

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST BERNADETTE RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Long Lane, Hillingdon

Local education authority area: Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102423

Headteacher: Mr. M. P. McDermott

Reporting inspector: Mrs. E.B. Camplin  
3586

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2001

Inspection number: 183950  
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 category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	160 Long Lane Hillingdon Middlesex
Postcode:	UB10 0EH
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. M. Simpson
Date of previous inspection:	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 1998

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School is situated in the London Borough of Hillingdon and is part of the Westminster Diocese. It is a large school, with 407 pupils currently on roll. The number has increased by 45 since the last inspection in 1998. The nursery has 52 part-time children and there is a newly established reception class of 19 pupils. During the past three years, the results of assessment tasks in early literacy and numeracy skills undertaken by children in their first term of full-time education have been above average, compared with other similar schools in Hillingdon. There is no national comparative data. There are 79 pupils on the register of special educational needs and six have statements for significant physical or multi-sensory learning impairment. The overall percentages are both broadly in line with the national average for primary schools. Children are drawn from a wide geographical area and their backgrounds are ethnically diverse, representing 12 different home languages. Twenty-three pupils are bilingual and six are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils' family, social and economic circumstances are broad and, when compared with most schools nationally, are relatively favourable. Statutory assessment results are compared with the band of other schools that, like St Bernadette's, have eight per cent or fewer pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very effective school with a continuing profile of improvement. Standards are high, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the age of eleven. They stem from impressive leadership, rigorous management and teaching and learning of consistently very good quality. Governors are providing very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- It fosters an interest in learning and has high academic standards. By the time pupils leave the school they achieve very well in core subjects compared with all schools nationally and with those in similar contexts.
- It caters sensitively for pupils, so that they quickly learn to enjoy school, behave very well and form mutually supportive relationships of exceptional quality.
- Its Catholic ethos is highly developed and benefits all aspects of school life.
- It has a headteacher whose inspirational and determined leadership and management skills have enabled the school to make rapid gains in effectiveness in recent years.
- The school functions very smoothly owing to the commitment, shared enthusiasm and loyalty of a united staff team and governing body.

#### **What could be improved**

- Teaching and learning at the newly established Foundation Stage, in line with the action already proposed in the School Development Plan.
- The consistency with which teachers maximise the potential of the thorough assessment policy so that pupils, teachers and parents establish a clearer understanding of pupils' progress and future learning targets.
- The school could extend further the range of opportunities for pupils to exercise initiative and independence in their learning, and increase their awareness of cultural diversity.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made impressive progress since it was placed in special measures in 1997. It has sustained good year on year improvement since the last inspection in 1998. The headteacher, staff and governors have rigorously addressed the key issues for improvement. Higher attaining pupils no longer underachieve in writing, spelling and mathematics. The majority of lessons are now good, or better, and systems for checking the effectiveness of teaching work very well.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	A*	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	B	A	A	A

**Key**

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

Pupils attain very high standards in statutory tests at Year 6 especially in English. Only five per cent of primary schools nationally achieved such consistently high standards in core subjects in the year 2000. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds perform very well. The trend in improvement in performance is better than in most schools, because the targets the school has set have been rigorous but attainable. Current work at both key stages is consistent with the well above average standards achieved in statutory assessment tests in the three core subjects. Children under five also attain above the national expectation for their age. Six to eleven year olds achieve close to capacity in a high percentage of lessons and this is reflected in their past work. At the Foundation Stage there is potential for children to improve upon their sound rate of progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have particularly impressive attitudes to their work and are determined to meet the school's expectations of them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are thoughtful and responsive in their oral exchanges with each other and adults. Their behaviour is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' strong sense of mutual responsibility, and care for each other, is based on happy and trusting relationships. They exercise initiative when appropriate opportunities are presented to them.
Attendance	Satisfactory trend over past three years. Attendance in the last reporting year was just below, and unauthorised absence above, the national average.

