

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST ANDREW'S MAGHULL CofE PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Maghull

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104895

Headteacher: Rev C R Sands

Reporting inspector: Mr J Morris
23696

Dates of inspection: 15th - 17th May 2000

Inspection number: 185872

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 Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Damfield Lane Maghull Merseyside
Postcode:	L31 6DE
Telephone number:	(0151) 526 1378
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Michael Pearson
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd – 6 th October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Andrew's Maghull CofE is a very large primary school with 485 pupils on roll, aged between four and eleven. It has no nursery provision. Almost all of the pupils are from white families. Forty seven pupils are eligible for free school meals, 66 pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs (three of whom have a formalised statement), two pupils have English as an additional language and all of these equate to below average percentages compared with national figures. Attainment on entry to the school is above average nationally, but slightly below average within the local authority. The school has very recently been awarded Beacon School status.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with many strengths. Academic standards are well above average at age eleven. Teaching and leadership are good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Eleven-year-olds achieve very high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The school's provision for information technology is very good and improving rapidly.
- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to all pupils is good.
- The pupils have very good attitudes to learning and they behave very well at all times.

What could be improved

- The standards achieved by the more able seven-year-olds are not high enough.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement overall has been good. The school was last inspected in October 1995. The key issues for action were to do with:

- 1) weaknesses in information technology;
- 2) weaknesses in the multi-faith aspect of religious education;
- 3) the marking of registers;
- 4) insufficient challenge for more able pupils in mathematics and art throughout the school, and history, geography and physical education from seven to eleven;
- 5) maintaining the high standards and the positive ethos.

Registers are now marked correctly. The religious education curriculum meets requirements. The provision and standards in information technology have improved dramatically. Teaching has improved. Standards for eleven year olds are very high but they are not high enough at seven years of age. The school could still offer more challenge to the most able pupils between five and seven years of age.

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

This table shows that the standards achieved by 11 year olds have been consistently well above average for three years, both in comparison with national figures and with results of similar schools. Furthermore, the school's results have kept pace with the national trend of rising standards. By 11 years of age there are no significant differences between different groups of pupils and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Seven-year-olds achieve results which are broadly in line with the national averages but there is some underachievement by the more able pupils. By the age of five children achieve or exceed the nationally recommended "Desirable Learning Outcomes" and are above average overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. All pupils enjoy school. They are enthusiastic and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The high standards of behaviour in lessons allow the pupils to get on with their work and learn well. Lunchtimes are orderly and harmonious. Pupils play in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships throughout the school are very positive and reflect the school's Christian philosophy. Older pupils are mature and responsible and well prepared for transfer to secondary school.
Attendance	In line with the national average for primary schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good overall and in lessons during inspection throughout the school. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are fully in place and are taught well, being especially effective for pupils older than seven. The school enables pupils identified as having special educational needs to make good progress. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there is insufficient challenge for the more able pupils between five and seven years of age and that the

standards of marking are inconsistent, particularly at Key Stage 1.

Twenty eight lessons were seen during the inspection. All of these were satisfactory or better. Eighty two per cent were good or better. Eighteen per cent were very good or excellent.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school continues to provide a good range of learning opportunities for all pupils. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented and the school provides worthwhile learning experiences in all other subjects of the National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Good co-ordination ensures all requirements and recommendations are met. These pupils make good progress as a result of effective teaching to clear targets relating to the areas in which they have most difficulty.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are only two pupils at the school in this category and they have no particular language needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school's provision for the pupils' personal development contributes significant to the quality of their experiences at school and the attitudes and values which they develop. Provision is very good for spiritual, moral and social development and good for cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Positive relationships and good policy promote the pupils' wellbeing and safety. Arrangements for the assessment of academic performance and analysis of this information are not yet fully in place.

Parents, governors and staff all expressed concerns about the traffic congestion and parking outside the school at the start and end of the school day. The school has explored several possible ways of improving the situation with the appropriate agencies but no answer has yet been found. There are some parents who habitually abuse the parking restrictions and add to this problem unnecessarily.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides a clear direction to the work of the school and the management by all staff with responsibilities clearly contributes to the high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors play an important role in the management of the school, particularly with regard to staffing and finance, and they play as full a part in the daily life of the school as their other commitments allow.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. However, insufficient action has been taken to raise the standards achieved by the most able pupils by age seven.
The strategic use of resources	Specific funding and grants are used in accordance with their intended use. Information technology is being increasingly well used to support all of the school's work. Very good use is made of the school's extensive collection of resources to enrich the school environment and stimulate the children.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Most parents state that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • The teaching is good • The school has high expectations • The school is well managed and led • Their children make good progress • Behaviour is good 	<p>A few parents state that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like clearer information about their child's progress • The school could work better with them • They would like more activities outside normal school hours • They would like more homework

