

INSPECTION REPORT

ST DOMINIC SAVIO RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Woodley, Reading

LEA area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 110041

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Gange

Reporting inspector: Mrs Ann Coughlan
21124

Dates of inspection: February 7th – 10th 2000

Inspection number: 190530

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Western Avenue Woodley Reading Berkshire |
| Postcode: | RG5 3BH |
| Telephone number: | 0118 969 3893/1606 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs Nuala Hemphill |
| Date of previous inspection: | November 1996 |

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|-------------------|----------------------|
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a large voluntary aided primary school with 403 girls and boys on roll. Over 80 per cent of the pupils are drawn from the local Catholic community. The numbers on roll have increased by one third since its last inspection. There has also been a fourfold increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, although at 15.9 per cent, this is still below the national average. Some of these pupils have very complex needs and ten pupils have statements of special educational need, which is above the national average for the size of the school. There are 17 pupils for whom English is an additional language but they are bilingual. Only 2.76 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and most come from broadly favoured backgrounds. Children are admitted at the beginning of the term in which they have their fifth birthday. Their attainments on entry are above average. However, the pupils admitted into older age groups show a broader spectrum of attainment levels.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, with many very good features, that meets its Christian aims very well, providing a high level of care for its pupils. It is maintaining high standards despite the increase in size and the considerable staff changes over the last two years. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is particularly effective for all groups of pupils. The leadership and management of the school have established a very positive ethos for learning and seek constantly to improve provision. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain high standards, particularly in mathematics
- Overall, teaching is good, with nearly one fifth of the lessons observed being very good or excellent
- The pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn
- The headteacher, with the support of governors and staff, plans improvements very carefully and implements them very successfully
- Effective teamwork ensures very good provision for pupils with special educational needs

What could be improved

- The consistency of some aspects of teaching and learning
- The clarity of written reports on their children's progress sent to parents in the summer term

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 good progress since its last inspection in November 1996 and has maintained the high standards achieved by the pupils. The school now meets fully the requirements for provision of information technology and has responded effectively to new requirements. The opening of a computer suite early next term is intended to support the teaching of the pupils' information technology skills that, at present, are unevenly developed. Subject co-ordinators have been given increased responsibility and are developing their monitoring roles well. Following training in assessment, the teachers match work more effectively to the differing needs of pupils. The setting for literacy and numeracy in Years 5 and 6 enhances this further. In response to the key issue on accommodation and to meet the increasing numbers on roll, the school has improved classrooms for the younger pupils and further work is in progress.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 |
| English | A | A* | A | B |
| Mathematics | A* | A* | A | A |
| Science | A* | A* | A | B |

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

These results show that the school is maintaining high standards and the work pupils were doing during the inspection confirmed this. The performance of pupils in the 1999 tests, though well above average nationally, fell slightly from 1998 when the school was in the highest 5 per cent nationally. The school anticipated this owing to the increased number of pupils with specific learning difficulties in the 1999 cohort. It expects similar results for this year and predicts that results will then rise again and has set challenging targets to achieve this. The pupils make good progress as they move through the school, though their information technology skills are unevenly developed. Most of the five year olds in the reception class achieve beyond what is normally expected for their age in language and literacy, numeracy and in their personal development. At seven years of age, standards are above average with nearly half the pupils attaining above average standards in reading and writing and very high standards in mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good: the pupils are attentive and concentrate well in lessons. They contribute confidently to discussions and respond well to a wide range of challenges and targets. Pupils enjoy contributing to the smooth running of their classrooms and the daily routines of the school . |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good in most lessons and around the school. Pupils are courteous, friendly and responsible. No incidents of bullying or harassment were seen during the inspection. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good relationships throughout the school and good personal development. Pupils can reflect on their own experiences and those of others. As they become older they develop more independence in their learning. All pupils are integrated well into the life of the school. |
| Attendance | Very good - well above the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school. |

The well-established Christian aims of the school have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school and their relationships with others. Although behaviour is good in most lessons, occasionally, where teachers do not make expectations for good behaviour clear, or reinforce these insufficiently, pupils become restless.

