

INSPECTION REPORT

Chorley, the Parish of St. Laurence Church of England School

Chorley, Lancashire

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119465

Headteacher: Mrs Y. B. Taylor

Reporting inspector: Mr P. M. Allen
OIN 17531

Dates of inspection: 12th – 13th March 2001

Inspection number: 191331

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Highfield Road South Chorley Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev'd Dr. J. Fenwick
Date of previous inspection:	27 th January 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Parish of St Laurence Church of England School is an average sized primary school which has voluntary aided status and is situated adjacent to parkland near to the town centre of Chorley. Of the 231 pupils on roll, there are slightly more boys than girls. The school serves an area of predominantly owner occupied housing. There are eight classes, one for the Foundation Stage (Reception), three for Key Stage 1 and four for Key Stage 2. All the classes contain discrete year groups, except for the smallest class which contains a mixture of Year 1 and Year 2 children. Virtually all the pupils are of white ethnic origin. There are 19 pupils on the register for special educational needs of whom three have a Statement of Special Educational Need. These numbers are below national averages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Most of the children have received pre-school education and overall, attainment on entry to the school is above what could be expected. The school aims to nurture and develop each child as a unique individual to his/her full potential. The school has set priorities for the future including the further improvement of teaching and learning in a continuing partnership with pupils and parents. The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with a will to become more effective. The quality of education is very well supported by the school's caring, Christian ethos. Children make a very good start to their schooling. The progress pupils make is more marked in Reception and at Key Stage 2, especially towards the end, than it is at Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching is very good in Reception and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. It is mainly good at Key Stage 2, with some very good teaching especially, in Year 6. Standards in tests have been high in recent years but can change when there are a significant number of pupils with special educational needs or there are few higher attainers in a particular year group. The headteacher and governors work well together to provide clear direction. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- ◆ The children in the Reception class are given a very good start to their schooling.
- ◆ The high quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2, especially in Year 6, enables pupils to make good or very good progress.
- ◆ There are very good standards in reading and speaking and listening.
- ◆ There is good leadership and management.
- ◆ The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- ◆ There is very good provision for the pupils' personal development.
- ◆ There is a very good partnership between the school and the parents.

What could be improved

- ◆ The teaching, learning and progress at Key Stage 1.
- ◆ The standards and results of the boys at Key Stage 2.

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 shown a good improvement since its last inspection in January 1997. The issues from that report have largely been addressed. The school has established an effective whole school approach to assessing attainment and progress and informing the setting of targets in the core subjects. Standards, progress and resources have improved in design and technology. There has been some renewal and replacement of resources for information and communication technology, although this process needs to continue. The school has developed systematic monitoring of the curriculum although more needs to be done in monitoring and evaluating the teaching at Key Stage 1. Evidence from National Curriculum tests indicates that standards in the core subjects have gradually risen. The staff are very committed to the school and have the will and capacity to improve further.

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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	B	C
Science	A	A	A	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards in reading and speaking and listening are very good throughout the school. Children at the Foundation Stage (Reception year) attain very well. The vast majority have already attained the new nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals and are beginning to exceed them, especially in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1, where pupils make satisfactory progress, are good and above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. There is a recognition that standards could be higher in writing. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2, where pupils are making good progress, especially in mathematics, are sound and broadly in line with national averages in English and science and good and above national averages in mathematics. With the exception of the mathematics results, these standards are not as high as in previous years; the judgements made are affected by the significant proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and the relatively low number of higher attainers in the Year 6 group observed during the inspection. There is some evidence to indicate underachievement by boys in the Key Stage 2 tests. Standards in music are high, especially at Key Stage 2. The school is setting clear targets in its plans to raise standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes, although there are some lessons where the attitudes of the boys are not as positive as those of the girls.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is usually good, sometimes exemplary, in classrooms, in the playground and around the school. Very orderly movement creates a purposeful atmosphere.
Personal development and relationships	The provision is very good. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Most pupils show respect for the feelings of others and show good levels of co-operation and personal responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is very good; pupils arrive promptly enabling a positive start to the school day.

The positive attitudes, the good behaviour and the very good relationships have a positive impact on the quality of school life.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	very good	satisfactory	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.

