

INSPECTION REPORT

PENNY ACRES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Holmesfield, Dronfield

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112565

Headteacher: Mr G Trend

Reporting inspector: Mrs C E Waine
23081

Dates of inspection: 4th – 5th February 2003

Inspection number: 247239

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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Main Road
Holmesfield
Dronfield
Derbyshire

Postcode: S18 7WP

Telephone number: 0114 2890330

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Streets

Date of previous inspection: January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Penny Acres is situated in an area of social and economic advantage, which is reflected in the low numbers of pupils receiving free school meals. The school is very small, with only 43 pupils, five of whom are in the reception class. All pupils are of white British heritage and about a quarter of the pupils travel some distance from outside the village to attend. There is no general pattern to the level of attainment on entry to the school because of the small numbers of pupils and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. It varies significantly from year to year; it is sometimes average, occasionally above average but frequently below or well below average. Several pupils have no pre-school nursery or playgroup experience. Most special needs involve speech and language development, general and specific learning difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Pupils are taught in two mixed age classes for part of each day but there are three classes for literacy and numeracy lessons. Most pupils entering the reception class remain until the end of Year 6. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been absent for seven months and an acting headteacher was in post. All other staff were part-time and some were temporary.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, which is highly valued by parents and the local community. It is effective in promoting good progress for all its pupils and particularly for those with special educational needs. It has faced an extended period of staffing change and staff illness but this has been managed well by the governing body and the acting headteacher. The quality of teaching and learning has been maintained at a good level. Relationships are very good and pupils develop into well-rounded and responsible individuals. As with most very small schools, the costs per pupil are high but, nevertheless, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science and standards in Year 6 are above average.
- Teaching is good, sometimes very good.
- The leadership and management of the acting headteacher and the governing body are good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave well because of the strong provision for their personal development. Relationships are very good.
- There is a strong partnership with parents who are very supportive of the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in spelling and handwriting, which are below average.
- Standards in information and communication technology, which are below average at the end of Year 6.
- The use of assessment information to check pupils' progress and raise standards further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1998 and since then has made good improvement. Standards have risen faster than nationally and pupils' achievement in science is much improved. The school now provides well for the teaching of art and design, design and technology and information and communication technology. Standards have risen in these subjects, although they remain below average in information and communication technology. There are schemes of work for all subjects, which are now being improved further. The curriculum for the children in the reception year is now planned to cover all the required areas of learning, following national guidance, and lessons are now of appropriate length. Teaching time for pupils in Years 3 to 6 now meets national recommended times. Sound assessment procedures are in place, and the school has now collated assessment information to help them to check on pupils' progress. Targets are now being set for improvement.

STANDARDS

The small size of the school means that the results of the national tests in English, mathematics and science fluctuate tremendously from year to year. The use of data from the tests is an unreliable guide to how well pupils achieve and the usual table of comparisons with other schools is therefore omitted. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups also has an impact on standards, particularly at the end of the reception year and Year 2. However, the school provides very well for these pupils and by the end of Year 6, some attain the levels

expected at this age. Inspection evidence shows pupils achieve well; current standards in English, mathematics and science are above average in Year 6, particularly in mathematics and science, where all pupils are currently working at the level expected for their age and some are working towards a higher level. This is an improvement on the results of national tests in 2002 in mathematics and English and maintains the standard in science. There has been good improvement in the results of national tests, in English, mathematics and science, over time and standards have risen faster than nationally. This is particularly so in science, where pupils achieve very well and standards have risen much faster than those nationally. It is a big improvement on the underachievement noted at the last inspection. The school met its targets of 100% achievement at the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics last year and expects to do so again this year.

Pupils make good progress in the reception year and, when they enter Year 1, most usually attain the levels expected for their age, although standards in the current year group are below average. This represents good progress from a well below average starting point. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and at the end of Year 2, standards are average in reading, writing, and science and a little above average in mathematics. Throughout the school, the biggest weakness in pupils' work is in writing, where standards of spelling are well below average. The school has noted the problem of spelling but has not yet adopted a whole school approach to remedy the situation. Standards of handwriting and presentation are below average in Years 3 to 6.

