

INSPECTION REPORT

JOHN HELLINS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Potterspury, Northamptonshire

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121851

Headteacher: Mr. M. Langrish

Reporting inspector: Mr. R. R. Fry.
21073

Dates of inspection: 10 – 11 March 2003

Inspection number: 248294

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

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Glossary

Baseline assessment – tests for pupils when they join the school or in their first year.

Booster classes – extra classes provided for pupils in English and mathematics to help pupils to do better in the SATs (national) tests.

Co-ordinator – teacher in charge of organising a subject, such as English or physical education.

Curriculum – everything the school teaches pupils in and out of class, such as English, science and health education, visits and visitors.

Foundation Stage – children of nursery and reception age.

ICT – information and communication technology.

Key Stage 1 (infant age) – pupils aged 5 to 7 years old. (Years 1 and 2)

Key Stage 2 (junior age) – pupils aged 7 to 11 years old. (Years 3 to 6)

Multi-cultural education – for example, the study of the beliefs of different ethnic groups within the United Kingdom.

National averages – refer to National Curriculum test results and teachers' assessments in English and mathematics where there are national comparisons with all schools and similar schools in Years 2 and 6.

National expectations – most pupils are expected to reach Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects at the age of 7 years and Level 4 at the age of eleven.

National tests – sometimes known as SATs, tests for all pupils 7, 11 and 14 years old.

Pupil – term used for a child of compulsory school age.

SATs – national tests for pupils aged 7, 11 and 14.

Scheme of work – courses of lessons in eg. English, for teachers to use when planning lessons. The school uses national guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to help them plan lessons for some subjects.

School development plan – set of plans that show how the school will improve over the coming year or longer, what its priorities for action are and how it will spend its money.

'Similar' schools – Schools are placed in groups for the purpose of comparing SATs results with other schools, based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. For example, one group covers schools who have 8 – 20 percent of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

Tracking – term used to describe a method of recording individual pupils' progress.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brownswood Drive Potterspury Towcester Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN12 7PG
Telephone number:	01908 542405
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. S. Lamb
Date of previous inspection:	3 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

John Hellins is a below average sized primary school for boys and girls aged between four and eleven years. The school educates pupils from Potterspurty and the surrounding area. It has 94 pupils on roll. Children's attainment on entry to the school is above that typical of children nationally. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Twenty four per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is above the national average. Some pupils, for example, need extra help with reading and writing skills. Sixteen per cent of pupils have either joined the school after the Reception year or left before the end of Year 6. All pupils speak English and no pupils have English as an additional language. During the inspection, a temporary teacher taught the Years 1 and 2 class.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

John Hellins Primary School is a very effective school. Pupils' standards of work at the end of Year 6 in 2001 and 2002 were well above average or were very high compared with schools nationally and similar schools. Pupils achieved very well. The school has received recognition twice from the Department of Education and Skills for the improvement in its results. The teaching is very good and the work that pupils do is relevant and interesting. The leadership and management of the school are very good. All adults work very well together and seek to maintain the high standards of pupils' work. The school effectively involves all pupils in everything that it does. Within the context of small schools, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain well above average and sometimes very high standards by the end of Year 6 and they achieve very well.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good.
- The teaching and learning in lessons are very good.
- The school cares for pupils very well and pupils' attitudes to school, behaviour and personal development are very good.
- The school has gained the Activemark Gold Award for physical education and the Healthy Schools Silver Award.
- Parents support the school very strongly.

What could be improved

- Governors do not have a formal programme of visits to observe lessons.
- The curriculum for design and technology and art has some shortcomings in Years 1 to 6.

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 November 1997. The school has made good improvements since then. The provision made for ICT has improved considerably. The school now has a computer suite and a good ratio of computers to pupils. Pupils' spiritual awareness in lessons has improved and relationships are now very good in all areas of the school. Pupils' behaviour is better outdoors and matches the very good behaviour seen in lessons. The roles and responsibilities of teaching staff are clear and well organised. The policy for pupils with special educational needs meets national requirements. Reports to parents have improved and show pupils' individual strengths and targets for improvement more clearly. The school development plan now includes whole school targets and a clear focus on raising the standard of provision generally.