It was possible to see only a relatively small amount of teaching during this short inspection. The quality of virtually all the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and often better. It was very good in 38 per cent of the lessons observed, good in 24 per cent and satisfactory in almost all the remainder. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is affected by the fact that two of the three classes are taught by staff new to the key stage. The consistency of the very good teaching seen in Reception and in Year 6 brings about the good or very good progress made in those years. The needs of the pupils with special educational needs are very well met. The needs of the pupils as a whole are well met, although there is a need to more closely target the progress made by pupils at Key Stage 1. The teaching of the skills of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and mainly good or very good at Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The teaching of the youngest and oldest pupils in the school is one of the school's strengths.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced with a clear emphasis on the basic skills. The school is continuing to develop its information and communication technology curriculum. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is comprehensive and imaginative.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for special educational needs is very good. The pupils are very well supported, benefit from clear individual education plans and they make very good progress
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. The quality identified in the previous report has been maintained and improved.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff know the children very well and give very good pastoral support. The school ensures the health, safety, care and protection of all pupils within its caring, Christian ethos.

The school has very effective relationships with parents and this has a significant impact on the quality of learning. A high priority is placed on the care and nurture of the children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together, providing clear and purposeful leadership. The day-to-day administration is very good enabling the school to function smoothly.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body supports the school very well, bringing a wide range of expertise to benefit the work of the school. A number of governors are very involved in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has developed a number of effective strategies for self-evaluation, partly through analysing results and setting targets. There is a need to more clearly focus on the monitoring of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its resources; the surplus income has been reduced through additional spending on part-time support teachers.

The school is well led and managed. Staffing is adequate and the accommodation is of good quality, although some of the classrooms are cramped. The school is well resourced although there is a recognised need to continue the development and renewal of the information and communication technology resources. The headteacher is an astute financial manager. Spending is prudent and focused on the school's priorities and good consideration is given to the principles of best value.

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 school and are making good progress.◆ Standards of behaviour.◆ The quality of teaching and the approachability of the school.◆ Being well informed about progress.◆ The leadership and management.◆ The expectation that children will work hard and become responsible.◆ The school's partnership with parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ As well as a small number of individual concerns, some parents were concerned as to whether the homework given was the right amount and some indicated that they would appreciate more extra-curricular activities.◆ A small number had concerns regarding perceived occasional lapses of discipline.

The responses to the parents' questionnaire and the comments made at the meeting indicate very strong support for the school. Virtually all the views expressed were supportive of the school and inspectors broadly support these views. There has been very good consultation with parents over homework and the provision is appropriate for the various age groups. There is a good range of music and sporting activities, appropriately provided for the older pupils. Observations made during the inspection indicate that standards of behaviour are usually good and often better. Parents value, and are valued by, the school making a positive contribution to the quality of education provided.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The children in the Reception class are given a very good start to their schooling

1. The very good teaching and learning in the Reception class ensures that the children are given a very good start to their school lives. The new national Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Reception Year. The school has made an excellent job of reviewing and developing its curriculum to focus on the new goals which are presented in six areas of learning.

2. At the time of the inspection, which took place just over half way through the school year, most of the children were already meeting the Early Learning Goals. By the end of the year, virtually all the children will meet the goals and it is likely that around three-quarters of them will exceed them in most of the areas, especially in those of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The main reason for this high level of attainment is the very good quality of the teaching and learning, led by the teacher and supported by the nursery nurse and the classroom assistant.

3. The work, involving a rota of structured play activities, is planned meticulously. Two months before the inspection, carefully adapted versions of the literacy and numeracy hours had been introduced and these sessions are having a very positive impact on the children's progress. In an excellent numeracy session observed, the children became very engaged in looking at a wide variety of interesting clocks and timers which the teacher had brought in. Focused questioning helped the children to gain a good understanding of measuring time, followed by games to see how much could be achieved in a particular time. Good examples included identifying a set of letters and numbers (up to 30); 'Can we beat the clock?' asked the teacher and the children answered in the affirmative. In the activities which followed there was a good range of adult-led and child initiated activities to reinforce learning and to enable children to develop and practise skills.

