

INSPECTION REPORT

FOREFIELD COMMUNITY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Crosby

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104871

Headteacher: Mr R F Naylor

Reporting inspector: Mr J Woodcock
1624

Dates of inspection: 14-15 March 2000

Inspection number: 188257

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Forefield Lane Crosby Liverpool
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. D Moore
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Pupils make good progress to achieve above average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science.

Pupils are eager to come to school, their attitudes to learning are very good, they are enthusiastic about the broad range of interesting activities provided and the care they receive is excellent.

Spiritual, moral and social development is promoted strongly; as a result, pupils' behaviour is very good and they get on well with each other.

Overall, the teaching is good, with over half the lessons being very good or excellent.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are effective leaders and are supported well by staff and governors in seeking to raise pupils' levels of achievement and to promote high standards

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Forefield is a bigger than average primary school with a current roll of 409 full-time pupils aged between seven and eleven years; it is oversubscribed. Pupils' attainment on entry to school varies from year to year, particularly when ten to fifteen per cent of pupils have limited linguistic skills, but overall it is good. The school has identified 102 pupils as having special educational needs; this proportion is above the national average. The proportion receiving free school meals, about one in ten pupils, is below the national average. Two pupils speak English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school; it has many strengths and is very effective. Pupils achieve well and standards are consistently above average because the teaching is stimulating and challenging. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together, are not complacent about the school's achievements, and aspire to higher standards. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress to achieve above average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science.
- Pupils are eager to come to school, their attitudes to learning are very good, they are enthusiastic about the broad range of interesting activities provided and the care they receive is excellent.
- Spiritual, moral and social development is promoted strongly; as a result, pupils' behaviour is very good and they get on well with each other.
- Overall, the teaching is good, with over half the lessons being very good or excellent.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very effective leaders and are supported well by staff and governors in seeking to raise pupils' levels of achievement and to promote high standards.

What could be improved

- The rigour of monitoring lessons to help evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- The provision for teaching information technology in order to improve standards.

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 continued to improve since the last inspection in June 1996. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is a significant factor in pupils' high levels of achievement. The key issues have been addressed well and test results show that standards are consistently above average and often well above average. The planning systems developed by the school since the last inspection are rigorous and consistently applied. The guidance given to teachers for planning for continuity and progression in pupils' learning is good; it is regularly monitored, evaluated and improved. Expectations of pupils' achievements in the non-core subjects have been raised and they show improvements in their knowledge, skills and understanding of these subjects. The role of the subject coordinators has been developed significantly, particularly the support they give colleagues; the monitoring of pupils' progress; and the standards achieved. Assessment procedures are good and the information gained is used well to set clear targets for teaching and learning. Pupils' experience the teaching of all aspects of information technology regularly, but provision for teaching of the subjects continues to be limited by the lack of appropriate facilities and standards are not as high as other subjects.

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

Overall, test results are above the national average, and are well above average in mathematics and science when compared with schools that have a similar intake. Relative weaknesses in writing were revealed in last year's test results and this is an area that the school is seeking to improve. The number of higher attaining pupils who achieve high standards in mathematics and science is well above the national average and above average in English. Trends over time show that standards are well above average and that the school is improving at a rate broadly in line with national trends. Overall, girls achieve slightly higher standards than boys in English and science. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average in all three subjects and pupils are on course to achieve the challenging targets set by the school. Overall, attainment in information technology is satisfactory with some good features but could be better, particularly when compared with pupils' general levels of achievement. Attainment in all other subjects is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to school are very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and take pride in everything they do. Pupils of all ages are highly motivated and have a strong desire to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, behaviour is very good. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. The oldest pupils conduct themselves with a good level of self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good throughout the school. The older pupils take responsibility for helping with younger pupils and for helping around the school. Pupils are keen to be involved in clubs, teams and other activities offered by the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The rate of attendance is similar to the national average. Unauthorised absence is below the national average and pupils are eager to come to school.

Pupils' very good attitudes to learning, and their very good behaviour and relationships make a significant contribution to the ethos of the school and to the high standards achieved. Good concentration and a productive work rate are regular features of lessons. Pupils come to school expecting to work hard.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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.

