

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ANCASTER CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ancaster

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120512

Headteacher: Judith Whiteley

Reporting inspector: Tony Dobell  
10373

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 248139

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Peter Storey
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This Church of England voluntary controlled school serves the village of Ancaster and other local villages. There are 144 pupils on roll with slightly more boys than girls causing significant differences in some year groups. Pupils come very largely from white western European cultural backgrounds and all pupils speak English as their first language. A small number of pupils from travelling families attend the school and this adversely affects the school's attendance figures. Overall, pupils' social backgrounds and their attainment and learning skills when they enter the school are about average. Children enter the school in the September of the year in which they are five and join the mixed Reception – Year 1 class. Nineteen children are currently in the Reception Year. Each of the five classes in the school contains two age groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (5.6 per cent) is below average. There are 21 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and, at 14.6 per cent, this is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs (0.7 per cent). The nature of special educational needs includes specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical impairment. During the last two years there have been considerable changes to the teaching staff in the school.

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

This is a good school with the potential to become very good. Under the leadership of its relatively new headteacher, the school is improving well. Standards of attainment in National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been erratic. This is partly the result of the small year groups which mean that one or two more higher or lower-attaining pupils in a year group can have a significant effect on average results. Attainment in 2003 is on course to improve on the levels achieved in 2002. Since the school was first inspected it has received two School Achievement Awards celebrating its successes.

The school has a clear sense of its identity and purpose. The headteacher, very ably supported by her colleagues, provides clear-sighted and purposeful leadership. The quality of teaching is good overall. The school is a lively and supportive community in which pupils feel secure and valued. Given the good levels of attainment now being achieved, the very good personal progress that pupils make, the very good leadership and management of the headteacher and its average costs, the school is now giving good value for money.

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

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has plans in place for its systematic development and improvement.
- The quality of teaching is now good overall and is improving attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Most pupils have very good attitudes to learning and very good relationships throughout the school result in very effective moral and social development.
- The school provides pupils with high levels of care and support so that their personal development is very good.
- The quality of the information provided for parents is very good and the school has good links with parents.

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

- Standards of attainment in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory because the National Curriculum is not covered fully.
- Deficiencies in accommodation and resources, particularly with regard to information and communication technology, library provision and the Reception class prevent pupils from developing the skills to manage their own learning.
- Information from day-to-day assessments of pupils' work is not used systematically to help them to make further progress by setting short-term, achievable targets.

- Attendance is well below the national average.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the rate of improvement since the school was first inspected in February 1998 has been satisfactory. Progress was slow initially in some areas identified in that inspection. For example, the school understands that there is still scope for better use to be made of the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs to enable them to make further progress. Similarly, there is scope for greater use to be made of assessments of pupils' progress to plan future learning. However, good progress is now being made. The headteacher's initial objective was to raise standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science and the school is on course to achieve this. In particular, higher-attaining pupils now have improved opportunities to reach higher grades. Parents feel that support for pupils, relationships and the quality of learning have improved since the school was inspected previously. However, attendance levels have worsened markedly. Under this headteacher the quality of leadership and management has improved and is now very good. As a result, the school has good potential to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	C	B	C
Mathematics	A	E	C	E
Science	A	C	D	E

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

Since the school was inspected previously, attainment as measured in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, has been erratic. In 2002, attainment at the end of Year 6 was broadly in line with the national average overall, but was well below the average attained in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. The pupils in this year group made satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. In 2002, the school failed to achieve its agreed targets for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 or higher in English and mathematics, although these targets were challenging, particularly in English. The rate of improvement at the end of Year 6 has broadly matched the national trend since 1998. Attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2002 was well below the national average in reading and writing and below the national average in mathematics. It was well below the standards attained in similar schools.