4. This was also the case in a literacy session based on the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'. 'Let's see what our little groups are going to do', said the teacher, followed by very clear and helpful instructions. One group enjoyed rehearsing the story with copies of the book and the 'listening station'; another group (led by the teacher) made their own book of the story, making use of their 'Gingerbread Man' bookmarks; a third group used puppets to make up their own version. 'Some of us are the audience', explained one child. A very good range of resources were enjoyed by the other children, including the very good use of information and communication technology to help children to reinforce early reading and numeracy skills. Every activity has clear purpose and there are good recording, assessment and evaluation practices.

5. The staff, working as a team led by the teacher, focus on particular individuals or groups but manage at the same time to keep oversight of the whole area, intervening when appropriate. The children's pleasure in learning is clear. There are very high expectations and this means that the children behave very well and co-operate well with one another. The quality of the teaching and learning is enriched by the caring and supportive quality of the relationships and by the way that each child is valued as an individual. Parents value and appreciate the quality of the teaching and the opportunities given to their children. This teaching leads to quality early learning, which lays the foundations for future learning.

The high quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2, especially in Year 6, enables pupils to make good or very good progress

6. The quality of most of the teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is good or very good. It is consistently very good in Year 6. The high quality of teaching has a significant impact on the progress made and the good academic standards that are achieved; it enables pupils with special educational needs to make very good progress. Teachers know their subjects well and planning clearly identifies the lesson objectives which are shared with the pupils in good quality introductions to lessons. These introductions usually move at a brisk pace and include a revision of work done previously. It is to the credit of teachers that pupils' recall is often very good; for example, in a science lesson on electricity, pupils showed that they had remembered basic information about simple electrical circuits from work done two years previously.

7. Teachers use challenging questions to make pupils think and to find out what they know and understand. This is particularly evident in numeracy lessons, where pupils are encouraged to explore different ways of finding the answers to problems. They are helped to become very skilled at using a variety of strategies which enable them to carry out calculations quickly and with confidence. Teachers provide effective feedback through marking and they set homework which is relevant, supportive and manageable. The focus of the teaching is on the pupils systematically gaining confidence and consolidating knowledge, skills and understanding by building on prior attainment.

8. In the very good lessons, teachers have high expectations of both the quality and amount of work which they expect pupils to complete. They provide work which is challenging, but well matched to pupils' needs, allowing them to complete the tasks successfully in the time allowed. Management of pupils is very good. There are very high expectations for very good behaviour and the pupils meet these expectations; this was clearly the case in the Year 6 literacy and numeracy lessons. Support staff are well briefed on the aims of the lessons and keep detailed records of the pupils' progress. They provide effective teaching, often to pupils with special educational needs. The very good communication between the teachers and support staff ensures that any difficulties which pupils may have in lessons are quickly followed up. The plenary sessions at the end of lessons are used effectively to reinforce lesson objectives, to assess achievement and to celebrate pupils' successes.

9. The high quality teaching and supportive attitudes towards the pupils ensure that they respond well and work hard giving of their best. Consequently they achieve as well as they are able, making good progress. This makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided.

There are very good standards in reading and speaking and listening

10. Comments made at the parents' meeting indicated that parents were very happy with the high priority given to reading and the very good standards attained. Early on, the routine is established for children to take reading books home on a daily basis, making effective use of the home-school reading record.

11. In the Reception year, children have good access to a range of good quality picture books. They quickly learn the initial sounds of letters and soon begin to read simple, repetitive texts. The classroom is full of language to read and children are given well structured, individual help as well as very good opportunities for shared reading within a stimulating version of the

literacy hour. This progress in reading continues through Key Stage 1. Pupils develop good levels of fluency, accuracy and understanding thus giving them the competency to meet the reading demands of the National Curriculum. By the age of 7, most pupils can read independently, establishing meaning through appropriate strategies. National testing data shows that, taking the three years from 1998 to 2000 together, the performance of pupils in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 exceeded the national average for their age by a significant margin.

12. This progress continues through Key Stage 2, where most pupils continue to read with understanding and expression. They become proficient at accessing information from books in the reference library, from the Internet and through the use of the CD-Rom; they effectively access information on world faiths. By the age of 11, except in the case of a minority of boys, pupils are developing into enthusiastic and reflective readers; the higher attainers are able to compare the merits of the different books they have read and many children have developed a love of reading.