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.

The teaching of English is satisfactory up to the end of Key Stage 1 (4 – 7 year olds) and good in Key Stage 2 (7 – 11 year olds). The teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school. The quality of teaching in Year 6 in English, mathematics, science and information technology is very good and sometimes excellent. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons, good in 44 per cent, very good in 12 per cent and excellent in 6 per cent. All teachers are competent in teaching literacy and numeracy skills and, in the majority of the lessons, the tasks they set meet the needs of all pupils. The setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 for literacy and numeracy has a positive effect on their learning and provides well for the brighter pupils. The teaching of pupils with a wide variety of special educational needs is very good. The wide range of interesting activities, good questioning by teachers and the positive ethos in most lessons encourages pupils to learn. In a small number of lessons, where there is insufficient challenge in the teaching or slow pace there is loss of concentration and reduced effort by pupils.

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good overall: the curriculum is broad, well balanced and relevant to the wide range in pupils' interests and abilities. Visits to places of interest, residential visits and extra-curricular activities broaden the pupils' experiences and extend their understanding. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good: the work designed especially for them and the high level of care through good teamwork by all concerned enables these pupils to make good progress and participate in all school activities. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good overall: the strong Christian values, clear codes of behaviour and the good role models provided by staff help the pupils to develop a mature understanding of their moral and social responsibilities. Sound provision is made for their spiritual development and for pupils to appreciate differing cultural traditions. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Good: the school cares well for its pupils and monitors their progress carefully as they move through the school. It works effectively in partnership with external support agencies. |

The good quality curriculum for 5 to 7 year olds and for 7 to 11 year olds prepares pupils well for moving on to the next phase of their education but insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' knowledge of the multicultural nature of society in Britain today. There is a satisfactory curriculum overall for the under fives but the provision of large toys and climbing equipment for outdoor play is inadequate.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The very good ethos set by the headteacher and senior staff strongly supports learning and high achievement. There is good monitoring of the implementation of literacy and numeracy strategies but less effective monitoring of classroom management. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The contribution of the governors is excellent. They are led and organised well, fulfilling their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. They keep fully informed of the work of the school in a variety of ways and maintain good relationships with school staff. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school makes good use of the assessments of teachers and the results of school and national tests to evaluate its performance. The results are used to modify practice, predict likely achievements and set appropriate targets. The school is aware that it could extend its analysis of a range of performance data. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school budgets systematically and is clear about the cost of new developments and use of its resources. Very good use is made of all staff, of time, of material resources and the school building. |

The management and control of the school's finances are very good. The cycle for budget setting to meet the identified priorities of the school and monitoring outcomes is well established. The school follows the principle of best value through comparing the quality it provides against that of others and asks appropriate questions about improving its provision. The school makes significant effort to secure monies and grants for improvements. The school is aware that it needs to develop ways of getting more feedback from pupils and has not carried out a survey of parental views recently.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like coming to school and their behaviour is good • The school expects children to work hard and to do their best • The school is well led and managed • Good teaching • The school helps children to develop a sense of responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree of information they get from the school about their children's progress • The amount and consistency of homework • The range of activities outside lessons • The school to more work closely with parents |

The inspection team endorses parents' positive comments. The school provides an opportunity for parents to meet their child's new teacher in the autumn term and a formal occasion in the spring term when parents can discuss their child's work with staff. There is an annual report on each pupil's achievements and parents agree that they feel comfortable about approaching the school. These arrangements are sufficient to keep parents well informed about their children. However, the inspection team found that it is not easy to understand the progress a child is making from the format of the report sent to parents last summer. The school is aware of parental concerns about the reports and is considering modifications. The amount of homework required is similar to that of other primary schools and is judged to be largely appropriate. The school has a suitable homework policy but this is not always followed consistently. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for 7 – 11 year olds including sport and music. Recently, the opportunities for younger pupils have reduced but they can join the Club Francais that meets 3 days per week at lunchtime. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the school endeavours to work closely with parents in a variety of ways. For example, through providing good quality information about its activities, through the well attended consultation evenings and through welcoming parents to help in school on a regular basis.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

1. The pupils achieve well above average standards overall in mathematics in their National Curriculum test. In English and science, they also achieve well above average standards when compared with national results and above average standards in comparison with other schools. This represents good value added by the school from the pupils' above average standards on entry.