Evidence from the inspection is that pupils are on course to attain improved results in the National Curriculum tests in 2003 at the end of Years 2 and 6. Attainment in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory because the school cannot teach all of the National Curriculum because of inadequate facilities. Children in the Reception class are now making very good progress in their learning.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have very good attitudes to school and to learning. In most classes, they settle quickly to work and are keen to make progress.
Behaviour, in and out of	Most pupils behave well in class. Play is boisterous but good-natured.



classrooms	
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Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good throughout the school and, as a result, pupils' personal development is very good.
Attendance	Attendance is well below the national average and is unsatisfactory.

Parents appreciate the school's 'family atmosphere', which enables pupils to feel secure and valued so that they enjoy learning and become mature and responsible. However, a few pupils have short concentration spans and the time taken to manage their behaviour slows learning for others. There have been no exclusions of pupils in recent years.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, maintaining the good standards found when the school was inspected previously. The high proportion of changes in teaching staff in the last two years has not adversely affected the quality of teaching. During the inspection, only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed, and, in one third of these lessons, teaching was very good or excellent. The best teaching occurs in the Reception and Year 1 class and in Years 5 and 6. In these classes, teachers plan interesting and stimulating learning experiences, which engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. As a result, they concentrate well for the whole lesson, enjoy learning of high quality and make at least good progress. In Years 1, 2 and 3, a few pupils have short concentration spans and are inclined to call out and chatter. The time taken to manage their behaviour interrupts the flow of lessons so that other pupils do not get full benefit from the good learning activities that have been planned. It was the lack of effective strategies to manage behaviour that resulted in teaching in one lesson being unsatisfactory.

The school has good strategies in place for teaching literacy and numeracy and pupils have satisfactory opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects. Arrangements for teaching information and communication technology are unsatisfactory because the facilities only enable a small number of pupils to be taught at any time. While this teaching is successful so that pupils become competent in some basic skills, the school is unable to teach the whole of the National Curriculum or to provide opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall, not least because of the effective support that they and other pupils are given by classroom assistants. Overall, pupils make good progress in their learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Pupils benefit from a good curriculum overall, bolstered by a good range of activities outside class.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good in the Reception class, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. Overall, these pupils make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for pupils' personal development and very good provision for their moral and social development.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good levels of personal care for pupils. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is developing and is currently satisfactory. There is scope for this to be developed further.
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The school has good links with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and management and is very well supported by her colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors have a good appreciation of their role and share the school's values and aims.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has developed very good systems for analysing and evaluating the school's performance so that there are clear plans for systematic development and progress.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its human and physical resources well and has good systems in place to get best value from its expenditure.

Leadership and management are strengths of the school. The headteacher has managed a period of very rapid change successfully so that the school is now positive and forward looking. A new senior management team is developing well and becoming effective. The management of subjects is in a transitional phase and the school has plans for more permanent arrangements to be put into place. The school is well staffed to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. It occupies an attractive site, but has deficiencies in its accommodation and resources, particularly with regard to its information and communication technology and library provision and in some aspects of provision for the Reception class.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching is good and children make good progress.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable when approaching the school with concerns.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and children become more mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The school is led and managed well.</li> <li>• Children like school.</li> </ul>	<p>Of the parents who responded to the questionnaires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22 per cent question the amount of homework that children are given.</li> <li>• 17 per cent do not feel sufficiently well informed about progress.</li> <li>• 13 per cent do not think that the school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• 28 per cent question the amount of activities offered outside class.</li> </ul>

The school distributed 144 questionnaires and 94 were returned (65 per cent). The meeting held before the inspection was attended by 16 parents. Overall, the meeting was supportive of the school. Inspectors support the positive views held by parents. The inspection team believes that the school uses homework satisfactorily to support learning. The quality of the information provided for parents is very good overall and the school has good links with parents. For a small school, there is a good range of activities outside class.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has plans for its systematic development and improvement.**

