

INSPECTION REPORT

EYNESBURY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Neots

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110820

Headteacher (Acting): Clare Hempsall

Reporting inspector: Declan McCarthy
23886

Dates of inspection: 10th-11th February 2003

Inspection number: 247058

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Controlled

Age range of pupils: 3-11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Montagu Street
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Cambridgeshire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Karl Wainwright

Date of previous inspection: 2nd – 5th February 1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Eynesbury Church of England Controlled Primary School is for pupils aged three to eleven. There are 224 pupils on roll including 40 children who are part time in the nursery. Pupils are accommodated in a large modern building, which is currently undergoing extension to provide a permanent nursery building and an ICT suite later this year. The nursery is temporarily housed in a double mobile classroom. Pupils live mainly in the St Neots area and are drawn from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school also serves the village of Abbotsley and a few pupils travel to school on a school bus provided by the local education authority (LEA). On entry to the nursery about a third of pupils have skills, which are below expectations for their age. Currently 6.4% are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. 34% of pupils are identified with special educational needs, including 4% who have a statement, which is significantly higher than the national average. There are no pupils learning English as an additional language, which is much less than most schools. There have been significant staff changes in the last two years, including the appointment of a new deputy head, who is currently acting headteacher of the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, which provides good care for its pupils. Pupils' personal development, including positive behaviour and relationships, is very well promoted. As a result, pupils behave very well and are enthusiastic learners. The curriculum is good with very good out of hours activities to enrich pupils' learning. Although teaching is good and the majority of pupils learn well as they move through the school, standards are not as high as they ought to be because a few higher attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Staffing arrangements are unsatisfactory and the special educational needs co-ordinator has insufficient time to carry out her role. The school has no effective means for addressing the high turnover of staff. Leadership of the school is satisfactory and the day-to-day management of the school is good. Governors provide good support for the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The day-to-day management of the school and the involvement of governors is good. The ethos of the school is very positive
- Teaching is good and as a result pupils learn well.
- The school provides good care for its pupils. It has very good systems for analysing pupils' progress.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development so pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well in school
- The curriculum is good with very good provision for art, music and extra curricular activities.

What could be improved

- Standards are below those of similar schools because higher-attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they should.
- Staffing arrangements are unsatisfactory, the special educational needs co-ordinator has insufficient time to carry out her role and the school has no effective means for addressing the high turnover of staff.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.

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 February 1998 and five main areas for development were identified. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing them, as well as coping with the significant changes in management and staff. History has improved with better planning and assessment and is now taught more effectively. Provision for ICT (information communication technology) has improved because staff have now received appropriate training, new computers have been purchased and a new computer suite is due for completion in the summer term. However pupils' opportunities for using computers in subjects are currently limited because ICT resources are not yet fully available. Systems for assessment are now very good and well used by the school to set targets for raising standards and planning improvements to the curriculum. Pupils' work is marked more consistently and the quality of teachers' marking is now checked to ensure that pupils know how well they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. Monitoring of teaching and learning has improved but is not yet in place for all subjects. There is satisfactory improvement in subject management. Subject leaders now regularly review policies with the governing body but are not yet monitoring teaching and learning in all subjects. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have begun to monitor teaching and learning. There has been good improvement in the development of schemes of work; which are in place for all subjects and give detailed guidance on what is to be taught and how it will be developed. Multi-cultural experiences for pupils are satisfactory. There have been a number of other improvements in the school, including a school council, an orchestra and more after-school clubs. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the school has the potential to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Year 6 Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools*
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	C	C	E
mathematics	E	C	C	D
science	C	B	C	E

Key

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

* similar schools means schools where the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to that in Eynesbury C of E Primary School.