2. Pupils make a good start in mathematics in the reception class through motivating practical activities and songs. They learn to count and recite number names up to 20 and beyond. Teachers ensure they learn appropriate mathematical vocabulary such as the words associated with subtraction. The pupils begin to develop simple mental operations and learn different ways to record their findings.

3. High expectations continue throughout the school with a suitable emphasis on developing strategies for calculation. As they move through Year 1 and Year 2, pupils work with increasingly larger numbers. They recognise patterns such as doubling and apply their number knowledge to practical activities such as giving change in shopping. By the time they are seven, most can partition two digit numbers, knowing what each digit represents and understanding the role of zero as a place holder.

4. Older pupils demonstrate their very good understanding of the number system in the mental activity at the beginning of lessons. This was demonstrated in a Year 6 lesson where quick and accurate answers were given on a wide range of topics such as square and prime numbers, the relationships between percentages, fractions and decimals and facts about angles. Scrutiny of work by pupils shows they present information and results in a clear and organised way and that their calculations are accurate.

5. The well-balanced curriculum encourages pupils to learn the relationships between different aspects of mathematics. Their good number knowledge supports their work in such areas as shape and measure. Pupils use their mathematical skills to further their understanding in other subjects. For example, Year 5 pupils draw graphs to interpret data on water handling in geography and Year 3 pupils measure the stretching of materials in a science investigation.

6. The introduction of the numeracy strategy has enhanced the school's already good teaching and learning of mathematics by promoting the interactive nature of lessons and the use of a wider variety of resources.

7. A strong emphasis on investigational work in science is evident throughout the school. This enables pupils to develop good practical skills. In a Year 2 lesson on electricity pupils quickly made simple circuits in order to extend their investigation into conductors and insulators. Good teaching of experimental processes helps pupils to understand the importance of prediction and fair testing. By the time they are eleven, pupils can plan and conduct investigations and they have a good understanding of scientific concepts.

8. The pupils quickly learn to read as they are taught a range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. By the age of seven, they express their preferences and begin to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction books. Year 6 pupils discuss why they prefer particular authors and explain clearly the situation in a story and the features of different characters. Pupils develop very good listening and speaking skills through activities such as a dramatic discussion in Year 3 on Boudicca's revolt. Following research, pupils begin to understand the differing points of view of Romans and Celts, as they discuss feelings about Boudicca in groups.

9. The school's analysis of national and school test results has helped it to identify how it can improve further standards in writing. To encourage boys, emphasis is given to writing factual accounts and lists as well as narrative. Introduction of word games has encouraged the interest of boys and the change in provision is having a positive impact. The school has also introduced a scheme to develop writing skills for 7 – 11 year olds and adjusted its timetables to provide more opportunities for extended writing. Pupils learn to improve their work; for example, higher attaining pupils make good use of drafting. Individual target setting also

encourages good achievement. By the age of eleven, many pupils use a rich vocabulary and complex sentences, expressing their ideas imaginatively.

10. The high standards in reading, writing and speaking contribute significantly to the pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Overall, teaching is good, with nearly one fifth of lessons observed being very good or excellent

11. A number of strong features, together with the teachers' enthusiasm and their positive attitudes to discipline, contribute significantly to the high standards achieved and the good progress the pupils make. From the reception class onwards, teachers encourage pupils to learn new words and ensure that as pupils move through the school they extend their knowledge of subject specific vocabulary.

