

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LEAMINGTON SPA

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125714

Headteacher: Mrs M Murphy

Reporting inspector: Mr J Burnham
5020

Dates of inspection: 28th – 29th April 2003

Inspection number: 249914

Short 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

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Augusta Place
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire

Postcode: CV32 5EL

Telephone number: 01926 427497

Fax number: n/a

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Armstrong

Date of previous inspection: 13 October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
5020	Mr J Burnham	Registered inspector
16472	Mrs C Stormonth	Lay inspector
3205	Mrs J Sullivan	Team inspector

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the centre of the town of Leamington Spa in Warwickshire and is an integral part of the parish of St Peter. Pupils are drawn mainly from the north side of the town. There are 113 pupils, 57 boys and 56 girls, whose ages range from four to eleven. They are taught in four classes. There are very few minority ethnic pupils, and an above-average proportion of pupils (7%) for whom English is not their mother tongue. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 7%, is below the national average, although this proportion fluctuates. Twenty-six pupils (23%) have special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. There are currently no pupils with statements of special educational need. The attainment of children when they first start school is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. By the age of eleven, pupils achieve standards that are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Behaviour is very good. The school is very well led and teaching is often very good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English are well above average by the age of eleven. Standards in mathematics and science are usually above average and are improving, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils are very well behaved and they have excellent attitudes to their work.
- The quality of teaching and learning is often very good, with some excellent teaching in all classes.
- The school promotes a very good climate for learning in which pupils grow and flourish.
- Pupils are very well cared for.
- The school has secured very good support from parents for the education of their children.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership, and all staff are committed to school improvement.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make very good progress.

What could be improved

- Plans for short-term improvement do not consistently identify the expected impact on pupils' learning, or the timescale for completing planned changes.

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 October 1997. Since that time, good standards have been maintained and good progress has been made in all the four areas identified as needing improvement. Schemes of work have been refined and objectives for learning are clearly stated. The school development plan is now a more useful tool for school improvement, and priorities are clearly identified. Assessment procedures are now good, with assessment opportunities identified in planning and individual targets set for pupils. The school's arrangements for performance management are now fully in place, supported by regular monitoring of teaching and feedback to staff. In addition to the key issues identified in the previous report, the school has also successfully addressed four other less important areas for development. Standards in music and information and communication technology have improved and are now good. The school has also substantially improved the arrangements for homework, which are now good, and is implementing a very effective behaviour policy.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	C	A	A
Mathematics	D	C	B	C
Science	B	C	B	C

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Results in the national tests for English for pupils aged eleven have usually been above, and sometimes well above, the national average over the past three years. Results in mathematics and science have not been quite as high but are improving. When compared with results in similar schools, overall results for eleven year olds in the three subjects taken together were above average in 2002, with well above average results in English. Results for pupils achieving the higher Level 5 are usually above average. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies is having a positive impact on standards throughout the school. The results in 2002 for pupils aged seven in reading were average, and in writing and mathematics they were unusually well below average, reflecting the composition of this particular year group. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the high standards in English remain a clear strength of the school. There has been a significant improvement this year in the achievement of seven year olds, especially in mathematics, reflecting the above average standards more regularly achieved by pupils of this age at the school. Standards in all other subjects are generally above average.

By the age of five, children often exceed the early learning goals. By seven, pupils have developed very good speaking and listening skills, especially those relating to questioning. This helps to support the good progress in later years. Across the school, pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in English, mathematics and science. Those pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English make good progress. The school sets high targets for itself and is on course to meet them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils demonstrate very high levels of interest and involvement in their work. They are conscientious and actively involved in the life of the school. They are eager to find out more for themselves. They respond well to challenges and find lessons fun.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are very well behaved, both in the school and outside on the playground. Movement around the relatively confined space of the school and in classrooms is very orderly. The school community is lively and harmonious.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils are courteous to adults and to each other. The respect they have for the feelings, beliefs and values of others is excellent. They are confident that their own views are sought and valued. Older pupils play with, and care for, the younger ones; this is an impressive feature of the school. Pupils accept responsibility and carry out duties sensibly.