In 2002, pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 was in line with the national average. However results were well below similar schools for English and science, and below similar schools for mathematics because higher attainers did not do as well they should. Standards by the end of Year 2 (2002 tests) show that pupils' performance in reading and mathematics is below the national average and well below that for similar schools. Pupils' performance in writing was well below the average compared to schools nationally and to similar schools. However there was a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this particular cohort of pupils with fewer higher-attaining

pupils, which is not obvious in the comparative data. The findings of this inspection show that standards by the end of the Foundation Stage are in line with expectations, and standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 in all core subjects are also in line with national average. Standards in art and music are above expectations and standards in other subjects are broadly in line with national expectations. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall and pupils with special educational needs are making good progress towards their targets. However a small number of higher attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they should because former arrangements where pupils from Years 3 to 6 were taught together in ability groups for English and mathematics did not extend their learning sufficiently. Following a detailed analysis of the 2002 results, pupils are now taught in year groups so that higher attainers are now challenged. Although these recently improved teaching arrangements are now effective, higher attainers have not yet caught up sufficiently with their learning. The school just failed to meet its target in 2002 for the numbers of pupils achieving Level 4 in English but exceeded its target for Level 4 in mathematics. It has now set more realistic targets for 2003 and is on course to meet them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic learners. They take a pride in their achievements
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are very well behaved in lessons and around the school with very few incidents of bullying recorded.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate very well to adults in the school and to one another. Boys and girls work very well together
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. There is a high rate of authorised absence by a small minority of pupils

The attendance of the majority of pupils is below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils	Foundation Stage	Years 1-2	Years 3-6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	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.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen; in almost two thirds of lessons seen, teaching was at least good and sometimes very good. The best teaching was seen in Year 6. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Pupils with special educational needs are equally well taught, particularly when support assistants are available in lessons to help them with their learning. Where teaching is good or better, behaviour is well managed and lessons are lively. As a result, pupils learn well, try hard, maintain interest and concentrate on their learning. In very good lessons, teachers challenge higher attaining pupils well. Where teaching is less effective work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' different abilities and published worksheets are overused. In these lessons higher attainers are particularly disadvantaged.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum fully meets legal requirements and provides wide ranging opportunities for learning, especially very good extra-curricular activities
Provision for pupils with special educational needs, including speech and language difficulties.	Satisfactory. Most pupils make good progress against their targets when supported by staff. Satisfactory progress has been made in implementing the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. However the SENCO has insufficient time to carry out her duties. She receives good support from external agencies and the SEN governor.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good and provision for cultural development is good. The school places a clear emphasis on these aspects, from which pupils benefit.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' welfare. All staff ensure that pupils receive very good guidance. Assessment arrangements are good and used well to inform planning

The school has good links with most parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher provides satisfactory leadership and good day-to-day management of the school and is well supported by the acting deputy head. Together they have ensured that the school has been managed smoothly with minimum impact on pupils' learning and welfare during the head teacher's absence.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors provide good strategic support for the school and fulfil their responsibilities well. They have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for further development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Information from tests has been effectively used to identify where pupils are not doing well. However, the school is hampered in its ability to deal with this effectively because of the temporary arrangements of the senior management team.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Funding is used well, finances are well administered, and efficient systems are in place.

The high turnover of staff has affected pupils' learning, particularly in Year 6. However accommodation and learning resources are good. The headteacher and governors constantly seek to achieve best value in their spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Most parents believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children like school; • their children make good progress; • behaviour in the school is good • teaching is good; • their children are expected to work hard. • pupils get the right amount of homework • the school is approachable 	<p>A significant minority of parents believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are not kept well informed about their children's progress • their children do not get enough homework • the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons

The inspection team mostly agrees with parents' positive views. Most pupils are making good progress. However, some higher-attaining pupils do not achieve enough. The inspection evidence does not fully support the other views expressed. The setting of homework is inconsistent, some pupils get too much and others not enough. Parents are generally well-informed about their child's achievements, however reports are not always personalised enough and very often say the same things. The inspection team found that the school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The day-to-day management of the school and the involvement of governors is good. The ethos of the school is very positive

