

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY AND ST SWITHIN'S CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104632

Headteacher: Mr J A McCaul

Reporting inspector: Mr A J Dobell
10373

Dates of inspection: 2nd and 3rd December 2002

Inspection number: 251220

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 aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J McCarthy
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This voluntary aided school is situated on the north eastern outskirts of Liverpool and educates boys and girls between the ages of three and eleven. It has 351 pupils on roll, 45 of whom attend the Nursery part time. Although its roll has declined significantly in the last few years, the school is still of above average size. Most pupils in the school are of white Western European origin and under one per cent originate in other cultures. One of these is in the early stages of learning English. The school successfully includes these pupils in all its activities and their knowledge, skills and understanding are developing well. Overall, pupils' social backgrounds are well below those normally found, although they cover a wide range. Children's attainment and learning skills are well below average when they enter the Nursery. This is a decline since the school was inspected previously. In the Nursery and Reception classes, there are the full time equivalent of 63 children. The rest are in single age classes in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6, and in three mixed age classes in Years 3 and 4.

The proportion of the school's pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (31 per cent) is above average. There are 50 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and this proportion is broadly average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and, at 0.3 per cent, this is below average. These proportions do not reflect the community that the school serves. The nature of special educational needs includes specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication difficulties and physical difficulties. The school is a member of the ALT education action zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a satisfactory school providing a satisfactory standard of education. Standards of attainment in the National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 have generally been at or above the national average since the school was inspected previously, but worsened in 2002 when attainment in writing was well below the national average. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been well below the national average except in 2001 when it matched the national average.

The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. They make satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6, although their progress improves in Year 5 and 6. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, although there is a lack of vigour in moving the school forward. Pupils enjoy their time in the school and have good attitudes to learning. They benefit from a curriculum of good quality and very good opportunities for activities outside class. Given the attainment of pupils on entry to the school, the quality of the education provided and the costs for each pupil, the school is giving satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils benefit from interesting learning activities and very good opportunities outside class.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and relationships are very good throughout the school.
- These good attitudes are fostered by the school's very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage, for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Overall, parents have very positive views of the school.

What could be improved

- Pupils' reading standards and their ability to express their ideas clearly.
- The assessment and recording of the progress of individual pupils.
- The teaching of information and communication technology, including its use to support learning in all subjects of the curriculum.
- The use of teaching and learning time.
- The ability of subject leaders to manage teaching and learning in their subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's previous inspection was in June 1998. Since then, its rate of improvement has been satisfactory. Most of the key issues from that inspection have been addressed, but the use of assessment to record the progress of individual pupils consistently remains unsatisfactory. Further, the library is not a major resource for learning. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good. The provision for information and communication technology has improved, but its use is inconsistent. The quality of the curriculum and especially of the range of activities outside class has improved. The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs has improved and is now good. Parents continue to hold the school in high regard and give it their support. The headteacher and his senior colleagues are providing satisfactory leadership and management. There are some good initiatives in the school, for example, in the tracking of the progress of individual pupils in Year 6, but these are often the work of individual members of staff and not part of a whole-school strategy. The school received an Achievement Award in March 2002 for improvement in attainment in the National Curriculum tests. The school's capacity to make further progress is satisfactory.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	C	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	A	D	C	
science	D	C	E	E	

Attainment, as measured in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 worsened in 2002. However, this was not unexpected. Of last year's Year 6, 20 pupils left the school at the end of Year 1 to join a newly opened school. Fifteen of these pupils were at least six months ahead of their age in terms of standards of reading. On the other hand, incoming pupils had an adverse effect on attainment. Attainment at the end of Year 2 matched the national average in reading and mathematics in 2002, but was well below the national average in writing. Teacher assessments in science judged pupils to be above the national average. Overall, pupils make good progress in their learning.