Overall, teaching is good. In nine out of ten lessons, teaching is good or better; it is very good or excellent in over fifty per cent of lessons. Only a very small amount of the teaching is less than satisfactory. Some outstanding teaching was seen in

Year 6. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and other subjects is consistently good or better and pupils' make good and often very good progress. Throughout the school, lessons are well prepared and planned, with interesting and stimulating activities that add to the enjoyment of pupils' learning. The majority of teachers have very good subject knowledge, manage pupils well and expect pupils to work hard and achieve high standards. Pupils are told what they are expected to learn at the start of the lesson and, when appropriate, are reminded of their individual targets for improvement. At the end of lessons, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learnt and how they have improved. A particular strength of the teaching is the quality of questioning that challenges pupils to think more deeply about what they are doing and extends the quality and range of their vocabulary. The dynamism and enthusiasm of staff is obvious in all the tasks they undertake. However, very occasionally, in one class, where routines are not fully established some pupils are not as well behaved and teaching is less effective.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and caters well for the differing interests and needs of the pupils. A very good range of extra curricular activities enhances the statutory curriculum. An interesting variety of visitors and visits, including residential trips, extend the learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good support enables pupils to make similar progress to that of their peers. Visiting specialist teachers and well-briefed classroom assistants are used effectively to support learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. These pupils are integrated well and their needs are met so that they achieve similar standards to those of their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Teaching and non-teaching staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and provide good role models in their relationships with each other. Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is promoted very strongly. Good provision is made for pupils to appreciate a broad range of cultural traditions through stories, art and music.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The welfare, health and safety, and child protection arrangements are excellent. Pupils are looked after very well on a day-to-day basis. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring pupils' achievements and for staff to be aware of their social and emotional needs.

The school provides a stimulating curriculum that promotes above average levels of achievement in all subjects except information technology. Good emphasis is placed on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. A broad range of additional activities to promote pupils' personal development is provided. Detailed analysis of pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses in academic progress and effective target-setting procedures underpin the drive to raise standards. Most pupils thrive on this level of challenge, but equally, very good support is provided for those who need to work more slowly.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's strong lead sets high expectations for the school community. They are supported well by a dedicated team of teachers, who share their commitment to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors work effectively through committees to meet their statutory responsibilities. They are well-informed and effective as critical friends, particularly in monitoring the school's achievements.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's self-evaluation of its performance is very good. Good use is made of comparisons with the performance of other schools, using information provided by the local authority. Internal monitoring procedures are well established and effective in identifying targets for improvement. They are used well to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's policies, planning and supportive systems. However, lesson observations do not focus well enough on the impact of the different elements of teaching on pupils' learning and the specific aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding to be developed.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of specific grants and additional funds raised by parents. The savings made by the appointment of young, high quality teachers and the prudent management of the budget has enabled a very large surplus to be created during the last two years. This is to be spent on improvements to the buildings and provision for information technology. The school seeks to gain value for money in all its expenditure.

The leadership and management of the headteacher is very good. He is supported well by the deputy headteacher who is an outstanding teacher. Together, they set high expectations and lead by example. The self-evaluation of the school's performance is very good and identifies accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body is effective and, by using rigorous selection procedures, has with the headteacher appointed many high quality staff to the school. The budget is managed well and the planned use of the current surplus meets the school priorities well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good progress children make and the high standards they achieve. • The very good behaviour and values the school promotes. • The homework given to pupils. • Their children like coming to school. • The school's expectations that the children will work hard and do well. • The high quality care pupils receive. • The good information provided about the curriculum and life of the school. • The good quality teaching. • The very good leadership and management of the school. • The very good provision for extra-curricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parental had concerns about the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

The inspection team endorses parents' views about the strengths of the school. Ninety-nine per cent of parents believe that Forefield is a very good school. Although the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, some parents' concerns have not been fully addressed. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very approachable and responsive to such concerns and give significant time to correcting misunderstandings and resolving disagreements between parents and the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils make good progress to achieve above average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science.