1. The acting headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2002 as the deputy head. With the recent sudden and unexpected long-term absence of the headteacher, she was appointed acting headteacher and immediately ensured that the pupils' welfare and education was not unduly affected by this change of events. Since this time she has managed the school well on a day-to-day basis with the very good support from the acting deputy headteacher. A good example of this, was the decision made by the acting head and deputy headteachers to continue with their class teaching commitments in Year 2 and 6, so that the education of these year groups was not disrupted before their forthcoming national tests. Although this decision reduced the amount of time to promote the school's priorities for development, it rightly ensured that pupils' education was not disrupted and demonstrated the strong team spirit in the school. As a result of their detailed analysis of the 2002 national tests, the acting head and deputy headteacher have introduced changes in the way that English and mathematics are taught in Key Stage 2. These subjects are now taught in groups based on single year classes, in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They have also written a good development plan by choosing the right priorities for raising standards. Furthermore, they have worked closely with governors to ensure that the budget is now closely matched to the new priorities for school development

2. The school receives good support from the governors who with the acting headteacher and deputy head inspire a common sense of purpose and direction in the school. The chair and vice chair are very experienced and a number of governors have expertise in areas that are helpful to the school. Governors are well led and organised into appropriate committees. They are kept well informed by the headteacher's reports and a number of governors come into the school regularly on informal visits. The vice chair, for example, helped the acting headteacher to produce accurate financial information. Governors also scrutinise the work of the school thoroughly and ensure that the budget is tightly managed.

3. The ethos of the school is very positive and there is a strong sense of identity. The school has a very welcoming atmosphere where pupils, staff and parents are valued, through, for example, the open door policy. All staff expect pupils to work hard and persevere. As a result pupils learn well are enthusiastic about school and behave well in lessons. Staff are also good role models for pupils, treating them with respect and expecting them to behave well. This leads to very good behaviour around the school and very good relationships between pupils and staff and towards one another. Pupils are expected to assume responsibility for their actions and this is very well promoted, for example in assemblies where Christian values of love for one's neighbour and kindness are very well fostered. Provision for pupils' personal development, particularly PSHE (personal, social and health education), the well-conceived code of conduct and circle time actively promote the positive atmosphere in the school. High expectations for learning and a well thought-out curriculum, which enriches the lives of pupils in the school, make an equally good contribution to this ethos.

Teaching is good and as a result pupils learn well.

4. Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen; in almost two thirds of lessons seen, teaching was at least good and sometimes very good. Teaching is always at least satisfactory, it is occasionally good in the Foundation Stage and mostly good in Years 1 to 6, with a higher proportion of very good teaching in Years 2 and 6. The best teaching was seen in Year 6, where almost half of teaching was very good. In very good lessons, teachers challenge higher attaining pupils well. Where teaching is satisfactory, work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' different abilities and there is an overuse of published worksheets. In these lessons higher attaining pupils are particularly disadvantaged.

5. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well by establishing good relationships with pupils and maintaining good classroom discipline. This was seen in nearly every lesson throughout the school. Whenever minor disruption occurs, such as talking over others, or calling out answers, teachers are quick to draw pupils' attention to the code of conduct and remind them of expectations for good behaviour. Teachers also praise pupils for good behaviour and the effort they have made in lessons. This encourages pupils to try hard and persevere with their learning. For example, in a nursery lesson where children were developing their literacy skills using big books and rhymes, their personal and social development was very well promoted as they were encouraged to relate well together and to be confident and outgoing in their learning, through the warm relationships promoted by staff. Learning was made into a fun activity and as a result children behaved well and developed positive attitudes to their learning. In a Year 5 geography lesson pupils worked harmoniously and collaboratively together. They were very well behaved during their study of flooding in St Neots, as a result of the positive climate for learning generated by the teacher. This included the use of a pupil as the 'special person' who acted as a mentor to help others with their learning.