13. The part played by parents has a very positive impact on the standards achieved. They provide valuable support for their children in reading by encouraging them and hearing them read regularly at home. Teachers show good technical competency in teaching phonic skills; they hear pupils read as often as possible and make good use of helpers to hear readers. Good quality support is given to pupils with special educational needs in order to help them in the acquisition of basic reading skills; they are regularly withdrawn from class to work in small groups, often with specialist help, enabling them to make very good progress. The significant recent development of reading materials is helping to support the very good standards.

14. Most children start school well prepared and positive about what the school has to offer and with good speaking skills. Through a wide range of activities to promote pupils' oracy skills, the school nurtures and develops spoken language and the pupils make good progress. Most literacy and numeracy sessions start and end with a discussion and, over time, most pupils become confident in their speaking skills. The youngest children enjoy listening to stories and recall the important points when questioned; they enjoy listening to 'The Gingerbread Man'. In Reception and at Key Stage 1 when talking informally, playing and working, most children communicate effectively using a growing vocabulary. They learn to listen attentively; this was the case in an assembly on the 'Five Loaves and Two Fishes'.

15. The good progress continues through Key Stage 2. In a science lesson on making a circuit with a switch, pupils were able to explain clearly what they had done and what they had learnt. In a 'Circle Time', pupils were observed speaking clearly and confidently when talking about their own responsibilities; they listened carefully and respected others' speaking time. In a literacy hour, pupils were able to give good explanations and examples of the difference between synonyms and antonyms.

16. The oldest pupils show increased competency in their spoken language. They take turns when listening and contributing their suggestions and answers and show appreciation of other points of view. They speak with confidence and choose words carefully. They reflect well on previous experiences; for example, a visit to a local farm, a trip to the Butterfly House at Lancaster, bird spotting at Worthington Lakes and singing as part of 'A Thousand Voices' in aid of the local hospice. The oldest pupils reflect with affection on their time at this school and share their anxieties about the move to secondary school. They talk with enthusiasm about their imminent planned residential break in the Lake District, involving bedtime in dormitories.

17. The very good standards in reading and in speaking and listening have a very significant impact on the quality of learning and the standards the pupils achieve.

There is good leadership and management

18. The quality of leadership provided by the headteacher, deputy head and governing body has had and is having a significant effect on the success of this good school. The headteacher is very aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. The action plan produced after the previous inspection addressed the issues raised in a rigorous, well organised way. The headteacher has ensured that developments have taken place at an appropriate pace, so that new systems are thorough and well organised. In addition to those issues raised at the previous inspection, the headteacher identified other areas for development such as the provision for early years which is now a strength of the school.

19. The staff are valued and work very well as a team. Evaluation of teaching is beginning to become part of the school's routine. Teaching staff have clear written descriptions of what is expected of them and these are reviewed regularly. The school has made a good start to analysing results and data to inform clear target setting in the core subjects. The headteacher and deputy head work closely together and provide clear and purposeful leadership. They share a vision of what sort of school it should be. Central to this, is a commitment to high expectations of success. They want pupils to achieve their best and to try to do better. National performance data on results shows that standards have risen since the previous inspection.

20. This vision is shared by staff, pupils, the governing body and parents. The headteacher's very strong commitment to the school as a community has resulted in very good communications between staff, pupils, the governing body and parents, and all enjoy being part of the school. The headteacher is very effective in promoting the school's caring, Christian ethos where every child is valued. Both the governing body and parents regard very highly the work done by the headteacher to make everyone feel they are making a worthwhile contribution to the partnership.

21. Governors use their considerable expertise well to support the work of the school. A number of them are closely involved in the life of the school. The close consultation between the headteacher and finance committee ensures that the budget is used effectively. The headteacher is financially astute and was commended for her financial management by the audit service. She always seeks best value for money; for example, where possible, she uses the considerable expertise amongst her staff for teacher training rather than employing outside agencies.