Evidence from this inspection is that attainment is likely to be at the expected level at the end of Years 2 and 6 in the National Curriculum tests in 2003. However, attainment in reading and pupils' ability to express themselves are below those normally found. Attainment in information and communication technology is likely to be at the expected level at the end of Years 2 and 6. Children in the Foundation Stage are making good progress overall and most are likely to attain the nationally expected levels in the six areas of learning for this age group by the end of the Reception Year although they are currently below the level normally found. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6, although progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. In 2002, the school failed to achieve its agreed targets for the proportion of pupils attaining level 4 in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6. The targets for 2003 are very challenging and the school will have to work very hard to achieve them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school. Most pupils enjoy lessons and apply themselves well to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good both in and out of class. Pupils exercise responsibility very well and many show very good initiative.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good. Pupils have a secure understanding of the effect of their behaviour on others.
Attendance	In the last full school year, attendance was well below the national average. The learning mentor is improving attendance levels. Too many pupils are up to 15 minutes late in the morning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery & Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Strategies for managing pupils are very good and staff have high expectations for behaviour and effort. Very good teaching is characterised by interesting and stimulating learning activities and searching questioning which develops pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Very good lessons have good pace so that pupils concentrate well. However, the quality of marking is variable and does not consistently indicate how pupils can make further progress. Information and communication technology is not used satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects. Work does not consistently match the needs of individual pupils and different ability groups. Pupils' research skills are underdeveloped because the library is inadequate. Support staff contribute well to learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs.

The school has good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and these help pupils to overcome difficulties in reading and expressing themselves clearly. However, there is scope for further improvement in these areas. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, are included effectively in learning and so make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality of the curriculum is good throughout the school and the range of activities outside lessons is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and classroom assistants are effectively used to promote progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the good provision made for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	There is very good provision for pupils' personal development. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
How well the school cares	Pupils are cared for well as individuals. However, different systems are

for its pupils	used to track their progress through the school and pupils are not always sufficiently aware of their targets to improve their work.
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The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and meets legal requirements. However, the use of time, for example, at the start of the day and immediately after lunch, is not consistently effective. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is of good quality. Aspects of information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. Parents appreciate the good levels of care and support that their children receive and the school has good links with parents overall.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and his senior colleagues are providing satisfactory leadership and management overall. The roles of the deputy headteacher and senior management team have been strengthened, but subject leaders are not able to manage their subjects effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well and have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory. It has mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate progress but there are occasions when they do not result in whole-school policies and practice.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its human and physical resources satisfactorily overall. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily.

The school has a clear vision for its work and this is supported by all who contribute to teaching and learning. The school development plan has been improved since the previous inspection, but criteria for judging the effectiveness of developments are too general. However, weaknesses remain in the lack of a clear, measurable strategy for improvement and in the lack of a whole-school dimension in some areas, for example, assessment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is good and children make good progress. Behaviour is good and children become more mature and responsible. Children are expected to work hard and do their best: homework is satisfactory overall. Parents feel comfortable when approaching the school with concerns. Children like school. 	<p>Of the parents who responded to the questionnaires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 per cent question if they are well informed about progress. 13 per cent question if the school works closely with parents. 15 per cent do not believe that the school is well led and managed. 22 per cent do not believe that there are sufficient activities outside class.

The school distributed 372 questionnaires and 280 were returned (75 per cent). This is an unusually high rate of return and indicates that parents are very supportive of the school overall. The meeting held before the inspection was attended by 25 parents.

Inspectors support the positive views held by parents. The quality of the written information provided for parents compares well with other schools, although annual reports do not consistently evaluate progress and targets for improvement. The school works well with parents overall. Inspectors judged the school

to be led and managed satisfactorily. The quality and range of opportunities provided outside lessons are very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils benefit from interesting learning activities and very good opportunities outside class.