Attendance	Good. Pupils are usually punctual, and there is almost no unauthorised absence.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is very good. Of the lessons seen, just under two thirds were very good or better. An example of excellent teaching was observed in each class. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.

The teaching of literacy skills is very good, and a strength of the school. Reading is taught particularly well, especially phonics. Learning support assistants and volunteer helpers make a significant contribution to the very good development of pupils' reading strategies. The teaching of numeracy skills is good across the school. Teachers have high expectations and take care to ensure that the work is sufficiently challenging for more able pupils. The management of pupils' behaviour, and the effectiveness of teachers' questioning strategies to encourage high quality learning, are particularly strong features. Teaching is very good for children under five. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good; they make very good progress in their learning.

The quality of learning is very good. Pupils are very well motivated. Their enthusiastic approaches to new learning help to maintain their interest and promote good progress. Pupils concentrate very well and listen carefully to their teachers and each other. They put a lot of effort into their work and rapidly develop the confidence to work independently from an early age. As a result, the learning is very effective and pupils often make very good progress, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They take a pride in what they do and readily celebrate their achievements.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Although there is a strong emphasis on the skills of literacy and numeracy, the other subjects of the National Curriculum, particularly the arts, receive appropriate attention. The range of experiences for pupils under five is good. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Procedures for identifying those pupils who need extra help are very good, and effective support is provided. Teachers know their pupils well and quickly alert the special needs co-ordinator if they feel that a child is likely to benefit from additional support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The above-average proportion of pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue receive good support from the school, and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school's caring ethos makes a major contribution to pupils' personal development. The provision for social and moral development is excellent. Pupils are very confident socially; they adhere to the clear rules which they set for themselves and take responsibility for their own actions. Spiritual development is very good, promoted well through assemblies and curricular experiences. Cultural development is good, making good use of stimuli from art and literature.
How well the school cares	All staff provide very good help and guidance for pupils. The welfare, health and

for its pupils	safety of pupils are successfully promoted in a happy, supportive environment.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and has been very successful in ensuring a commitment to high standards. The contribution of all staff is valued, and their professional development is very well promoted. They work very well as a team and show a determination to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive and have a clear strategic view of the direction that they wish the school to take. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teaching and learning are monitored effectively by the headteacher and subject leaders. This has enabled the school to focus attention on specific areas, such as music, information and communication technology and extra support for pupils in Year 1, to bring about further improvements in provision and standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of the available resources, and staff are deployed effectively. The school has good systems to ensure that it receives best value from the funding it receives.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has high expectations of their children. • The quality of the teaching. • Their children are happy at school. • Their children make good progress. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. • The children's behaviour is very good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents do not agree that their children get the right amount of work to do at home. • Some parents do not agree that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. • A few parents do not agree that the school works closely with parents, and would not feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem.

The inspectors fully endorse all the parents' positive views of the school. The inspectors found that teachers set homework regularly for all pupils, and this makes a very positive contribution to the high standards achieved. Inspectors also judged that the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school tries very hard and succeeds in working very closely with parents who, in turn, make a significant contribution to their children's education and the life of the school. All staff are readily available every day to see parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English are well above average by the age of eleven. Standards in mathematics and science are usually above average and are improving, particularly in mathematics.