22. The commitment to continuing self-evaluation and high expectations has helped to create an effective school which has the will and capacity to improve further through a systematic process of review, evaluation and planned improvement.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good

23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school complies with statutory requirements for the care of the 19 pupils who are on the register of special educational needs, three of whom have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Very good individual education plans and support programmes are devised for the pupils. Targets set are realistic, manageable and comprehensively set out to accommodate the pupils'

learning. Very good strategies and useful materials are listed in the plans. The writing of the individual education plans has changed since a local education authority monitoring visit late last year. Recommendations to use an alternative format for writing the plans that would sharpen the focus on assessment as the basis for target setting have been put in place.

24. Each term the special educational needs co-ordinator is given a small amount of non-contact time to write the individual education plans with the class teachers. This has enabled teachers to improve the quality of the plans and the co-ordinator to monitor the progress of pupils more closely. The co-ordinator meets staff individually at 'worship' time or after school to discuss pupils' needs. Parents are involved as soon as any concerns are raised about their child's special needs. They are closely consulted in the process of writing the individual education plans. Parents are welcome before and after school to see the co-ordinator who makes herself readily available.

25. Support assistants and teachers work very effectively to promote the learning of the pupils. No modifications to, or disapplications from, the National Curriculum have been sought for the pupils. Very clear planning is in place covering the role of support staff, enabling all pupils to follow the same topic at an appropriate level. All lesson plans refer to the requirements of pupils with special educational needs. Decisions on where support is best used are made termly. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good but more often it is very good. Pupils work on basic skills in the core subjects with differentiation and good reference to purpose and context. All pupils are given opportunity and access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

26. Links with outside support agencies and with parents are very good. The policy is in the process of being updated with help from the local education authority adviser. A governor is designated to monitor special educational needs and comes into school on a regular basis to be updated and to observe lessons. The co-ordinator is providing good leadership. Accommodation for special educational needs is good with some very good areas for withdrawal groups. The work is well resourced and good use is made of computers. Overall, provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, progression is good and achievement is appropriate to their ages and abilities.

There is very good provision for the pupils' personal development

27. There is very good provision for the pupils' personal development within the school's safe, caring environment. The school's mission statement, together with its values and aims, form the introduction in the school brochure for parents. These aims give a clear, definitive commitment to the Christian faith and to the development of each child as an individual. The school has very good provision for the pupils' welfare and guidance; their pastoral needs are well met. All the staff know the children well and provide good supervision in lessons and in the playground; this builds up very good relationships.

28. There is very good provision for the pupils' spiritual development. In every aspect of school life, the school's Christian ethos is evident. Religious posters, murals, tapestries, artefacts and Biblical quotations are displayed around the school. There are many opportunities for the pupils to reflect on their own lives and the lives of others. The well planned assemblies include meaningful acts of collective worship, using a candle as a central focus for the pupils' thoughts. Prayers are said at the end of school sessions; written prayers are displayed on the

walls, such as the prayer 'Thank you for the food we eat' in the Reception classroom. The pupils are encouraged to think about the world around them through their curricular work, especially in religious education. The school has a very strong tradition of charity work, including support for the children's hospice at Derian House, for the Pendlebury Children's Hospital and for the local Mayor's charities.

29. The school teaches the principles which distinguish right from wrong. The pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour expected and they respond accordingly. They are encouraged to support one another; the older pupils look after their younger friends by helping the adult supervisors in the infant playground. The pupils are taught to show suitable respect for the views of others and for property. The exemplary movement observed into and out of the assemblies, whilst carrying their chairs, was an excellent example of the orderly way in which the pupils demonstrated their discipline. The pupils' academic, sporting and other successes are celebrated in Friday school assembly.

30. There is very good provision for the pupils' cultural development. They learn about the cultures of local, national and international populations through their work in history, geography, art and drama. Pupils benefit significantly from the very good musical opportunities through which a significant proportion learn to play a good range of instruments and perform in the recorder group, the orchestra and the choir. The school's welcoming environment is enriched by interesting displays, such as van Gogh pictures, an anthology of poems and some historical American paintings. The pupils gain valuable education from their work with their American pen-pals; this work includes various projects, such as analysis of each other's weather data.

