

INSPECTION REPORT

Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School

Purley

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101797

Headteacher: Mr Gary Tanner

Reporting inspector: Ms Lysbeth Bradley
1994

Dates of inspection: March 20th – 21st 2000

Inspection number: 181644

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Catholic aided
Age range of pupils:	4 –11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Eamonn Tuke
Date of previous inspection:	21 st – 24 th November 1994

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Teaching is of a very high standard. It is both challenging and stimulating, and leads to boys and girls of all abilities developing as very effective learners who enjoy their work.

Pupils make good progress and achieve very good standards across a wide range of subjects because of the rich and well-planned curriculum.

Pupils love coming to school; their behaviour, relationships and personal development are excellent because the school is committed to educating the heart of the child as well as the mind.

The breadth of the curriculum and provision of a wealth of valuable experiences results in learning of depth and quality for children of all ages.

The headteacher, staff and governors work together very effectively to ensure that everything the school does puts its pupils and their achievements first.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

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Communication could be better with parents although they play an active part in the work of the school and in supporting their children's learning.

Targets in the development plan are not clear enough and do not enable the school to measure improvement or evaluate the effectiveness of decisions

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Margaret Roper is an aided Catholic primary school in the parish of Purley. It is similar in size to other primary schools with 112 boys and 114 girls on roll, aged from four to eleven years. The school is regularly oversubscribed and admits only children from Catholic families, most of whom live in the parish. Nine per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority families, and less than four per cent speak English as an additional language, although this is higher than most schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about average, although the percentage with a statement of special educational need is below the national average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. When the pupils start school their attainment level is above the national average in English and mathematics. Although the school population is stable, a minority of boys moves to the independent sector in Years 5 and 6 and their places are immediately filled.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School is a very good school that provides a very good quality of education for all of its pupils. The ethos is warm and caring and places children at its heart. The headteacher, staff and governors have high expectations of what each pupil can achieve academically and socially and have improved standards of teaching and learning significantly. Behaviour, values and personal development are excellent. Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science through very effective leadership and management that inspires teamwork, and teaching that is of very good quality overall. Children join the school with above average attainment; they make good progress over a wide range of subjects and leave very well prepared for secondary school. The school gives parents and taxpayers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is of a very high standard. It is both challenging and stimulating, and leads to boys and girls of all abilities developing as very effective learners who enjoy their work.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve very good standards across a wide range of subjects because of the rich and well-planned curriculum.
- Pupils love coming to school; their behaviour, relationships and personal development are excellent because the school is committed to educating the heart of the child as well as the mind.
- The breadth of the curriculum and provision of a wealth of valuable experiences result in learning of depth and quality for children of all ages.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work together very effectively to ensure that everything the school does puts its pupils and their achievements first.

What could be improved

- Communication could be better with parents, although they play an active part in the work of the school and in supporting their children's learning.
- Targets in the development plan are not clear enough and do not enable the school to measure its improvement accurately.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement has been at a much faster rate than expected. The school has tackled those areas for improvement identified in the last report with thoroughness. Assessment procedures, and their use in monitoring the progress of individual pupils, have improved substantially; they are now of good quality and ensure target setting is accurate and challenging. The co-ordinators' role has developed well in terms of evaluating and monitoring standards throughout the school, especially in the key priorities of literacy and numeracy. Pupils' achievement has been raised in design and technology, and in information and communication technology (ICT), where pupils attain expected standards overall and good standards in control at the age of eleven.

The curriculum has improved markedly through the consistent implementation of quality schemes of work and extending the school day for pupils in Key Stage 2. This, in turn, has made a significant impact on the

quality of teaching, which was judged to be satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and is now very good. The governing body has developed effective strategies for developing its understanding of the curriculum and in monitoring its implementation and impact. Although improvements in financial planning have brought about some improvement in governors' ability to evaluate how well they have deployed the budget, the targets are not specific enough for them to evaluate how effective their spending decisions have been or to measure success. The school is well placed to maintain its high standards and to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	A	A	A	well above average A
mathematics	A	A	A	B	above average B
science	B	A	A	B	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

Over the three years from 1997, standards have been consistently well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science, when compared with schools nationally. The school has not remained complacent though, and standards have improved in line with national trends during this period. When compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils, who are eligible for free school meals, standards are well above average in English, but above average in mathematics and science. The school has set realistically challenging targets for each year group at the end of both key stages, based on careful tracking of individual performance, and it is in a good position to achieve these.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school life. They are proud of their school and do their best at all times.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils respond very well to the family atmosphere and the clear, strong values that the school promotes. They display courtesy and thoughtfulness to each other and to all adults.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The quality of relationships is a significant strength of the school and pupils show real initiative and thoughtfulness from a young age and leave the school as well-rounded, young people.
Attendance	Very good. The rate of attendance is much better than that found in most schools.