1. Pupils usually achieve high standards in the national tests for eleven year olds in English. This has been a feature of their performance over the past three years, despite the fluctuations in results due to the relatively small year groups and the variations in numbers of pupils within each of these cohorts. These high standards are being sustained by those pupils currently in their final year at the school. Results in mathematics and science in 2002 were above the national average, and average when compared with similar schools. Standards seen during the inspection in the work of eleven year olds are currently above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science, supported by effective teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Those pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue make good progress in relation to their prior attainment, and many achieve in line with national averages by the ages of seven and eleven.
2. Standards achieved by the age of seven in the relatively small year groups have also fluctuated. Nevertheless, compared with all schools nationally, results in the national tests in reading in 2002 were above the national average, reflecting the very good teaching of phonics at the school. In writing, standards were average; in mathematics, standards were, unusually, below average. When compared with similar schools, the results in reading were average, and in writing and mathematics they were well below average, reflecting the composition of this particular year group. Over the last three years, standards attained in reading, writing and mathematics have generally exceeded the national average. The successful implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy has had a positive impact on standards. By the age of seven, pupils currently achieve standards that are above average in mathematics, writing and science, and often well above those normally seen in reading, speaking and listening. Pupils' high standards in speaking and listening, especially their questioning skills, help to promote and sustain high standards across the curriculum.
3. Pupils are assessed when they first start school. The most recent results show attainment to be broadly similar to the county average in language and mathematics. In the reception class, children quickly become familiar with phonic sounds and readily think of words that begin with a particular sound. Many of them show confidence in forming letters when writing, and are well supported in what is a literacy-rich learning environment. They quickly learn how to count accurately to 10 and to 20, and enjoy familiar number songs. In one lesson, children counted the body parts of 'minibeasts' and were making simple classifications, using their number skills to good effect.
4. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are developed very well throughout the school because they are successfully encouraged to use language to support their understanding, their relationships and their learning. Very good attention is given to reading. Pupils are encouraged to try to find different ways of identifying words with which they are not familiar. These include breaking the word down into different sounds and using other clues such as illustrations or the context of the sentence.
5. The National Literacy Strategy has been used successfully to further improve pupils' reading and writing. From an early age, pupils are taught to draw increasingly more complex inferences from what is written and to think about characters. For example, pupils in Year 1 were successfully prompted, through the teacher's skilful use of a

puppet, Bernard, to describe him and consider what he might do or say in certain circumstances. In the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils successfully identify and re-create persuasive writing techniques, such as in a lesson focusing on a petition against the establishment of an imaginary pet shop. Pupils tackled this in a very mature way, producing a very good analysis of the letter of protest they had read. They teased out the factual basis, clarified what was opinion, and identified the effect of half-truths and emotive language.

6. High standards are maintained in pupils' writing. Children's emergent writing in the reception class indicates rapid progress in their letter formation and their ability to read back what they have written to an adult or another child. By the end of Year 2, pupils have made very good progress, and their written work indicates a rapidly growing confidence. Many of them write at length and are beginning to work consistently in a joined and legible handwriting style. By Year 6, many pupils' writing shows great maturity for their age. They master complex sentences and undertake detailed language investigations using reference material and information and communication technology (ICT).
7. The school has adopted the National Numeracy Strategy successfully. This has helped pupils to broaden their skills and to use these more flexibly across other areas of mathematics. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils played a game of 'Bingo' based on three-digit numbers up to 1000, but where numbers were called as 10 more or 10 less than the given number. This required very flexible thinking on their part, and the time-constrained nature of the activity provided a high level of challenge to which the pupils responded with enthusiasm. In the Year 3 and 4 class, pupils demonstrate good levels of flexibility in describing and extending sequences of numbers, including negative numbers. Their oral and mental strategies are good. Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved and are now above average. Pupils in Year 6 work confidently with fractions and have a good understanding of the functions of numerator and denominator in a fraction statement.
8. Progress in science is good. Pupils in the Reception and Year 1 class made rapid progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world through a lesson developing simple scientific thinking and observations, using the starting point of the story 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' by Eric Carle. Pupils in Year 2 described physical and chemical changes in materials, using the appropriate scientific terminology with high levels of consistency. Pupils in Year 6 know the properties of solids, liquids and gases. In a lesson on the properties of air, they were beginning to understand the difference between air pressure and air resistance. They recognised through experimentation and investigation that an inflated balloon weighed slightly more than a collapsed balloon, and several of them understood that this was because the compressed air was denser than the air outside.
9. Since the last inspection, standards throughout the school in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and are now above those expected nationally. The school has placed great emphasis on improving provision for ICT. The school curriculum now covers an appropriate range of ICT capability. Opportunities are seized to develop skills through other subjects. So, for example, pupils in Year 2 demonstrated good mathematical accuracy when giving instructions to a programmable vehicle ('Pixie') in order to complete a given course. One girl observed, " *We have to make sure Pixie is given a new set of instructions each time. We have to tell it which way to turn and work out how many squares it has to move*". She estimated the number of left- and right-hand turns required with a good level of accuracy, determined the number of squares to be covered and programmed the vehicle, which ran along the course, successfully.