1. The quality of teaching has improved since the school was inspected previously. Then, while all teaching was at least satisfactory, less than half was good or better and only one lesson in ten was very good. During this inspection, 31 lessons were observed and the quality of teaching was always at least satisfactory, with over two thirds being good or better. Almost one lesson in five had teaching which was very good. Teachers have very good strategies for managing pupils behaviour overall and this promotes a good atmosphere for learning.
2. Very good teaching is rooted in thorough planning. In these lessons, it is clear what is to be learned and how this is to be achieved. Separate work is planned for pupils at different stages of learning so that all pupils have appropriate levels of challenge. This results in pupils making very good progress and future learning is then planned in the light of the progress being made. In these lessons very effective feedback is given to pupils on their learning and carefully targeted questioning tests and reinforces their understanding.
3. For example, in a very good science lesson in Year 1, pupils were being asked to judge the relative brightness of five torches and to evaluate their predictions in tests that were fair. The teacher was absolutely clear and specific in explaining the task and in questioning pupils about their conclusions. Because they understand precisely what they are doing and why, pupils responded with enthusiasm and worked in pairs co-operatively. They offered their ideas eagerly – ‘I think this one because it is the biggest’ and ‘I think it’s torch number four because it’s got a bigger bulb’. The teacher used subject-specific language well to underpin pupils’ learning, for example, ‘predict’, ‘observe’ and ‘fair test’. After they had experimented with the different torches, results were recorded in a ‘frame of the experiment’ created as a result of earlier discussion. This gave pupils a clear idea of a successful experimental format. The lesson moved with good pace and totally engaged the pupils’ attention so that their learning was secure and of very good quality.
4. A very good physical education lesson for children in the Nursery was based in very clear and detailed plans very well related to the early learning goals for physical development. After warm up activities which engaged the children’s attention, the teacher introduced a ‘Father Christmas Sack’ which created great excitement and anticipation. The teacher talked in whispers which meant that children’s learning skills were developed very effectively. Different items were produced from the sack such as an aeroplane, jack-in-the-box and a dancing doll. Children then imitated the actions of these articles moving at different speeds. Opportunities were taken to sing relevant songs, for example, ‘Aeroplanes, aeroplanes all in a row’, so that links were made with other areas of learning. Children with particularly good movements were used to demonstrate. Attitudes and behaviour were excellent during this lesson because the children’s attention was totally engaged. High expectations for behaviour and effort resulted in learning of very good quality.
5. In a very good mathematics lesson for lower attaining pupils in Year 6, the main part of the lesson was concerned with solving mathematical problems which were expressed in words. The teacher had devised a system to tackle these problems which had a number of clear steps. She explained this very clearly so that all pupils fully understood what they were to do. She then questioned them sensitively but rigorously to ensure that they understood. Her reinforcement of their confidence and self-esteem was excellent. All pupils were engaged fully in learning and made very good progress in understanding the method that they were to use.
6. In all these lessons, the teachers had a very secure knowledge and understanding of the subject they were teaching. This resulted in interesting and stimulating learning activities so that pupils’ interest and attention were captured. They worked with a high level of sustained concentration and enjoyed the very good progress that they were making. They appreciated that their teachers cared

for them and wanted them to succeed and they responded with excellent attitudes to learning.

7. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. However, pupils find it difficult to express themselves clearly and accurately and this holds back attainment in other areas of English. The school has targeted writing as a priority for improvement and there is good evidence that this is raising standards in the current Years 2 and 6. In these classes, there is clear evidence of progress being made in the accuracy and quality of writing during the course of this term. Attainment in reading covers a wide range. In both Years 2 and 6, high attaining pupils read fluently and with good expression. Their attainment is above average. On the other hand, lower attaining pupils find it difficult to recognise unfamiliar words and read hesitantly and with little expression. Their attainment is well below the average. Pupils' enthusiasm is not helped by the poor quality of the books in the library. In mathematics, pupils' understanding of methods is often secure, but too many pupils are let down by careless errors in arithmetic often resulting, for example, from an insecure knowledge of tables.
8. The quality of the curriculum and of pupils' learning activities is good overall. Members of the senior management team have an overview of the planning of learning in their year groups – the Nursery and Reception classes, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6. They have a responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in the year groups which they manage and for ensuring that the National Curriculum is covered. A particular strength in the school's provision is the range of activities outside class. They cover a wide range and are intended to help to motivate pupils to learn. They include a good range of visits and visitors to the school, musical and sporting activities and activities promoted by the ALT education action zone. An unusual strength of this imaginatively structured provision is that aspects of it are available to pupils of all ages throughout the school.
9. Overall, pupils enter the school with levels of attainment and learning skills which are well below those normally found. They make very good progress in their learning in the Foundation Stage, good progress in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. However, the rate of progress improves in Years 5 and 6. Where teaching is at its most effective, very high expectations and interesting and challenging learning activities coupled with very good relationships resulted in a very good response from pupils, learning of very good quality and so to secure levels of understanding.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and relationships are very good throughout the school.