Standards in information and communication technology have improved since the previous inspection but in some aspects, particularly the control of events, the use of spreadsheets and multimedia work, standards are still below average. The below average standards reported in art and design and design and technology at the previous inspection have improved and are now average, and good in some lessons.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school and are enthusiastic about learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well, in lessons and at breaktimes. There have been no exclusions for poor behaviour in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and pupils care for each other and collaborate very well when working together. Pupils become responsible and supportive of each other.
Attendance	Very good. Well above average with below average levels of unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching is good throughout the school and very good in some lessons, particularly in the older year groups. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory and evidence from pupils' work confirms that good teaching is typical for the school. Teachers' expectations are high and they have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are teaching. This is particularly so where part-time teachers specialise in certain subjects like literacy, numeracy, science and art and design. Lessons are interesting and teachers match work well to the needs of all the pupils in their class. They set individual learning targets for them in literacy and numeracy. Pupils enjoy their lessons and develop very good attitudes to work, taking responsibility for their own learning when investigating and researching for themselves. Teaching in English and mathematics is good and the basic skills of reading and numeracy are taught well, so that pupils quickly gain the skills they need for their independent learning. The basic skills for writing are not taught as well. Although pupils learn good skills in structuring and organising their writing, insufficient attention is paid to spelling and handwriting. Pupils are given ample opportunities to apply and develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects, which consolidates their learning well. A classroom support assistant is used well to provide appropriate activities for children in the Foundation Stage. The very good support for pupils with special educational needs promotes very good progress in lessons, where these pupils work alongside

others on the same topics at their own level. A good programme of checking the quality of teaching and learning has been effective in maintaining a good standard, despite the difficult staffing situation that the school has faced.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good and provides for a varied experience in all aspects of the National Curriculum, including that for the children in the Foundation Stage ¹ . It meets all statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good and helps them make very good progress towards their personal targets. Some achieve the levels expected nationally by the end of Year 6.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision is very good and promotes very good relationships. Pupils develop very good moral values and social skills.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well, offering good personal and educational guidance and support to all. However, there is currently no qualified first aider.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has a strong partnership with parents that promotes their children's learning well.

The curriculum is enhanced by the close links made between subjects and many opportunities for pupils to work independently, learning at first hand through practical experience. It is also enriched by a very good programme of visits and visitors to support classroom lessons.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the acting headteacher and other key staff	Leadership is good and efficient management strategies have been put into place to make sure that pupils receive a good education. The quality of teaching is checked regularly to make sure that it is effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors carry out their roles well and fulfil all their statutory duties. They take a keen interest in the school and have managed continuing staffing difficulties well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes a sound analysis of its performance and highlights areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Financial and learning resources are used well to raise standards. Long-term illness has had a considerable impact on the budget but the governing body makes good use of the principles of achieving best value for their limited resources.

The governing body and the acting headteacher have been effective in maintaining a good standard of education during the headteacher's absence. They have introduced a good range of management strategies to ensure that the school continues to improve and to check that pupils are making good progress.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

¹ The Foundation Stage is the provision for the pupils in the reception year.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are very happy in school and become mature and sensible • Teaching is good; teachers have high expectations and pupils make good progress • The school makes them welcome and keeps them well informed about their children's progress • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons • Some parents would like more information about the topics being studied.

The inspection team fully supports all of the parents' positive views. In respect of the points parents would like to see improved:

- The school fully accepts that it has not been able to provide after school clubs because of the number of part-time and temporary staff and hopes to provide some later in the year. Inspectors find that there is a very good range of visits and expert visitors to school to enrich learning.
- The school has already remedied the point about information on topics by sending details about the terms' topics.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science and standards in Year 6 are above average.

1 Pupils make good progress through the school but the fluctuating levels of attainment on entry do affect the overall standards achieved at the end of Years 2 and 6. They are reflected in the results of national tests, particularly so in Year 2, where pupils have had less time in school. Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve well and most attain the levels expected for their age, both in Year 2 and Year 6, in English, mathematics and science. In the results of national tests in 2002, all pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieved the levels expected in the tests. A good proportion of pupils in Year 2 attained a higher level in mathematics and a good proportion in Year 6 attained a higher level in science but no pupils did so in English. Many of the pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve very well, with some attaining the level expected for their age when they leave the school. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average in all three subjects, whilst in Year 2 they are closer to the average because of the make-up of that particular year group. Since the previous inspection, the results of national tests have improved faster than the national rate of improvement. This is particularly so in science, where the underachievement of pupils in Year 6 noted at the previous inspection has been rectified and standards have risen rapidly.