1. Pupils achieve above average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science in National Curriculum tests. The current Year 6 pupils are on course to do well in all three subjects. In English and mathematics, the achievement of higher and middle attaining pupils is good and many make very good progress; lower attaining pupils make satisfactory progress. In science, all pupils are achieving good standards and their progress is very good.
2. A strong emphasis is placed on reading; this is supported well by parents, as the regular entries in reading diaries testify, and pupils make good progress. Pupils in Year 6 achieve high standards in reading. They respond well to characters in favourite stories and learn to make deductions from ideas presented in key texts. Teachers encourage them to express opinions about their choice of characters, and pupils can identify key words and phrases to illustrate a point they are making. These skills are used effectively when gathering information for other subjects such as history and design and technology.
3. Good standards in speaking make a significant contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school and across a range of subjects. The ability to question, to discuss ideas in groups, to listen to the views of others and to justify those views in a mature way, enables pupils to learn effectively from each other. When teachers intervene with probing questions, the quality of the dialogue is high, for example in a religious education lesson in Year 5 about the views of different faith groups on right and wrong. Pupils are taught to use correct technical vocabulary to support their understanding in subjects such as history, geography and information technology; this contributes well to the standards achieved in these subjects.
4. The school has identified pupils' writing skills as an area of relative weakness compared with reading. The National Literacy hour and additional lessons for reading have helped to create more time for writing. This is being used well and pupils are making good progress. Pupils are given opportunities to write in many different styles and for a variety of purposes. Good attention is paid to teaching the structure of writing and improving spelling skills, particularly for middle and lower attaining pupils. By Year 6, pupils organise their writing into paragraphs, and use the conventions of punctuation correctly. They make good progress in developing the skills of drafting and editing. Pupils look for ways to improve their written work and make it more exciting and interesting for the reader. They are able to identify key points in an argument and understand the techniques of writing summaries including making unbiased individual comments, for example when discussing the poem "The Lady of Shallot"; their progress is very good. Pupils use a wide and interesting range of vocabulary to enliven their work.
5. In mathematics, pupils are grouped by their prior attainment in Years 5 and 6 and this is helping to raise standards. Higher attaining pupils are stretched, middle attaining pupils make good progress and lower attaining pupils receive good support. Overall, progress is good and most pupils by the end of Year 6 are working at the expected level for their age and one third are achieving well above average standards. This is due to the very good quality of teaching they receive. Pupils' knowledge and manipulation of number is strong. Good recall of number and multiplication facts aids the speed and accuracy of calculations. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of multiplication and division, and good investigative skills. Their work in shape and space is particularly good. Pupils can construct graphs, compare simple distributions and have a good understanding of probability. Their ability to articulate their methods of working and to discuss a range of strategies to use in calculations helps improve their overall level of understanding. They work productively and with very good pace and show obvious enjoyment in the subject.
6. By the end of Year 6, pupils' good scientific knowledge enables them to predict the results of experiments that they carry out. They record their findings well in a variety of formats, including tables, charts and graphs. Pupils understanding and use of correct vocabulary helps them to express accurately the conclusions from their observations. They have a good knowledge and understanding about the human body, particularly the workings of voluntary and involuntary muscles. Pupils make very good progress in understanding that some materials are better conductors of electricity than others, for example in a Year 3 lesson. Teachers very good subject knowledge and clarity of explanation contributes significantly to pupils' learning and their enjoyment of the subject.

Pupils are eager to come to school, their attitudes to learning are very good, they are enthusiastic about the broad range of interesting activities provided and the care they receive is excellent.

7. The school provides a very good range of exciting and interesting activities that takes advantage of pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school. The oldest pupils spoke warmly about the variety of practical learning opportunities provided, such as the residential visits, Victorian days and the Easter Holiday learning experience. They cited these as some of the features of the school that they would miss most when they leave but particularly the private time that teachers give to listening to their interests and personal concerns.

8. In eight out of ten lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and in two out of ten lessons excellent, particularly in English, mathematics, and design and technology in Year 6. Teachers create a stimulating environment in which pupils learn. They encourage pupils to ask questions, work things out together, and have a go at new ideas. In response, pupils are interested and receptive learners. They work with sustained concentration, are motivated well and have a strong desire to improve. Pupils are attentive to teachers and their peers during whole class sessions and discussions. The majority of pupils work together well, sharing ideas and materials in a mature way. Older pupils have well-established work habits and their work-rate in lessons is consistently high. Displays of pupils' work around the school make a significant visual impact and boost pupils' self-esteem. Standards of presentation are good, and pupils take pride in their work.

9. It is clear that pupils understand why they are in school. They work hard and are determined to take advantage of what the school has to offer. Many pupils attend the good range of after school and lunchtime clubs; they participate willingly in musical concerts and sporting activities. Projects that involved pupils in planning, preparing and planting the garden areas around the school, not only enhance the physical environment and add interest to their learning, but also foster in pupils a sense of pride and respect for their surroundings.