Governors have appealed to parents to support the school in its efforts to restore attendance to the above average levels achieved in 1998 and 1999. Extended holidays and rigorous adherence to school policy for recording late arrivals account for the deterioration in the school's recorded performance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 6 years	aged 6-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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.*

Teaching throughout the school is very good, with some exemplary practice in English at Year 4. There is very effective teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. Most science lessons are also of high quality and mathematics lessons are consistently good or better at Key Stages 1 and 2. At the Foundation Stage teaching, though satisfactory, is not of the same high quality. This is because confidence in managing the new curricular framework has yet to be developed and activities do not always fully match children's needs. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language and for those on the register of special educational needs enables them to make very good progress. The most able pupils are learning at an increasingly good rate. This is as a result of effective teaching in groups set according to prior attainment and the opportunity to join some science lessons at a local high school; 100 per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better and 36 per cent was very good or better.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL



<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Curricular provision is good. Short-term planning for core subjects and information and communication technology is of high quality, especially at Key Stage 2. It is not as detailed in remaining subjects and in promoting the areas of learning for children of nursery and reception age.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Effectively planned and organised. Pupils have the same access to the curriculum as their peers and make very good progress in gaining confidence and skills.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good. The school works hard to support and encourage pupils with a different mother tongue rapidly to acquire competence in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Much of the practice is very effective, particularly in enabling pupils to develop spiritually, morally and socially. Cultural development is sound but the school could do more to explain and celebrate the diversity of culture and beliefs represented in the modern world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The good quality of provision for pupils' health and welfare has been sustained since the previous inspection. All staff share the same strong commitment to understand and meet pupils' needs and aspirations. Plans to monitor and accelerate the impact of new assessment procedures are appropriate and should be sustained.

#### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides leadership and management of very high quality. He inspires all staff, and particularly the deputy headteacher and senior management team, to work very effectively together.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body manages its statutory responsibilities very well. Members are supportive and highly committed to fulfilling their role as critical friends.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has very effective procedures for checking how well pupils are performing and evaluating the impact of teaching on learning.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are carefully managed and allocated to areas of greatest need. The principles of best value are clearly understood and demonstrated.

The School Development Plan is a useful tool for communicating a shared vision for school improvement over the next three years. It could be enhanced by the inclusion of clearer success criteria in order to strengthen provision for cultural development and to raise further the quality of teaching, especially at the Foundation Stage.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They appreciate the welcoming atmosphere and are pleased that children enjoy school so much.</li> <li>• They are highly satisfied with standards achieved.</li> <li>• They value the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and find staff very committed and approachable.</li> <li>• They think behaviour is very good.</li> <li>• They are delighted with improvements to the environment.</li> <li>• They are very impressed by the improvement in the school in recent years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minority think there is too much homework. Other parents think it lacks sufficient challenge for the more able pupils.</li> <li>• Some parents would appreciate more advice about how to help with homework.</li> <li>• A minority who returned questionnaires is dissatisfied with the range of extra-curricular opportunities.</li> </ul>

Twenty parents attended the Parents' Meeting and 99 questionnaires were returned. The inspection team agrees with parents' views about the strengths of the school. It judged homework to be satisfactory, or better, as an aid to consolidating learning. Inspectors support the constructively critical view of the quality of information about how to help with homework. They also conclude that the school should provide parents with a more comprehensive explanation of the sound quality and reasonable range of its extra-curricular activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**It fosters an interest in learning and has high academic standards. By the time pupils leave the school they achieve very well in core subjects compared with all schools nationally and with those in similar contexts.**