6. Nearly all teaching is delivered in a brisk and lively manner. Lessons always start promptly and finish on time. Teachers move pupils quickly from one activity to the next and there is a sense of urgency in every lesson. In a Year 6 English lesson, where pupils were considering how to balance written arguments in persuasive writing, the teacher taught at a brisk and lively pace so that they remained focused on their activities, worked hard and were well motivated throughout as they worked individually, in pairs, and as a whole class. Similarly, in a Year 3 science lesson pupils investigated the types and function of teeth. The teacher ensured that the lesson proceeded at a brisk pace and during group activities she circulated around each group to check pupils' progress. As a result of this lively interaction, pupils worked well in pairs and in groups exchanging their ideas on the functions of different types of teeth. They behaved well and remained focused on their work throughout.

7. Literacy and Numeracy are well promoted in other subjects. In all lessons teachers extend pupils' vocabulary by highlighting key words and explaining what they mean before pupils write them down and read them in context. For example in a Year 6 science lesson pupils were investigating dissolving. The teacher encouraged pupils to understand the meaning of 'translucent', 'transparent' and 'opaque' when writing up their investigations. They listened very carefully, tried hard and as a result they understood that a soluble substance appears transparent in water. Lessons follow closely the structure of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy with a good balance between whole-class teaching, group work and individual work. This was seen in all lessons. Pupils' written work also shows that they are encouraged to write carefully paying particular attention to sentence structure and the correct use of punctuation. Teachers promote pupils' writing within subjects such as science, religious education, history and geography. Numeracy is equally promoted within subjects. For example in a Year 4 history lesson, pupils learned about the passage of time in writing a report about life in an Anglo-Saxon village. In science pupils measure and record

their results in tables and on graphs and in physical education they keep time, learn sequencing in travelling and moving body parts with balance and control. Pupils keep time in music and count beats to a bar when playing orchestral instruments.

8. Teachers make good use of support staff and this ensures that pupils with special educational needs are taught as well as other pupils. Teachers plan and discuss activities with support assistants so that they are very well prepared to support pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that support assistants and teachers know about pupils' needs and provides clear guidance which considerably improves the support provided in lessons. This was evident in all lessons where support was provided, particularly in Year 3 where there is a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. They also discuss the work which has been marked by the teacher to point out what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the support assistant discussed the relationship between different fractions with a lower attaining pupil, prompting and encouraging him to understand that three tenths is larger than one tenth. He worked hard throughout the lesson, concentrating on the activities and listening well to the support assistant.

The school provides good care for its pupils. It has very good systems for analysing pupils' progress.

9. The school provides good care for its pupils as a result of very good systems for monitoring and reviewing their personal progress. Staff have very good knowledge of every pupil in their care. Teamwork between teachers and support staff produces a consistent approach so that staff are very aware of any changes in pupils' behaviour which might give cause for concern. Child protection arrangements are very good. All staff, parents, helpers and governors have been briefed in the school's procedures and the acting headteacher has assumed the role of child protection officer for the school. The local education authority's child protection service has been very helpful to the school and procedures are complied with rigorously. PSHE and circle time provide very good guidance, support and care for pupils. The Healthy Schools project also promotes pupils' welfare. Furthermore the positive behaviour policy provides a good system of rewards and sanctions with prompt action on bullying. As a result, pupils are happy in school and enjoy all aspects of it.

10. Assessment systems are very good and have greatly improved from the last inspection. There are very good systems for analysing pupils' progress. The assessment co-ordinator has developed internal writing grids, handwriting assessments and guided reading assessment records linked to National Curriculum levels from which targets are derived. Teachers' assessment folders have been developed for each pupil ranging from 'P' scales to Level 5. There is a very good Foundation Stage profile for each child, to record individual progress. Literacy, numeracy and information technology are tracked through subjects, data is analysed and pupils' progress is monitored. This information is well used by the school to set targets for raising standards and planning improvements to the curriculum. Reports to parents are satisfactory and contain helpful targets in English and mathematics and appropriate recording of pupils' attendance. However comments in foundation subjects focus more on the work pupils have completed rather than their achievements. Furthermore comments in reports are often not sufficiently personalised as they are clearly derived from a computer data bank. There was a remarkable similarity in the wording of reports in the same year groups. Pupils and parents have good opportunities to record their comments on these reports and many do so. Most parents are pleased with the information provided in them.