10. The care pupils receive is excellent. Teachers provide very good support and guidance for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs work hard to achieve the targets set in their individual educational plans and make good progress. They work hard and respond well to the sensitive and effective support that high quality learning support assistants gives them. Parents value highly the homework arrangements and pupils find the tasks set helps them improve, particularly in mathematics. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are excellent. Pupils work and play in a safe and secure learning environment. Staff are very aware of the pupils' social and emotional needs and very good provision is made to monitor pupils' personal and academic development. The headteacher knows the children by name and constantly mixes with them, giving words of encouragement, setting high expectations and creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust that permeates the daily life of the school.

Spiritual, moral and social development is promoted strongly; as a result, pupils' behaviour is very good and they get on well with each other.

11. The commitment of the school to continuous improvement and the ethos this creates contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual development. Lessons are often exciting and pupils experience the awe and wonder of learning. In music and dance, they are becoming increasingly aware of the spiritual nature of human beings as they learn to move and respond to rhythms when interpreting the development of man through the ages. Many pupils caught their breath, as their first efforts in developing a batik picture were successful. Collective acts of worship are exciting, capture pupils interest, giving rise to questions that require more careful thought. Pupils are encouraged to recognise a Supreme Being in their quiet time for reflection. They express pleasure, admire the work of other pupils, and take a pride in their own work.

12. All adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and give clear, consistent messages about what is right and wrong, particularly to those who need the occasional reminder. This, together with searching discussions with adults about the consequences of their actions, effectively helps pupils to understand the underlying moral principles that govern behaviour. Pupils understand fully the school's systems of rewards and sanctions and the action to be taken if anti-social behaviour occurs. They know what is expected and for the majority of them, this is well established in their day-to-day habits. Mutual respect and self-discipline are evident in the way they conduct themselves. Throughout the school, pupils are polite and well mannered to each other and to adults and visitors.

13. Strong role models and very good teamwork amongst teachers and support staff promote good relationships between adults and pupils, which are warm and friendly. Pupils relate very well to each other. For example, a boy, who has a particular physical need, says he is well accepted by others, who are tolerant of his difficulties. Throughout the school, equipment and books are used carefully and shared fairly, and pupils respect the school surroundings. Older pupils help in the smooth daily running of the school, acting as monitors for tasks like looking after the music for assembly and assisting

in the library. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to work together in small groups and relationships within these are very good, such as when using the computers and undertaking investigative work in science. The many extra-curricular activities enhance further pupils' very good social development.

Overall, teaching is good, with over half the lessons observed being very good or excellent.

14. Overall, teaching is good, with over half the lessons being very good. Excellent lessons were observed in English, mathematics, and design and technology in Year 6. Teachers' good knowledge of the National Curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' learning. It enables pupils to make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and skills and to increase their understanding in English, mathematics and science and in most other subjects. Lessons are well prepared and planned, with clear learning objectives that are conveyed to pupils at the start of the lesson so that they know exactly what is expected of them. Many teachers remind pupils to think about their individual targets for improvement before they start work. In the best lessons, very good links are made between assessments of pupils' prior learning and subsequent planning so that tasks are pitched at just the right level to provide a challenge without being too difficult. Good quality plenary sessions refer back to the learning objectives, and pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learnt and how they have improved.

15. Teachers provide interesting and stimulating activities that add to the enjoyment of learning, and result in a very good pace of work and excellent effort from pupils. As two Year 6 boys in design and technology remarked, "*that was a smashing lesson, we don't want to stop*". The atmosphere in classes promotes enquiry and pupils are encouraged to 'have a go'. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by very good class assistants and parent helpers such as when reading or undertaking computer assisted learning. When lessons are very good, the dynamism and enthusiasm of staff are transmitted to pupils so that they recognise that they are part of a special learning experience. High expectations of behaviour and standards of work are implicit in the expert and unobtrusive way in which teachers manage and organise pupils. However, very occasionally, in one class where routines are not fully established some pupils are not as well behaved and the teaching is less effective.