There have been other improvements. The teaching is better and many lessons observed during this inspection were very good. The standards of pupils' work have improved considerably in the last four years. Teachers have put the many new school initiatives, such as the literacy and numeracy strategies, into place very effectively. The curriculum for design and technology and three-dimensional art is not taught as successfully as at the time of the last inspection.

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:	John Hellins compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A*	A	A
Mathematics	A	A*	A*	A
Science	A	A	A	A

Key	
very high (top 5%)	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the table above, pupils' performances in Year 6 have been well above average or very high compared with all schools over the last three years. In 2002, Year 6 pupils' standards of work in English and science were well above average compared with all schools nationally and similar schools. In mathematics, standards have been very high for two years in comparison with all schools, and they have been in the highest five per cent nationally. Pupils met or exceeded the high targets set by teachers in all three subjects in 2001 and 2002. Pupils made very good gains in performance from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve very well by the end of Year 6.

In the Reception class, most children exceed the standards expected of children nationally by the end of the year and achieve well. Young children become more confident and have many important skills, such as how to answer questions clearly, to read and write and to investigate ideas. The results of the very good teaching of basic skills from the Reception class onwards in reading, writing and mathematics are evident in the school's results. Pupils' standards of work in Year 2 over the last three years have been above or well above average in reading, writing and mathematics in comparison with all schools. Pupils achieve well. Reading standards last year were very high. In some years girls' standards of reading are higher than boys'. However, by the end of Year 6, boys' and girls' reading standards are similarly well above average.

Pupils with special educational needs across the school attain the targets in their individual education plans and they achieve very well. Boys' and girls' standards of attainment are similar overall. Pupils' work observed during the inspection was above the expected standards in the National Curriculum in most lessons. Pupils made good or very good progress with the tasks that they were set.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show a considerable interest in school life and enjoy going to school. Pupils listen very attentively to teachers and to each other during lessons. They respond confidently and relationships are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and during lunchtimes. Pupils work very well together on shared activities. Movement around the school is also very good. Older pupils willingly help younger pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school's emphasis on developing pupils' moral and social awareness has been successful. Pupils get on very well with each other. They are enthusiastic, helpful and have very good manners.
Attendance	Good, and above average at 95.3 per cent last year. The national average is 94.1 per cent. The school occasionally authorises absences that it should not, for example, when a reason for a pupil's absence has not been provided.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3-6
Quality of teaching	Very 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 Reception teacher's attention to young children's individual needs helps them make a very good start to their education. Activities in lessons are varied, very well planned and broken down into elements children can understand. The teacher provides many opportunities for children to learn to read, write, count and to experience a wide range of other experiences in small groups. The working atmosphere in lessons is very good. The Foundation Stage curriculum is working well.

Across the school, English and mathematics are taught very effectively. Teachers and support staff reinforce ideas and repeat key points of lessons regularly so that pupils learn quickly. Teachers question pupils to encourage them to think about new ideas and to check their understanding. In all classes, teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils will learn. Teachers have enthusiasm for their work and teach the main points of lessons very clearly. Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly so that no time is wasted. Teachers vary activities to maintain pupils' interest and work is well matched to pupils' abilities. All these features often lead to very good learning in lessons

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. Pupils with special educational needs learn effectively because teachers and support staff meet their needs quickly. There is a purposeful atmosphere in virtually all lessons. Teachers have a wide spread of knowledge and skills that they use effectively to bring about learning. Pupils' capacity to learn is extended effectively. Teachers' high level of expertise showed, for example, in excellent music and physical education lessons in Years 3 and 4, and 5 and 6 respectively. Pupils learned to compose music and to improve their ball skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is varied, relevant and interesting. The Foundation Stage curriculum meets the needs of young children effectively. There is a very good range of clubs for pupils to attend. There has been considerable improvement in the ICT curriculum. The school has gained the Activemark Gold Award for its physical education curriculum. The curriculum for design and technology and three-dimensional art is not as well developed as other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision is well managed. Support staff help pupils effectively during lessons. Pupils make very good progress and many attain national standards at the end of Year 6. All pupils are integrated well into lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school is a happy place. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in everything that the school does. The social and moral tone of assemblies is strong. The school council has a positive effect on school life and pupils' opinions are heard and acted upon. The school's award scheme successfully motivates pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school cares very well for all pupils day to day. Pupils' very good attitudes to school are a reflection of the relationships that teachers have with pupils. Pupils make the most of what the school offers. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award for improving pupils' awareness of a healthy approach to life.