Pupils are very well behaved and they have excellent attitudes to their work.

10. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning especially when the teaching inspires very good work. A recent survey of Year 3 to Year 6 pupils indicated that all pupils strongly like school and are very keen to attend. They think that lessons are *“fun and interesting, and we learn a lot.”* Parents attribute their children’s love of school to the enthusiasm and care shown by the teachers who are held in high regard, both by the parents and pupils alike.
11. Pupils typically settle to work quickly and are keen to learn. Pupils listen very closely and join in confidently in discussion and activities. They ask searching questions in their pursuit of knowledge and often make astute observations which engender useful discussion points. Pupils are pleased that their opinions are sought and valued by teachers. This generates active participation and high concentration levels on the lesson objective. This was clearly seen when the youngest pupils were learning about the life cycle of a butterfly. They made comparisons with the story they had read about the *“Very Hungry Caterpillar”* and drew upon their own previous knowledge and observations. They were fascinated and concentrated very well for the whole lesson.
12. Pupils follow instructions well, work hard and respond positively to praise and encouragement. They are keen to discuss their work and take pride in its presentation. They particularly relish challenge and this was seen in an outstanding art lesson in the Year 3 and Year 4 class when pupils drew and painted portraits in the style of Matisse and produced work of very high quality. Another strong feature is the support pupils have for the achievement of others. The less able were encouraged by praise and some friendly critical advice for improving their work by their classmates.
13. Behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved since the last inspection and is very good. This makes a significant contribution to pupils’ achievement and happy school life. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions in the dining hall. Behaviour in the playground is very good; pupils obviously enjoy the equipment and resources. Behaviour is occasionally boisterous when boys tear around the playground to escape their friends who chase them and sometimes bump into others. Pupils show reverence during assemblies and prayer times when their behaviour is impeccable. Pupils confirmed strongly that bullying and racism hardly ever occur; when one case of bullying was reported, over three years ago, it was dealt with very effectively. There have been no exclusions in the school’s recent history.
14. Relationships throughout the school are very good and are based on mutual respect for all in a caring school community. *“We’re like a big family”*, one pupil said. Teachers and other adults speak positively to pupils and value the contributions they make. This builds pupils’ confidence and self-esteem and helps them tackle new learning and do their best. Boys and girls and the small number of pupils from ethnic minorities mix freely and happily. Pupils have excellent understanding of the impact of their actions on others and have the utmost respect for each other’s feelings and values. They work well together, sharing equipment and taking turns.

The quality of teaching and learning is often very good, with some excellent teaching in all classes.

15. The quality of teaching is very good. In nearly two thirds of the lessons seen, teaching was judged to be very good or better. One in every six lessons was judged to be excellent. Overall, nearly four-fifths of the lessons seen were at least good: the rest were satisfactory.