1. The school experienced regular monitoring visits from Her Majesty's Inspectors during the period from 1996 to 1998. On each occasion teachers responded positively to constructive feedback on the quality of their teaching. They have succeeded in almost doubling the percentage of good or better teaching since the last inspection. This rapid improvement is partly the result of devising clear and relevant curricular policies, more detailed and up-to-date schemes of work and improved learning resources. Most of all, it is the consequence of effective lesson planning and high expectations of pupils. Teachers are committed to fostering an interest in learning that will prepare pupils very well for the next stage of education.
2. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, and the programmes of study for science, have been embraced with enthusiasm at both key stages. Teachers focus strongly on developing communication, problem-solving and reasoning skills, and the ability to calculate. They are effective in the way they use questions to probe understanding. Equally, the good quality of instructions, explanations to clarify misconceptions, and new information, constantly reinforces pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Often an engaging, punchy style successfully enthuses children and prompts them to make considerable intellectual effort.
3. Pertinent examples of very good, even excellent, teaching, occurred in English lessons at both key stages. In two separate junior classes and a Year 2 class there were lively discussions about different kinds of texts that in all cases led to some imaginative, well-structured writing. One junior class lesson explored literal and figurative language based on the poem 'The Highwayman'. In the second lesson, junior pupils explored the use of extravagant vocabulary from a text called 'Metal Miss'. At Year 2 pupils progressed naturally and productively from oral discussion about the rhyme 'Whatever the Weather' to drafting poetry and prose in a similar genre. In all three lessons, pupils made very good use of the original texts and thesauruses. They achieved high standards, fully consistent with the quality noted in their previous written work.
4. The setting of the older pupils enables teachers to have high expectations in mathematics. The top Year 6 group was involved in data handling activities where the pupils were productive and made good progress with activities on mean, median, mode, and range. Different methods of calculating these values were discussed and the pupils applied them successfully, using precise mathematical vocabulary. Year 5 used a variety of methods that they capably explained to solve mentally word problems such as "What is one fifth of 30?" Teachers at Key Stage 2 were seen to ensure that work was well matched to pupils' abilities, even within the different settings. This enables the pupils to make good or better progress.
5. Science is popular with pupils throughout the school and the lessons observed quickly demonstrated why pupils are so keen on the subject. The emphasis is on challenging practical experience and investigations. Pupils are managed sensitively and firmly so that as they get older they learn with increasing effectiveness to concentrate, collaborate and capitalise on learning time.

Year 1 pupils showed they had a good grasp of features that help them to distinguish between objects made from a variety of materials including wood, plastic and metal. Their ability to sort and classify everyday objects from the classroom was above expectation for their age. In a unit of work on electricity Year 5 pupils showed a mature approach to constructing games using a range of different components. They were accomplished in their ability to make constructive use of their own design plans, to test, evaluate and refine their group work project.

6. In all the good or better lessons, such as those exemplified, the needs of pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are managed very well. Able pupils' needs are also increasingly well met. Teaching of such consistently good quality has reaped high rewards for the school in statutory assessment tests at both key stages. For two consecutive years, pupils at Key Stage 1 have achieved well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Year 6 pupils have performed even better, obtaining such high results in English they were placed in the top five per cent of schools nationally, owing to improved standards of spelling and writing. Their overall tally of average points scored in the three core subjects also places them in the top five per cent compared with all schools and well above average for schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals. These results speak for themselves in communicating just how hard teachers and pupils have worked.

**It caters sensitively for pupils, so that they quickly learn to enjoy school, behave very well and form mutually supportive relationships of exceptional quality.**