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 made a very positive impact and has quickly developed the school's capacity to evaluate its work. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher set high standards in their teaching. There is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school. The administration and caretaking are efficient. Some assessments of physical risk have not been completed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors take an active role in helping to lead the school and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. There is no formal programme of visits by governors to lessons. A small number of items have not been included in the annual report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school's development plan is very well written and is used to check progress towards targets very well. The school has identified all the most important areas for development. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark for its work in improving the skills of all in the school.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has made good use of the money available to it and offers 'best value' in many aspects of its work. Financial controls and monitoring of spending are very thorough. The under-spend last year is being used to improve levels of equipment in classes and for important building maintenance work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Fifty eight per cent of questionnaires (54) were returned and 30 parents attended the meeting

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like going to school very much and make good progress with their work. Behaviour is good. The teaching is good and parents feel comfortable when approaching the school with a question or problem. The school is well managed and led. The school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed about their children's progress. The school has high expectations of children and it helps them to mature and be responsible. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. 	Parents are very pleased with all that the school provides.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The school has an excellent partnership with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils attain well above average and sometimes very high standards by the end of Year 6 and they achieve very well.

1. Over the last three years, pupils have achieved very well by the time they leave the school in Year 6. In 2002, Year 6 pupils' standards of work in English and science were well above average compared with all schools nationally and similar schools. In mathematics, standards have been very high for two years in comparison with all schools, and they have been in the highest five per cent nationally. A key indicator of pupils' performances last year was that even compared to similar schools, pupils' attainment was well above average. The school has received recognition twice from the Department of Education and Skills for the improvement in its results.
2. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and the very good quality of teaching ensures that pupils make very good progress from the time they enter the school until they leave it. Many pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress. All pupils have responded particularly well to the opportunities that the school gives them and to the atmosphere in the school, that hard work brings high rewards. Parents are very pleased with the progress their children make and in the interest they have in lessons.
3. There are many reasons why pupils' very good achievement has occurred. The school makes good use of its funding. The headteacher and governors have provided a good ratio of adults to pupils and good quality resources for pupils to use. Pupils receive much help and support and so make better progress in lessons. Teachers mark pupils' work thoughtfully and pupils learn new ideas and consolidate what they know every day. There are many good displays of work, of which pupils are very proud. At all stages in their school lives, pupils feel valued and important.
4. A significant number of pupils either join the school after the Reception year or leave before the end of Year 6. This proportion of new pupils could lead to lower standards because significant numbers of pupils have not had the benefit of a consistent education at John Hellins. However, the school manages pupils very well and in practice this factor has little impact on pupils' standards and achievement by the end of Year 6. Teachers respond quickly to pupils' needs and new pupils settle in quickly to the routines.
5. There is much emphasis on teaching pupils the basic skills of literacy and numeracy up to the age of seven, which has been successful. The results of the very good teaching and learning are seen in pupils' results at age 11. A further reason why pupils achieve very well is that teachers plan lessons that require pupils to learn at a good pace. Teachers often provide interesting and well written information for pupils to use, such as in science and mathematics lessons. Pupils are always clear what they have to do and how long they have to do it. They receive praise when a job is well done, and pupils therefore have a sense of pride in their work.
6. Standards of work seen in a Years 3 and 4 music lesson were high. The quality of teaching was excellent. During the lesson pupils clapped rhythms very accurately, created simple tunes and recorded them successfully. The lesson proceeded at a considerable pace and pupils had very good attitudes and behaved very well throughout the lesson. Pupils appreciated the need to use correct musical vocabulary for sounds, such as 'forte' (loud) and 'adagio' (slow). The lesson was divided into short sections that built layer upon layer into a performance at the end of the lesson from pairs of pupils. The

teacher talked to pupils about the importance of rests between notes and also about how music is recorded. Pupils attained a wide range of skills in a short time, performed tunes that they had written in pairs and at all stages enjoyed the lesson.

7. In Reception, children considered the story of Noah. They knew that Noah and his wife were good people, that he built the ark and it was made from wood. Pupils consolidated the idea of pairs of animals entering the ark and about what animals looked like. Children knew that it rained for 40 days and nights and learned that this was a flood. The teacher built up the atmosphere in the lesson using a tambourine and well-timed prompts to stimulate pupils' thinking to a high standard for young children. During this excellent lesson, children were encouraged by the teacher to consider the feelings of animals. Children were asked to consider what running out of food might have meant and what Noah should do. Children learned why the story was told and how everybody must be good.