16. The very best teaching was characterised by high expectations and very good subject knowledge on the part of the teachers. An example of excellent teaching was observed in each class. These lessons provided an excellent match between the demands of the tasks set and the learning needs of the pupils. Lively, stimulating learning experiences were generated which captured the imagination of the pupils.
17. The teaching of English, in particular, is very good and a strength of the school. An example of this was a lesson with pupils in the Year 1 and 2 class. They enthusiastically took part in a 'hot seat', role-play activity where they asked questions of the subject of a story, a cat named 'Six Dinner Sid'. This exercise encouraged them to formulate and ask good questions, to listen carefully and to form some intriguing impressions of Sid's character. The teacher's enthusiasm for, and expertise in, the subject ensured that the pupils' interest and involvement was captured. The teacher's questions were successfully devised to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of understanding. Well-established routines and high expectations promoted very good behaviour.
18. All teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly. They identify what they expect pupils to gain from the learning, the activities they consider will best achieve these objectives and the activities which are best suited for pupils of different ability in the class. This ensures that the received curriculum is relevant to pupils' learning needs. Teachers' questioning skills are of a very high quality.
19. There is a very good balance in lessons between the teacher explaining ideas and demonstrating how the work is to be carried out, and the pupils working by themselves, or in small groups, to carry out the tasks. Throughout the school, the management of pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils know exactly what they have to do and they are successfully encouraged to work hard during lessons. Any inappropriate behaviour is handled firmly but fairly by teachers; this helps to ensure that other pupils can work without distraction.
20. Reading is taught very well; teachers have a very good knowledge of how to teach phonics. Learning support assistants and voluntary helpers make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' basic skills and learning in all subjects, and particularly their reading strategies, both within the classroom during lessons and when working with small groups elsewhere in the school. As a result of the very good teaching and support of all adults, pupils quickly develop as effective learners in the school.
21. The quality of learning is very good. Pupils are very well motivated. Their enthusiastic approaches to new learning help to maintain their interest and promote good progress. They concentrate very well and listen carefully to their teachers and each other. They put a lot of effort into their work and develop the confidence to work independently from an early age. As a result, the learning is very effective, and pupils often make very good progress, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils use good strategies to solve problems in mathematics. The skills and confidence thus gained are used very well to help them tackle problems in other curricular areas, notably in science. They take a pride in what they do; their work is well presented and they readily celebrate their achievements.

Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported and make very good progress.

22. Pupils who are identified as having special educational needs are very well taught and make very good gains in their learning. Procedures for identifying those pupils who need extra help are very good, and effective support is provided through specialist teaching and the high quality work of the learning support assistants. Teachers know their pupils well and quickly alert the special needs co-ordinator if they feel that a child is likely to benefit

from additional support. The school has invested in the development of the staff's skills and expertise in several different aspects of special educational needs provision.

23. Communication and information between teachers and learning support staff are very good. Together they share high expectations of the pupils. Teachers' planning clearly identifies the tasks set for pupils with special educational needs. These are closely matched to the objectives set out in pupils' individual education plans. Records of pupils with special educational needs are very good; progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans is monitored very carefully.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, and for those pupils whose mother tongue is not English, is very good. Learning support assistants intervene sensitively; they successfully encourage pupils to meet the challenges set for them. As a result of the consistently high quality of support provided for them, and the school's clearly inclusive climate for learning, pupils with special educational needs often make very good progress and those for whom English is not their mother tongue make good progress.

The school promotes a very good climate for learning in which pupils grow and flourish