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.

Standards have improved markedly since the last inspection. At that time 30 per cent of lessons seen were judged to be unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1 and 13 per cent at Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection and over 90 per cent of lessons were judged good or better. In over half of the lessons observed, teaching was of very good or better quality. The teaching of children under five is very good and takes very good account of their needs by providing many practical situations for learning. At both key stages, literacy and numeracy were particularly well taught, but very good teaching was also

seen in science, French, geography, history, music and physical education. The very best lessons went at a cracking pace and teachers showed mastery of the subject, constantly demanding and receiving more from their pupils. Very occasionally, weaknesses in planning meant that tasks were not always appropriate for pupils of different attainment.

Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and make good progress. Pupils with particular aptitudes are encouraged to develop their talents and high attaining pupils are given activities that stretch them. In this school, boys as well as girls want to do well. Pupils show high levels of concentration and an ability to get on under their own steam. Teachers are imaginative in combining subjects in their planning in order to exploit pupils' knowledge and skills in a range of contexts. Although many teachers explain each lesson's learning targets clearly to their pupils, this is not common practice in every class. Pupils are not encouraged enough to become involved in evaluating their own work, even though many are capable of identifying how they can improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Pupils are stimulated by a wealth of experiences across a wide range of subjects, even though the main emphasis is on literacy and numeracy. There are excellent opportunities in the creative arts. Extra-curricular activities for older pupils are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and, as a consequence, they make good progress. More could be done on a regular basis to discuss targets with parents.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language and those from ethnic minorities	Good. The school has very few pupils who are not fluent in English. Individual tracking makes sure that each pupil's progress is monitored, although the school does not monitor the progress of different ethnic groups.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school nurtures pupils' spiritual growth to a high degree and promotes cultural development very well. Moral and social development are both outstanding as a result of the very strong links between the school, the parish and families.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a secure and caring place where the headteacher and his staff know each pupil very well indeed. There are excellent procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and the deputy form a highly effective partnership. The headteacher has a strong sense of purpose and clear vision for the development of the school. He brings out the very best in the staff team through genuine consultation and effective delegation.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are actively involved in many aspects of school life and have a clear picture of the school's development. They are supportive and critical friends who are not afraid to ask challenging questions or to grasp nettles.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Senior managers are aware of the school's strengths and are not afraid to address its weaknesses. There is strong determination to make things even better. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not as effective as they could be. Governors recognise that targets in the school development plan are not specific enough to enable them to measure the cost-

	effectiveness of their spending decisions.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school puts finance, staff, time, accommodation and learning resources to very good effect. The school applies the principles of best value well but could consult more regularly with parents and pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best • The school achieves high standards • The strong relationship between home, school and church which reinforces family values • Behaviour is good and the school is successful in helping children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way in which the school responds to their concerns • The range of activities provided by the school outside lessons • The information about the standards their child has achieved and their progress • Consistency in the quality of teaching and support • The way in which the school supports children with special needs • Consistency in implementing the homework policy • The state of the playground

Over 60 per cent of parents responded to the questionnaire and 50 parents attended the meeting. This provided inspectors with a good evidence base for parents' views. The inspection team endorses parents' positive views of the school. Although parents feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons, the team views the provision for the oldest pupils as excellent and for younger pupils as good. Although there are not the same opportunities to join clubs at Key Stage 1, the wide variety of visits and visitors that form a regular part of the curriculum make learning very interesting. The team cannot support the parents' view of teaching. Teaching was judged to be very good at every stage and there was a high degree of consistency. The provision for pupils with special needs is good and the school is not slow to identify specific learning difficulties. However, communication with parents could be improved.