2 Children in the reception year now have a more appropriate curriculum than at the time of the previous inspection. Some spend only limited time at pre-school nurseries or playgroups and their speaking and listening and social skills are often below average on entry to the reception year. This is confirmed by the assessments made in their first few weeks in school. They make good progress, particularly in their early speaking and listening and reading skills, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. Staff create a warm and caring atmosphere in the classroom that gives children a sense of security and encourages them to speak and co-operate with others. They quickly settle into school routines and establish good relationships with staff and the other pupils. Children develop an enjoyment of books and make good progress in their phonics work², which they begin to apply in reading. They learn how to print letters clearly and begin to attempt their own writing. In mathematics, they learn how to count, write numbers to 10 and begin to add and subtract numbers practically. There is no general pattern to attainment when children enter Year 1, but in the current reception year, attainment is below average, despite the good progress being made.

3 Speaking and listening skills are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers because lessons are interesting and engage their attention. They listen to each other with respect because of the school's culture of valuing all. Staff provide good role models of speech and ensure that pupils understand the technical vocabulary in subjects such as science and mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to use a wide range of vocabulary and have many opportunities to speak aloud, such as through drama and presentations on topics of their own choice. Teachers plan lessons with many opportunities for pupils to speak in front of others, by sharing their thoughts and discussing their work. On these occasions pupils are confident and articulate and use a good range of descriptive vocabulary.

4 Standards in reading are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2 and read with sound understanding. Good progress continues through Years 3 to 6 and by Year 6 pupils read confidently, with clear understanding of themes and characters, and using expression well in their reading. Pupils apply and develop their skills well in research in other subjects, using books, the Internet and CD-ROMs to locate their information independently.

5 Standards in writing are average at Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 to 6 in writing interesting accounts, stories and poetry. They structure their writing well to adapt it to many different styles and apply and develop their skills in other subjects. For example, they write letters, instructions, newspaper reports, biographies and reports of their work. A good example of this was seen in religious education when pupils created a front page newspaper report on their studies, The Nazareth News. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary to make their work interesting and by the end of Year 6, organise it into paragraphs. Their use of punctuation is good but their spelling is below average in Year 2 and well below average in Year 6. Whilst pupils in Years 1 and 2 print neatly, many of those in Years 3 to 6 do not develop a good style of joined writing and their work is often untidily presented.

6 In mathematics, standards are a little above average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6, where all pupils are working at the expected level and a few are working towards the next higher level. Pupils develop a good understanding of numbers and the four rules of computation, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, and use these appropriately to solve simple problems. They learn their tables and apply these to help them calculate their

² Phonics is the study of the relationship between sounds and the letter or letters that represent them.

answers. At both Years 2 and 6, pupils respond with increasing speed and confidence in quick-fire mental sessions at the start of numeracy lessons. The oldest pupils use fractions, decimals and percentages and understand the relationship between them. They work with high numbers and negative numbers and calculate confidently showing good understanding. In Year 2, pupils collect data and represent it in the form of simple graphs and by Year 6, pupils use a variety of graphs to present their information. They then use them to extract information and look for patterns in their findings. Pupils have made some use of computers in this work but have not yet used spreadsheets. They have a good understanding of measurements and shape. For example, in Year 6, pupils measure accurately with rulers and protractors to construct shapes with given angles. They use their numeracy skills well in other subjects, such as when collecting data in science and measuring accurately in design and technology.

7 In science, standards have risen rapidly since the previous inspection because of the practical approach to teaching, which gives pupils many opportunities to investigate for themselves and record work scientifically. By the end of Year 2, standards are average. Pupils develop good skills in experimenting, observing and recording their findings. They develop sound knowledge and understanding of different aspects of science, such as the study of living things and how they grow and change. For example, they experiment with growing beans and seeds under different conditions and keep a diary to note the changes over a period of time. At the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of how to carry out fair tests, and observe very carefully, sometimes repeating their measurements to ensure accuracy. They make very good use of their literacy and numeracy skills in measurement, research and recording of their findings, in their own words and through the presentation of scientific data. All pupils are currently working at the level expected and a few are working at a higher level.