10. Pupils' good attitudes to learning have a positive effect on their attainment and progress. The school has a good range of strategies to promote these good attitudes. Adults in the school know pupils and families well and effective systems are in place to foster good responses and to promote the personal development of individual pupils. Good support is available from the parish sister who is very effective in supporting families.
11. School and class rules encourage a respect for others. Pupils know these rules well and also have a good understanding of the underlying principles of the school's mission statement. They respect the values of others and the contributions that all pupils make to school and to class activities. Older pupils help younger ones automatically and most pupils have a mature understanding of the effect that their actions have on others. They are willing to discuss these issues in assemblies and in whole-class discussions. A clear atmosphere of care pervades the school and this has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning.
12. This quality of care also underpins pupils' good behaviour. In most classes, pupils are co-operative in learning. In some classes, their attitudes and behaviour are exemplary. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, pupils responded with total interest and concentration. They moved from a whole-class session to group work without fuss and got on with their work. They gave each other very good support, but were also well able to work independently. They showed good initiative in the way in which they tackled their writing and were happy to discuss and explain their

work. Their excellent attitudes were a key factor in the good progress that they made.

13. This good behaviour is based in the school's behaviour policy which is known and understood by pupils and is shared with parents. It is applied consistently in classes and pupils understand and respect the rewards that result from good behaviour. As a result, there is relatively little unsatisfactory behaviour and pupils accept the sanctions that it results in as fair. The school takes a firm line on bullying which is supported by parents. Bullying is rare and occasional instances are dealt with firmly and effectively. Parents confirm this.
14. Good attitudes and good behaviour create a positive atmosphere for learning. This is enhanced by the very good relationships which exist between pupils and between pupils and adults throughout the school. Pupils appreciate that adults have a genuine concern for them and want them to be happy and successful. They respond by treating adults with respect but also by regarding them as friends who they want to please. Throughout the school, very good relationships are rooted in mutual respect and, in many cases, by the very real affection that adults feel for their pupils which evokes a similar response. For example, when one member of staff had an accident in the school on the first morning of the inspection, her class responded responsibly and showed her genuine care as they co-operated with her for the rest of the day.
15. Good attitudes to learning are being fostered by the school's membership of the ALT education action zone. This has made possible the appointment of a learning mentor. Among her other roles, the learning mentor is having a positive effect on attendance and punctuality which is improving the attitudes to learning of the small number of pupils with poor attendance. She has also developed whole-class discussions throughout Years 1 to 6 to improve pupils' abilities to articulate their views with confidence and sensitivity. She also plans to develop a school council to give pupils further experience of responsibility.
16. Parents confirm that their children enjoy school and want to attend. This exemplifies their good attitudes to learning and the very good relationships which exist and have a positive impact on attainment and progress.

Good attitudes are fostered by the school's very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

17. The report from the school's previous inspection judged the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to be very good. This very good provision has been maintained, and remains a strength of the school. This underpins the pupils' very good personal development and is a key reason for the positive and caring atmosphere that exists in the school.
18. Because this is a Roman Catholic school, the main report on collective worship and religious education will be prepared by the Archdiocese. However, assemblies offer very good opportunities for reflection so that pupils develop a spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. Throughout the school, teachers take opportunities to encourage pupils to consider their place in the world and to think sympathetically about the conditions and needs of others.
19. The provision for pupils' moral development is very strong. Pupils have a very clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. This is underpinned by the school's mission statement and aims which include 'to provide opportunities for pupils to experience and to understand the Gospel value of love, justice, truth and reconciliation'. In pursuing this aim, the school provides pupils with a secure understanding of the moral basis of the choices that they make and develops their understanding of the potential effect that their actions might have on others.
20. Social skills are developed very effectively through the creation of different opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. Year 6 pupils set good examples for younger pupils. Membership of the ALT education action zone is also promoting social development. Pupils throughout the school show a very good awareness of the need to care for each other and for property. They support each other well in learning and co-operate very well in group work. Social awareness is developed

further through the support that pupils offer to different charities. The learning mentor, who is financed by the education action zone, is in the process of setting up a school council which will give pupils further opportunities to develop social skills. The education action zone is also promoting good links with the local secondary school which successfully raise the confidence and self-esteem of older pupils within the school.