1. The headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2001. She found that standards of attainment, as measured in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, were erratic. In 2000, the school had highly impressive results at the end of Year 6 and good results overall at the end of Year 2. The school received two School Achievement awards in 2000 and 2001 in recognition of these results. However, in 2001 and 2002, results were less good and, in 2002, standards of attainment were poor at the end of Year 2. Further, in 2002, the school's standards of attainment were well below those achieved in schools that draw their pupils from similar backgrounds.
2. To some extent, variations in levels of attainment from year to year can be explained by small numbers in year groups. These mean that, for example, one or two more pupils in a year group on the special educational needs register can have a significant effect on overall attainment. However, the headteacher's analysis showed that this was only a partial explanation that would not account for differences between subjects. For example, in 2002 at the end of Year 2, one third of the pupils attained the higher than expected Level 3 in reading and mathematics while no pupils attained this level in writing. Similarly, at the end of Year 6 in 2002, 32 per cent of the pupils attained the higher than expected Level 5 in English while, in mathematics and science, only 21 per cent of pupils attained this level.
3. The headteacher concluded the quality of teaching and learning was variable and, to an extent, lacked challenge and ambition. Attainment in English and mathematics was being hampered because the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy had not been fully implemented. Further, there was a lack of experimental and investigative work in science. In response, the headteacher introduced a strategy to raise aspirations and standards of attainment. Evidence from the inspection is that this strategy is being effective and that the school is on course to improve attainment well in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6.
4. The strategy for improving teaching and learning and raising attainment has been developed at a time of rapid teacher movement. At the time of the inspection, only one teacher preceded the headteacher's appointment. A second teacher was on leave of absence. This high rate of turnover has created problems but has also created opportunities. Overall, this period of turbulence has been managed sensitively and effectively. One opportunity available to the headteacher has been to create a new senior management team of three. This group meets fortnightly and is building up its role well in managing the school and planning for its future development. Arrangements have been made to support staff new to the school and for professional training to be available to all staff. For example, training is being arranged in conjunction with other local schools to help newly appointed staff to undertake the roles of subject managers in the future. Another example of co-operation with other schools is the arts festival planned for next term.
5. Professional development in English and mathematics has been a central element in raising standards. As a result, the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are now fully in place and are having a positive effect on attainment. Standards of

attainment in science are improving because of a greater emphasis on experimental and investigative work. Pupils in Year 6 now have a clear understanding of scientific methodology and have been taught well to think about what they are doing. As part of the drive to raise standards, the headteacher has taken classes to challenge higher-attaining pupils in Year 6. Similarly, a recently appointed leading mathematics teacher has offered supplementary classes in mathematics. Different groups of pupils in the school, for example, those with special educational needs, are well provided for and make good progress in their learning overall. The headteacher is concerned that, in this relatively small school, pupils should have a wide range of educational experiences, and for its size, the school offers an impressive range of activities outside class. As is the case in most schools, these activities are very largely for older pupils. Parents are appreciative of these and also of the impressive quality of end-of-year music-drama productions.

6. The governing body has a mature understanding of its role and gives the headteacher effective support. Governors are involved in the work of the school through the range of committees that contribute to the different aspects of its work. Many governors are in school regularly and are aware of the views of parents. The governing body fulfils its legal requirements and effectively supports the school in its role as 'critical friend'. Governors share the school's aims and values and are effective in ensuring that the school obtains 'best value' from its expenditure and the use of its resources.
7. The school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Its routines are straightforward and well understood so that little time is lost in most classes when moving from one activity to another. Day-to-day management is effective and the school administrator ensures that routine administration supports teaching and learning. The school uses its resources well and its budget is well managed strategically by the headteacher and the governors' finance committee and, on a day-by-day basis, by the school administrator.
8. The school occupies a pleasant, open site and has ample hard play and grassed areas. However, the accommodation has limitations. The hall is small and is inadequate as a space for a full class to take part in physical education indoors. It is a thoroughfare and contains the small library and the four computers used for teaching information and communication technology to small groups in its gallery. The headteacher is aware that these, and the inadequate accommodation and resources for the Reception Year, need to improve if the school is to offer its pupils the quality of education to which it aspires.
9. During her five terms in the school, the headteacher has provided very effective leadership. The school has clear aims, which, in essence, are to provide pupils with high quality learning experiences so that they develop their lives with confidence, underpinned by the Christian values which the school holds. These aims are reflected throughout the school's work and the headteacher is developing a sense of unity and purpose among her colleagues, which means that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