The leadership and management of the school are very good.

8. The newly appointed headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide very good leadership. They have clear and high expectations of all staff, which they apply to themselves. The school is successful because all the staff work together to improve the school and have done so since the last inspection. Teachers have steadily improved the quality of education and ensured that pupils' needs are met each day. The headteacher has a strongly held belief that all pupils must have every opportunity to do well. The headteacher keeps the school up to date with educational developments but also takes into account what he has learned as the headteacher at other schools.
9. There is a strong emphasis on the everyday care for pupils and on developing an ever better curriculum which includes improvement of pupils' standards of work in art and design and technology. The headteacher has been quick to continue and develop the checks teachers make on each other's work and to encourage governors to be 'critical friends' to the school. There is already a good level of reflection by staff on their work in lessons. The staff is highly receptive to each other's ideas and is willing to change after honest reflection on their teaching. The staff feels that close teamwork and the depth of expertise amongst a relatively small staff are two of the keys to success.
10. The deputy headteacher sets an excellent example in his teaching and in his attitude to all aspects of school life. Younger or less experienced staff gain much from his enthusiasm for teaching and pupils, the way he develops ideas in lessons and from his generally enthusiastic manner. All staff make a very good contribution to the smooth running of the school. All the subjects or areas they co-ordinate, for example, the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics, music, science and ICT have significant strengths. The school, for example, has created a good ICT suite that teachers use effectively. The staff discusses the future direction of the school in a wide range of areas, such as about pupils' attainments in National Tests and how teachers should manage their responses to trends in results. A key question that the headteacher asks is, 'Is any aspect of the school slipping and why?' Communication throughout the school is very good and everyone feels involved at their particular level.
11. The school's aims are well conceived. The school encourages every child to develop intellectually, physically and socially. Teachers expect children to take pride in their work and behaviour and the school in turn should provide a caring secure environment, in which children are valued, stimulated and challenged. The school fosters enquiring minds by developing independence and perseverance in pupils. Pupils' attitudes and

behaviour are rooted in developing a sense of individual responsibility. The school achieves these aims.

12. The headteacher and staff know pupils well and they take a detailed interest in pupils' standards of work. Every pupil is valued and rewarded and parents confirm the high level of care in the school for their children. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed effectively. The identification of pupils with particular needs has allowed the school to boost their performances considerably, in most cases up to the standards that are expected nationally by the time pupils are eleven years old.
13. All adults have an important role to play and there is a whole-school approach to the management of change. Teachers are thorough in what they do and share expertise regularly. The staff attends courses and brings back information for their colleagues to use. Consequently, teachers are up to date and use what has been learned effectively. The very good management has led to pupils' high achievements.
14. The governing body provides good leadership and support for the management of the school. The governing body makes a significant contribution to the school's development planning process. The chair of governors has a good understanding of the strengths and points for development for the school. For example, he and governors have supported a school organisation based on a good ratio of adults to pupils. Class sizes have been kept to below average numbers, which increases pupils' involvement and engagement in lessons. Governors make a very good contribution to financial control and ensure there is enough money to pay the costs of staffing the school. The chair of governors outlined several reasons why the school is successful. He pointed out that the teaching is a strength and that teachers help pupils to develop individually. He feels that the staff accepts change and makes the most of new opportunities. Governors' committees successfully appoint well-qualified and enthusiastic staff. These factors contribute significantly to the high standards of pupils' work.
15. The headteacher is very well focused on the school's priorities and ensures the staff is too. The school's development plan gives the reader a very good indication of what the priorities for school improvement are. For example, the school has identified the need to improve further pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy. The staff is clear about what they are trying to do within their various roles to achieve this goal. An important strategy operating in the school is the use of targets. For example, there is a target for teachers to use information and communication technology in at least 20 per cent of lessons. This approach successfully focuses teachers' attention on whether they are using computers and other equipment enough.
16. The school's evaluation of its performance is very good. There is already a good process of checks on teaching and learning in lessons in place. Teachers receive credit for all the positive aspects of their work and pointers for improvement. The flow of information is good and the headteacher wants to involve all staff in making checks on each other in future. The school also checks its progress rigorously using the school development plan and associated documents. Targets in the school development plan are reviewed regularly and they are useful tools for judging the school's progress over the year. The school's development plan contains all the main areas that the school needs to address to make further progress, such as to improve the curriculum for design and technology. The document indicates that the school knows its strengths and areas for development very well. However, a small number of items have not been included in the annual report to parents, such as sufficient detail about pupils' attendance statistics. Some assessments of physical risk around the site have not been completed.