7. St Bernadette's behaviour policy has as one of its stated aims that the school should 'enhance the caring atmosphere, one which values each person as special'. From the nursery to their final year, pupils benefit from the vigilance of staff in finding many positive ways to promote this aim successfully.
8. When children start school, parents are invited to share with the nursery staff personal information about their children. In this way the nursery team gain an early understanding of children's likes, dislikes and any fears or special needs they may have. Teachers encourage parents to keep in frequent touch and help in the nursery when they can. This practice means that a close partnership with parents begins early in children's school life and leads to very good relationships with children and their families.
9. In such a large school, staff realise the importance of a shared and consistent approach to managing behaviour and pupils' personal development. They have a well thought through policy for behaviour and anti-bullying that children, as well as staff, have helped to devise. For example, pupils establish a few class rules at the start of each year and are proud of the way they work. The whole school community knows, understands and supports behavioural expectations. The headteacher, teachers and other members of the staff team are excellent role models for pupils in the way they respond to each other and to pupils. They listen to each other, demonstrating courtesy and interest. When asked about why they enjoy school, pupils responded that it is because everyone is so friendly that there is rarely any anti-social behaviour or bullying. Parents, staff and pupils consider that children are nearly always kind, considerate, polite and honest. Occasionally, pupils are upset by other children's behaviour towards them. However, they feel confident to share their feelings with adults.

A pupil confided to an inspector her satisfaction that the immediate action taken by the school quickly resolved her problem. It is clear that parents are involved from an early stage in response to behavioural difficulties. Partnership with them, good use of counselling skills and a spirit of forgiveness mean that unkind incidents are not allowed to fester or multiply.

10. Inspectors found that pupils smile a lot and are open and friendly. Their good manners are natural, and include greeting visitors cheerfully, spontaneously moving aside for an adult to pass along a corridor, or providing a chair at assembly. It was noticeable that peer friendships do not just rely on relationships formed in class groups. The school's pen-pal and mentoring systems enable junior pupils to bond with children from infant classes. Older children also help with lunchtime activities such as reading to younger ones or teaching them to play board games. The way pupils are organised is flexible and prevents any idea that pupils can only work habitually within the same grouping. There is very effective use of the computer suite, for example, where pupils work with a different partner. In science lessons mixed ability groups work very well as children provide each other with leadership and mutual support.
11. There is overwhelming evidence that teachers take every opportunity they can to develop pupils' ability to share and work constructively together. The exceptional quality of pupil and adult relationships is a significant strength of the school.

### **The Catholic ethos is highly developed and benefits all aspects of school life.**

12. The school's Christian atmosphere is a uniting force that a visitor senses very quickly when participating in the day's activities and observing the school as a community. The mission statement tries to communicate the shared ethos by summarising it as placing Jesus Christ at the centre of everything that happens at school. The home/school agreement captures its essence in perhaps more accessible terms. It sees its first responsibility as to provide a friendly welcome for each child and a secure, stimulating, Christian environment in which to learn and make good progress. It describes the school promise to demonstrate a shared faith by the way people live and worship at the school.
13. These aims are taken very seriously by everyone who works at the school. Parents are unanimous in their praise for the welcome they receive when they first visit the school. They habitually feel the same warmth whenever they come into contact with the headteacher, staff and governors. They are very proud of their school.
14. One has only to attend a whole school assembly to understand why. The happy atmosphere, shared conviction and highly positive attitudes of the pupils are clearly seen and felt. The headteacher is inspirational. He commands the central stage, showing his knowledge and understanding of the children in each class. He draws them into discussion and prayer in an inclusive, enthusiastic way that children find infectious. There is always a forest of eager hands shooting up when he asks questions. His chosen theme 'Stars' was developed sensitively and well. There were highly appropriate links between the morals of Bible stories and pupils' everyday experiences and interests. On these occasions songs of praise are sung confidently, tunefully, with spirit and enjoyment. Pupils listen carefully and are reflective in their response to music. They respect the way an extract from Chopin, for example, is used to encourage a calm, controlled entry and exit to and from the hall.
15. Many school routines and activities are used to cement the link between assembly religious themes and classwork. A prayer unites children at the end of every school session. Pupils often write prayers and their own versions of Bible stories. One such example is from a pupil with quite severe special educational needs whose poem shows how reflection on his faith helps him prepare for his move to secondary school. Pupils sometimes discuss and compare their customs and celebrations in the context of different faith practices. There is a good example in one classroom of a Muslim pupil's experience of a pilgrimage. The use of a house points system enables teachers to

reward pupils for observing the school's moral code. The system reinforces the children's commitment to care for people, the environment and property. Special certificates are awarded for both individual and group achievements. The use of circle-time and a weekly meeting for Year 6 are also effective means for encouraging children to share ideas and feelings and pose solutions to problems.