**The quality of teaching is now good overall and is improving standards of attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science.**

10. The good quality of teaching found when the school was inspected previously has been maintained, although there has been a high number of changes in the teaching

staff. During this inspection, 20 lessons or parts of lessons were observed and only one had teaching which was unsatisfactory. In just over one third of lessons, teaching was very good or excellent, and, in almost one third, teaching was good.

11. The very good and excellent teaching was found in the Reception/Year 1 class and in the Year 5/6 class. In these lessons, teaching is challenging and stimulating so that pupils' interest is fully engaged and they enjoy learning and work with enthusiasm. Because they are fully involved, pupils work with sustained interest and concentration, and, in at least one lesson, complained when they had to stop in order to begin the next lesson. In these classes, the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well so that pupils make very good progress in their learning. As a result, children in the Reception Year are on course to exceed the standards expected in the areas of learning designed for this age group.
12. Examples of good teaching were found in each of the other classes. However, each of these classes includes a few pupils who have short concentration spans and the time needed to manage their behaviour interrupts the flow of the lesson so that progress in learning is slowed for other pupils. It was insufficient progress in learning that resulted in the quality of teaching being unsatisfactory in one lesson. The quality of lesson planning is good throughout the school, and teachers plan activities that enable all pupils to make good progress. For example, in a very good English lesson in the Year 5/6 class, pupils were totally engaged in analysing the meaning contained in two World War I poems. They analysed the meaning behind the words with a high level of sensitivity. The learning activities, and the way in which they were taught, enabled pupils to work with insight and impressive maturity of thought. In most lessons, this good planning results in effective learning. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in the Year 4/5 class, careful planning ensured that different ability groups had learning tasks which challenged them effectively. As a result, all groups of pupils made good progress in their learning.
13. Overall, teachers have high expectations for pupils' effort and behaviour and, in most lessons, these expectations are largely realised. In most lessons, the management of pupils is secure and, in the best lessons, the management of pupils is not an issue because pupils and adults are working together to promote learning. For example, in a good art and design lesson in the Year 4/5 class, there was very good concentration on how to achieve perspective in pencil drawing and some good use of shading. Pupils enthusiastically worked with their teacher to improve their drawings although some found it difficult to achieve a three-dimensional effect. In all lessons, attainment was at least at the level found in most schools, and in about four lessons out of ten, it was above the level normally found.
14. By the time that they leave the school, higher-attaining pupils write accurately and with a good level of imaginative insight. They use a good range of vocabulary and have experienced a wide range of writing styles. Handwriting is neat and clear. Average and lower-attaining pupils are less secure in spelling and grammar although they are capable of a good level of imaginative work. In the case of lower-attaining pupils, handwriting improved markedly when ink was used instead of pencil. Work is marked regularly, with some good suggestions for further improvement.
15. In mathematics, higher-attaining pupils are impressively secure over a wide range of work. Average pupils too have a good level of accuracy but lower-attaining pupils are less tidy in the way in which they set their work out and so are more prone to error. Even so, there are some patches of accuracy when a topic is thoroughly

understood. In a very good mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 had a very good grasp of multiplication and division and were impressive in a mental mathematics session that challenged their knowledge of the seven and eight times tables. They were very quick to spot an error in working that the teacher made deliberately to test their alertness.