31. The pupils' social development is enhanced by the well-planned use of circle time, where pupils sit in a circle taking turns to talk to their class. A very good Year 5 lesson was observed where the pupils explored the meaning of 'being responsible', using words such as 'trusted'; the pupils then had to consider the differences between rewards and privileges. The pupils benefit from the school's provision of many educational visits and from the school's excellent tradition in music and performance, at such venues as Manchester's Bridgewater Hall and Blackpool's Winter Gardens. The good range of extra-curricular activities extend the pupils' learning, helping to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world.

32. The pupils are polite, courteous and independent. The school's provision for their personal development teaches them to become responsible and independent citizens. It is a strength of the school of which it is rightly proud.

There is a very good partnership between the school and the parents

33. The school works very well in partnership with its parents. During the inspection the parents agreed unanimously that, should they have any concerns, the school is easily approached and they have full confidence in the school. Coffee mornings have been introduced and there are occasional information evenings, in order to ensure that parents are able to integrate better with the school. Parents are aware that they are able to speak with the class teachers at the end of the school day, should they wish to do so. All parents agreed that there is close liaison with them on pastoral matters.

34. The school's prospectus and the governing body's annual report are both well presented documents, with detailed information for parents on the school's procedures and curriculum. The prospectus gives a wider range of information than is normally expected; for example, there are

useful sections on preparation for starting school and advice on communicable diseases. Parents are kept up to date on the school's current events through a weekly newsletter each Friday. There are two formal parent evenings, one each in the autumn and spring terms, which are very well supported. Parents are also invited into school to discuss their child's end of year report. The pupils' reports are very well formulated with information on the curriculum studied in each subject, followed by the teacher's detailed assessment of the individual pupil's progress and attainment.

35. The parents' association is a very successful group which arranges the summer fair and other various activities throughout the year. It raises significant funds, which are well used to supplement the school's resources; for example, information and communication technology hardware and library books. The complete stage lighting in the hall is another valuable asset provided by the association. The parents are well represented on the governing body and the annual meeting for parents is well attended. Parents are able to make an important contribution to the formulation of school policy.

36. The school has a detailed homework policy, which was revised after consultation with the parents and pupils. The policy now allows for homework to be spread across the weekends in order to better fit in with family arrangements. The policy has been circulated to all parents in order that they are aware of the requirements; most parents are happy with the homework provision, although a few would prefer either less or more. The parents' contributions are effective in enhancing the education of their children; this is particularly evident in the standard of reading. Many parents help within the school, especially within Key Stage 1. During the inspection, one of the helpers was observed giving valuable assistance in a Year 2 literacy lesson.

37. The parents agree that there is a good standard of teaching and that the school works closely with parents. Many parents spoke of having had several children pass through the school and praised the consistently high standards achieved. The parents of Reception children were very complimentary about the school's induction procedures and the excellent academic and social education given by the Foundation Stage teacher. The inspection questionnaire for parents indicated a very high degree of support for the school. Overall, the very good partnership with the parents is a significant factor in enhancing the quality of education provided by the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The teaching, learning and progress at Key Stage 1

38. During the inspection the quality of teaching and learning observed at Key Stage 2, especially in Year 6, was usually higher than that observed at Key Stage 1. For reasons of professional development, some teachers have recently changed age groups; the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is affected by the fact that two of the three classes are taught by staff who are new to the key stage. Some support has been provided but more is needed.

39. In the teaching observed towards the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils responded to the high expectations of their capacity to work hard, where the pace of lessons takes learning forward and where high standards are carefully targeted. The quality of teaching has a very positive impact on levels of attainment and progress being made. In some of the teaching observed at Key Stage 1 during the inspection there were insufficiently high expectations of the

pupils; for example, there were times when the work was not challenging enough for the higher attainers and when there was too little for them to do. Consequently the pupils did not

do a great deal of work and too much time was spent off-task. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 needs to be as focused on targeting progress and raising standards as it is at the end of Key Stage 2.

40. A scrutiny of pupils' work reflects this picture. There is sometimes less matching of the tasks to the needs and abilities of the different ability groups than is found in the Key Stage 2 work. The quality of presentation and handwriting is not as good as it should be for some pupils because of the insufficiently high expectations. Some pupils are not as productive as they could be; the amount of work produced is sometimes insufficient. Most pupils are motivated to do well but they are not always encouraged sufficiently. Standards in the work are often not as high as they ought to be. There is a need to improve written work and to further develop extended writing.