12. The literacy hour is established well and the school introduced the National Numeracy Strategy last September. Throughout the school, these lessons are prepared thoroughly by careful planning and with pupils grouped carefully according to their prior attainment. The setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 contributes to the good match of work to the differing needs of pupils. That brighter pupils are well catered for is evident in the well above average proportion of pupils that attain above the expected levels for their age in the national tests.

13. The teaching of pupils in the reception class, including children under five is organised and managed efficiently. Meticulous planning and the very clear introduction of activities ensure the children know what is expected so that they settle quickly to their tasks and make good use of time. The learning support assistants are briefed well. All the adults support the children as they work but also encourage them to develop independence.

14. In many lessons, precise objectives for learning are shared with the pupils and frequently displayed at the front of the class, as in a Year 4 lesson introducing estimation and investigation of mass. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, not only was a mathematical objective given but the teacher also placed emphasis on a target for listening and reinforced this, helping these young pupils to develop their listening skills.

15. This sharing of objectives and targets promotes pupils' knowledge of their own learning. In mathematics lessons for 5 to 7 year olds teachers emphasise the importance of discovering strategies to help with computation. For example, Year 1 pupils are learning to use their good knowledge of doubling single digits to help with adding two numbers. Year 2 pupils are being encouraged to select the appropriate strategy to solve money problems.

16. In many lessons teachers use skilful questioning to further their pupils' progress. Through questioning, the teacher in a Year 2 lesson focusing on character, helped pupils to understand clearly the different criteria of appearance, personality, actions and relationships. In a Year 3 history lesson, a good mix of questions and information checked pupils' understanding of the conflict between Celts and the invading Romans and extended it effectively. Good questioning, together with clear articulation and explanation of ideas about water consumption helped Year 5 pupils to gain recognition of how human activity can effect the environment either positively or negatively.

17. A wide range of methods that motivates pupils and develops their skills and knowledge is illustrated by the very well integrated learning in the very good and excellent lessons in Year 6. In an English lesson on narrative, the teacher linked the current lesson well to objectives for the week. Through detailed planning and very high expectation she maintained achievement at a high level during discussion and written work. The teacher heightened the pupils' awareness of connective words in an interesting context and developed their ability to criticise constructively. The homework set was related well to the theme of the lesson.

18. The effective use of information technology is integrated well into mathematics and science lessons in Year 6. Pupils discovered facts about woodlice by using CD ROM and the Internet as well as text. This helps them develop skills of comparing and assembling information from a variety of sources. At the same time, they design experiments to find whether these creatures prefer living in the light or the dark. Use of a programmable floor robot and a computer programme enhanced the pupils' understanding of shapes inscribed in a circle that they had also constructed themselves using protractors and compasses.

The pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn

19. Teachers, parents and governors have equally high expectations that pupils should work hard and do their best. The school provides a high level of care that helps pupils to feel relaxed, confident and secure. The headteacher and staff plan experiences to make learning challenging and exciting. These factors evoke a positive and enthusiastic response from pupils. Hard work, good concentration and a determination to improve are evident in all classes. As they become older, pupils' interest in their learning enables them to work independently and in small groups with a minimum of supervision. The very good attitudes to learning of the pupils are a significant factor in the high standards achieved.

20. Even the youngest pupils concentrate and persist well. They show high levels of attention during stories and when being introduced to new work. They responsibly help to tidy up resources. Pupils make good contributions to lessons, eagerly answering questions and joining in discussions. In a Year 5 English lesson, the pupils were alert and attentive, were confident to retell a myth heard the day before and ask for clarification. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other's ideas and achievements and realise they can learn from each other. This is seen in the good co-operation in practical work.

21. The very good relationships seen across the school between adults and pupils and among the children are an important factor in pupils' enjoyment and keenness to learn. While showing a Year 3 class how to add information to a database the teacher created a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere so that pupils were confident to ask for help. The teachers' clear explanation, good use of specific vocabulary and humorous interjections, captured the pupils' interest so they were all keen to 'have a go' and willing to help each other.