25. The school curriculum meets statutory requirements. The range of curricular provision is broad and balanced, and many good quality learning opportunities are provided by teachers across the school. The provision for, and teaching of, basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are very good. There is an appropriate balance throughout the school between the demands of literacy and numeracy, and the promotion of music, art and other creative aspects, such as dance. Equality of opportunity is ensured through good planning within a fully inclusive setting in which all pupils are valued.
26. The school provides pupils with the knowledge and insight to develop their spiritual awareness very well. The mission statement "that Gospel values may influence and enrich the lives of all pupils" is fully reflected in its work and has great influence in practice. The close links with the parish, preparation for sacraments, the programme of Masses, the celebration of Feast days and assemblies very effectively promote spiritual development. Pupils write prayers thoughtfully and regularly. Older pupils have the opportunity to engage in a retreat at Alton Castle as part of their spiritual journey and preparation for Confirmation. Spiritual development elsewhere is very good, especially when pupils are encouraged to explore and reflect on values and understand feelings and emotions. Some very good opportunities to express these elements are given when considering the life of Jesus, in intensive and reflective writing and poetry, and in circle times. Some lessons offer spiritually uplifting experiences. The youngest pupils marvelled as they watched daffodils slowly open over a week; they baked bread; they dissolved substances in water; and they explored the senses.
27. Moral development is excellent and a real strength of the school. There is a well-developed ethos of respect and kindness within which pupils' efforts and achievements are valued. Through the very fine examples set by the headteacher and other adults in the school, pupils learn the principles of right and wrong and that high standards of behaviour and care for others are expected. Staff constantly remind pupils about this and it permeates all areas of school life. Positive reinforcement of the values of respect, care for others, forgiveness, trust, peace, justice, fairness and high moral standards are conveyed in assemblies, prayer times and in personal and social education. In circle times pupils consider themselves and explore issues such as "how can I make myself a better person?" This helps pupils to be very considerate and thoughtful in their approaches to others and to have high expectations of their own behaviour.
28. The skills and qualities required to become more mature and take on greater responsibility as pupils get older are promoted extremely well. Pupils have very good

social skills, are friendly and well mannered and are a credit to the school. Verbal assertiveness skills are taught from an early age. This quickly enables pupils to become confident in their approaches to others, and they participate very well verbally in lessons. Teachers value pupils' questions and give them space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns, which extends personal development markedly. The school is drawing on the pupils' confidence and skills to introduce a school council. The personal and social education programme teaches some important life skills such as adopting a healthy lifestyle, general safety and some early good citizenship. Other experiences, such as performing in assemblies with sacred dances or role-play, reading at Mass and leading bidding prayers, musical and sporting activities and the various clubs, also extend social development very well. As part of their Easter preparations, pupils commendably organised their own Lenten games to raise money for charities; they have managed to raise an impressive £1600 so far. A recent residential trip to Marle Hall in North Wales gave pupils some new and exciting experiences at the outdoor centre. Pupils described it as *"an amazing trip."*

29. Cultural development is good. The school celebrates and builds on the interests, experiences and cultural diversity of its small number of pupils from different ethnic heritages. This was clearly seen in the production of "Christmas all Around the World" when many cultures in the school were featured, as exemplified by Greek and Irish dancing, an Indian carol in Urdu and a Caribbean song. The school has some well-established links with St Francis' school in Bo in Sierra Leone and pupils have been pen pals for the past three years. A musical workshop is planned to learn more about the music from that part of Africa. Pupils are encouraged to learn about the rich history and geography of the Leamington Spa locality. There is good use of classic literature, traditional stories, a range of music and art to inspire good work. Theatre trips to see plays such as "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" enrich pupils learning. The relative weakness in cultural development is in the lack of development of pupils' understanding of traditions from Britain's multi-ethnic and multicultural society. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of other cultures could be further developed.

Pupils are very well cared for.

30. The school takes great care of its pupils; this helps to improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning. Staff know their pupils very well and pupils place high levels of trust and confidence in their teachers and other adults in the school; this helps pupils to feel happy, safe and secure.
31. A recent pupil questionnaire indicated that 100 per cent of pupils in Years 3-6 feel that they would have someone to turn to if they ever felt troubled or worried. In further discussions with pupils, they strongly confirmed that teachers are kind and approachable and know pupils so well that they can detect mood changes and show great concern about their welfare. Teachers care passionately and go way beyond normal bounds to ensure that pupils are happy, feel valued and well cared for so that pupils can perform well in their work. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are given good advice for improving their attendance and punctuality, behaviour and attitudes, their social skills and their work habits.
32. The arrangements for child protection are exemplary. The school keeps a watchful eye on pupils and monitors any suspicions carefully and sensitively. The school gives a high priority to making sure that all medical conditions are known and catered for. When pupils are ill or injured they are cared for well. The health and safety management system is very good, and records show that the accident frequency is low reflecting a safe school. The school, however, currently does not have sufficient trained first-aiders who have valid first-aid certificates to ensure good coverage.