17. The headteacher has adopted a loose-tight management style. This means that he delegates duties to staff but at different points in the year looks closely at the results of the delegation and progress made, and what needs to be done next. In this way teachers are trusted to carry out their duties and to use their expertise but remain accountable to the headteacher.

The teaching and learning in lessons are very good.

18. The very good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to school are two of the main reasons for pupils' standards of work and their individual achievements. Many examples of good to excellent teaching were observed during the two days of the inspection.

19. There are two definable approaches to teaching. Some teachers teach at a steady good pace throughout their lessons. Other teachers deliberately coax pupils along at the beginning of lessons and work towards a dramatic ending. The purpose of the second type of teaching is to finish the lesson in such a way that pupils are more likely to remember what they have learned. In Years 3 and 4, the teacher introduced the topic of 'hair care' in a personal, social and health education lesson. The teacher made references, for example, to Samson and the strength he derived from his hair. Pupils had the task of producing a poster towards the end of the lesson about caring well for your hair. The lesson ended with the teacher projecting a huge image of a head louse.

20. Teachers revise pupils' knowledge from previous lessons very well. Teachers reinforce ideas effectively and repeat key points of lessons often, so that pupils have every chance to learn and consolidate new ideas. Teachers prepare lessons efficiently and all the things that pupils need are ready for them to use in each lesson.

21. In a physical education lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils worked extremely hard in a series of small game situations. The teacher showed the high level of his expertise. Pupils learnt in a short space of time all kinds of new skills or consolidated and improved things they had known before. Pupils were all proficient in over-head, bounce and chest passes. The teacher introduced a reasonable amount of competition to keep pupils really interested in the lesson. The teacher's explanations of how pupils might improve their skills were of a high quality. Pupils developed speed, accuracy and commitment to the tasks.

22. Another important feature of the teaching is the quality of the support staff, who with teachers work with groups of pupils effectively to help them learn new ideas. Pupils want to learn because they feel valued and included in lessons. There is a very good atmosphere in school, where pupils work hard and everybody gets on very well. Year 6 pupils set a very good example to all younger pupils. The high quality of relationships underpins much of the success of the school.

23. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all that the school does and staff meet their needs effectively. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and the work pupils have is well matched to their capabilities. Support staff work effectively with pupils with special educational needs. There is a significant turnover of pupils who either join the school after the Reception year or leave before the end of Year 6. Teachers skilfully induct new pupils into the school's systems. They quickly assess new pupils' standards of work and place them in groups commensurate with their capabilities. New pupils soon begin to make good progress and to make a contribution to the school.

24. Occasionally the teacher in Years 1 and 2 set tasks that were a little too difficult for pupils. For example, the reading level of the dictionary work that pupils were set in one lesson required reading skills that some pupils had not yet acquired. However, pupils made satisfactory progress largely because the teacher and her assistant gave pupils enough support to allow pupils to complete the tasks and understand what they were doing.
25. In a good mathematics lesson in Years 1 and 2, the teacher effectively revised sharing or dividing numbers. She encouraged pupils to decide whether, for example, an addition or division sign should be put between two numbers to achieve a given answer. In common with all staff at the school, the teacher encouraged pupils to participate because of her pleasant manner and through the good interest level of the questions she asked. Later in the lesson pupils learnt how to pay for items using different denominations of money. They learned for instance that 10 pence can be made up of two fives or five two penny coins. Other more able pupils paid for objects of greater value.

The school cares for pupils very well and pupils' attitudes to school, behaviour and personal development are very good.