The inspection team largely agrees with the parents' positive views and disagrees with the parents' negative views. The children do like school, teaching is good, leadership is good and behaviour is very good. Pupils make good progress in reception, satisfactory progress from five to seven and good progress from seven to eleven. Expectations of attitudes and behaviour are high and, for the most, part they are also high for work. The school provides a good range of activities at lunchtimes, after school and at other times such as residential experiences, which make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning and personal development. Homework is satisfactory throughout the school and increases in the last two years to prepare pupils well for their transfer to secondary school. The school has established a positive partnership with the parents. Written reports meet requirements but, in the inspectors' opinion, do not provide clear enough information about progress and what the child needs to do next. The school has good arrangements for parents to discuss these matters with teachers.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Eleven-year-olds achieve very high standards in English, mathematics and science.

1. Pupils achieved very good results in the national curriculum tests for 11 year olds in 1999. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in English and mathematics was well above the national average and in science it was very high. The percentage achieving the higher level was well above the national average in all subjects. Furthermore, pupils' achievements are well above average in comparison with similar schools. These standards have been achieved consistently over the past four years and, although there have been some variations, they have at least kept pace with national trends. There are no significant variations between boys and girls.
2. Standards are equally high this year. Pupils in Year 6 are fluent, confident readers of challenging texts. They have a good vocabulary and, although some pupils do not make reasonable guesses at the meanings of new, difficult words, they all use dictionaries and thesauri well. They have a good recall of what they have read previously. Writing is neat and well formed and spelling is to a good standard. Pupils make good progress in descriptive writing, expressing a range of ideas and grammar and punctuation through story writing. In mathematics, pupils have a very good understanding of large numbers, decimal numbers and fractions and they use the four rules of computation well, including completing more complex multiplication and division problems. Pupils have a good scientific vocabulary, know a good range of facts and have a good understanding of scientific concepts and conventions.
3. Although few lessons were seen in other subjects during the inspection, evidence from work samples provided and classroom displays shows that standards are high. Pupils' achievements have improved in geography, history and music since the previous inspection. For example, in geography, pupils are making good progress in their study of Europe. Pupils make good progress in basic literacy and numeracy skills. These skills contribute to the pupils' understanding in other subjects and are further developed in information technology, design and technology and history projects, for example. There are good examples of work in English, religious education, geography, history and art which contribute significantly to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development but relatively few of these in music.
4. From the age of seven all pupils make very good progress. The more able pupils make particularly good progress so that the percentage achieving the higher than expected level is well above the national average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets. These are predominantly in literacy and the progress they make here helps them in all other subjects. The two pupils with English as an additional language are fluent in English and, as a result, do not need any special help.

The school's provision for information technology is very good and improving rapidly.

5. The previous inspection was very critical of many aspects of the school's provision for information technology and the standards achieved by the pupils. There have been widespread, effective improvements in the curriculum, teaching and resources and this has resulted in high standards. This has been achieved by a strong lead provided by two very competent subject co-ordinators, a very good subject action plan, commitment from all staff to improve and excellent support from the headteacher and governors to implement planned developments. Available funding has been used very effectively to develop the school's resources for learning and to train staff. Assessment has properly been identified as a high priority once the use of the new resources and scheme of work are established. The current arrangements are too informal and do not allow teachers to track pupils' progress and identify gaps in learning systematically.
6. Currently all seven to eleven year olds have at least one lesson every week in the very new information technology suite which contains enough computers for the pupils to work in pairs in

the largest class. All pupils are making good progress in a wide range of activities, including word-processing, data-handling, using a spreadsheet and using CD-ROM for research. The pupils will soon have access to the Internet and the National Grid for Learning and, in preparation for this, Year 6 pupils have been designing web pages. Some of these demonstrate a very high level of understanding and careful consideration of aspects of design, such as layout and colour.