16. In science, pupils have a clear understanding of scientific methodology, write clear reports of their investigations and show a good ability to draw accurate conclusions from their data. Diagrams are clear but are sometimes untidily drawn. All pupils whose work was analysed were working at least at the expected level and often above. Pupils have covered a wide range of work with a secure level of understanding. In a good lesson on the reflection of light, pupils of all levels of attainment had a good understanding of the concept and used scientific vocabulary accurately.
17. The evidence from lesson observations and from the analysis of pupils' work suggests that pupils are on course to attain better results in the National Curriculum tests in 2003 at the end of Year 6 than they attained in 2002, at least in mathematics and science. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 are on course to attain results which will be a marked improvement on those attained in 2002. Higher-attaining pupils are working at levels that are above those normally found in reading, writing and mathematics. Average and lower-attaining pupils are more prone to careless errors. In English, much of the work is on worksheets that can be undemanding where they require only one word answers. These worksheets do not help pupils to develop effective writing skills. When they are not dated, it is difficult to discern the pupils' progress in learning over time.
18. Children in the Reception Year are making very good progress and are well prepared to begin their work on the National Curriculum in Year 1. Their very good progress results from their teacher's very clear understanding of how young children learn, and her enthusiasm and commitment. She plans interesting activities that totally engage the children's interest and is adept at creating opportunities for learning in one area to support understanding in another. For example, in an excellent whole-class discussion in the hall, mime was used to enable children to illustrate different aspects of the seaside. This combined elements of physical development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The children's progress is carefully tracked and very good records are kept so the future learning can be planned to enable children at different levels of learning to make further progress. However, the curriculum for children in the Reception class is impeded by deficiencies in accommodation and resources. For example, no large construction equipment is available and there are no facilities for water play. Furniture is old, in poor condition, and not of an appropriate size. There is a lack of good role-play materials. The teacher works hard and imaginatively to overcome these difficulties, but weaknesses in provision prevent children from having access to the full range of learning activities.
19. The teacher in the Reception class is given highly impressive support by her assistant and classroom support assistants who work effectively throughout the school. However, less class support is available to teachers than is found in most schools.

20. Parents have understandably had concerns about the rapid turnover of teachers. However, the quality of teaching and learning is now good overall and pupils are making good progress. As a result, attainment in English, mathematics and science has improved well during this school year.

**Most pupils have very good attitudes to learning and very good relationships throughout the school result in very good moral and social development.**

21. Most pupils have very good attitudes to school and to learning. They come into lessons quietly and settle quickly to work, moving smoothly from one activity to the next so that little learning time is wasted. They are eager to learn and make progress and respond readily to questions, respecting and valuing each other's ideas and contributions. This is particularly true in the Reception/Year 1 class and in the Year 5/6 class where attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils work with impressive levels of interest and sustained concentration. They are co-operative and support each other well. As a result, relationships are excellent and these very positive attitudes mean that pupils make very good progress in their learning overall.
22. In the other classes, most pupils have very good attitudes to learning, but a few have short concentration spans and are unable to work effectively for long periods. Their inability to concentrate is largely the result of immaturity and lack of social skills rather than of poor attitudes to learning. The school is working to improve their attitudes by consistent application of strategies to encourage mature and positive behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning and these attitudes are central to the good progress that they make in their learning.
23. These very good attitudes to learning reflect the very good relationships that exist throughout the school. Parents refer to positive developments since the school was inspected previously. They describe relationships as excellent and believe that the school is now more 'child friendly'. They sense a feeling of greater enthusiasm in the school and children now enjoy learning more because it is 'more fun'. Parents appreciate that pupils' good conduct and effort is now rewarded with positive reinforcement so that they are encouraged to make further efforts. Parents appreciate the way in which successes are celebrated, for example, in assemblies. These positive approaches to work and behaviour are underpinned by the very good relationships which exist between pupils and between pupils and adults. Parents acknowledge the good levels of behaviour which exist in the school.
24. Very good attitudes to learning and very good relationships help to promote pupils' moral and social development which is very good. Pupils have a mature understanding of right and wrong and bring secure moral values to their consideration of issues in the school, the local community and the wider world. The school's high expectations for pupils to act with an awareness of the impact of their activities on others are reinforced in assemblies and in lessons. All adults in the school successfully instil into pupils ideas of 'fairness' and encourage them to reflect on their responsibility to act in a 'fair' way to others.
25. Pupils' social development is very good. Throughout the school, pupils have appropriate opportunities to exercise responsibility either in class or in whole-school activities such as assembly. For example, during the inspection, Year 6 boys controlled the music as pupils arrived in and left assembly, managed the words to songs on the over-head projector, drew curtains and dealt with lights. Other pupils gave teachers different kinds of help in their own time. Pupils develop impressive