Homework is understood well by pupils and what is set is usually reasonable in quantity, relevant and appropriate for their age. Although the playground is not in a good state of repair, it is not a safety hazard. The team judges that the school could improve the way it gathers regular information on parents' views and also how it shares its successes with them. Evidence was provided to inspectors by a small minority of parents who do not find it easy to approach the school or to have their concerns addressed professionally. Evidence was also provided that indicated a small minority of parents who were both rude and unreasonable in views they expressed and the way in which they communicated them. The local education authority (LEA) has only upheld one complaint, concerned with the time of admission. Although 78 per cent of parents feel that they would be comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem and 83 per cent believe the school works closely with parents, there is room for improvement on the part of the school and a small minority of parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Teaching is of a very high standard. It is both challenging and stimulating, and leads to boys and girls of all abilities developing as very effective learners who enjoy their work.

1. When the school was inspected six years ago, the overall quality of teaching was judged to be sound. Significantly, although teaching in reception was never less than satisfactory and frequently good, 30 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1 and 13 per cent at Key Stage 2. No indication was given that any lessons had been judged as very good or better. Teachers' competence in science, information technology, and design and technology was identified as a weakness. In addition, teachers made too little use of assessment to identify the levels at which pupils should be working. Lesson plans did not state clearly what pupils were expected to learn and consequently pupils were insufficiently aware of the lesson's purpose. On too many occasions, pupils did not make sufficient progress.
2. The quality of teaching has improved substantially since the previous inspection and is now of a consistently high standard in reception and at both key stages. The implementation of detailed schemes of work, well targeted staff development and improved assessment procedures have all contributed to improvements in teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection and over 90 per cent of lessons were judged good or better. In over half of the lessons observed, teaching was of very good or better quality. The teaching of children under five is very good and takes very good account of their needs by providing many practical situations for learning. Inspectors were among the first visitors to the reception class's own Millennium Dome where children were seen to be absorbed in self-directed activities in the Time, Quiet and Eating Zones.
3. The very best lessons went at a cracking pace and teachers showed mastery of the subject, constantly demanding and receiving more from their pupils. In one excellent literacy lesson, the teacher introduced the dramatic context of a controversial plan for a by-pass. This enabled pupils to develop their ability to weigh evidence from different perspectives and to express their views coherently, both orally and in a formal letter. Pupils were drawn in by the teacher's lively presentation, which enabled them to act in role and to make very perceptive comments to support their point of view. Most pupils showed very high levels of concentration, listened actively to each other and built on the many perceptive points raised. The lesson enabled the higher-attaining pupils to demonstrate an increasing ability to infer from a wide range of information in their analysis of the situation.
4. Teachers are imaginative in combining subjects in their planning in order to exploit pupils' knowledge and skills in a range of contexts. In another excellent literacy lesson in Year 6, the teacher drew on the pupils' knowledge and understanding in science, history, geography and current affairs to develop pupils' ability to empathise. Using a story about a young girl from Ethiopia, she enabled the pupils to identify with children who do not have access to safe water and to use vocabulary with effect to express their feelings of joy and relief when a water pump was installed in the village. The pupils responded to the teachers' very high expectations and expressed their ideas eloquently using complex sentences to explain their views, making detailed reference to social conditions in Shakespeare's time and their understanding of microbes. They had an impressive detailed recall of the story they had just listened to, making explicit reference to the text in their detailed answers.
5. Literacy and numeracy are particularly well taught, but very good teaching was also seen in history, French, music and physical education. What characterised lessons in these subjects was teachers' very good subject knowledge. This enabled them to focus on the progressive development of skills, whether in developing a stroke in swimming, learning how to pitch a true note through attention to posture and correct breathing, or appreciating why there can be more than

one account of an historical event.