16. Overall, the school's policies and practices result in high standards of moral, social and spiritual development.

**It has a headteacher whose inspirational and determined leadership and management skills have enabled the school to make rapid gains in effectiveness in recent years.**

17. Governors appointed the current headteacher in 1997. They sought someone with effective team-building skills and a thorough knowledge of management systems and procedures. They were determined that the school should quickly be removed from special measures. They recognised that the governing body and staff needed a leader who could foster a collaborative approach to school development, someone who could communicate effectively and provide high quality professional support and encouragement.
18. The headteacher fulfils all these requirements and his high expectations for the school resulted in the school being removed from special measures after just two school terms. He now aspires to even higher academic and behavioural standards than those currently achieved, even though they are already very good. He shares his aspirations readily with governors, staff, parents and pupils and gains their full support. Their shared vision is well communicated in school policies, the prospectus and the School Development Plan. The headteacher ensures that the plan for improvement is rigorous and stems from the key issues identified in 1998. These focus on continuing to raise standards by higher attaining pupils, on improvements in the quality of teaching, and on the strengthening of systems for monitoring teachers' performance.
19. A very effective approach to setting targets has been developed. It is based on an analysis of strengths and relative weaknesses in statutory assessment results. The attainment of different groups of pupils, including boys and girls, and pupils of different ethnic backgrounds, is analysed. Any differences that are identified from gaps in either provision or teachers' expertise are noted and effective action is taken immediately. Examples are the successful drive towards encouraging a greater interest in reading and writing amongst boys so that the gap between the results at Level 3 of seven year old boys and those of girls can be reduced. Fiction and non-fiction books have been purchased that reflect boys' interests, for example. They are consulted when determining a focus for different forms of writing. There was no evidence during the inspection of any significant difference between boys and girls in their attitudes, effort or achievement in English and literacy. The school's targets for improvement at Key Stage 1 are likely to be met this year.
20. Responsibility for managing the School Development Plan's clearly identified priorities is equitably shared. They capitalise on individual expertise and experience. A very good example of the headteacher's expertise influencing curriculum development is the way he has set up the computer suite and trained staff in the use of new technology and software. All teachers are gaining confidence in their ability to deliver whole-class lessons in a variety of subjects based on the use of computers. One such instance was a geography lesson in Year 5 on setting up a database about rivers of the world. Pupils had collected relevant information during a useful homework activity. They entered data from their individual worksheets and made a good range of entries.

21. Other examples of effective delegation are to members of the senior management team. The deputy headteacher is very effective in her management of staff in-service training, including the induction of newly appointed staff. The key stage co-ordinators have collaborated well with members of their teams to improve curricular planning at each key stage. All members of the senior management team are involved in observing and giving constructive feedback on the management and outcomes of lessons. As a result, the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and the programme for the development of information and communication technology have been carefully implemented. The co-ordination of science has also proved a challenge. Noted weaknesses in different attainment targets are being addressed. This is being achieved through support from the local authority science advisor. She has led model lessons and advised on the acquisition of more resources such as those for work on electricity and energy. The quality of all the science lessons observed reflected the positive impact recent development initiatives are having. Attendance at lessons at a high school also enables two very talented pupils to follow an advanced course of study that matches their aptitudes and knowledge.
22. As a result of sheer determination and hard work, standards of spelling, writing, mental mathematics, and use of word-processing and desktop publishing skills have accelerated quickly. The achievement of more able pupils now reflects their intellectual capacity much more than at the time of the last inspection. There has been significant improvement in the percentage of higher achievers attaining above average standards at seven and eleven years of age in the three core subjects. Notably, pupils with English as an additional language perform at advanced levels in line with their higher achieving peers in all except their writing skills, which nevertheless match national expectations.