7. Children under five and pupils aged five to seven have a very worthwhile early experience of computers and other devices. The computers in the reception classes and in the corridor outside the Year 1 and 2 classrooms are constantly in use. Pupils are making good progress in keyboard and mouse skills and learning how to use the computer for writing, data handling and other number work, art and design activities and CD-ROM for research. Teachers keep records to make sure all pupils participate in a good range of activities and very good use is made of support staff, parent volunteers and students to help the pupils.
8. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. The knowledge of teachers and support staff ranges from excellent to adequate and those who are less confident are benefiting from the very good programme of training. A strong feature of the teaching of older pupils is the excellent use of the large display screen to recap what has been achieved before and to instruct whole classes at the start of lessons. Lessons are characterised by a lively pace and obvious interest and enthusiasm for the subject by both the teacher and pupils. Throughout the school, information technology is used effectively to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills and support learning in other subjects, such as art, geography and history.

Teaching is good throughout the school.

9. The quality of teaching observed during this inspection was always at least satisfactory. It was good or better in 82 per cent of the lessons and it was very good or excellent in 18 per cent.
10. Throughout the school, teachers plan lessons well and organise their classrooms and learning resources well. Good use is made of available additional adults. Teachers generally have good knowledge of the subjects of the National Curriculum. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils. The three-part lesson model, recommended by the national literacy and numeracy initiatives, of whole class introduction, individual or small group work and whole class review, is used in many other lessons to great effect. Lesson introductions very often feature a good recap of what has gone on before and a clear explanation of what is to come next.
11. The best lessons are characterised by a lively pace and style of delivery which motivates pupils to listen, work hard and learn. There are good opportunities in whole class sessions for individual pupils to contribute and show the teacher what they know and understand. There were several examples of this in literacy and numeracy lessons in different year groups. During individual or small group time the work is carefully matched to the achievement and needs of different groups of pupils. At this time, teachers make checks on how different pupils are getting on, provide individual support where necessary and make pertinent points to the whole class.
12. In lessons which are satisfactory overall, the most common shortcomings are a lack of challenge for more able pupils, too slow a pace and, very occasionally, teachers do not fully engage pupils' interest and stimulate their great willingness to learn.

The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to all pupils is good.

13. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities to all of the pupils. Whilst the school has been successfully implementing the national initiatives in literacy and numeracy and addressing weaknesses in information technology and religious education identified in the last inspection, it has continued to provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. The school effectively meets its aim to provide worthwhile learning experiences in all of the areas of learning for children under five and subjects of the national curriculum for pupils aged five to eleven.

14. The subject schemes of work, teachers' planning and pupils' work on display around the school all illustrate the school's commitment to providing a wide range of learning experiences for the pupils. The curriculum is enriched by the school's own good programme for personal and social education, including sex education and drugs education. Educational visits, performances, sporting activities and the school's own resources are all used to complement and develop the classroom teaching and the pupils' development as individual young people. The quantity and range of opportunities outside normal school hours are good. For example, the school choir achieves good standards of singing because they benefit from the after school sessions, when the good quality teaching focuses on what they need to do to improve their performance.
15. A particular feature of this school is the very high quality of the learning environment. The school has a quite extraordinary range of learning resources and materials, many of which are displayed in a very stimulating and professional way in communal areas. These include historical and religious artefacts and many samples from the natural world. It is a small museum! These resources are used very well in many subjects but they make a particularly strong contribution to the pupils' learning in English, science, history, geography and religious education. The headteacher plays a leading role in the collection, development, and display of these resources. He was responsible for two different displays during the period of this inspection, which were stimulating and informative for pupils, parents and other visitors and were challenging to pupils in that they required a considerable degree of interaction.

The pupils have very good attitudes to learning and they behave very well at all times.

16. All of the children and pupils who attend St Andrew's school clearly enjoy doing so. They are happy, relaxed and confident from an early age. They understand the school's rules and teachers' expectations of behaviour and comply with them willingly. Behaviour is very good in lessons, at lunch and at play. There are very good relationships throughout the school. No significant conflict between pupils was noted during the inspection. The pupils are very smart in their school uniforms, there are no exclusions and there is no evidence of bullying. This all adds to the friendly, harmonious atmosphere.
17. Pupils try hard with their work and are keen to succeed. They are enthusiastic in lessons, listening carefully to adults and raising their hands to answer questions or get attention. For example, in a numeracy lesson in Year 3, all pupils demonstrated that they were fully involved by holding up number cards to answer the teacher's questions and, when spoken answers were required, a considerable number of them were literally bursting to speak. The children in the reception classes are very well settled into school routines, are keen to learn and use classroom materials sensibly.
18. Pupils have a strong sense of right from wrong and show respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. Throughout the school, pupils are friendly and polite when talking to adults and show a genuine interest when talking to visitors. They respond very positively to opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative. In Year 6, the school successfully fosters a sense of growing maturity and preparation for secondary education.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The standards achieved by the more able seven-year-olds are not high enough.