6. Very occasionally, teachers' planning does not take good enough account of the needs of pupils of different attainment and tasks were not always appropriate. Although the lessons are satisfactory overall, unclear planning can result in pupils losing interest and momentum when asked to do something that they already understand or when they are uncertain as to the purpose of the lesson. Because the school has not yet identified a ladder of skills in all subjects, teachers do not always build on what pupils already know.
7. Pupils are very involved in lessons. They are keen to play a full part and show real appreciation for each other's efforts. In many lessons pupils displayed high levels of concentration and the ability to generate their own pace. Pupils in Year 2, who went off to a music lesson between two short numeracy lessons, returned without any fuss and picked up exactly where they had left off with renewed vigour.
8. Pupils of all abilities do well. Those with special educational needs are supported effectively and make good progress. Pupils with particular aptitudes are encouraged to develop their talents in subjects such as art, drama, music and sports. Higher attaining pupils are given activities that stretch them in lessons and the daily challenge is a feature in many classes and much enjoyed by pupils. In this school, boys as well as girls want to do well and achieve at the same high level, unlike boys nationally.
9. Although many teachers explain each lesson's learning targets clearly to their pupils, this is not common practice in every class. Most teachers do not provide written comments that are sufficiently analytical to enable pupils to recognise why their work is good or what they need to do in order to move forward. As a consequence, pupils are not skilled in evaluating their own work, even though they have developed good critical thinking skills and many are capable of identifying how they can improve.
10. Margaret Roper is not a hot house of learning but a place where children are encouraged to learn in partnership. Teachers are consistent in their approach and they enthuse children with their own love of learning. Lively expositions arouse children's curiosity, such as the teacher who prepared the class for the story of Pandora's Box by leaving a box with a notice 'Do not touch' on her desk all morning! At the same time teachers instil in pupils an understanding that learning is something that combines both hard work and fun. This is achieved through setting clear and consistent standards of behaviour, approaches to work and presentation.

Pupils make good progress and achieve very good standards across a wide range of subjects because of the rich and well-planned curriculum.

11. When children join the school in the year in which they are five, their attainment is above average both for Croydon and when compared with children across the country. At the age of seven, pupils achieve well above average standards in reading and mathematics, and above average standards in writing. Pupils do not make the same progress in writing at Key Stage 1 as they do in reading and mathematics. Standards are average when compared with similar schools for writing because no pupil attained level 3 in 1999 and only 31 per cent attained level 2A. The school recognises that it has marked papers too stringently in the past and believes that teachers now have a better understanding of how to judge the level of pupils' work accurately. Through more rigorous assessment of test results and improved monitoring of standards the school has identified the need to improve the quality of creative writing.
12. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of eleven, they achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics and science when compared with the national average. When compared with similar schools, pupils achieve well above average standards in English and above average standards in maths and science. In line with the national picture, girls outperform boys in English and the converse is true in maths. However, the difference in both cases is less than a term and not

at all significant. Boys do much better than other boys nationally at both key stages. A minority of boys in Years 5 and 6 move every year to the independent sector, which may explain why results in mathematics and science are not quite as high.

13. Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school and very good progress in Years 5 and 6, where teachers are particularly skilled in drawing threads together from a number of subjects and enabling pupils to achieve high standards in applying their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Gifted and talented pupils are challenged to achieve high standards through effective identification and well-planned provision. Boys continue to achieve well throughout the school and do not adopt a negative attitude to high achievement, responding well to a challenging curriculum that provides them with many opportunities to get 'hands on'.
14. The stimulating curriculum, and the ways in which teachers actively involve pupils in experiencing many aspects at first hand, provides a very good vehicle for developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. This is a real strength of the school and by the time pupils move on to secondary school, they express themselves confidently, expressively and lucidly, using a very wide range of vocabulary and with a keen sense of audience and purpose.
15. Not only do pupils make good progress in the core subjects, they also attain well above average standards in many other subjects. Improved curriculum planning which is implemented with flair and imagination, the introduction of schemes of work which provide clear guidance to teachers, and the school's commitment to provide a wide range of enriching experiences are together a force for improvement. In music pupils achieve well above national expectations in the quality of their singing and playing because of the excellent teaching and the many opportunities they have to perform and appreciate a range of music.
16. The school avails itself of an adjacent pool and swimming is taught to all pupils from Key Stage 1, although this is not a statutory requirement. As a result, pupils in Year 2 achieve very high standards for their age and many have almost attained the levels expected of eleven-year-olds. Standards in history exceed national expectations. Teachers place great emphasis on the development of historical skills. Through thorough planning and preparation, they provide pupils with very good insights into cause and effect, and similarity and difference. Pupils have a well-developed sense of chronology and a keen sense of what it was like to have lived in Shakespeare's England, in Ancient Greece and during the period of the Second World War.
17. Visits to an impressive number of museums, art galleries, theatres and concert halls, such as to the Globe Theatre, the Imperial war Museum and the Barbican Concert Hall bring learning into vivid relief. The chance to spend three days at the Earl of Sandwich's ancestral home, dressed as a member of a Victorian household, and to stay in role in order to get a real feel for what life was like at the time has been used very effectively by the school for the last four years.