11. The school uses assessment information well to improve standards. Immediately after the 2002 results of national tests were published, the acting headteacher and deputy head carried out a very detailed analysis, demonstrating the good progress that the majority

of pupils had made. They also used this information to re-organise classes for the benefit of all pupils, particularly higher attainers, to set realistic targets for the whole school in literacy and numeracy and to identify clear priorities for school improvement. As a result they have produced a good school development plan which has been very carefully based on assessment information

12. Pupils' work is marked more consistently and teachers' marking is now checked by senior managers to ensure that pupils know how well they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. For example an analysis of pupils' work in English from Years 3 to 6 shows consistency in marking. Pupils have re-drafted their work as a result of comments made by teachers which enabled them to improve their writing.

The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development so pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well in school

13. Pupils' personal development is well promoted by the positive climate for learning created by staff and by very effective provision for spiritual, moral, cultural and social development in the school.

14. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. Assemblies are held regularly and pupils have opportunities for prayer and personal reflection. For example, in an assembly for pupils in Years 3 to 6, pupils were challenged to think of ways to take personal responsibility for their actions when they do something wrong, eliciting responses such as 'we own up to it'; 'we're expected to make up for anything we do wrong in school', 'we say sorry' and 'If we make a mess we clear it up' The acting headteacher then told them the story of the Just King before eliciting further responses from them. This was followed with a prayer on taking personal responsibility led by the acting headteacher. Finally the assembly ended with a hymn and pupils sang together enthusiastically before leaving the hall in a quiet and orderly fashion to a recording of Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata'. Pupils reflected on this finally saying 'Amen' reverently together. The school actively encourages pupils to be successful, effectively promoting their self-esteem. Positive written comments are always included in teachers' marking and pupils are constantly praised for the effort they make in lessons as well as their achievements. As a result they feel good about themselves, they see the goodness in their teachers, they are happy in lessons and take a pride in their work. Religious education also supports pupils' spiritual development through the celebration of Christian festivals such as advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. There are strong links with the parish church and the vicar sometimes visits the school to take an assembly and to talk to pupils. There are also good opportunities for reflection in some subjects such as science art and music.

15. Provision for moral development is very good. Positive behaviour and relationships are very well promoted through the code of conduct, circle time and the PSHE curriculum. In circle time, pupils are given opportunities to discuss moral issues and behaviour is also discussed regularly. In PSHE they are encouraged to think about relationships carefully and teachers challenge inconsiderate responses from pupils clearly promoting positive attitudes towards others. Many pupils write about the good qualities of their family members and identify the characteristics of a good teacher. Pupils are also encouraged to discuss whether they have made the right choices when they have behaved inappropriately. All staff provide good role models for pupils and foster an understanding of right and wrong. Pupils respond very well to the good management of behaviour in lessons and moral values are reinforced through teachers' regular contact with parents. Most parents believe that the school helps their children to become more mature and responsible.

16. Provision for social development is very good. The school has a climate which values hard work and achievement. In lessons there are very good opportunities for independent

learning and for pupils to work together, for instance, in physical education, English, mathematics, art, geography, history and science. Pupils are encouraged to be helpful to one another, to listen to others' ideas and to take turns. Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility for decisions affecting the whole school through the School Council. Representatives are elected termly by their peers and they worked closely with the PTA on the best way to spend PTA funds. Pupils demonstrated responsibility by sending a Get Well letter to a sick member of staff. The Indoor Club is run by Year 6 pupils, who also act as dinner monitors. They take turns in setting out playground equipment and helping in assemblies. There are class monitors in Years 2 to 6 and a special person in each class who takes responsibility for the registers. Younger pupils in Reception and Year 1 are nominated to carry out helpful tasks, such as putting equipment away at the end of lessons. Pupils are also encouraged to consider the needs of the elderly and those less fortunate than themselves. A pupil with diabetes has established a charity to raise funds for diabetes and the choir and orchestra perform at an old peoples' home. Pupils choose the charities to donate the funds they have raised. Opportunities for independence are also very well promoted. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to use their own dictionaries, they use the library for research and for computers. They are allowed to telephone homes when necessary.