The school has secured very good support from parents for the education of their children

33. The school tries hard to work closely with parents, and very effectively involves them in joint approaches to improving standards and ensuring their children's happiness. The partnership with parents is forged early, even before pupils start school. Prospective parents are given some very good information on what to expect and the best ways to support learning and develop pupils' confidence. Parents report that family induction arrangements are very good, and that children settle quickly when they start school. Links with parents are very good.
34. The strong partnership continues all the way through school. The school is approachable and welcomes parents' views as an important part of school improvement. It frequently reminds parents that they are welcome to keep in contact with their children's teachers. Staff are available every day to talk to parents about any concerns, and many were seen taking advantage of this in an open and friendly way. Parents confirmed their complete confidence that any worries would be quickly, effectively and sensitively dealt with to make pupils' learning experiences more enjoyable. The arrangements for formal consultation are very good. School reports contain a huge quantity of information about progress over the past year in a very positive way but do not always sufficiently indicate pupils' weaknesses or give advice on how these can be addressed. Newsletters and letters keep parents fully in touch with school news and parents are informed about the curricular planning a term ahead.
35. The arrangements for homework are good; parents are provided with a homework timetable and know what to expect. This helps parents to support learning at home effectively.
36. Parents are often invited into school, and many are actively involved in school life. There are a dozen or so parents who volunteer and come into school regularly and help to provide good quality support learning in reading, ICT, art and other practical tasks. They also help whenever needs arise for swimming, school trips and much more. Evening meetings let parents know about the latest strategies for learning so that parents can help their children with literacy, numeracy, ICT, sex education, SATs and preparation for the sacraments. Parents are very supportive of all activities that involve their children. Invitations to class and whole-school Masses often result in standing room only in the crowded hall. Termly coffee mornings are well attended and described by parents as "great fun". The Parents' and Teachers' Association is very active, and many parents help to arrange a busy social calendar raising funds for additional resources to enhance learning. In this way the impact of parents' involvement on the school is very good.

The headteacher provides strong leadership, and all staff are committed to school improvement.

37. A fundamental commitment to the pupils' welfare, promoting high quality learning and achieving high standards, is shared by governors and staff alike. A positive climate for learning and improvement has been promoted by the very good, strong leadership of the headteacher who has both challenged and supported her staff. The aims of the school permeate all aspects of daily life and have a very positive impact on everyone associated with the school.
38. Staff work together very well as a team. Learning Support Assistants are very well briefed and they make a very positive contribution to the high standards achieved by the pupils. Recent newly qualified teacher appointments have contributed significantly to the school's overall improvement. It is planned that a review of responsibilities will take place in summer 2003 so that these new teachers can play a full part in subject leadership from

September 2003, following the end of their induction period. In the interim period, other staff at the school have assumed responsibility and worked effectively to secure continuing development in curricular areas.

39. The school regularly compares its performance with that of similar schools, and closely monitors the progress of individual pupils as they move from year to year. The school's recent policy for gifted and talented pupils is proving effective in this regard, and staff are well aware of emerging issues. The effectiveness of the teaching is monitored systematically, and teachers' development is supported in accordance with agreed priorities.
40. All staff and governors are committed to improvement. The school is successfully achieving the well-founded priorities in the school development plan. The progress made in improvement against these priorities is closely monitored, and new priorities are being identified. The school is rapidly becoming very proficient in self-review and managing change, and clearly has the capacity to improve still further.
41. Governors are well informed about the school through a variety of means, including reports from the headteacher, staff and individual governors on the progress of initiatives, and school visits by governors. The governing body is well led; its structures enable it to fulfil its duties efficiently in supporting and challenging the school. The school's budget is very well managed; financial controls and monitoring are very good. Specific funding is used effectively and the school makes good use of the resources available to it.
42. The school gives careful consideration to all its spending options when purchasing resources. This has been achieved, for example, in respect of the increased provision for music and for information and communication technology equipment, and for the additional teaching support for Year 1 pupils, all of which have contributed to raising standards. The decision to release the headteacher from her significant class teaching commitment has resulted in creating time for her to introduce and maintain much-improved arrangements for monitoring and evaluation.
43. Arrangements for performance management and the professional development of teachers are very good. Induction programmes for the two newly qualified teachers have been very effective.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