Pupils love coming to school; their behaviour, relationships and personal development are excellent because the school is committed to educating the heart of the child as well as the mind.

18. The school's mission statement is the bedrock on which all other achievements are securely founded. It states that 'each child in our school is valued and encouraged to achieve human wholeness – spiritually, morally, emotionally and academically, in a happy, secure Christian environment'. This is carefully cultivated in partnership with parents and the Church. Thoughtful and thorough planning ensures that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is nurtured in lessons and in all other aspects of school life.
19. Inspectors were fortunate to make a preliminary visit on World Book Day when every pupil and members of staff were dressed as characters from Roald Dahl books. It was obvious to visitors new to the school that, within a palpable family atmosphere, all children are expected to put a great deal of effort into everything they do and to derive as much enjoyment as possible. Pupils from Year 6, who took inspectors on a guided tour, showed great pride in their school, were very

knowledgeable about the organisation of the curriculum and were well known to the younger pupils to whom they were kind and considerate.

20. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was judged to be excellent overall. The headteacher is a quiet but effective role model in establishing a purposeful, yet relaxed, learning environment. Teachers and support staff show impressive consistency in their expectations of behaviour and the way in which they ensure that pupils develop very good self-discipline by developing strong moral values. Within this solid framework, pupils are encouraged to behave naturally and with thought to others, and to show initiative in a number of different ways.
21. A perfect example of this is the school's current initiative to raise funds for the children in Mozambique who are suffering as a result of the devastating floods. Teachers made reference to the situation in assemblies and lessons, where it was appropriate, so that pupils of all ages began to understand the impact the floods have had on the lives of children like themselves. They have been encouraged to bring in 10p to purchase a raindrop and to consider other ways of raising money. Each class devised and organised events to raise money in their own time. This led to the children in the reception class inviting other year groups to visit their Millennium Dome for a small admission charge. Other fund raising activities included the raffling of cakes baked by pupils, a sponsored run and the donating of possessions for raffling by pupils.
22. An important feature of lessons was the emphasis teachers put on encouraging pupils to think. In a history topic on evacuees, the teacher expected pupils in Year 3 to begin to challenge stereotypes and to understand that there could be more than one interpretation of events. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 were challenged to bring reason and logic to their science and mathematics investigations. Younger pupils in Year 2 were helped to understand the need for economy and story telling that lay behind the American settlers' patchwork quilts as they applied their understanding of tessellating shapes to a creative activity. These lessons involved extensive planning and preparation and imaginative use of resources. Pupils' own suggestions were actively sought and, as a result, pupils became active partners in learning.
23. The school has very good procedures in place to ensure all aspects of pupils' support, guidance and welfare are planned for. All adults in the school make a positive contribution to the children's well being. The school's procedures for child protection are excellent. The school has made very good strides in monitoring academic performance. There are improved procedures in place for tracking individuals in English, mathematics and science. This now enables teachers to set individual targets for all pupils and to involve the oldest pupils formally in the process through conferencing. However, there is no formal monitoring or recording of pupils' progress in foundation subjects and this leads to imprecise reporting to parents and is an area which the school intends to develop. The religious education programme 'Here I am' is used effectively to monitor pupils' personal development and this aspect of pupils' development is reported to parents annually along with their attitudes to work.
24. When the pupils leave the school they are well-rounded individuals because of the school's high quality planning and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development.

The breadth of the curriculum and provision of a wealth of valuable experiences result in learning of depth and quality for children of all ages.

25. Although the school pays very good attention to the continuous development of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, this has not been at the expense of other subjects. The curriculum is very broad, well-balanced and very relevant to the needs of all pupils, whatever their interests, talents and aptitudes. Pupils are stimulated by a wealth of experiences across a wide range of subjects. There is excellent enrichment to the planned curriculum through very well chosen visits and visitors.