social skills, for example, holding open doors and fetching chairs for visitors. They are aware of differences and take care to involve others, for example, those with special educational needs, in their activities. Raising funds for different charities is a significant way of developing social awareness and there are a number of letters of appreciation from different charities displayed in the hall. An annual residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is a further means of developing social awareness. A few older pupils also gain a sense of social responsibility when acting as 'chicken managers', looking after the school's few chickens under the supervision of the school caretaker.

26. Very good relationships and attitudes have a positive effect on standards of attainment and on the good quality of learning that the school provides. By the time that they leave the school, pupils have an impressively mature attitude to learning and a clear understanding of the value of co-operation and mutual support.

**The school provides pupils with high levels of care and support so that their personal development is very good.**

27. The school has very good procedures for supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils are well known to all adults in the school so that any changes in behaviour that may indicate a cause for concern are quickly identified and dealt with. Parents appreciate that support for pupils is improving. Arrangements for child protection and the health and safety of pupils, including first-aid, are good and pupils feel secure and valued in the school. At the end of Year 6, good arrangements are in place to enable pupils to move smoothly to their next school.
28. Very good procedures ensure that children entering the Reception Year are sensitively introduced into the school. These include visits to school by parents and an opportunity for children to spend time in the school during the summer term. Most children have attended the local playgroup and very good relationships exist between this group and the school. This is a further means of ensuring that children are able to join the school with a minimum of disruption. The teacher of the Reception class has a very secure understanding of how young children learn and develop. As a result, they make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, and quickly feel secure and confident in the school.
29. Pupils with special educational needs are given good personal support so that they are well integrated into the school's activities and make good progress in their learning. They participate confidently in all that the school offers and develop well as individuals. Pupils from travelling families are given effective support by the school and by the local education authority's specialist support agency. They make good progress in relation to their previous levels of attainment. However, individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs do not include sufficiently specific targets to support progress in learning adequately. The school is aware that these plans need further development so that they are more effective in planning learning for these pupils. Even so, these pupils are given good support in class by teachers and classroom assistants and this provides the basis for the progress that they make.
30. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and this supports pupils' personal development well. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on issues that affect others. For example, in a satisfactory lesson observed, Years 4 and 5 were considering what they would miss if they had no friends. This led to a

brief consideration of an individual's responsibilities as a friend. Teachers make good use of whole-class discussions in which pupils sit in a circle and take turns to speak. This system creates effective self-discipline and those pupils who find concentration over time difficult, adapted successfully to the discipline of this system.

31. Parents feel that the strong family atmosphere is an important feature in the school's success. Some 95 per cent of parents feel that the school is helping their children to become more mature and responsible. It is the quality of the care and support available to pupils that gives them the confidence to develop personally so that their attitudes become increasingly mature and responsible.