8 At the time of the previous inspection, work in art and design, design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT) did not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has rectified this and work seen in art and design and technology is now of average standard, with some good examples of individual work. The ICT curriculum was the last to be developed and although pupils are now making sound progress, standards are still below average at Year 6, as pupils lack experience in some aspects of the subject, such as the use of spreadsheets, the control of events through computers and development of multimedia presentations.

9 Pupils with SEN make very good progress throughout the school, particularly in lessons where they have support. This is because of very good planning that enables these pupils to work towards their personal targets, whilst studying the same topics as other pupils. Higher attaining pupils achieve well because teachers' planning ensures that they are given work which challenges them, with good opportunities to extend their learning through independent research and investigation and teachers question them well to make them think about their work. The younger higher attainers also benefit from working alongside older pupils.

Teaching is good, sometimes very good.

10 Teaching is good for the children in the Foundation Stage and for those in Years 1 to 6. During the inspection, all teaching observed was at least satisfactory and most was good or very good. An examination of pupils' work confirms that this is the usual standard for the school. This is an improvement on the satisfactory teaching reported at the previous inspection. It is a credit to the school in view of the many changes in staffing, some long-term illnesses and the part-time status of most of the teachers.

11 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum has improved because of the way the school has developed those subjects which were not meeting requirements at the previous inspection. This has resulted in higher teacher expectations and better planning. Planning is very good and focuses on developing knowledge and skills progressively for all pupils, building well on what they already know and can do. This is a good improvement on the previous inspection, when work did not always meet the needs of all pupils. There are clear learning targets for each lesson, which are shared with pupils, and usually reviewed in the closing session so that pupils can see how much progress they have made. At the time of the previous inspection, there was some over-reliance on worksheets, particularly in science, but this is not now the case and teachers are very selective where commercial materials are in use, producing their own worksheets when appropriate and allowing pupils ample opportunities to record what they have learned in their own words.

12 Teachers plan interesting lessons that engage pupils' attention and motivate them to work hard. Classes are well organised and staff manage their pupils in a positive manner that gives them confidence in attempting new work. In most lessons, teachers make good use of time to provide a good balance of direct teaching and pupil tasks. It means that pupils maintain interest and have enough time to complete their tasks and that teachers have time to discuss with pupils what they have learned at the end of the lesson. Lessons that are satisfactory, rather than good, are not as well balanced and some pupils work at a slow speed, with no sense of urgency in completing their tasks. The closing session of these lessons is sometimes too short for teachers and pupils to assess and consolidate what has been learned. A common weakness in teaching is that teachers do not sufficiently reinforce the message about

spelling, the use of dictionaries to check words, or standards of handwriting and presentation. Work is usually marked well, particularly in English, and gives pupils good guidance in what they need to do to improve their work.

13 The school uses its part-time teachers well to teach those subjects in which they have particular interest and expertise. For example, in science the teacher is skilled in planning to develop the skills and knowledge of the four different year groups in the class at appropriate levels, whilst working on the same topic. She achieves a good balance between teaching and practical work and organises the groups very well, so that she can teach one group, whilst others are experimenting or researching independently. Similarly, the teacher for art and design plans work for the different age groups very well. For example, in a study on work in the style of Hockney, she organised different activities for the different age groups, so that all were equally interested, involved and challenged by their task.

14 Planning for the children in the reception year is good and enables them to work in a practical way on similar topics to the other pupils in their class. They are supported well by an experienced teaching assistant. The way in which work is planned for those pupils with special educational needs is a strength and helps them to take a full part in lessons, working at their own level towards their personal targets. The very good support provided by the school's support assistant also makes a significant contribution to the progress they make.

15 The school has faced many difficulties with staffing over an extended period. Good staff selection procedures and an effective system of checking the quality of teaching and learning have been instrumental in maintaining a good standard.

The leadership and management of the acting headteacher and the governing body are good.