26. The school's provision for pupils' moral and social development has had a positive effect on the way pupils approach their work and in the degree of effort they make in all aspects of school life. The oldest pupils set very good examples for younger pupils to follow. They have opportunities to collect and deliver registers to classes, which they enjoy. Others put out the equipment ready for assembly each morning and change the hymn slides on the overhead projector. Pupils also help teachers put games equipment out ready for lessons and help younger pupils at lunchtimes. Pupils carry out these activities reliably. The duties help pupils become more independent and grown up.
27. The school council is a successful initiative which shows pupils that adults value their views. Pupils enjoy representing their classes and their meeting agendas reflect their concerns. Pupils have made some important decisions about what happens during the school day. They have discussed whether water can be provided during lesson times and considered questions put to the council by other pupils.
28. Pupils showed how very well behaved they are during assemblies. They responded very well to the headteacher's assembly on the Tuesday. Pupils sang 'Light up the Fire' enthusiastically. The basis of the assembly was to reward pupils' for good work, helping one another and other good deeds. Pupils showed politeness when receiving the certificates and behaviour throughout the assembly was very good. All pupils listened carefully and appreciated the success of others. The prayer linked care for others and others caring for them very effectively. Two pupils also played their violins very confidently to the school.
29. Pupils' attitudes to work are a strength of the school. Pupils' positive responses enhance their progress in lessons and the standards they attain because they make the most of what they are offered. They show a strong interest in school life and most have a thirst for knowledge. Virtually all pupils respond very well to the teaching. Parents have considerable confidence in the school and their trust is communicated to their children. Teachers make good use of displays of pupils' work and of other information to stimulate pupils. The environment throughout the school is interesting and pupils feel that their work is valued.
30. Reception children's positive attitudes begin at an early age because the teacher reinforces good social and moral behaviour. At the beginning of each week, children sit

down with the teacher and talk about what they have done at the weekend. This discussion gives every pupil a chance to speak and to be heard. Other children listen politely and wait for their turn to say what they did at the weekend. Children's attitudes and behaviour during these sessions are very good. This valuable time helps pupils improve their listening and speaking skills.

31. Pupils showed very good powers of concentration in many lessons. Pupils are attentive and concentrate very well on the teaching, because the teaching is interesting and teachers' expectations of pupils' attitudes to work are high.
32. Attitudes and behaviour of pupils were excellent in a literacy lesson in Years 3 and 4. Pupils had the task of recognising some simple forms of poetry. During the lesson they learnt what rhyming couplets were and how to use alternative words to 'nice.' Pupils were very good listeners so when the teacher read a poem they were all listening. All pupils responded very well to the lesson because they were encouraged to think. They had work at a level they could complete successfully and which took their understanding of poetry forward. All pupils were willing to read out loud to the class.
33. In Years 1 and 2, pupils behaved well in a physical education lesson. Their good behaviour had positive effects. All pupils practised their jumps and turns, used different heights as they moved and changed their body positions effectively. Most pupils worked hard and made good progress. By the end of the lesson pupils' movements were more extensive and exciting.
34. In Years 5 and 6, pupils showed how responsible they are when using the computer suite. Pupils' task was to record information on a spreadsheet programme. They worked successfully and quickly and soon had interesting results to communicate to their classmates. Pupils again proved to be reliable and hard working. They were very interested to find out that more goals are scored in football matches in the last five minutes than at any other time.

The school has gained the Activemark Gold Award for physical education and the Healthy Schools Silver Award.

35. The school provides a programme of physical activities that is exceptional, and the school has gained the 'Active Mark Gold' award from 'Sport England.' There is a comprehensive scheme of work and programme of activities to cover the National Curriculum for physical education. Pupils receive 90 minutes of physical education each week. There has been outstanding leadership from the co-ordinator of physical education, who leads by practical example. Pupils learn to acquire and develop skills, apply tactics, evaluate and improve their performances and to develop knowledge of fitness and good health.
36. The co-ordinator and teachers plan the programme of work thoroughly. The teaching emphasises the correct match of activities to the abilities of pupils. The co-ordinator attends courses and has high expectations of the teaching and learning. The school provides extra swimming lessons for non-swimmers and this is a good example of how the school meets the needs of different pupils. There is a good emphasis on safety and fair play in lessons.
37. The school makes very good use of community training programmes for a variety of sports, such as, cricket, rugby and football. The staff has received training to improve their skills. For example, teachers have benefited from the 'Top Sport' training and

sessions about First-Aid. John Hellins and local schools share resources for physical education and teachers make very good use of the school's facilities. There is a small field and a good sized school hall. Within the confines of the school's accommodation, there is a netball court, a small football pitch and space for a 50 metres straight track.