17. Provision for cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. English, art, geography, history, music and dance, make a very good contribution. For example, in art pupils consider the work of famous artists such as Monet and Van Gogh. In a Year 2 English lesson, pupils looked at a Big Book of the Caribbean poetry of Grace Nicholls. Children in the nursery and the reception class celebrated Chinese New Year. Year 3 pupils visited a Hindu temple as part of their study on Hinduism and further trips are planned to offer more multi-cultural experiences for pupils. In a dance lesson linked to an African poem about a rhino, pupils listened to African music from the Serengeti, moved well to the teacher slowly beating an African drum and enjoyed the experience tremendously. The school has clearly improved its provision for multi-cultural development, which is underpinned by a good equal opportunities policy. Displays now show a range of cultural traditions, for example Jewish religious artefacts in Year 6, posters in the hall showing a birthday party with children of different races and a poster in the entrance hall containing pictures of children from different cultural traditions. The library service also monitors the content of the school library and plans are in place to extend the range of multi-cultural resources.

18. As a result of this, pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic learners. They are very well behaved in lessons where pupils are polite and helpful when questioned. They know their routines well and behave in a sensible and considerate manner. Very few examples of disruption occurred in lessons and they were only minor, such as calling out. These very few incidents were quickly and effectively dealt with, in a calm yet firm manner. Behaviour around the school is also very good. This was particularly noticeable during a wet playtime where pupils remained seated in lessons, chatting amicably with one another. Year 2 pupils worked happily together making Valentine cards and Year 1 pupils played happily together in their classrooms. At the end of the day pupils leave school contented and enthusiastic about their day. Around the school, pupils are sensible and interact well with each other. This was very evident in the playground where boys and girls were engaged in team games. There were no incidents of bullying seen during the inspection.

The curriculum is good with very good provision for art, music and extra curricular activities.

19. There are a wide range of learning opportunities to help pupils learn well. There is a good balance in the amount of teaching time allocated to each subject with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. There is very good provision for PSHE which helps pupils learn and develop. A wide range of school visits extends pupils' learning. These include a Year 5 Victorian Day in Stibbington, a Year 4 visit to a Saxon Settlement and a Year 3 visit to a Hindu temple. There are also visits to a landfill site, a cathedral, the local church and the library. In addition there are very good residential trips. Year 4 pupils have the chance to participate in an environmental visit to Stibbington for three days, Year 5 pupils can take part in adventurous outdoor activities during a five day visit to the Horstead Centre and Year 6 pupils go a five day visit to Northumbria for history and geography.

20. Art and music are a particularly strong feature of the curriculum. In art pupils have opportunities to explore different kinds of media and create works of art. For example reception children, have many opportunities to develop creativity through painting, working with collage, learning about colour and texture. Their classroom is visually stimulating and does much to raise their awareness of colour. Their paintings are also lively and expressive. Year 2 pupils have created excellent pastel drawings of landscapes inspired by Monet and Van Gogh, demonstrating exceptionally high standards in the variations of marks (lines, smudges and colour blending) and in composition. Year 4 pupils have produced attractive illustrations to frame their writing about their trip to an Anglo-Saxon settlement. Their drawings show that they are able to record with some accuracy from secondary sources. For homework, this class made Anglo-Saxon houses in three dimensions using their own materials and they have also made three-dimensional models of Anglo-Saxon boats, which are well constructed and carefully decorated.