21. Subjects such as art and design, geography and history contribute very well to pupils' knowledge and understanding of western culture. Visits to local facilities such as Croxteth Hall promote an awareness of our cultural history. A wide range of music and drama activities support this awareness. Visits from theatre groups and opportunities to work with specialists, for example, in a drama workshop for Year 3 and work with a gospel choir in Year 4, widen pupils' cultural awareness very effectively. In February, because of the support of the education action zone, the school plans to use a singer/story teller as an artist in residence for a week to work with pupils. The provision for multicultural education has improved markedly since the school was inspected previously. Religious education has a good multi-faith element concentrating on Judaism and Hinduism and Year 3 have visited a Hindu temple. There is scope for further development, for example, in considering the impact of other cultures on music and art, but, overall, this area of the curriculum has developed well.
22. The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development results in pupils developing a good level of maturity in their outlook. This enables them to approach learning in a responsible and adult way, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and contributes well to attainment and progress.

There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage, for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

23. Many children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment and learning skills which are well below those normally found. Initial assessments show that language development is poor and that numerical and listening skills are underdeveloped. Personal and social skills are below average as are physical skills, for example, in cutting and pencil work. Some children have little or no experience of books. Detailed records are compiled to indicate the needs of different children and then records of their progress are kept so that future learning experiences can be planned.
24. The curriculum designed to underpin the learning and development of young children is fully in place. Teachers have a good understanding of how young children learn and plan interesting and stimulating activities which motivate the children and build their confidence and self-esteem. For example, in the Nursery, in a physical education lesson to prompt children's responses to different stimuli, the teacher produced different toys from 'Father Christmas's Sack' to stimulate different responses. This resulted in excellent attitudes and behaviour and learning of very good quality. Similarly, in a good Literacy lesson for older Reception children, good opportunities were provided for children to reflect on the story which stimulated imaginative thinking. Teachers and support assistants work well together. Adults are careful to promote children's learning of language at all times and to question and prompt them to think through their ideas and explain clearly. However, in one lesson, the quality of learning could have been improved with greater verbal input from adults.
25. Children make very good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, most reach the standards expected nationally by the time they leave the Reception Year, although they are currently below this level. This is because their learning is effectively planned and managed by a team of adults who have high expectations for them and who are ambitious for them to be successful.
26. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning because of the good provision made for them. Learning support assistants are effective in ensuring that they are fully included in learning and that the work provided for them enables them to make good progress. Their individual education plans are of good quality and are reviewed regularly to ensure that they

are supporting learning effectively. They have clear targets which are attainable, focused and measurable. The one pupil with a statement of special educational needs is fully supported. The requirements of the statement are met and external agencies are involved where appropriate.

27. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is a part-time teacher who has one afternoon per week to devote to special educational needs. This is taken up largely by administration and meetings and she has no time for direct involvement with pupils who have special educational needs or to formally review their progress. She values the good support that these pupils are given by the learning support assistants, but she has no opportunity to monitor and evaluate their contribution. Within these constraints, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well and these pupils are enabled to make good progress.
28. The school has very few pupils who speak English as an additional language and their learning is managed well. The school has obtained advice from the local education authority and the special educational needs co-ordinator and a teacher have had professional development in the education of these pupils. Careful planning and provision has resulted in these pupils making good progress in their acquisition of English so that they are fully included in learning and able to make progress at the same rate as their fellow pupils.
29. The school makes good provision for all groups of pupils to be fully included in all its activities and in this it is largely successful. It currently has no specific provision for pupils who have particular gifts or talents, but plans to develop such a provision in the near future.

Overall, parents have very positive views of the school.

30. The unusually high rate of return of parents' questionnaires, 75 per cent, suggests that parents are interested in the school and in their children's education. A very high proportion agreed that teaching was good and that their children made good progress. Parents believe that behaviour in the school is good and that children become more mature and responsible. Overall, parents are happy with the amount of work that their children are expected to do at home. They feel comfortable at the prospect of approaching the school with questions or concerns. A very high proportion of parents confirm that their children enjoy school and the pupils themselves agree with this.
31. Slightly more parents do not believe that they are sufficiently well informed about their children's progress. In fact, the school's systems for informing parents about progress are typical of schools of this type and reports on progress conform to requirements. However, some lack evaluation of progress. Statutory information for parents, such as the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents, are of good quality. Some parents do not feel that the school works closely with them, but there is a good attendance at information evenings linked to curricular issues and a good number of parents support courses organised by the Parent-School Partnership. Some parents question if the school is well led and managed. Inspectors judge leadership and management to be satisfactory. Just over one fifth of parents responding to the questionnaire do not believe that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors believe that the quality and range of these activities are very good.
32. The parents' meeting held before the inspection was attended by 25 parents and carers. Their views are very positive. Their main concern was that they were not adequately prepared for the introduction of mixed age classes in Years 3 and 4 at the beginning of this school year. They felt that they were given too little notice of this proposal to respond. This view was also expressed in three written comments to inspectors. The inspection team found no evidence to suggest that the mixed age classes were having a negative effect on attainment and progress.
33. Discussions with parents during the inspection confirmed these positive views. Most parents view the school very highly. Indeed, one grandmother in conversation with an inspector stated that all her children had attended the school and had been very happy and well taught and that all her grandchildren were having the same experience. She expressed very strong support for the headteacher. Most written comments on parents' questionnaires were supportive overall and