16. A particular strength of the teaching is the quality of questioning that challenges pupils to think about what they are doing and to develop specific vocabulary. Very good staff training has helped to develop these skills. Pupils in Year 6 were asked "*What can you tell me about the Antarctic?*" and "*What does global warming mean?*" and "*Can you tell me more?*" as they sought to establish what is fact and what is fiction when constructing a balanced argument about the continent's future. In Year 3, higher attaining pupils thinking was challenged when they were asked, "*How can you improve it?*" when designing an electrical circuit using their own ideas. In Year 4, a teacher extended the pupils thinking by probing their understanding of the differences between rural and city life in India. Teachers in Year 5 used effective questioning techniques to help them assess what pupils know, understand and can do in mathematics. Teachers are skilled at sharing this information with the pupils so that the pupils know what they have achieved and how to improve.

17. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. In literacy, a good balance is achieved between class teaching, group work, individual support and plenary sessions. In Year 3, teachers are skilled in using key words and illustrative examples from text to develop pupils' ideas and work more creatively when writing. In Year 4, effective support is given to pupils with special educational needs to help them improve their spelling and the range of vocabulary used when writing descriptively. Year 5 teachers manage group work well and are good role models when demonstrating and guiding pupils to read accurately and with expression. In Year 6, teachers' very good subject knowledge combined with good questioning techniques, high expectations and constructive comments enable pupils to make very good progress. Pupils are acquiring a very good knowledge and understanding of reading and interpreting poems and the writing of effective arguments and balanced reports on controversial issues.

18. In mathematics lessons, mental practice sessions are well focused on the quick recall of numbers facts and accuracy of mental calculations and using these to acquire new knowledge and skills. Pupils' errors and misconceptions are used well by teachers to provide a greater level of clarity and explanation. Specific subject-based vocabulary is modelled well, and pupils are encouraged to use this when they explain their methods to the class. Pupils are fascinated when activities encompass problem solving, and teachers use pupils' natural competitiveness to motivate them to work quickly in timed challenges. Plenary sessions are helpful in sharing strategies for developing a range of alternative methods for calculation. In Year 6, teachers' very good subject knowledge, combined with good questioning techniques and high expectations, extends pupils' knowledge and promotes high standards by challenging their thinking.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are effective leaders and are supported well by staff and governors in seeking to raise pupils' levels of achievement and promote high standards

19. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. He is supported well by the deputy headteacher who is an outstanding teacher. Together they set high standards and lead by example. Their self-evaluation of the school's performance is very good and identifies accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The headteacher has a clear view of how he wants the school to develop. This is conveyed to staff and they share his commitment to provide a high quality education for pupils. The school's aims are met well. The headteacher has very high expectations of staff and provides them with positive and constructive advice on their performance. The headteacher and deputy headteacher make very good provision for staff training. They are effective in identifying training needs and, where appropriate give demonstration lessons and follow-up support to help teachers improve their skills as for example in recent initiatives to improve teachers' questioning skills and to increase the pace of lessons in some classes. Very good teamwork and clarity of purpose are exemplified in the high expectations that staff have of pupils, and in the stimulating environment that supports good learning. Co-ordinators recognise the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and give effective advice, support and guidance to their colleagues such as in English, mathematics and for teaching pupils with special educational needs.

20. All staff and governors are involved in the process of identifying priority areas for development, based on a careful analysis of the current situation. The school development plan is constructed well and clearly identifies costs, training needs and success criteria to bring about continuous improvement over the next three years. The governing body is effective and, by using rigorous selection procedures, has with the headteacher, appointed many high quality staff to the school. The budget is managed well and the planned use of the current surplus meets the school priorities well, for example, to provide essential improvements to the school building and extra resources for information technology.

21. A system for target setting is now well established. It involves all staff in analysing pupils' strengths and weaknesses and in identifying what pupils need to work on to make further improvements. Very good analyses of test results and a detailed system of tracking the attainment of individual pupils have been devised and developed by the headteacher and key members of staff. This has enabled the school to identify pupils' writing, for example as an area for improvement. Challenging whole-school targets have been set for cohorts of pupils, and teachers set class, group and individual targets, for example in English and mathematics. In this way, staff are constantly striving to raise pupils' levels of achievement.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The rigour of monitoring in lesson observations to help evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning

22. The process of monitoring is established well and accepted by staff, who are keen to continue improving the quality of what they do. Subject coordinators regularly monitor curriculum provision and evaluate the progress made in achieving the targets set for their areas of responsibility. Detailed analysis of test results identified weaknesses in spelling and the structure of pupils' writing. Pupils' writing was made a target for improvement, along with implementing the daily mathematics lesson and further developments in information technology.