16 The acting headteacher, staff and governing body share a strong commitment to maintaining good quality provision and raising standards, in a warm and supportive community. The school is successful in meeting these aims. There is a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve its provision and standards and effective action is being taken to achieve the school's priorities. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and this is continuing in the absence of the headteacher.

17 Good leadership is the major reason for the improvement made and good management by the governing body has provided the resources for the school to make this possible. The governing body has allocated financial resources to enable the key subjects of literacy and numeracy to be taught in smaller sized classes by employing a part-time teacher for the past few years. They have managed a very tight budget well, despite the continuing financial costs of long-term staff illness. Governors are very closely involved in the life in the school and have a clear view of its strengths and of its priorities for future development. They keep a close watch on the current situation to ensure that their decisions on staffing and their spending priorities are being successfully implemented. As yet, they have not been fully involved in the analysis of test results as this has only recently been completed. They communicate clearly with parents and sometimes consult them on matters of school policy.

18 The acting headteacher took up her post during the autumn term. She has formed a strong partnership with staff, the governing body and parents and secured their full support in establishing clear priorities for development. Her good leadership entuses others to commit themselves fully to raising standards through improved provision. Subject leaders show an equal commitment, although all, except the acting headteacher, are part-time and some only temporary. For example, a teacher who works the equivalent of only 1 day a week is the co-ordinator for science, history and geography. She has developed a new and good quality scheme of work for science, including assessment procedures, which are already in place in Years 3 to 6 and are to be introduced shortly in Years 1 and 2. Recent management initiatives introduced are good and allow staff to develop a clear picture of provision, standards and pupils' progress across the whole school. For example, the acting headteacher observes teaching and gives teachers detailed feedback about how lessons might be improved. She then visits again to ensure that recommendations have been put into place. This has been effective in maintaining the usual quality of teaching in a difficult period. An analysis of test results and other assessment information and the regular examination of pupils' books have highlighted areas for improvement. Whilst these initiatives have not had sufficient time to make an impact on standards, they are leading to improvements in teaching and learning.

19 The school improvement plan has been adjusted this school year to take account of changes in staffing and school priorities. A close watch is being kept on spending and on the success of initiatives by the acting headteacher and governing body. Very effective support has been provided for the acting headteacher by the school's LEA adviser and a headteacher mentor from a nearby school, with the financial support of the local education authority (LEA). This has provided her with the training and expertise required to lead and manage the school well.

20 Whilst the school building is small, good use is made of space. There is no school hall and the village hall is used for physical education lessons. At the last inspection, the arrangements were not effective in terms of the use of time. Whilst it is not ideal, time is now better used and arrangements are satisfactory. Learning resources are sound and are much enhanced by parents and community funding, which has been important to the school and its pupils.

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave well because of the strong provision for their personal development. Relationships are very good

21 The staff create a warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere and there is a strong family feeling in the life and work of the school. This is a major factor in the good progress that pupils make in their personal development. Staff provide very good role models, showing respect to each other and to pupils and showing a genuine concern for pupils' welfare. In their turn, pupils are respectful and display caring attitudes towards others. Relationships between all in the school community are very good. All pupils are included in all activities and they are valued as individuals. They are listened to and this gives them confidence to talk about themselves, their feelings and their work. A strong moral code underpins the whole life of the school and pupils understand how their actions affect others. Behaviour is good in lessons and in the playground, where pupils of different ages play together amicably. This helps younger pupils, some of whom have had little previous experience of playing in large groups, to settle into school quickly.

22 Pupils enjoy school because it provides a secure and happy environment and lessons are interesting. Classes are well organised and the difficulties presented by a wide range of ages in each class are overcome by the way in which pupils are grouped within the class. Older and younger pupils learn to work together and at times help each other. For example, in an ICT lesson in the junior class, older pupils helped younger ones as they worked in groups on the computers. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy learning, and are particularly enthusiastic about the many opportunities they have to find out for themselves, through research and investigation. Their achievements are celebrated by staff in lessons and in good displays of their work.

23 The pupils with SEN are very well supported by staff and other pupils who include them in all activities, both in the classroom and at play. They take a full part in whole class sessions, such as mental arithmetic, because teachers target specific questions to them to help them succeed. This gives them confidence and a sense of achievement.