some had minor concerns or suggestions. Three comments expressed more serious concerns which were particular to those parents and which appear to have little general support.

34. Some parents, grandparents, friends of the school and parishioners help in the school in a range of ways, for example, by hearing pupils reading, helping with different activities or with visits. The school much appreciates the contributions that they make to children's learning and progress.
35. The school's Friends Association exists to support the school and to raise funds to provide extra resources. Its activities are well supported by the general body of parents and it raises quite substantial amounts of money. The school appreciates the extra resources provided and the contribution that they make to attainment and progress.
36. The school is valued by parents, the parish and the local community. Its central role gives it a confidence and security which support teaching and learning well.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Pupils' reading standards are below average and many pupils find it difficult to express themselves clearly.

37. Children enter the Nursery with language skills which are well below average overall. Some have little or no awareness or knowledge of books. Many pupils are not used to expressing their ideas and opinions at any length or with precision. Many teachers have good questioning skills but, unless pupils are prompted to respond in detail, many are content to give brief answers which often lack effective use of language. This lack of articulacy adversely affects attainment and progress in English and in other subjects. The school has made writing a priority and, in the current Years 2 and 6, there is good evidence of improvements in the quality and accuracy of writing during this school year. Attainment in writing is broadly in line with the expected level.
38. However, there is underachievement in reading. Throughout the school, there is a considerable difference between the reading skills of high attaining and below average pupils. In the Reception Year, high attaining pupils read with reasonable fluency and accuracy, but below average pupils have poor skills in recognising even very frequently used words. By Year 2, high attaining pupils read challenging texts well, discuss their reading confidently and have good strategies for reading unfamiliar words. In contrast, below average pupils have weak strategies and tend to guess. For example, one pupil read 'has' when the word was 'said'. This pupil knew only about 20 frequently used words.
39. By Year 4, high attaining pupils are fluent and confident, although they do not always read with expression. They read regularly and widely and are confident and successful when tackling unfamiliar words. Below average pupils read mechanically and do not respond to punctuation in order to make their reading meaningful. In Year 6, high attaining pupils read confidently and with good expression. They discuss their reading in depth and are able to compare authors and characters. Below average pupils have reasonable strategies for reading unfamiliar words and compare authors and characters but at a naïve and unsophisticated level.
40. The range and quality of reading books is less attractive than is found in many schools. Parents support reading in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, but this support falls away rapidly in Years 3 to 6. The use of Home-School reading diaries is inconsistent and, overall, does not support progress for weaker readers well. The library is poor and uninviting in terms of the quality and range of its stock and its organisation. A key issue from the school's previous inspection was to 'organise and resource the school library effectively to allow it to play a central role in supporting pupils' learning'. This has not been achieved. Pupils do not see the library as central to their learning and it cannot be used to develop an enthusiasm for reading. In the current school development plan, there is an action plan for developing the library and the preparatory work should now have been completed.

The assessment and recording of the progress of individual pupils.

41. The first key issue from the school's previous inspection was to 'ensure that assessment of pupils' attainment is undertaken regularly to record their progress as they pass through the school and is used to plan future work'. Some progress has been made since the previous inspection and an innovation to assess the progress of pupils in English and mathematics after each half term so as to build up a picture of progress throughout the year is a useful source of information. In other subjects, assessments are made at the end of each topic.
42. There is analysis of National Curriculum test results to identify areas of weakness so that they can be addressed. There is also use of initial assessments in the Nursery and the Reception Year in order to discover the learning needs of the children. The test at the start of the Reception Year is then repeated at the end of the year as a means of assessing the progress that children have made and to provide evidence for the teachers of Year 1 so that they can plan future learning.
43. Overall, the approach to recording information from formal assessments is not systematic and does not provide a means of tracking an individual pupil's progress through the school easily. For example, a tracking sheet to track progress has been devised by the Year 6 teachers and is in use in Year 6 while different systems are in use across the rest of the school.
44. Pupils have individual targets to promote further progress, but these are not given enough prominence and pupils do not focus on them sufficiently. There is insufficient clarity as to how much progress pupils in any year group need to make in order to reach levels of attainment at the end of that year which will enable them to make the right amount of progress during the following year. This is because assessment systems and target setting systems lack a systematic approach. There is scope for further improvement in this area.

