupils also have the responsibility of taking out, and bringing back, equipment before and after playtimes. There is a buddy system in place with older pupils working in pairs to support the needs of younger ones. Most pupils seize on opportunities to be involved in all aspects of school life and are thrilled to be given special roles or responsibilities. Their personal development is greatly enhanced by this.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- **More consistency in the use of specific learning targets with individual pupils across the school.**

- 34 A system of individual learning targets is being used in most classes at the moment. These are effective, to a point, in enabling pupils to know what is expected of them. The targets for mathematics, for example, work well and help to keep pupils focused on their next area of learning.

- 35 In writing, the targets are mainly associated with the secretarial skills and do not give sufficient attention to 'content and form'. The use of targets to move on the pupils' learning in writing is not as effective therefore. The pupils also have individual targets making it difficult for the staff, in classes of 30, to have a full overview of the way pupils are making progress towards their targets. The school has started to review the system. There is a need to give greater consideration to the manageability of the system and to ensuring that the written targets put greater emphasis on the content of the pupils' written responses.

- **More emphasis needs to be given to developing pupils' thinking skills when planning work across the curriculum.**

- 36 The school has already recognised that its next area for curriculum development is to give greater emphasis to the thinking skills, outlined in the National Curriculum, when planning work across all subjects. There is already good practice happening in this area but, at present, the staff are not explicitly noting these skills in their planning.

- 37 The school is now at a stage when there can be opportunities found to give more attention to formally including these skills in its planning. The staff are enthusiastic about the prospect and

whilst acknowledging that the present arrangements for the curriculum are more than adequate this should help to strength even further the work of the school.

- **Greater emphasis placed on extending pupils' vocabulary to further enhance the quality of pupils' written work.**

38 Although the quality of pupils' written work is good, as is indicated by the above average attainment of 11-year-olds in the national tests, the school recognises that pupils' use of adventurous vocabulary is limited. Their presentation skills are good, as is the standard of spelling and use of punctuation.

39 The scrutiny of written work of the more able pupils, from Year 2 onwards, showed that they were very secure in following a sequence of events and accurately recording them. However their descriptive language was a little limited, as was their use of vocabulary. The lack of use of adventurous language is hindering their development.

40 In Year 6 there are effective opening extracts, which helps to keep the reader very interested, for example, one pupil wrote, 'A glimmer of light shone between both the dark hallways...' However, this quality of exciting vocabulary is not maintained throughout. To a large extent this is due to pupils not using a wide vocabulary when speaking. They are confident communicators but tend to stick to a vocabulary that is 'safe' and they tend not to take risks by using words that they are not quite sure of. This is hindering their writing, as they tend to stick to known words rather than experiment with new, or unknown phrases.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41 In order to maintain this very strong position, the governors, new headteacher and staff need to ensure that all the strong features continue to developed and they also need to deal with the following issues:

- **Ensure that there is more consistency in the way learning targets are being used to help pupils improve.** (Paragraphs 34 and 35)
- **Place more emphasis on pupils' thinking skills when planning work in all subjects.** (Paragraphs 36 and 37)
- **Look at introducing a range of strategies to help pupils be more adventurous with their written vocabulary.** (Paragraphs 38 to 40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	10	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	29	71	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 eight 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)		391
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		54

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		46

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	22

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	30	30	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	27	30
	Girls	27	27	29
	Total	54	54	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (91)	90 (91)	98 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	27	30
	Girls	27	25	30
	Total	55	52	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (82)	87 (98)	100 (84)
	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	28	37	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	25	27
	Girls	36	34	36
	Total	59	59	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (79)	91 (81)	97 (95)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	22	22
	Girls	36	34	36
	Total	56	56	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (81)	86 (81)	89 (87)
	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	367	1	
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian	2		
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian	4		
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	5		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	9		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1		
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese	2		
Any other ethnic group	1		
No ethnic group recorded			

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)	16.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	321

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	948,475
Total expenditure	959,869
Expenditure per pupil	2,347

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	391
Number of questionnaires returned	85

Percentage of responses in each category

21.7%

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	20	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	25	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	36	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	38	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	76	24	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	36	4	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	21	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	24	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	39	1	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	87	13	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	27	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	29	6	0	6