26. This does not come about by accident. It is the result of very good whole school curriculum planning and a shared understanding of what makes learning and teaching effective. Very good curriculum leadership and management ensures that learning opportunities build on one another as pupils move through the school and that they can make connections between past and present learning by applying their knowledge and understanding in meaningful contexts. Although skills are generally planned for in a progressive way with reference to the National Curriculum programmes of study, the school has not developed a map of cross-referenced skills. This can mean, for example, that from time to time pupils may be required to apply a mathematical skill in science or geography before they have consolidated their understanding.
27. The school has a long and developing tradition for its work in the creative arts. From the time they start school pupils have opportunities to visit art galleries, to listen to professional musicians, to attend performances by theatre groups and to work with authors and illustrators. They also have regular opportunities to perform themselves and to discover their individual creative potential. The school chooses to employ a specialist music teacher and a number of peripatetic music teachers who provide individual tuition for pupils who play a range of instruments. This has not only led to higher than expected standards in choral singing and in instrumental work, but the school is regularly commended in competitions and has accompanied the Royal Philharmonic. This year pupils in Year 6 worked with professional actors to develop their own production of Twelfth Night and in doing so learned much about the art of stage craft as well as gaining insights into the life and times of Shakespeare. Another aspect of the school's emphasis on the Arts is the opportunity that pupils have to work with professional dancers over a period of six days, culminating in a high quality performance. Boys and girls are equally involved in developing their skills in this area of the curriculum.
28. Extra-curricular activities for older pupils are very good. A very wide range of activities takes place after school and at lunchtime for children in Year 4 and above. Pupils in Year 6 develop their European awareness through spending a week in Belgium and the The Netherlands, whilst pupils in Year 5 go back in time during a spell as Victorian children in Dorset. The school ensures that sporting aims are clearly spelled out in the development plan. Pupils participate in a number of competitions with schools in Croydon, with other Catholic schools, and in the County of Surrey at a higher level of competition. Pupils chalk up success regularly in cross-country, football, netball and swimming. Equality of opportunity and access is very good for boys and girls.
29. Younger pupils learn to swim when they start in the reception class and regular swimming lessons throughout the school lead to very high standards by the time pupils leave the school. Although there are no clubs for the youngest pupils to join, they have many good opportunities to study subjects at first hand. Over the last eighteen months they have made visits to places as diverse as Purley town centre, the National Gallery, the Ragged School Museum, the local sorting office and bus depot, the flight simulator at Gatwick airport and Bough Beach reservoir.
30. These visits are an integral part of the planned curriculum and result in pupils acquiring a wide general knowledge, producing work of depth and quality, and attaining literacy and numeracy skills that are well above average. When asked how they would market the school to other children, pupils in Year 6 singled out the way in which they are enabled to achieve high standards in a wide range of subjects.

The headteacher, staff and governors work together very effectively to ensure that everything the school does puts its pupils and their achievements first.

31. The headteacher has a strong sense of purpose and clear vision for the development of the school. The school benefits from the very effective working partnership he and the deputy have established since her appointment, nearly two years ago. The headteacher also brings out the very best in the staff team through genuine consultation and effective delegation, a strength that is recognised and valued by the governing body. All staff are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. They are very hardworking, committed to improving their practice through continuous professional

development, and give of their time unstintingly to organise extra-curricular activities for pupils and to participate in curriculum evenings and fundraising events.

32. Senior managers are aware of the school's strengths and are not afraid to address its weaknesses. There is strong determination to avoid complacency and to make things even better. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not as effective as they could be. The school has rightly emphasised the need for the English and mathematics co-ordinators to devote time to monitoring the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and their impact on standards. However, the headteacher and deputy do not monitor the work of teachers often enough to ensure that there is a high level of consistency and that best practice is shared.
33. Governors are actively involved in many aspects of school life and have a clear picture of the school's development. At the time of the last inspection, the governing body's role in the curriculum and in the evaluation of whole school priorities was underdeveloped. This key issue has been addressed thoroughly and effectively. Governors take their responsibilities towards children, parents and staff very seriously. Individual governors have established a closer working relationship with key staff since the last inspection and have taken active steps to learn as much as they can about the changes to the curriculum brought about by national and local initiatives. Governors regularly liaise with curriculum co-ordinators and observe lessons in order to monitor the implementation of policies and to get a better understanding of what makes teaching and learning effective. As a result of this better understanding, they are not only supportive of the school but, importantly, critical friends who are not afraid to ask challenging questions or to grasp nettles.
34. The school puts finance, staff, time, accommodation and learning resources to very good effect. Although many class sizes are quite large, teachers make very good use of the generous space available and, through effective planning, ensure that the needs of pupils of different interests and attainment are catered for well. Very thorough planning and preparation is the key. The way in which teachers work in close collaboration with support staff and other teachers means that no time is wasted and that resources are exploited to the full for the pupils' benefit. The school applies the principles of best value well, regularly comparing costs and standards, as well as challenging themselves to justify the use of resources. However, although the school consults with parents and pupils in many informal situations, it has not established formal mechanisms to consult on major decisions, such as a school council for pupils and parental questionnaires.
35. The rate of improvement has been far greater than expected because the school has kept its eye on the ball, continuing to aim for higher standards through improvements in target setting and the quality of teaching, assessment and planning. At the same time, the headteacher, staff and governors have never lost sight of the needs of their principal customers – the children. They remain actively committed to providing a broad curriculum of the highest quality, which provides challenge and enjoyment in equal measure. In so doing they stand steadfast in their belief that 'the future of humanity lies in the hands of those strong enough to provide the young with reasons for living'.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Communication could be better with parents, although they play an active part in the life of the school and in supporting their children's learning.