38. Pupils experience a wide range of activities. Six sports clubs run each year, for cross-country, football, cricket, dance, athletics and netball. Many pupils attend the extra curricular sports clubs and represent the school. Pupils can win a variety of awards, for example, for athletics and swimming success. Pupils are highly motivated because of the quality of the curriculum and teachers' attitudes to the subject. Their high degree of motivation was particularly in evidence in the lesson observed in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' standards of work in the small games were high. School teams have been particularly successful in inter-school football and cross-country competitions.
39. The school has a second strength in this area. Recently the school gained the Healthy Schools Silver award. In order to qualify for this award, schools have to prove that they have a curriculum that covers all areas of personal, social and health education. Teachers emphasise aspects of healthy living effectively to pupils of different ages. Topics include, sex education, drug education, smoking, and eating healthily. Other areas of study are bullying and accident prevention.
40. Younger pupils up to the age of seven look at rules, the difference between right and wrong, making choices, dealing with feelings and caring for others. Older pupils from Years 3 to 6 study the same areas but at greater depth, and include other subjects such as rules and laws as well. Pupils have learned many things that will help to guide them in later life, such as what a good balanced diet is and why their packed lunches need to be kept cool during the day.

Parents support the school very strongly.

41. The school has developed a close and excellent partnership with parents. The quality of the links with parents is another effect of the very good leadership and management of the school over the last four years. Parents' views of the school have improved since the last inspection. The relationship with parents has grown stronger over the years. The newly appointed headteacher supports parents' fund raising activities with enthusiasm. Parents feel very well supported by his approach and interest in what they are doing. Parents report that the headteacher and staff are very good listeners and that no issue is too small for the school to deal with.
42. At the parents' meeting and in the questionnaires, parents showed how positively they feel about the school. The results of the questionnaires showed, for example, that ninety eight per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire feel that the school is well managed and that the teaching is good. Fifty-four questionnaires were returned. All parents reported that their children like school. All parents feel the school's expectations of their children are realistically high. Ninety eight per cent of parents feel that the school helps their children mature and become responsible and that their progress is good. All parents feel comfortable when asking the school questions or when resolving a problem.
43. Ninety eight per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that they are kept well informed about their children's education and that the school works closely with them. Inspectors looked into the quality of reports to parents about their children's progress. In all respects inspectors found that the provision is satisfactory, and is good where teachers adapt the computer based reporting system with many of their own

thoughts and comments. Ninety six per cent of parents felt that the range of activities outside lessons is good. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. Year 6 pupils take part in many different activities that cover a wide range of sporting events and reach good standards of performance.

44. During the parents' meeting, individual parents raised a number of points. Parents commented on the enthusiasm of staff for their jobs and how it 'rubs off' positively on their children. Parents noted that the provision for information and communication technology has improved hugely. One parent mentioned that the library had to be moved to accommodate the suite of computers. Inspectors looked into this issue and feel that arrangements for the central library are satisfactory. The school also uses collections of books from the school library service to supplement the library stock. The school has a small outdoor swimming pool and a few parents were interested in the running costs. The headteacher confirmed that the local education authority pays for most of the costs to run the pool. Parents have noted how the school has developed over the years since the last inspection. One parent who has had contact with the school for almost 10 years, said how it had 'vastly improved.'
45. At the meeting for parents, they commented for example that the school has continued to promote high standards in all that it does. Many parents clearly think that their children's standards of work at John Hellins are some of the highest in the area. They commented that the school rewards pupils for any aspect of their work or social behaviour, such as kindness to others, good work or carrying out duties.
46. Parents are well aware of the quality of relationships and support the school enthusiastically. Pupils have their positive attitudes reinforced at home. The school's relationship with parents has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and on the atmosphere in school. Parents' confidence in the school shows in the way that pupils respond to it. Parents have many good reasons why they should support the school. For example, pupils receive a curriculum that develops them in many ways, standards are well above average and their children are happy at school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Governors do not have a formal programme of visits to observe lessons.