21. Music is also very well promoted in school so that pupils not only have the opportunities to listen to different kinds of music, but to perform and compose. For example, the school choir performs carol services at Christmas and for a local retired peoples' home. Understanding and enjoyment of music is also very well promoted through dance. A particular strength of the music curriculum is the school orchestra, which is run by the music co-ordinator with the help of a governor and a group of parents after school. It is very well attended and generates an enthusiasm and love for music. There is also an infant music festival which gives pupils in Year 2 a chance to perform.

22. The wide range of lunchtime events and after school activities greatly extend pupils' learning. In addition to the orchestra, there is good football coaching by Cambridge United and a hockey club. There are handwriting weeks and book weeks in school which span the whole day, an indoor club where pupils have opportunities to play board games, organised by Year 6 pupils and very good use of outdoor facilities, particularly the conservation area and pond.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards are below those of similar schools because higher-attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they should.

23. The results of the Key Stage 1 2002 national tests show that pupils' performance in reading and mathematics was below the national average in reading and mathematics and well below the national average in writing. The results also show that by the end of Year 2, pupils' performance in reading writing and mathematics was well below average in comparison with similar schools. However the national comparisons and those made with similar schools do not take sufficient account of the relatively high numbers of pupils with special educational needs which are twice the national average. The vast majority of pupils who were in Year 2 at that time and who took the national tests, were lower attainers (70%)

and included those identified as having special educational needs. The remainder were average attainers with a very small number of higher attaining pupils. An above average proportion of these particular pupils gained the expected levels in reading and mathematics. Pupils were approximately one year behind in their writing, and overall standards in writing also declined from being below average in 2001 to well below in 2002. However national comparisons over time do not reflect the high proportion of lower attaining pupils in this particular Year 2 group where, given the nature of their particular difficulties, their lower performance in writing tests would be expected. Despite this, standards have improved slightly in reading and mathematics and remained roughly the same in writing over the previous three years.

24. At Key Stage 2, results in English, mathematics and science were in line with those nationally and results at the higher levels were above those nationally in all core subjects. Compared with similar schools results were well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics. Compared with their prior attainment in national tests at the end of Year 2, the performance of Year 6 pupils was well below that found in schools nationally with similar Year 2 results. Results at the higher levels were significantly below those nationally and well below similar schools in all core subjects. However the detailed analysis of the 2002 results by the assessment co-ordinator and acting headteacher has pointed to over-optimistic teacher assessments in 1998 for the Year 6 pupils who were in Year 2 at that time. Results also show that the school does well by its average and below average attainers but poorly by its higher attainers. The school just failed to meet its target in 2002 for the numbers of pupils achieving Level 4 in English but exceeded its target for Level 4 in mathematics. However it has set more realistic targets for 2003 and is now on course to meet them. The poorer results of higher attaining pupils are almost entirely attributed to the organisation of teaching English and mathematics in ability groups with pupils from all Key Stage 2 classes. As a result the pupils in the highest ability group were working mainly to the Year 5 objectives so that higher attaining pupils in Year 6 were underachieving. Since the appointment of the acting headteacher, a detailed analysis of the 2002 results has taken place and classes have recently been re-organised into year groups. As a result, the current Year 6 pupils are working to the full Year 6 learning objectives and extension activities are now provided for higher attaining pupils. Boys, whose results exceeded the national average, did better than girls, whose results were below the national average, in the 2002 tests, because there were only a few lower attaining girls who took the tests.

25. The findings of this inspection show that standards by the end of the Foundation Stage are in line with expectations, and standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 in all core subjects are also in line with national averages. Standards in art and music are above expectations and standards in other subjects are broadly in line with national expectations. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Most pupils are achieving well and pupils with special educational needs are making good progress towards their targets. This reflects the views of parents who are pleased with the progress pupils make. However, higher attaining pupils do not attain as well as they should. The recent re-organisation of classes into Year groups has not benefited higher attaining pupils as well as it should, because they have a considerable amount of learning to catch up before their national tests in 2003.