22. Younger pupils say they enjoy school and particularly like creative and practical work. They like working with different adults. Older pupils can recount in detail some notable moments from their school life. They are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and begin to understand the importance of planning work in order to improve. Year 6 pupils were eager to share recent experiences on a residential visit to the Isle of Wight and demonstrate the wide range of information technology skills they had been practising. Parents confirm that their children enjoy coming to the school and try to do their best.

The headteacher, with the support of governors and staff, plans improvements in provision very carefully and implements them successfully

23. The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school through careful evaluation of its work with the senior management team and the governors. She involves all adults who work in the school and governors with planning further improvement. The governing body is well organised and proactive in securing grants. The governors have developed systematic procedures for gathering information and for monitoring the effects of new developments on standards. They recognise that parents have entrusted their children to the school so are very conscious of their accountability. The governors regard themselves as 'guardians of the school' and try to ensure a continuous momentum of development through working towards targets with the headteacher and senior management team.

24. The success of this aim is illustrated well by the positive response to the key issues from the last inspection. For example, governors allocated money to allow subject co-ordinators time to monitor teaching and curriculum development and this has led to improvements in provision and organisation that are supporting the maintenance of high standards.

25. The key issue for the school to meet fully the requirements for information technology was addressed by the purchase of hardware and software to develop the control strand of the subject and by training for teachers. In order to keep abreast of new requirements in the subject, to improve pupils' access to computers and help all staff make more effective use of new technology, the school has drawn up a detailed and carefully costed development plan over three years. To support implementation of the plan, the school has put together a team, overseen by the headteacher, that consists of the deputy headteacher as overall manager, a subject co-ordinator responsible for curriculum issues and a support assistant who is a skilled technician. Another teacher is involved as a shadow co-ordinator. The plan addresses important issues such as benchmarks of skills and staff training needs. The installation of a computer suite to facilitate successful implementation of government strategy is planned to begin shortly.

26. The headteacher demonstrates strong leadership and effective management and determination to improve the school's facilities every year, in order to raise standards and allow for increased numbers on roll. The site controller, also, makes an effective contribution to the running and renovation of the school. Improvements have been made for reception and Year 1 pupils, including the addition of a new classroom, in response to findings of the last inspection, but the school is well aware of remaining difficulties. Therefore, further improvements, to facilitate teaching and learning, are planned for the accommodation for 4 – 7 year olds and, in particular, for the under fives.

27. An addition to the facilities that is popular with pupils is a large pond. A parent with environmental expertise helped to supervise its installation and management. The school arranged for this to be sensibly situated just outside the corridor that links the infant and junior classrooms so all can observe seasonal changes and visiting wildlife on a regular basis. The school has set up a study area with easy access to the pond. This includes a computer with relevant programs and an adjacent sink and equipment room. The school has just added a large wooden dipping platform to improve access to the pond. These facilities considerably enhance opportunities for the appreciation and study of plants and animals and also support other areas of the curriculum such as art, mathematics and writing.

Effective teamwork ensures very good provision for pupils with special educational needs

28. The school's approach to the teaching of pupils with a very wide range of special educational need reflects strongly its Christian aims and values. All concerned are keen to help the pupils feel secure and confident of achieving. The way the adults work together promotes pupils' access to the full curriculum. In response to the increasing numbers of these pupils the school appointed a co-ordinator with no class responsibility who works 4 days per week. The headteacher and governors support her very well. The school keeps useful and detailed records of the needs and progress of these pupils.

29. The beneficial effects of training for teachers in writing individual education plans are seen in their good quality. Nearly all show very specific, easily measurable targets and clear indications how these will be achieved and by whom. Parents agree the plans and are involved frequently in helping at home to meet the targets. The plans are reviewed at least half termly and more frequently as required.