**The school functions very smoothly owing to the commitment, shared enthusiasm and loyalty of a united staff team and governing body.**

23. A striking feature of the school is the sense of purpose all staff and governors share. It is not only teachers who have developed the curriculum and strengthened teaching practice or the quality of support for the school. All who work at and with the school enjoy their roles and responsibilities and are proud of their achievements in recent years.
24. Classroom assistants, a nursery nurse, and members of the lunchtime supervisory staff play a significant part in ensuring pupils' care and welfare in and out of lessons. Two members of the support team work closely with teachers to provide skilled help for two severely disabled pupils. One is a trained first aider and swimming instructor who is able to help with lessons at the local pool and deal with accidents when they occur. Support staff encourage a harmonious spirit of friendship and co-operation at break and lunchtimes. They are alert to hazards and supervise the use of outdoor equipment and all areas of play space well. There are very few incidents that disrupt the quality of pupils' playtime.
25. Day-to-day routines and aspects of budget management work very efficiently as a result of effective liaison between the school administrator, the headteacher and members of

the governing body. The administrator acknowledges how much job satisfaction she now enjoys because she is able to exercise initiative and deploy her many office management skills effectively. Much of the recent improvement in the attendance monitoring procedures has been initiated and implemented by her. The installation of a special telephone 'Hotline', for example, now enables parents to get through to the school quickly. Her input into managing the school budget is also considerable and highly valued by staff and governors alike.

26. Governors play a full part in the life and management of the school. The chairman provides strong and committed leadership, and all members have designated roles that capitalise on their expertise and interests. They regularly attend training to keep up to date with statutory requirements and shoulder their responsibilities very effectively. A foundation governor, for example, has had a big input into shaping and writing the policy for the special educational needs of more able pupils. The chair of the finance committee uses his local education authority work experience judiciously in helping with the management of the budget. Governors who are parents keep in constant touch with other parents and strive to keep them well informed through newsletters and informal meetings. The way the annual Governors' Report is written and the organisation of meetings to discuss it have also improved considerably and meetings are now well attended. As well as giving the headteacher and staff committed support and trust, the governors are not afraid to fulfil their role as critical friends. Their relationships with staff are so very good that frank exchanges of views and ideas about such issues as the teaching of spelling, the use of homework, and ways to extend the most able pupils, is the norm. The two groups are stimulated by the depth of discussion and by the constructive outcomes. Governors have an impressive understanding of the school and its needs, deploy its resources efficiently and effectively, and provide parents with very good value for money.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Teaching and learning at the newly established Foundation Stage, in line with the action already proposed in the School Development Plan.**

27. The school has a comprehensive plan of action for the development of effective planning at the Foundation Stage that covers provision in the nursery and reception classes. The aims and objectives reflect careful consideration of recommendations for improvement in the last inspection report and those made by members of the local education authority support service. Both teachers who work with the under-six age group are new to the experience. They are keen to learn more about how best to cater for children's needs and are facing up to their responsibilities with enthusiasm and energy. Good progress has been made with such initiatives as the development of the outdoor play area and in



extending the range of suitable resources for the teaching of numeracy and literacy skills.