**The quality of information provided for parents is very good and the school has good links with parents.**

32. The school is building up good links with parents. To this end, it is providing parents with information of very good quality. A weekly newsletter is sent home so that parents are aware of the school's activities. This is concise, but, at the same time, informative. There are three consultation evenings per year, the final one being to discuss the annual report on pupils' progress. These reports are clearly written and informative and parents feel that they are valuable in identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses. However, they feel that there is need to have clearer information about National Curriculum levels and about the optional National Curriculum tests.
33. Parents appreciate the school's 'open door' policy that means that the headteacher and other staff are available for consultations at the end of the day. Parents feel valued in the sense that the school listens to their concerns and acts on them. They feel comfortable with the idea of approaching the school with suggestions or concerns. There has been good support for the home-school agreement. Some parents help in school and there is a good level of support for practising reading at home. There is good support for the Parent, Teacher and Friends Association in its fund raising activities for the school.
34. Most parents appreciate that the school offers a good range of activities outside class, considering its size. Most of these take place at lunch times so that those pupils who travel to the school by bus are not disadvantaged. In common with most schools, these activities are for older pupils from Years 3 to 6. Parents also appreciate the high quality of the end-of-year music/drama productions and recognise the amount of work that this involves in a small school.
35. The school is anxious for parents to feel that they are valued as partners in their children's education. Good links exist with parents and they have positive views of the school. Indeed, some parents bring their children to this school from some distance away. Parents contribute well to learning both at school and at home. As a result, pupils feel that parents are interested in their education and so think that education is important. This has a positive effect on attainment and progress.

**WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Standards of attainment in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory because the National Curriculum is not covered fully.**

36. The school has four computers on the 'gallery' in the hall. A maximum of eight pupils at a time can be taught information and communication technology skills by using these computers. This teaching is largely undertaken by a classroom support

assistant. By the time that they leave the school, pupils have a very secure understanding of word processing and know how to send and receive e-mails and use the Internet. They have some understanding of the use of spreadsheets and enter and retrieve data successfully. This is the result of effective teaching from the classroom support assistant.

37. However, some areas of the National Curriculum are not being covered. Using information and communication technology to control models such as traffic light systems or lifts between floors is not covered and, in discussion, pupils could not suggest how this might be done. They have virtually no knowledge of the uses of information and communication technology in society. These significant areas of weakness in subject knowledge mean that standards of attainment are unsatisfactory.
38. The fact that class teachers do not teach information and communication technology directly means that they do not have direct knowledge of the levels of attainment and progress of pupils in their class. This makes planning for future progress for the whole year group very difficult. Further, the fact that small numbers of pupils are withdrawn from other lessons for information and communication technology raises issues regarding their equality of access to the curriculum as a whole.

**Deficiencies in accommodation and resources, particularly with regard to information and communication technology, library provision and the Reception class, prevent pupils from developing the skills to manage their own learning.**

39. The school's library is sited on the 'gallery' in the hall with the computers. It is small in size and its position means that younger pupils cannot visit it independently and it is totally inaccessible for whole classes because it is too small. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 had little understanding of how to find books in a library because this has not been taught. The school's provision means that pupils have few opportunities to organise and manage their own investigations and research. As a result, they have few opportunities to develop skills as independent learners.
40. The Reception teacher makes every effort to provide a rich and stimulating curriculum. As a result of her hard work, children in the Reception Year make very good progress in their learning. An outside resource has recently been completed and is an important addition. However, it is uncovered and so will be unusable in inclement weather. A lack of resources in other areas adversely affects the quality and range of the curriculum for children in the Reception Year. These deficiencies include a lack of large construction resources, no facilities for water play, poor quality resources for developing manipulative skills, poor display and book storage facilities, limited resources for role play to develop language, a lack of multicultural resources and inappropriate furniture for the needs of young children.
41. These inadequacies in accommodation and resources adversely affect the quality of the curriculum that the school is able to offer its pupils. As a result, they do not develop skills in planning and managing their own work by the time that they leave the school.

**Information from day-to-day assessments of pupils' work is not used systematically to help them to make further progress by setting short-term, achievable targets.**

42. Under the guidance of the headteacher, the school has made rapid progress in analysing the results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6.