36. Parents are actively involved in many aspects of school life. A group of parents makes a weekly commitment to reading workshops in the reception class and in Years 1, 2 and 3, others work in the library caring for the stock and enabling pupils to change their books on a regular basis. A parent also runs The Red House Book club. These contributions have added to pupils' enjoyment in reading and helped them to acquire good reading habits. Many other parents accompany class visits, which enables the school to provide a wealth of first-hand experiences for pupils in every

class.

37. Parents also share their talents, interests, time and transport to provide pupils with access to a wide range of activities, such as sports training and competitions, assistance at the design and technology club, help with lighting for the school play and sewing the millennium tapestries. Others share their experience of the world of work with pupils, for example, a dentist, school nurse and author. Many others are involved in running or supporting a myriad of events organised by the parent-teacher association. These provide opportunities for parents and staff to communicate on an informal basis as well as raising large sums of money to buy additional resources for the pupils, such as providing drama-dance workshop sessions leading to a school production. Parents regularly attend class services and holy festivals throughout the year.
38. Parents and grandparents show equal commitment to supporting their children's learning at home, whether by reading with them at home or enabling their children to contribute precious family objects to classroom displays that bring work on their topic alive. Recently, some grandparents have taken part in the pupils' research project on the 1940's by responding to questions, such as happened in Year 3 when pupils learned about the Second World War through the eyes of evacuees and those who shared their homes.
39. The school provides good quality information to parents. The prospectus gives a clear picture of the school, its organisation and curriculum in an attractive format that demonstrates effectively that children are at the heart of all it does. The governors' annual report to parents is written in a friendly and readable style, providing all the required information to parents, emphasising the importance of strong links with parents and acknowledging warmly the contribution that parents make. Regular newsletters from class teachers, a reading handbook and curriculum workshops keep parents abreast of national, local and school developments, as well as providing clear guidance on what their children will be learning each term.
40. The quality of pupils' annual reports to parents is variable, although satisfactory overall. They contain a great deal of information and some are explicit, easy to follow and contain targets, which are quantifiable. Others are unhelpful because they give the pupil nothing to aim for, such as 'continue with the effort made with creative English to consolidate the good level he has achieved'. The school has recently introduced target sheets, which are negotiated annually with all pupils. These are written in February but have not been incorporated into the annual reports. At the parents' meeting, several people expressed the view that these provided useful information and guidance but indicated that termly targets would be even more helpful. A significant minority expressed the view that they receive insufficient details about their child's standards and the progress they make. Reports do not tell parents whether their children are working above, at, or below the expected level for their age in any subject.
41. Although the school has worked very hard to provide a wide range of good quality information, there are no formal mechanisms for seeking parents' views. Educational initiatives come at such a pace that it is all too easy for the governors and staff to spend most of their time ensuring that everything has been implemented. The school concentrates on explaining to parents what it is planning to do, without taking sufficient time to explain to them why certain decisions have been taken. The school has held workshops for parents in literacy and numeracy which go some way to meeting this need, but not far enough.
42. Seventeen per cent of the 60 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they did not feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. Although this is only considered to be a significant issue if 20 per cent of parents indicate concern, it is none the less an indication that things could be better. Evidence was also provided to inspectors by a small minority of parents who responded that the school did not address their concerns in a helpful and professional manner. Evidence was also provided that indicated there is a small minority of parents who were both rude and unreasonable in views they expressed and the way in which they communicated them. The LEA has only upheld one complaint, concerned with the time of admission. Although 78 per cent of parents feel that they would be comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem and 83 per cent believe the school works

closely with parents, there is room for improvement on the part of the school and a small minority of parents.