28. Evidence of a better quality of provision for physical development, an aspect criticised by HMI, was demonstrated as children made good use of wheeled vehicles such as cycles and wheelbarrows. Some, happily wearing yellow safety hats, were observed spontaneously acting the part of workers on a building site, whilst others practised managing tricycles by weaving around and between plastic cones. Not all of the activity outside was quite as productive. A task involving counting footsteps up to 20 was clearly ambitious and related to the day's learning objectives. However, it was not sufficiently stimulating to make learning enjoyable or meaningful to the children. Their response was co-operative but achieved hesitantly. There was a lack of lively discussion because the only adult present was supervising this counting activity and all the outdoor play. Therefore, children made few gains in their mathematical learning. This outcome was in contrast to the response of pupils to activities with counters and worksheets, and to a bingo game inside the nursery. These activities were managed more easily and children were far more involved and interested in what they were doing.
29. In the reception class, the relationships between the teacher and children are being sensitively developed. The teacher has a quiet and supportive manner that children just admitted to full-time education find reassuring. Liaison with the classroom assistant is effective and children benefit at group-work time from being divided into groups, two of which can be directly supervised by an adult. Much of the practice is sound but sometimes the methods used do not work well, although the intentions are very good. At times explanations of learning objectives are confusing. During a literacy lesson a definition of rhyming words was not accurate, whilst in a numeracy lesson criteria for making patterns were unclear.
30. The inspection findings revealed much that is positive about current provision. It also substantiated the school's own evaluation of how it needs to improve during the terms ahead. Teachers at the Foundation Stage will continue to need support and advice to develop what is mainly sound practice to that which is good or better. They need to concentrate on improving the quality of the learning activities so that they are consistently stimulating and appropriately matched to children's differing stages of development. They will also need to develop the ways in which they evaluate the outcomes of their teaching and assess children's progress in all the areas of learning.

**The consistency with which teachers maximise the potential of the thorough assessment policy so that pupils, teachers and parents establish a clearer understanding of pupils' progress and future learning targets.**

31. The school's assessment policy was reviewed and revised by the staff team in December 2000. It contains very appropriate aims and objectives to achieve consistency in this aspect of school practice. It also links well with the separate policies for special educational needs, able pupils, and equal opportunities. It reaffirms the value of tried and tested methods such as the analysis of statutory assessment results, the use of other diagnostic tests in year groups other than Years 2 and 6, and setting small achievable targets for pupils with individual education plans. It also contains several new and potentially very useful suggestions. These are directed at improving upon the ways teachers mark and evaluate work, set targets for pupils across the ability range, and gather reliable evidence about how well pupils are learning.
32. Marking takes place regularly and comments are consistently positive in tone. The best are also helpful because they explain what children have done well or clarify how they

can remedy errors or fill gaps in understanding. Time at the end of lessons is also being used increasingly well to enable teachers to evaluate and summarise what pupils have gained from their efforts. With further practice teachers will be able to achieve greater consistency in the perceptiveness of their written comments and in the management of oral reviews of progress. Teachers could consider, for example, how they could improve upon advice about writing as happened in Year 2 where a comment was 'you could add more details'.

33. The introduction of cards containing individual targets for improvement is a very new initiative. Pupils have not yet become familiar with them. However, given time they should find them helpful, particularly when they are precise and achievable within a reasonably short timespan. Teachers at Key Stage 1 are currently better at this than their counterparts at Key Stage 2. There is a case for enabling children, especially the higher attainers, to evaluate and independently record their own conclusions about their rate of progress.
34. The inspection team identified other aspects of practice that, though sound, could be more rigorous or diagnostic. Assessment sheets for use at open evenings were rather narrowly focused on writing and number, for example, and require more reference to other attainment targets in English, mathematics, and foundation subjects. The reading record booklets that are regularly shared with home could more clearly describe what children need to practise. Parents identified a need for the purpose and outcomes of homework to be explained better to help them understand how best to encourage their children. Portfolios of work could be used more productively. For example, collated samples of work in information and communication technology demonstrate achievement but do not describe the context of the task or the teacher's views about standards attained. The use of simple assessment activities and discussion with parents at the Foundation Stage is also underdeveloped. Neither are used sufficiently at present to set goals for attainment at the end of the reception year.
35. Attention to all these features of assessment practice will improve parents' and children's understanding of how well pupils are performing.