This information is then used to identify areas for development. For example, when the results for Year 6 in 2002 identified inconsistencies in the numbers of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in different subjects, the headteacher organised 'booster classes' to address the problem.

43. Since her appointment, the headteacher has had to move the school forward on many fronts. She recognises that the school has still to make progress in developing whole-school records of progress that will identify, for example, any pupils who are underachieving. Whole-school assessment is not systematic and so cannot be used as a tool across the school for setting short-term targets for individual pupils to enable them to make further progress. The school is in the very early stages of involving pupils in assessing their own work.
44. Assessment is concentrated in English, mathematics and science and each pupil's progress is assessed in these subjects each term. There is no formal recording of progress for individual pupils in other subjects. In information and communication technology, the only records are those kept by the classroom support assistant teaching the small groups. Because of this, there is no systematic consideration of how learning in all subjects can contribute to raising standards within a programme of short-term, attainable targets. However, the records kept on the progress of children in the Reception class are very detailed and thorough and are used effectively to plan their future learning.

**Attendance is well below the national average.**

45. In the last full school year, the school's attendance rate was 93.3 per cent compared with the national average of 94.1 per cent. This level of attendance was well below the national average, and, broadly, amongst the worst third of all schools in the country. At this stage of the school year, the level of attendance is 92.5 per cent. This means that, despite the school's efforts, the situation has worsened. The proportion of unapproved absence is also rising.
46. An analysis of the school's records shows that there are three major reasons for this. The main reason is pupils being absent for medical reasons. The second reason is that the absences of the children of travelling families count against the school, and the third reason is holidays being taken during term time. During this school year, over 150 days absence have so far been recorded because of pupils being on holiday. Further requests for holiday absences have been received for the rest of this term. These breaks disrupt pupils' attainment and progress.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. In order to improve further the quality of education provided by the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) improve the provision for teaching information and communication technology so that all aspects of the National Curriculum are fully covered;  
(see paragraph 37)
  - (2) improve resources for the library and information and communication technology so that pupils have the opportunity to develop skills as independent learners and resources for the Reception class so that children have better opportunities to develop the full range of skills expected;  
(see paragraphs 8, 17, 36, 39, 40, 41)
  - (3) establish a comprehensive system for assessing pupils' progress in learning throughout the school and use the information from these assessments to guide the planning of future learning by setting short-term targets for improvement for individual pupils;  
(see paragraphs 29, 38, 43, 44)
  - (4) improve the level of attendance in the school to at least the national average.  
(see paragraphs 45, 46).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	6	6	1	0	0
Percentage	5	30	30	30	5	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than five percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	144
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	21

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%
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#### Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	6.7
National comparative data	5.4

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	13	11	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	10
	Girls	9	11	10
	Total	18	21	20
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	75 (77)	88 (86)	83 (86)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	9	11
	Girls	11	9	11
	Total	21	18	22
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	88 (86)	75 (86)	92 (86)
	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	10	9	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/a*	N/a*	N/a*
	Girls	N/a*	N/a*	N/a*
	Total	N/a*	N/a*	N/a*
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (92)	74 (62)	89 (92)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/a*	N/a*	N/a*
	Girls	N/a*	N/a*	N/a*
	Total	N/a*	N/a*	N/a*
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (100)	84 (96)	89 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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



**\* NB Statistics are not included for boys and girls separately because of the relatively small numbers.**

**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	144	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

## **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	28.8

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	66

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a
Total number of education support staff	N/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a

## **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	254,707
Total expenditure	259,384
Expenditure per pupil	1,995
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,040
Balance carried forward to next year	10,363

## **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	144
Number of questionnaires returned	94

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	39	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	48	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	62	2	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	49	19	3	1
The teaching is good.	52	43	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	36	16	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	33	5	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	44	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	48	12	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	45	1	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	48	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	32	22	6	14