

INSPECTION REPORT

ST CLARE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119587

Headteacher: Mr M Purcell

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Boden
12301

Dates of inspection: 10th – 11th September 2001

Inspection number: 191435

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sharoe Green Lane North Fulwood Preston Lancashire
Postcode:	PR2 9HH
Telephone number:	01772 787037
Fax number:	01772 78701601772 787016
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father M Lakeland
Date of previous inspection:	18th – 22nd November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
12301	Mrs J Boden	Registered inspector
31718	Mrs D Shields	Lay inspector
22398	Mrs L Wright	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Evenlode Associates Ltd
6 Abbey Close
Alcester
Warwickshire
B49 5QW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	13
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	15
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	16

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized Catholic primary school with 265 pupils on roll. It is a popular and over-subscribed school. Although there are significant differences between the numbers of boys and girls in some year groups, overall the difference is not significant. The school is situated in a middle class area and most of the children attend private nurseries before they join the school. Their attainment when they enter the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday is above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. All the pupils speak English fluently although a small number are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below average as is the proportion with statements of special educational need. The school was without a full-time head teacher for five terms before a permanent appointment was made in April 2001. (The deputy was also absent for two terms). During this time crucial changes took place in primary education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Clare's provides a sound education for all its pupils. The recently appointed head teacher has been very effective in the short time he has been in post. He has restored staff morale and the teachers have welcomed his appointment. The very good relationships between all members of the school community create a family atmosphere where the pupils feel relaxed, secure and keen to learn, and the parents support the school effectively. The quality of teaching and learning is good and this leads to high standards in English, mathematics and science. Children join the school with above average attainment. They make good progress and develop good attitudes to learning that prepare them well for secondary school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The very good leadership by the head teacher, since his appointment at the beginning of the summer term, has raised teacher morale and created a team spirit that supports the determination by all staff to move the school forward.
- Teaching in English, mathematics and science (the core subjects) is of consistently good quality enabling the pupils to make very good progress as they move throughout the school.
- The pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The very good relationships within the school, and the good support of parents make the school a happy place where the pupils feel relaxed, secure and ready to learn.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) in Years 3 to 6 are too low.
- The curriculum is unsatisfactory in the infant and junior classes. It does not meet statutory requirements in the junior classes, and some pupils do not receive their full entitlement to all subjects.
- The school day is not long enough in the junior classes.
- The governors' involvement in running the school is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. When the school was inspected in 1996, it was deemed to give good value for money, even though there were weaknesses in leadership and management. From September 1999, the school was managed by a succession of part-time associate head teachers until the very recent appointment of the present head teacher. During this difficult period, the teachers coped very well and maintained the high standards that have earned the school its good reputation. They implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies very effectively and planned their work in science according to the latest guidance. This addressed successfully the first key issue in the last report. The rest of the key issues were not tackled effectively until the appointment of the present head teacher. Since his appointment he has made a good start to addressing the remaining key issues. The staff have welcomed the head teacher's sensitive approach and are very supportive of his plans to move the school forward. Given the commitment and enthusiasm of the head teacher and staff, the school is well placed to maintain its high standards and to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	C	D
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	A*	A	A*	A

Key	
Very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and reach high standards by the end of the reception year. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been consistently high for the past three years. In 1999, standards in reading and writing were in the top five per cent of schools nationally.

The results of the national tests at 11 show that standards in English were consistently high until they dropped in 2000 to a point where they were only average in comparison with schools nationally and below average in comparison with similar schools. The unusually high proportion of pupils in the year group with special educational needs explains this. Some of these pupils had come from other schools. In English, boys do better than girls at seven, but the position is reversed at eleven. Standards in mathematics and science at seven and 11 have remained consistently high over the past three years. In 2000, standards in science at 11 were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. The school is not complacent. In order to maintain such high standards they set challenging targets, which, in 2001, they have met in mathematics and exceeded by a considerable margin in English. The quality of writing achieved by most pupils is impressive. They write with increasing confidence and, as they move through the school, they develop a very good range of techniques for engaging the interest of the reader. Pupils throughout the school have good mental skills that they use effectively to solve problems. In the junior classes, standards in information and communication technology are well below those expected. The school does not build effectively on what the pupils learn at home.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall. When teaching is relevant and interesting, pupils respond enthusiastically and with enjoyment. As a result they make good gains in learning. In some lessons pupils show little interest in or enthusiasm for learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school is an orderly place. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and the vast majority concentrate well on their work.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The quality of relationships is a strength of the school. The pupils show respect for other people's values and beliefs.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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 quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Its impact over time on pupils' learning in English, mathematics and science is very good. The teachers have had to find their own ways of coping with national priorities and initiatives, and they have done so through hard work and dedication to the well-being and intellectual growth of their pupils. Parents appreciate how well the teachers worked in difficult circumstances.