30. The well-trained and experienced learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the good progress made by these pupils. Those responsible for pupils with statements have a very good understanding of the complex needs involved. They make detailed notes, liaise effectively with the class teacher and promote the pupils' access to the full curriculum. Through their own good relationships with the pupils and their parents, they encourage integration with other members of the class. Much useful information circulates on an informal basis and regular formal meetings underpin this.

31. The school has identified 60 pupils who need extra help in learning spelling so have introduced a structured scheme that helps pupils move through increasingly difficult levels of spelling patterns. The pupils work in small groups, for several short sessions each week. As in other withdrawal groups for literacy and numeracy support, success is assured largely through the good relationships made by learning support assistants with the pupils. Through calm and patient support they gain the confidence of the pupils, who are then willing to meet the challenges offered to them.

32. The co-ordinator manages the support of external agencies well, including their involvement in the annual review of statements. She has formed a constructive partnership with a member of the local authority's integrated pupil support service that has been helpful in developing the school's provision. Good links with occupational therapy have led to the introduction of exercise programmes for pupils with co-ordination difficulties. The school has arranged for the provision of specialist equipment such as orthopaedic chairs, sloping writing boards and laptop computers for individuals.

33. Pupils throughout the school, who may be having difficulties, for example with friendships, have the opportunity once a week at lunchtime to talk to a former governor in confidence. She is trained in listening skills and helps pupils to develop strategies for resolving difficulties. The school is taking further steps to improve its provision and management of special educational needs through identifying it as an area for monitoring in the coming year.

34. The school has further strengthened the management of this area of its work by its recent appointment of a co-ordinator and governors' committee for pastoral care and special educational needs. The good effect of the close co-operation of all involved is seen in the positive attitudes of these pupils to learning, the good progress they make and their integration into all aspects of school life.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The consistency of some aspects of teaching and learning

35. Over the last two years, the school has experienced a 60 per cent change in teaching staff including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher last September. This presents a challenge to senior staff and governors in maintaining high standards of teaching. The school has budgeted for a systematic programme of monitoring lessons.

36. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators have monitored the implementation of the literacy and numeracy hours and provided feedback to teachers. This has proved useful and the next planned focus is the teaching of religious education. There has been less emphasis on monitoring specific aspects of classroom practice and the headteacher is aware that this is underdeveloped. During the inspection, inspectors noted inconsistencies in lesson planning, in the pace and challenge in lessons and in the management of pupils. Although all lessons seen were at least satisfactory, where these weaknesses occurred the productivity of pupils was less than in the better lessons.

37. Work on planning the teaching of literacy and numeracy has helped teachers improve the structure of lessons across the curriculum and most are planned well. The teachers have clear learning objectives for their lessons and prepare appropriate activities to achieve these. They plan assessment carefully in relation to the learning objectives. However, some lesson plans indicate confusion between the learning objectives and the activities, such as those for a Year 5 English lesson and a Year 3 history lesson. Assessment is focused specifically on individuals or groups in many lessons. However, in others it is too general and not linked sufficiently to learning objectives to be useful in deciding what pupils need to learn next.

38. Teachers offer appropriate challenges in most lessons and move the work on at a brisk pace so there is often a buzz of excitement and interest, but this is not always so. The time given for Y5 pupils to plan their own myth was too long so their concentration lapsed. Where introduction to lessons is overlong, as in a Year 2 English lesson, the pace of learning slows and pupils then find it more difficult to settle quickly to their individual tasks.

39. Where pupils are not sure whether to select resources for themselves, or wait for them to be given out, the pace of the lesson flags as in a Year 2 science lesson. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils unsure of the routine for attracting their teacher's attention were not using time efficiently.

40. In some dance and gymnastics lessons, teachers miss the opportunity to help pupils improve as they give insufficient emphasis to demonstration by pupils and to helping them develop their evaluation skills.

41. Occasionally, in the short lessons before lunchtime, too much is expected for the time. In a Year 5 geography lesson, the initial explanation was rather rushed, so the teacher then had to repeat this to individuals and pairs. This inefficient use of time slowed the pace of achievement.