43. The school does not regularly ask parents or pupils what the school does well and what it could do better. Actively seeking views would enable staff and governors to receive information from as many people as possible and to establish how strongly parents feel on any issue. The school is not good at celebrating its successes with parents and may lay itself open to unnecessary criticism at times because of this.

Targets in the development plan are not clear enough and do not enable the school to measure improvement or evaluate the effectiveness of decisions

44. Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to develop the process of whole school planning by identifying key priorities and by implementing a further tier of detailed curriculum action plans for all subjects and for important aspects such as assessment, special educational needs and the library. These provide a route map for maintaining quality and breadth within the curriculum.
45. The governing body has established effective strategies for keeping abreast of national initiatives and considering their impact at school level. Individual governors have responsibility for a subject and meet with the co-ordinator on a regular basis. Each co-ordinator submits a termly report to the governing body, outlining developments. Each term one co-ordinator provides a briefing to the governing body. These measures have the potential to give the governing body a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a clear grasp of how effectively resources are being used.
46. However, although the whole school development plan is more focused on raising standards, and targets are more concerned with pupil achievement than they were, the criteria are not usually specific enough to enable teachers and governors to monitor the implementation of initiatives or to measure success in meeting the targets.
47. Governors and staff have no problem with monitoring the extent to which individual actions have been completed within the planned time. It is much more difficult for them to measure how effective actions have been if criteria are not precise enough, such as 'involvement in events' or 'all documents in place'. Even more important is the need to ensure that it is possible for governors and key staff to gauge what impact each initiative has had on pupils' achievement. If targets were more specific, the headteacher and co-ordinators would be better able to produce more evaluative reports to governors, and governors would be in a much better position to judge whether they had spent the school's money wisely.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to sustain the present high standards and to ensure that the headteacher, key staff and governors become even more rigorous in checking how effective their actions have been, the school should

Improve communication with parents by: -

- introducing formal mechanisms for taking the views of all parents into account
- providing more specific information to parents in pupils' annual reports to explain how well their children are achieving

Improve school development planning, monitoring and evaluation by: -

- establishing specific, measurable targets in the school development plan
- further developing systems for co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate standards, teaching and learning
- ensuring that senior managers regularly monitor classroom practice so that high standards are maintained, best practice is shared and areas for improvement are addressed

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
12.5	41.5	37.5	8.5	0	0	0

The table gives 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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	226
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	35

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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999(98)	15(13)	17(18)	32(31)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14 (12)	13 (12)	15 (13)
	Girls	16 (16)	16 (16)	16 (18)
	Total	30 (28)	29 (28)	31 (31)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (90)	91 (100)	97 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14 (12)	15 (13)	15 (13)
	Girls	16 (17)	16 (18)	16 (18)
	Total	39(29)	31 (31)	31 (31)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94(92)	94(100)	97(100)
	National	82 (80)	86(84)	87(80)

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
	1999(98)	16(11)	17(23)	33(34)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15 (10)	16 (10)	16 (10)
	Girls	17 (22)	15 (19)	17 (21)
	Total	32 (32)	31 (29)	33 (31)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (94)	94 (85)	100 (91)
	National	69 (65)	68 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15 (10)	16 (11)	16 (10)
	Girls	17 (22)	15 (19)	17 (21)
	Total	32 (32)	31 (30)	33 (31)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (91)	94(88)	100 (97)
	National	67 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black-Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	84
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.4
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Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.1:1
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	2.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85

	£
Total income	292,735
Total expenditure	322,786
Expenditure per pupil	2242
Balance brought forward from previous year	95,007
Balance carried forward to next year	64,956

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	227
Number of questionnaires returned	140

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	26	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	38	5	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	36	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	43	6	1	1
The teaching is good.	49	43	6	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	41	19	2	0

I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.

The school works closely with parents.

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

51	27	10	7	1
62	37	1	0	1
38	45	12	4	0
49	39	9	1	1
59	39	1	1	1
34	34	18	6	6

Other issues raised by parents

The inconsistency in the approach of different teachers and support staff

The inconsistency in the quality of teaching

The way in which the school supports children with special educational needs

The poor state of the school playground