Teaching in English, mathematics and science (the core subjects) is consistently good, enabling the pupils to make very good progress as they move through the school. The main strengths of the teaching are the high expectations that the teachers have of all their pupils and the lively and interesting way they present their lessons. Most of the lessons proceed at a brisk pace that keeps the pupils on their toes. Although most of the classes contain pupils from more than one year group, the work is matched accurately to the needs of the different groups. All the teachers ensure that all pupils are able to join in the lessons, working alongside their peers and being fully included in tasks, activities and class discussions. Often this is done by giving pupils with identified special educational needs extra help, but teachers are vigilant to check that no-one is struggling, and quick to support those that are experiencing difficulty. This enables them to progress as well as the other pupils. Teachers have a good understanding of what they are teaching, which enables them to plan learning that is well suited to the different ability groups, and challenges them to think and work hard. At the time of the inspection, the pupils had only been in their new classes for four days and their teachers were still finding out how much they understood and could do. Although an effective system of record keeping has yet to be established, they used questioning effectively to establish levels of learning and changed their questions and approaches accordingly. Teachers have incorporated the structure and aims of the national literacy and numeracy strategies successfully, so that standards in English and mathematics remain high, and in this year's test results show improvement.

Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers are very good, and this promotes a secure and happy learning environment. Although teachers give good, and sometimes excellent verbal feedback in lessons so that pupils know how well they are doing, and how they can improve, this is not reflected in the marking of pupils' work. Here, although it is supportive it tends to give few pointers to future improvement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It is relevant and interesting and stimulates good learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The length and organisation of the school day result in insufficient time being allocated to the non-core subjects and statutory requirements are not met in information and communication technology. Although literacy and numeracy skills are taught well in English and mathematics lessons, the pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects. Some pupils miss out on music and swimming.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. As a result these pupils make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The pupils enter school with strong moral and social values. They know the difference between right and wrong and this is evident in their good behaviour and in the way they relate to other people. Their spiritual development is nurtured well through the strong links with the church.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory procedures are in place for child protection and all members of staff are aware of these. The governors pay close attention to health and safety matters with regard to the school premises.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The head teacher provides very effective leadership and the curriculum co-ordinators have begun to take on more responsibility. The head teacher has a very clear idea of what the school needs to do to improve. In the short time he has been in post he has put in place good systems to effect the necessary improvements.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory overall. Although the governors support the school in a pastoral sense and have become more involved than they were before the present head teacher's appointment, they are not sufficiently involved in running the school. They have not yet introduced measures for establishing whether they are achieving best value.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. The school analyses its test results and takes effective action to improve overall standards. However, although it is aware of the discrepancy between the performance of boys and girls in English, it has not yet taken steps to address this.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. The funds allocated for specific training and the support for pupils with special educational needs are all properly targeted. There are shortages of resources for some subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Behaviour in school is good. • The teaching is good and the teachers are very committed. • The staff are approachable and friendly. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like a more consistent approach to homework. • They would like more information about how their children are getting on. • They would like a closer partnership with the school. • They would like more extra-curricular activities.

The inspectors agree with all the positive comments. The comments regarding homework, information about how their children are getting on and the partnership between the school and parents are well founded. The school acknowledges these weaknesses and steps have already been taken to remedy these. With regard to extra-curricular activities, even though the vast majority of pupils are happy with what is provided, there are plans to introduce more.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The very good leadership by the head teacher, since his appointment at the beginning of the summer term, has raised teacher morale and created a team spirit that supports the determination by all staff to move the school forward.

1. Since his appointment, at the beginning of the summer term, the head teacher has brought a new lease of life to the school. The school had been without effective leadership since the departure of the last permanent head teacher two years ago. During this time there were three associate head teachers working at the school on a part-time basis. Although they each did their best to support the school, they obviously could not give the commitment that was necessary because they were still managing their own schools.
2. Teacher morale was at a very low ebb because the teachers knew that there were important changes taking place in primary education and they were not getting the information and support they needed to implement these changes. Although they worked very hard and maintained the high standards in English, mathematics and science, they knew that there were weaknesses in other areas of the curriculum. In particular, they were concerned about their lack of training in information and communication technology because their pupils were missing out; standards in the school were falling whereas in most other schools they were rising. Although parents at the pre-inspection meeting praised the teachers for keeping the school going under such difficult circumstances, there were some who withdrew their children because of their dissatisfaction.
3. The head teacher's first priority was to restore the teachers' belief in themselves. Until his appointment staff had not been sufficiently involved in management decisions. Curriculum co-ordinators did not manage their subjects, so they had little idea of what was going on in other classrooms. The present head teacher has given the co-ordinators full responsibility for their subjects. They have responded well to this because they feel empowered to manage effectively. A programme of monitoring of teaching and learning through classroom observations by co-ordinators has been started although this is at an early stage. A new computer suite has been provided and the teachers are looking forward eagerly to receiving training that will enable them to teach information and communication technology skills to the pupils.
4. Although the staff have worked very hard over the past few years and tried to work as a team, the lack of leadership and a clear overview of what was happening meant that they were not always effective. There was no one person to collate ideas and make decisions. The deputy head had little management experience and was not equipped to take over the school as acting head.
5. When the head teacher was appointed, he recognised very quickly what was good in the school and where improvements were necessary. He brought with him a wealth of management experience and in the short time he has been in post he has put in place good systems for improvement. His main strength is in his sensitive handling of people and the difficult situations in which they find themselves. He appreciates and values the teachers. They in turn welcome his appointment. Given the commitment and hard work by the teachers and the very good team spirit that exists, the school is well placed to move forward.