47. Governors make a significant positive contribution to the work of the school through activities such as school development planning. Governors do ask questions of the school in the area of health and safety. One governor from time to time writes to the school to ask, 'What would happen if,' questions. The headteacher replies and crucially, the school is alerted to the importance of having procedures in place to cover, for example, specific emergency situations.
48. Governors' point for development is to act as more rigorous 'critical friends' to the school. Governors do not decide at the beginning of the year what they are going to see of the day to day working of the school. There is no formal programme of visits, for example, to look at lunchtime arrangements, after school activities, the Foundation Stage, and numeracy and literacy lessons. There is no consistent programme of lesson observations. Governors do not ask enough questions about the school as a result of their experiences of it, such as why the school carries out activities in a particular way and not in another.

'Critical friendship' involves asking questions of the school so that it reviews why it does what it does.

49. Some governors feel that they are not qualified to carry out this role. This is not the case. Governors are very well qualified to comment on the atmosphere and behaviour in lessons, about time keeping, whether a teacher's planned lesson happened in the manner intended and whether the targets for pupils' learning were met in the lessons observed. Teachers also have much to discuss with governors about their work.
50. There are important reasons why governors need to carry out this work. The most important reason is that the school has reached a high level of organisation and success, and from time to time it needs to know that there will be regular checks on aspects of its work so that it maintains its high standards. The local education authority is likely to have less time to make routine checks on the school in future.

The curriculum for design and technology and art has some shortcomings in Years 1 to 6.

51. In the Reception class there are examples of very good work in both subjects. For example, children have made mobiles, a flying bird with moving wings and a kite. They have also produced some very good observational drawings. Children have drawn butterflies in charcoal and shown that they mix colours well when painting.
52. The school has identified the need to improve the curriculum for design and technology and three-dimensional art in Years 1 to 6 in the school development plan. The two subjects have less prominence in the curriculum than many other subjects. However, in Years 3 and 4, pupils have produced well made gas mask boxes. Pupils have studied aspects of the Second World War and the teacher has successfully developed the topic in design and technology lessons. Pupils have designed, made and evaluated their boxes successfully. Around the school, there are good paintings and drawings of 'Signs of Spring,' of objects observed at first hand and pupils' good attempts to paint in the style of great artists, such as Van Gogh.
53. In design and technology, pupils do not have enough opportunities to respond to challenges and solve problems using their own creativity. Pupils do not develop the process of designing, making and evaluating their work systematically between Years 1 and 6 because there is no agreed whole-school scheme of work for teachers to follow. Pupils have few opportunities to learn about how to fix things together or to blend foods into tastes they like. They do not experience the wide range of materials available and the things that can be done with them. Pupils do not have enough experiences of how to use tools safely and skilfully so that they can turn their ideas on paper into reality.
54. Three-dimensional art is not as well developed as other aspects of the subject. The National Curriculum suggests, for example, that pupils should investigate materials and processes and design and make artefacts in response to their experiences and imagination. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to fulfil these requirements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. The governors, headteacher and staff now need to,

- Develop the work of the governing body by,
 - Devising a programme of visits to observe lessons,
 - Asking questions about the school's provision as a result of the visits,
 - Recording what has been seen and any points for improvement in the governing body's minutes.

- Improve the curriculum for design and technology and three-dimensional art at both key stages by,
 - Adopting a scheme of work for design and technology that focuses on the process of designing, making and evaluating tasks and challenges,
 - Ensuring enough time is devoted to both subjects,
 - Providing more opportunities for pupils to work in three-dimensions and at different scales in art.

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	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	8	5	2	0	0	0
Percentage	25	40	25	10	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 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)	0	94
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	23

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	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	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	3	5	8

Where a year group has less than 10 pupils, the results have not been reported so that individual pupils cannot be identified.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	8	10	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	7
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	18	18	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	94 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	6
	Girls	10	9	10
	Total	10	17	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (86)	94 (95)	94 (100)
	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	92	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	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	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)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	68

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.5

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 / 2002
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	£
Total income	278273
Total expenditure	262192
Expenditure per pupil	2881
Balance brought forward from previous year	21300
Balance carried forward to next year	37381

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	94
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	20	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	80	18	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	28	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	43	7	4	2
The teaching is good.	87	11	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	80	18	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	11	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	91	9	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	89	9	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	89	9	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	22	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	69	27	0	2	2

Other issues raised by parents

- One parent mentioned that the library had to be moved to accommodate the suite of computers and suggested it was inadequate.
- The school has a small outdoor swimming pool and a few parents were interested in the running costs.