42. The teachers' management of pupils is good overall and sometimes very good. However, where a teacher raises their voice as a means of control, this is counter-productive, as seen in some Year 3 and Year 4 mathematics lessons. Where the expectations for tasks or behaviour are not clear to the pupils or not fully reinforced, the pupils' effort and productivity are reduced.

The clarity of written reports on their children's progress sent to parents in the summer term

43. A significant number of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the information the school provides on their children's progress. Parents expressed a similar concern at the time of the last inspection.

44. The inspectors judge that the school provides sufficient opportunities for parents to find out about their children's achievements but the format of the written report sent out last summer is not helpful.

45. The report has several good features. For example, there is a clear statement inviting those parents who wish to discuss the report to make an appointment to do so. There are sections in the report that provide opportunities for comments by both pupil and parent.

46. The main difficulty is with the reporting of achievement in each subject area. The format of a series of statements each linked with a five point rating system indicated by stars, provides plenty of useful information, but this is difficult to access in order to form a picture of the performance of an individual.

47. The report appears impersonal and the school has not interpreted the information sufficiently for parents to be able to gain easily a clear idea of the level of progress in each subject over the past year.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To raise further the standards of work and the good quality of provision apparent in many aspects of the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Further monitor aspects of classroom practice such as lesson planning, the challenge and pace of lessons and the management of pupils to improve consistency across the school and match the high standards evident in many lessons.
- (2) Interpret more clearly what children can and can't do in terms of their overall achievement and demonstrate more clearly the progress made in each subject in the annual written report to parents.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 36 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 18 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 6 | 12 | 44 | 38 | 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

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | - | 403 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | - | 10 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | - | 10 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | - | 40 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 17 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 10 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 10 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 4.0 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 0.1 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 5.4 |
|---------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 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 | 28 | 26 | 54 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 25 | 27 | 27 |
| | Girls | 25] | 25 | 25 |
| | Total | 50 | 52 | 52 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 93 (97) | 96 (99) | 96 (99) |
| | National | 82 (77) | 83 (81) | 83 (84) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 25 | 28 | 28 |
| | Girls | 24 | 25 | 25 |
| | Total | 49 | 53 | 53 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 91 | 98 | 98 |
| | National | 82 | 86 | 87 |

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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 | 24 | 22 | 46 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|-------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 17 | 22 | 20 |
| | Girls | 20 | 20 | 21 |
| | Total | 37 | 42 | 41 |

| | | | | |
|---|----------|---------|---------|----------|
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 80 (94) | 91 (97) | 89 (100) |
| | National | 70 (65) | 69 (59) | 78 (69) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 18 | 22 | 21 |
| | Girls | 20 | 20 | 21 |
| | Total | 38 | 42 | 42 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 83 | 91 | 92 |
| | National | 65 | 65 | 71 |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 4 |
| Black – African heritage | 6 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 2 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 1 |
| White | 352 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 9 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 15 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 26.8 |
| Average class size | 31 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

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.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Financial year | 1998/99 |
|----------------|---------|

| | £ |
|-------------------|--------|
| Total income | 578126 |
| Total expenditure | 573271 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 17 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 246 |

| | |
|--|-------|
| Expenditure per pupil | 1525 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 31799 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 36654 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 381 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 126 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 53 | 40 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 36 | 53 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 52 | 45 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 29 | 49 | 15 | 4 | 2 |
| The teaching is good. | 44 | 47 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 19 | 52 | 19 | 11 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 50 | 39 | 10 | 2 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 57 | 39 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 25 | 51 | 17 | 6 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 52 | 40 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 48 | 44 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 13 | 44 | 28 | 5 | 10 |

Other issues raised by parents

At the meeting for parents, some expressed concern about large class sizes and this concern was also raised in some written comments received by inspectors. The concern was linked to one about the inadequacy of the accommodation for the youngest pupils in the school. From next September, the maximum class size for pupils aged 4 – 7 years will be 30.