Although standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory by Year 6, there are weaknesses in provision and use which prevent higher standards being achieved.

45. Resources for information and communication technology have improved significantly since the school was inspected previously. There is now a well-equipped computer suite and there are plans for the education action zone to provide six interactive whiteboards to support teaching and learning. All classrooms have at least one computer.
46. However, during the inspection, less than one computer in five was in use at any given time and a number of computers were not switched on. This is partly because some computers were not working. Teachers' confidence in using computers and teaching their use varies. National training to improve teachers' knowledge, skills and understanding is not scheduled to be completed until March 2003. Only about one quarter of pupils are believed to have computers at home which means that, if pupils' skills and understanding are to be developed effectively, this needs to be done in school.
47. The subject leader has no time available to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning throughout the school and has no strategic overview of the subject. She has a file with examples of pupils' work but these are not assessed in terms of National Curriculum levels or identified in year groups. The elements of modelling and control which are part of the National Curriculum for Years 3 to 6 are not currently provided satisfactorily. Information and communication technology is not used effectively or consistently to support learning in subjects across the curriculum. The availability of software such as CD-Roms has improved since the school was inspected previously, but their use in different classes varies and is not monitored or evaluated. As a result, pupils do not use these resources consistently in their learning and do not regard them as an everyday resource from which they can benefit.

The use of teaching and learning time.

48. There are periods of time, typically at the start of the day and immediately after lunch, which are not used effectively in some classes. These are sometimes described as 'silent reading'. The purpose of these times in terms of pupils' attainment and progress is unclear. Similarly, it is unclear how any progress is measured so that further progress can be planned. In some classes, these times can be as much as 30 minutes per day.

The ability of subject leaders to manage teaching and learning in their subjects.

49. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in different subjects are undertaken by the senior management team. Subject leaders who are not members of the senior management team do not have opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. This means that subject leaders' awareness of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in their subjects is uneven so that their ability to manage their subjects and to plan improvements is adversely affected.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. In order to improve attainment and the quality of education further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- (i) improve standards of attainment in reading and pupils' ability to express themselves clearly;
(paragraphs 7, 37, 38, 39, and 40)
 - (ii) establish consistent systems across the school for assessing the attainment and progress of individual pupils and use this information as a basis for setting short-term targets to enable them to make further progress;
(paragraphs 43 and 44)
 - (iii) promote consistent learning in information and communication technology, for example, by improving the provision for modelling and control in Years 3 to 6, and develop its use to support learning in the different subjects of the curriculum;
(paragraphs 46 and 47)
 - (iv) analyse the use of teaching and learning time and establish a strategy across the school to ensure that this time is used effectively; and
(paragraph 48)
 - (v) enable subject leaders to manage teaching and learning in their subjects effectively.
(paragraphs 27 and 49)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	6	16	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0	19	52	29	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three 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)	45	330
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	103

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	1	50

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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	27	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	21	27
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	45	44	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (91)	83 (93)	96 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	27	27
	Girls	23	23	25
	Total	45	50	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (95)	94 (98)	98 (100)
	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	25	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	15	17
	Girls	19	19	23
	Total	29	34	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (73)	64 (78)	75 (91)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	15
	Girls	20	18	20
	Total	29	28	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (72)	53 (85)	66 (85)
	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	285	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	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	2	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)	13.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	25.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	183

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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	952,469
Total expenditure	960,003
Expenditure per pupil	2,462
Balance brought forward from previous year	62,800
Balance carried forward to next year	55,266

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	372
Number of questionnaires returned	280

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	26	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	37	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	37	5	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	40	8	1	3
The teaching is good.	66	30	1	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	42	11	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	23	6	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	23	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	48	38	11	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	50	32	8	7	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	33	3	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	30	15	7	12