41. Some of the main differences between the teaching at Key Stage 1 and that at Key Stage 2 were concerned with the pace of lessons, the management of pupils and the expectations of what pupils could achieve. The school has appropriate aspirations to benefit all its pupils with consistently high quality teaching. Closely focused monitoring of teaching at Key Stage 1 can provide targets for improvement, targets which are monitored and reviewed. This can enhance teacher performance and have a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Where the quality of teaching observed was very good, this had a very clear impact on the response of the pupils, the progress they made and the standards they reached.

The standards and results of the boys at Key Stage 2

42. Analysis of pupils' performance based on test results shows that, in 2000, the performance of boys at Key Stage 1 was significantly higher than the national averages for boys in reading and writing and slightly higher in mathematics. During the same year, the performance of girls was higher than national averages for girls in reading and writing, but to a lesser degree. It was higher in mathematics by a very similar margin to that of the boys.

43. Given the size of year groups, attainment can and does vary especially, for example, when in one year group there are a significant proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. Nevertheless, national performance data makes it possible to consider the results over a longer period. Taking the performance over three years, from 1998 to 2000, gives a broadly similar picture of the relative performance of boys and girls. This data indicates that there is no significant difference in attainment by gender at Key Stage 1.

44. Looking at performance over three years at Key Stage 2 gives a different picture. The performance of girls over three years, from 1998 to 2000 together, compared with the performance of girls nationally is higher than the performance of the boys compared with the national averages for boys, and this is particularly marked in English. With the exception of mathematics in 2000, this difference is apparent to a greater or lesser extent in all the test results over the last four years. It is difficult to predict outcomes by gender compared with national averages for the tests of summer 2001.

45. The school has started to consider and act upon this indication of underachievement by boys, for example, by building up a range of reading texts to cater for the interests of boys with

plans to further develop guided reading materials and non-fiction for boys. Although the timescale of a short inspection provided insufficient opportunity to consider this issue, there

were lessons, including literacy sessions, where the attitudes of the boys were not as positive as those of the girls. In a practical science lesson, it was noted that there was no evidence of gender differences in enthusiasm for the work.

46. It is a perception of the staff that boys are more interested in numeracy than they are in literacy. An assessment undertaken as part of a range of performance indicators is concerned with attitudes of pupils towards various areas of learning. In one of the older Key Stage 2 year groups, the only pupils identified with negative attitudes were boys.

47. There is an important need for the staff to investigate and address the apparent underachievement by boys, especially in English. A start has been made but there is much more to be done.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors' action plan will set out how the areas for improvement identified during the inspection are to be addressed.

In order to further raise standards and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆ improve the teaching, learning and progress at Key Stage 1 by:
 - *providing focused monitoring of the teaching and learning with the development of clear strategies for more effective teaching;*
 - *raising expectations of what pupils can achieve and their productivity;*
 - *consistently providing more challenging work for the higher attainers, especially in written tasks;*
 - *reviewing the level of adult support for the teaching;*

- ◆ target the improvement of standards and results of the boys at Key Stage 2 by:
 - *investigating further the evidence of underachievement by boys;*
 - *closely monitoring progress made by boys in the various areas of learning;*
 - *carefully reviewing gender response to classroom and school practices;*
 - *continuing to develop resources geared to the interests of boys, including reading materials.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	33	24	33	5	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)	232
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24

English as an additional language

Number of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

Number of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	15	18	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	17	18	18
	Total	31	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (97)	100 (94)	100 (97)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	29	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (94)	91 (97)	91 (97)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	19	16	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	17	18
	Girls	16	13	15
	Total	31	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (89)	86 (89)	94 (91)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	17	19
	Girls	16	13	15
	Total	31	30	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (80)	86 (86)	97 (83)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	197
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)	9.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4 : 1
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
	£
Total income	397,691
Total expenditure	394,768
Expenditure per pupil	1,605
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,960
Balance carried forward to next year	28,883

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	238
Number of questionnaires returned	112

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	39	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	47	1	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	46	11	0	1
The teaching is good.	60	40	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	50	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	26	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	31	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	46	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	49	45	4	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	39	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	45	12	0	5