24 Many parents, including parents of pupils with SEN, comment that this aspect of school life is a major strength of the school. They value the family atmosphere and quality of relationships highly.

There is a strong partnership with parents who are very supportive of the school.

25 There is a strong partnership with parents that enriches the life of the school and promotes learning well. Parents are enthusiastic about the school and very positive about how continuing staffing problems have been handled. They are very supportive of staff, particularly expressing much confidence in the acting headteacher.

26 Parents are welcomed into the school and several help on a regular basis, such as by organising the library. They report that they have full confidence in approaching the school if they have any concerns and they know that the school will sort out any problems. Parents also support learning well at home, through a regular programme of reading and written homework and this also promotes sound progress and good attitudes to work for their children.

27 Parents get good information about the school and their children's progress. Although many were not very keen on the new style of reports last year, this was partly because they were not fully completed for the oldest pupils because of the class teacher's absence. When completed fully, they provide a very clear picture of exactly what pupils can do and what they need to do next to improve. Clear targets are set in literacy and numeracy that help parents understand what they can do to help their children. Parents are welcomed into school if they wish to discuss their children's progress. Those with children with SEN are fully informed and involved in their children's provision. The prospectus and governors' reports to parents are informative and clear. Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection said that they would like more information about what is being taught each term. The school has now begun to send out a termly information sheet about topics. Parents are consulted from time to time about school policies, such as the provision of homework.

28 An active parent, teacher and friends' association (PTFA) organises social events and has close links with the village community, which enrich learning. The PTFA raise money for resources and members decide how the money will be spent. Together with specific grants from a village endowment, this has been invaluable to the school in providing vital learning resources for pupils in time of financial constraint.

29 The only significant negative point that parents raised in the questionnaire was the lack of out-of-lesson activities. Whilst the school does not currently provide any regular after-school clubs because almost all staff are part-time and some are temporary, there is a very good programme of curriculum visits to bring learning to life and of expert visitors to the school, such as professional storytellers. Pupils are also involved well in the life of the village, through such events as Well Dressing. They take part in sporting events and cultural events with other schools, such as football matches and an 'Arts Week'. The latter provides pupils with an insight into multicultural art and music, which is so important in a school whose pupils are all of white British origins.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in spelling and handwriting are below average.

30 Whilst pupils throughout the school write interesting pieces of work, using a good range of vocabulary, their written work is spoilt by poor standards of spelling and handwriting. This is particularly so in the older classes where many pupils, even higher attainers, make unnecessary mistakes with common words, and have a very immature and untidy style of handwriting.

31 The school has no whole school policy on spelling. Teachers have identified spelling as a weakness and spelling books have been introduced in the younger class, which pupils take home to learn the week's spellings. These are not used as regularly as they might be and are not yet having a full impact on standards. The pupils in Year 3 to 6 have developed a careless attitude to spelling and although dictionaries are provided in lessons, few pupils use them to look up words or check spellings. Familiar words are as often spelled incorrectly as more unusual ones; for example pupils spell

- 'picture' as 'pitchure';
- colour as color;
- 'dose' for 'does' and '
- 'qate' for 'quite'.

They show unfamiliarity with common spelling rules, such as when they write 'thier' for 'there' and 'to' for 'too'.

32 There is a sound whole school policy on teaching handwriting. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 write using a neat style of print and practise how to join up letters in specialist handwriting books. This work is continued into Years 3 and 4 and handwriting in these books is of average standard. However, the majority of pupils do not apply what they have learned in their everyday writing and in Years 3 to 6, letters are often poorly formed and of irregular size, resulting in work that looks untidy and scrappy, despite the fact that the content is often good. Teachers are not insistent enough about good presentation and pupils are happy to settle for writing that is less than their best.

33 The acting headteacher has already checked the quality of work in pupils' books and identified presentation as a point for development. She has not yet had time to develop a strategy to improve the quality of handwriting but has checked that pupils are now setting out work in an orderly way, with titles and dates.

Standards in information and communication technology are below average at the end of Year 6.

34 At the time of the previous inspection, the full National Curriculum for art, design and technology and ICT was not being taught and standards were below average. Good progress has been made in the first two subjects but the introduction of a full programme of study for ICT has been slower. Whilst pupils are now making sound progress in most areas of the subject and standards are average at the end of Year 2, they are still below average in Year 6.