26. The provision for higher attaining pupils is unsatisfactory and the school recognises the need to develop this further. It has rightly been established as a clear priority within the school development plan. An appropriate policy has recently been developed but has yet to prove fully effective in improving teaching. Longer term planning and teachers' planning within subjects does not yet fully challenge higher attaining pupils. However during the inspection there was clear evidence of extension activities in many lesson plans, particularly in Years 2 and 6 and the school has made a good start in re-organising classes so that the needs of

higher attainers are accommodated more effectively. These measures are beginning to improve the standards of higher attainers. The use of computers for researching subjects in more depth, is currently restricted because the new computer suite is not available until the summer term.

Staffing arrangements are unsatisfactory, the special educational needs co-ordinator has insufficient time to carry out her role and the school has no effective means for addressing the high turnover of staff

27. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last two years. The school has managed to retain regular supply teachers. Although the reasons for teachers leaving the school are entirely justifiable, for example, younger teachers who seek promotion in other schools, this has had a negative affect on pupils' learning. Staff changes have mainly affected pupils in Year 6, who have had 14 different teachers from the beginning of Year 1. Some parents rightly expressed concerns about the impact of teachers leaving on pupils' emotional well-being. Despite this, the governors have not seen any reason to produce a policy for the retention of staff. They regard the turnover of teachers, as beneficial to those teachers since they gain promotion. Although understandable, this position is unsatisfactory, since the turnover of teachers has been detrimental to pupils' learning and achievements.

28. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) works very hard in order to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs are met. However she only works part-time despite above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the school, has insufficient time to perform her duties adequately. This has particularly affected the monitoring of provision for special educational needs. For example, neither the governors' annual report to parents nor the school prospectus have sufficient references to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Attendance is unsatisfactory

29. Although the majority of pupils attend regularly, there is a high rate of authorised absence in the school. The school works closely with the educational welfare officer but it has inadequate systems to monitor and promote attendance. Registers are not always kept up to date.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement, the governors, headteacher, senior staff and teachers should:

- (1) improve provision for higher-attaining pupils by
 - implementing the school policy on gifted and talented pupils and monitor its impact regularly
 - raising teachers' awareness of how to make learning by higher attainers more effective by providing different teaching approaches and methods to extend pupils' learning including greater use of ICT.
 - improving the monitoring of teaching so that it focuses rigorously on the criteria for raising teachers' expectations for learning through appropriate challenge.

(paragraphs 4 and 26)

- (2) Improve staffing arrangements by
 - developing an effective policy and procedures for the retention of staff, which include regular monitoring and review.
 - increasing SEN co-ordination time so that the SEN co-ordinator has enough time to carry out her role

(paragraphs 27 and 28)

- (3) improve attendance by
 - developing systems to monitor and promote attendance, ensuring registers are kept up to date and fully comply with statutory requirements.

(paragraph 29)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	11	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	14	50	36	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 four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	184
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	37
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0.6
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	19	11	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	15
	Girls	9	10	10
	Total	24	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (82)	80 (82)	83 (88)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	13
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	25	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (85)	80 (88)	77 (88)
	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	13	12	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	9	10	11
	Total	21	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (88)	92 (83)	96 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (73)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	13
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	22	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (71)	88 (71)	92 (83)
	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	165	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian			
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	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)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y7 (including SEN Unit)

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	226

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	527,687
Total expenditure	522,659
Expenditure per pupil	2,513
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,904
Balance carried forward to next year	19,931

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.2
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Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.7
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	224
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	42	7	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	42	4	4	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	68	3	3	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	50	18	10	2
The teaching is good.	33	55	5	3	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	50	24	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	38	12	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	45	5	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	24	55	14	5	2
The school is well led and managed.	27	60	8	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	60	8	3	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	42	23	4	9