**The school could extend further the range of opportunities for pupils to exercise initiative and independence in their learning, and increase their awareness of cultural diversity.**

36. Dialogue with the headteacher, governors and teachers quickly established that the approach to professional development and performance management is increasingly constructive and valued. The headteacher has a very clear view of what makes the difference between satisfactory, good, very good and excellent teaching. He appreciates that the very best lessons are characterised by a lively pace, good quality explanation and discussion, a blend of individual and collaborative learning tasks, and shared evaluation. He realises how much pupils gain from sometimes making their own decisions about their working methods or tasks. The headteacher was in total accord with members of the inspection team when discussing the extent to which pupils have opportunities to exercise initiative and develop independence in their learning.
37. The School Development Plan has many objectives for improvement but very few focus on specific teaching methods that develop initiative, promote independent learning, or advance skills in self-assessment. At the Foundation Stage, for example, there are none to ensure that children are taught to develop skills in tidying up and looking after their classroom resources. There is potential to improve these skills, especially in the

reception class. At the opposite end of the age range, teaching at Year 6 is exemplified by good, methodical, careful practice. However, teachers are not consistently alert to the additional value of encouraging pupils to take decisions. In an English lesson about dream sequences even the most able pupils frequently sought reassurance and guidance. "Can we be really fantastic?" some asked. At the end of the same lesson it was the teacher, and not the pupils, who made the judgements about the quality of their work. When the school has set challenging targets for improvement, it has demonstrated a proven capacity to succeed. In the drive towards excellence the school should now define clear objectives that will promote opportunities for pupils to exercise initiative and be more independent.

38. The school has a good policy for moral and social development that contains elements of school policy for cultural education too. However, teachers are not as consistent in their explicit planning for, or evaluation of, progress in cultural development as they are in the other aspects. Overall there is an inadequate emphasis on multi-culture and learning about beliefs other than Christianity in displays of pupils' work and artefacts around the school. Older pupils who are usually articulate and assured when discussing their learning lack confidence when asked about their views on other faiths, customs and beliefs. It would help the school identify its strengths and weaknesses if governors and teachers were to initiate further review of the outcomes of their policy as soon as the opportunity presents itself.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

39. The headteacher, staff and governors should now:-
- (1) Take further action to strengthen teaching at the Foundation Stage so that its quality rises to that of the best practice in the school. (*paragraph 30*)
  - (2) Continue with the current initiatives to:
    - (a) strengthen the methods used to assess pupils' work and progress;
    - (b) enable pupils to evaluate how well they are performing and what they are ready to learn next;
    - (c) provide as much information as possible to parents about their children's progress and how they can help with homework.  
(*paragraphs 31 – 35*)
  - (3) Give higher priority to extending the range of opportunities for pupils to:
    - (a) demonstrate their independence and initiative;(*paragraph 37*)

(b) extend their awareness of cultural diversity. (*paragraph 38*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### **Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection**

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	32	40	24	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**

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	355
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	17

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	78

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	23

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.80
National comparative data	5.20

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.70
National comparative data	0.50

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	17	34	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	17
	Girls	33	34	34
	Total	48	50	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (94)	98 (98)	100 (96)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	33	33	33
	Total	48	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (98)	94 (94)	94 (94)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year		2000	24	26	50
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	23	24	
	Girls	25	22	26	
	Total	48	45	50	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (87)	90 (85)	100 (92)	
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	24	23	
	Girls	24	24	26	
	Total	45	48	49	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (85)	96 (85)	98 (88)	
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)	

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	2
Indian	15
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	295
Any other minority ethnic group	12

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 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.70
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.60
Average class size	27.30

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	159

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	732292
Total expenditure	721766
Expenditure per pupil	1778
Balance brought forward from previous year	36974
Balance carried forward to next year	47500



## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

382
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Number of questionnaires returned

99
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### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	26	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	32	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	40	2	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	44	10	1	1
The teaching is good.	62	35	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	46	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	29	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	19	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	51	41	4	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	71	25	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	34	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	42	15	1	6

### **Other issues raised by parents**

None