23. A range of methods for observing lessons, sampling pupils' work and monitoring teachers' plans and their use of assessments are in place. However, the monitoring of teaching quality in lesson observations has, so far, been broad, wide-ranging and informal. It has checked how well teachers are implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies, but has not focused on the impact of the different aspects of teaching on pupils' progress or on identifying where teaching can be refined. The monitoring, for example, has not established the impact of teachers' knowledge of information technology on the skills pupils are learning. The monitoring of the development of specific areas of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in each subject has not yet begun in earnest but a good start has been made with writing and spelling.

24. The monitoring of lessons lacks rigour in identifying sufficiently inconsistencies in teaching, for example, in one Year 4 class where the group tasks given to pupils were not as effective as they might have been. The main reason was the lack of precision in the matching of activities to meet the differing needs of pupils. In one Year 5 class, procedures and routines to be followed by pupils are not firmly established and therefore some pupils' behaviour is not as good as elsewhere in the school. The teacher did not implement fully the school's behaviour policy for managing pupils experiencing difficulties. The teaching is less effective and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. These aspects of teaching, management and organisation require further refinement in order to raise teaching to a good level. The headteacher and deputy head recognise that a more rigorous approach to monitoring lessons forms part of the next stage of development to improve teaching and learning.

The provision for teaching information technology in order to raise standards

25. A limited number of lessons and related activities were seen but the evidence from these together with analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning as well as discussions with staff and pupils, indicate that the majority of pupils achieve satisfactory standards but they could be better. Pupils' achievement in word processing is good and satisfactory progress is made in using spreadsheets. However, higher and middle attaining pupils are not achieving the same high standards and very good progress as in other subjects. Since the previous inspection, the key issue of implementing the National Curriculum programme for information technology has been achieved.

26. Overall, teachers are confident, have good subject knowledge and plan learning well. However, the lack of timetabling for the direct teaching of the subject by teachers to whole-classes limits the rate at which pupils' progress in order to achieve higher standards. Pairs of pupils do have regular opportunities to develop their information technology skills and they receive very good support from high quality and knowledgeable learning support assistants. Pupils are keen to learn, experiment and try out new ideas. They are acquiring good word-processing skills and use logo and spreadsheets appropriately. Pupils can use control technology to program floor robots and many have a developing knowledge of e mail and the use of the Internet. Resources are satisfactory and are used well, however, some machines although serviceable are rapidly becoming obsolete. The school has already identified, as part of its development plan, the need to construct a specialist area to facilitate high quality teaching and to achieve higher standards. Very good provision has been made in the budget to finance this project.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

27. The school is pursuing the correct priorities in order to raise standards. It should now:

- improve the rigour of the monitoring of teaching by:-
 - developing more formal procedures for monitoring using agreed criteria;
 - monitoring and evaluating the impact of specific aspects of teaching on pupils' learning;
 - identifying specific areas of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding to be improved and monitoring and evaluating the progress made.

- improve standards in information technology by:-
 - timetabling the direct teaching of the subject;
 - improving the facilities and equipment for computer work.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	45	34	8	2.5	2.5	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)	409
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	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	102

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.9
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 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	57	44	101

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	44	44	55
	Girls	39	36	40
	Total	83	80	95
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82(82)	79(72)	94(87)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	45	43	50
	Girls	38	35	37
	Total	83	78	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82(78)	77(71)	86(82)
	National	68(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	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	405
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)	14.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	34

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	92

Financial information

Financial year	1998/9
	£
Total income	577121
Total expenditure	536519
Expenditure per pupil (NOR-405 for 1998/9)	1325
Balance brought forward from previous year	62004
Balance carried forward to next year	102606

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	409
Number of questionnaires returned	146

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	43	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	32	3	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	40	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	46	3	1	0
The teaching is good.	63	34	2	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	37	4	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	16	3	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	15	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	34	1	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	71	25	2	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	32	1	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	72	23	3	1	1

There were no significant areas for improvement identified by parents.

A few parents had concerns but these were individual matters about their children. These focused on support for a pupil with special educational needs, opportunities for team games and the approachability of some staff. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very approachable and responsive to such concerns and give significant time to correcting misunderstandings and resolving disagreements between parents and the school.