19. The overall standards achieved by seven-year-olds in 1999 (in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics) were broadly average both in comparison with national figures and similar schools. However, the percentages of pupils achieving the higher than expected level in the tests and tasks in reading and writing were below the national average. Compared with similar schools the percentages achieving the higher than expected level were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. This inspection finds similar standards this year, with nearly all pupils at the expected level but very few producing consistent, higher quality work in writing and number work. Given the very high standards at age eleven and the inspection findings that children show above average achievements by the age of five, there is clear underachievement by the more able seven-year-olds.

20. The possible factors contributing to the differences in standards achieved by seven- and eleven-year-olds are:

- the school has a strong philosophical position on the degree of academic pressure that it is prepared to exert on younger children. The school aims to provide a broad curriculum for all pupils and achieve high academic standards and mature eleven-year-olds who are ready for secondary education. In this it is very successful. However, not enough pupils achieve the higher than expected level at age seven. There is no evidence that there are significant differences in the different year groups of pupils, which may have contributed to these differences;
- there are considerable differences in the teacher assessments and the national tests and tasks at age seven at the higher than expected level. The teacher assessments in 1999 were consistently above the results achieved by the pupils in the tests and tasks. For example, the teacher assessment for writing was that nearly a third of the pupils were at the higher level but none achieved this standard in the tests and tasks. This is not the case at age eleven where there is a very close match between the teacher assessments and test results;
- the school's arrangements and procedures to collect and analyse information about what pupils know, understand and can do are not yet effective enough. The headteacher and assessment co-ordinator do analyse available information and identify possible areas of concern. They are less successful in making this information known to all relevant staff and agreeing appropriate action. At the time of the inspection, the school was awaiting the arrival of a computer programme to help with the collation and analysis of assessment data;
- the school's arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning are not yet effective enough in identifying the relative strengths and weaknesses in classroom practice. The headteacher makes frequent visits to classrooms but these are not recorded and feedback to teachers is not formalised. The English and mathematics co-ordinators have observed lessons as a part of the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Generally, however, the senior management team and subject co-ordinators do not carry out monitoring of lessons and pupils' work rigorously enough. For example, there are inconsistencies in the standards of marking throughout the school and these are greater at Key Stage 1 than they are at Key Stage 2. Where marking is successful it clearly demonstrates to the pupils that the teacher has read their work and noted both what they have done well and where they could do better. It is not always possible to maintain very high standards but, in the sample of provided work, there were too many examples of teachers noting errors in a negative way (without indicating what the pupil needed to do better), not acknowledging significant effort or simply not marking work at all;
- the school has used available funding in the past to provide booster classes for eleven-year-olds. This money has been provided nationally, specifically for this age group. From September 2000 additional support staff are going to be employed to work with five to seven year olds.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

21. The school should now:

- raise standards achieved by the more able seven-year-olds by:
 - making effective use of available information about what pupils know, understand and can do (from national testing, other standardised tests used by the school and teacher assessments) to identify the more able pupils in different subjects;
 - monitoring teaching to identify the best practice, particularly with regard to marking work and setting challenging work to more able pupils, and disseminating this practice throughout the school, especially from age five to seven.

(paragraphs 19 and 20)

The current School Development Plan contains targets relating to raising standards at age seven and increasing the level of challenge for the more able pupils.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	14	64	18	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)	485
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	47

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	66
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	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	31	35	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	26	29
	Girls	32	32	33
	Total	59	58	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89	88	94
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	30
	Girls	32	34	31
	Total	60	62	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91	94	92
	National	82	86	87

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	33	35	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	32	33
	Girls	32	32	35
	Total	60	64	68
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88	94	100
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	32	32
	Girls	32	32	35
	Total	61	64	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90	94	99
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

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

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)	18.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.2
Average class size	32.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	176

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	734587
Total expenditure	741969
Expenditure per pupil	1511
Balance brought forward from previous year	53749

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	485
Number of questionnaires returned	204

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	35	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	37	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	45	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	47	11	0	0
The teaching is good.	66	32	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	40	23	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	33	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	24	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	34	49	13	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	64	32	2	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	37	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	33	13	1	9

Other issues raised by parents

Parents, staff and school governors expressed concerns about the traffic congestion and car parking outside the school at the beginning and end of the school day.