35 Standards in Year 2 are average and in Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to build appropriately on work in word processing. They enter data into databases to present mathematical evidence in several subjects and but do not use spreadsheets. Pupils make good use of the Internet in carrying out research in other subjects, such as mathematics and art. They have had insufficient experience over the years in other areas and have a substantial amount of work to make up. For example, the current Year 5 and 6 pupils began to prepare work on controlling events through a computer but have not completed the task because of teacher absence. They are at an early stage in inserting pictures, video clips and sounds, sometimes from the Internet, into their work to create multimedia presentations. Pupils are also just beginning work on monitoring events through computers, such as when they check the rate of fall in temperatures using electronic sensors in their study on the comparative qualities of materials as insulators. Whilst pupils continue to use a graphics program to produce pictures, they have not yet used this as a design tool.

36 The direct teaching of skills is sound and teachers have appropriate expertise in using computers. They plan very well to use ICT in many other lessons, such as in research in science and in the use of digital cameras to produce their own photographs for Hockney style montages in art and design. A temporary co-ordinator is providing sound leadership in adapting the new scheme of work so that it meets the school's needs. This provides a sound framework for teachers to plan to build skills progressively. There are enough resources to implement the

curriculum fully. Good use is made of the resources in most lessons so that pupils are beginning to understand the value of computers as a learning tool.

The use of assessment information to check pupils' progress and raise standards further.

37 Teachers know their classes well and make good use of their on-going assessments of pupils. However, information gained from the programme of more formal assessments in English, mathematics and science is not as well used. Information has been collected over a period of a few years but has only recently been collated and the records show that from time to time some pupils' progress slows. The acting headteacher has developed a simple format to record pupils' progress through each year and from year to year in English, mathematics and science. It allows teachers to see at a glance which pupils are making the progress expected, and highlight those who are not making enough progress. This is only just being introduced and as yet has not had time to be effective in raising standards, although teachers are now using their information to set individual targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy. Whilst these are appropriate for individuals they are not always sharply focused enough to secure improvement. Pupils know their targets and teachers comment on their progress towards them, both verbally and sometimes in marking.

38 The acting headteacher has also begun to analyse the results of national tests and has identified some areas for improvement, such as spelling and solving of complex word problems in mathematics. This knowledge has been shared with teachers and although no action has yet been taken to resolve the spelling, teachers are providing opportunities for problem solving in mathematics and focusing on the understanding of the specific vocabulary needed to read and understand the problems. Pupils' English, mathematics and science books are now checked on a regular basis but this has not had time to have an impact on standards, other than in the way pupils set out their work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

39 In order to raise standards further, the school should:

(1) improve the standard of written work by;

introducing a systematic whole school policy for spelling;
encouraging the greater use of dictionaries to look up and check spellings;
adopting a more rigorous attitude to the standard of handwriting and presentation in all subjects.

(Paragraphs 5, 30 – 33)

(2) raise standards in ICT by the systematic implementation of the new curriculum and assessment procedures;

(Paragraphs 8, 34-36)

(3) make greater use of the assessment information available:

to check that progress is consistently good across each year and from year to year;
to set targets that are sharply focused on the next steps for learning; and
to identify areas for further development.

(Paragraphs 37 – 38)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	9
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	2	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	44	23	33	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

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)	Not applicable	43
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Not applicable	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	Not applicable	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	Not applicable	7

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
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.

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	41	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.32
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.7
Average class size	20.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	34

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	Not applicable
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	-
Total number of education support staff	-
Total aggregate hours worked per week	-
Number of pupils per FTE adult	-

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	159434
Total expenditure	159291
Expenditure per pupil	3319
Balance brought forward from previous year	53
Balance carried forward to next year	196

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.53
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.53
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1.65

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	41
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	12	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	27	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	26	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	37	4	4	0
The teaching is good.	74	22	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	22	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	19	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	74	22	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	52	41	0	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	37	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	29	33	8	0

Other issues raised by parents

Parents at the meeting were very supportive of the way in which on-going staff changes and long-term sickness has been managed by the governing body and the acting headteacher. They felt that quality has been maintained.