44. Standards in music by the ages of seven and eleven are now above national expectations. Music provision has improved through specialist teaching and the provision of a wider range of resources.
45. The quality of teaching in these lessons is good. Lessons are well prepared and proceed at a brisk pace. Pupils enjoy making music and collaborate well in groups. They sing well in assemblies. They now have access to sufficient musical instruments to ensure that they can compose and perform on appropriate instruments, such as glockenspiels and electronic keyboards, whilst working in small groups. Older pupils record their work and then listen to the recordings and appraise what they hear.
46. Good work on rhythm and tempo is further encouraging links with dance. Pupils' skills in composing and performing are now good. Pupils now demonstrate good levels of confidence in, and enthusiasm for, this subject. Teachers supplement the specialist provision with some additional musical activities in class, such as singing to accompany mathematical activities.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Plans for short-term improvement do not consistently identify the expected impact on pupils' learning, or the timescale for completing planned changes.

47. The school sets clear targets for improvement and the management of change through the school development plan. These are monitored and evaluated effectively. The governing body has already identified and acknowledged the need to ensure an even clearer focus on the impact of actions in the development plan for pupils' learning.
48. However, when short-term needs for change are identified, the strategies employed sometimes lack the degree of rigour which is applied to the school development plan. For example, thorough monitoring and evaluation by the English co-ordinator has identified some overuse of worksheets around the school. A clear plan for action is not yet formalised, although good, informal action has been undertaken.
49. A similar example exists in relation to the analysis of results in national tests, which was again undertaken very thoroughly both by English and mathematics co-ordinators. Patterns have been clearly identified, such as the need to address money problems and fractions for older pupils in mathematics, and developing the use of dialogue, action and description to develop characters in writing within English. Strategies have been adopted informally to bring about improvement. However, there have been neither specific plans for improvement which identify how the impact of corrective measures will be judged, nor timescales and specific dates set for the completion of tasks to meet the objectives.
50. In both of the above examples, the management of change was not as precise as it could have been. As a consequence, insufficient opportunities have been taken to use the well-developed monitoring and evaluation skills of staff to identify whether or not the initiatives have achieved the expected impact on pupils' learning. There is currently too little feedback to staff and governors about the success of any such action, or to celebrate the usually rapid progress towards change which the school makes over relatively short periods of time.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. The school should now:

- ensure greater consistency in implementing plans for short-term development tasks by:
 - setting clear objectives for action;
 - setting appropriate deadlines for specific interim stages and reporting dates;
and
 - analysing and evaluating the success and actual impact upon pupils' learning of the action taken.

(refer to paragraphs 48 – 50)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	11	4	5	0	0	0
17%	46%	17%	21%	0%	0%	0%

The table gives the numbers of lessons and the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

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)		113
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		26

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

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	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	6.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	9	9	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	17	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (88)	83 (94)	94 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	17	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (94)	94 (94)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Only 9 boys and 9 girls were involved in the tests and tasks in 2002, so separate results for boys and girls have been omitted from the table.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	8	6	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (86)	86 (71)	93 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	11	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (86)	86 (71)	86 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Only 9 boys and 9 girls were involved in the tests and tasks in 2002, so separate results for boys and girls have been omitted from the table.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	109
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.2
Average class size	28.25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	69

FTE means full-time equivalent

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	247912
Total expenditure	245346
Expenditure per pupil	2191
Balance brought forward from previous year	1822
Balance carried forward to next year	4388

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	113
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	35	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	23	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	71	28	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	35	9	0	1
The teaching is good.	78	19	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	35	5	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	26	5	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	31	9	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	84	15	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	24	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	20	10	0	5