Teaching in English, mathematics and science (the core subjects) is of consistently good quality enabling the pupils to make very good progress as they move throughout the school.

6. The pupils' very good achievement and the high standards of work that result are the consequences of good teaching. All lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory and the majority were good or very good. The good quality of teaching noted at the previous inspection has been maintained. This reflects the commitment and hard work of the staff, who have experienced a very difficult few years of changing leadership and its associated lack of a co-ordinated and consistent approach to staff and curriculum development. The teachers have had to find their own ways of coping with national priorities and initiatives, and they have done so through hard work and dedication to the well-being and intellectual growth of their pupils. They

have incorporated the structure and aims of the national literacy and numeracy strategies successfully, so that standards in English and mathematics remain high, and, in this year's test, show improvement.

7. The teaching of the core subjects is thoroughly prepared and resourced. Teachers have a good understanding of what they are teaching, which enables them to plan learning that is well suited to the different ability groups, and challenges pupils to think and work hard. At the time of the inspection, the pupils had only been in their new classes for four days and their teachers were still finding out how much they understood and could do. Although an effective system of record keeping has yet to be established, they used questioning effectively to establish levels of learning and changed their questions and approaches accordingly. The teachers' clarity of the purposes of the lessons enables them to explain clearly and ask questions that constantly establish the level of the pupils' understanding and to reinforce, and extend it. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 2, the pupils understood the value of each digit in a two-digit number and read it correctly. The teacher provided more challenge in her questioning, signalling her high expectations that her pupils would keep concentrating and working hard throughout. In an excellent English lesson in Year 6, the teacher asked particularly probing and well-focused questions to set the context for a passage from 'Oliver Twist'. The pupils were expected to draw on their own experiences as well as previous learning to consider what life is and was like for poor people. A feature of these and some other lessons seen was the teachers' joy in enthusing the pupils, and a shared love of learning.
8. Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do, and ensure that these expectations are met. A group of pupils in the reception class, and very new to the school were gently and supportively encouraged to listen carefully and think hard about how to lay the table for a forest animals' 'picnic'. They responded with interest and enthusiasm, and even laid the table spontaneously with coloured sets of dishes and cutlery. All teachers ensure that all pupils are able to join in the lessons, working alongside their peers and being fully included in tasks, activities and class discussions. Often this is done by giving pupils with identified special educational needs extra help, but teachers are vigilant to check that no-one is struggling, and quick to support those who are experiencing difficulty. This enables them to progress as well as the other pupils.
9. Lessons are generally purposeful, well organised and suitably paced. This reflects the teachers' thorough subject knowledge and good classroom management skills. The pupils' home values match those of the school strongly, so pupils are willing to learn. They match the school's high expectations of good behaviour right from the start, so that, generally, only a gentle reminder is needed. This means that lesson time is used fully for teaching and learning. Teachers have a good grasp of the concepts they are teaching. This was particularly evident in science lessons seen, where the teachers understood the purpose and range of scientific enquiry and helped their pupils to make good progress in their learning. In a lesson in Year 1, the teacher had chosen very carefully objects to be sorted according to whether they need a push or a pull to start them moving. Her clear and correct use of scientific terms helped the pupils towards an understanding that pushes and pulls are two different actions and that movement results from each. In a very good science lesson in Year 5/6, the class was investigating how their bodies react to exercise, and how this could be measured. The teacher had planned this as an interesting and imaginative activity, so that the pupils made very good gains in their learning.
10. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers are very good and this promotes a secure and happy learning environment. A group of pupils in Year 6 said they thought the school was 'brilliant, perfect' and they thought that the teachers helped them to learn so that they learnt well.
11. Although teachers give good, and sometimes excellent verbal feedback in lessons, so that pupils know how well they are doing, and how they can improve, this is not reflected in the marking of pupils' work. Although it is supportive it tends to give few pointers to future improvement.

The pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science.

12. Despite the difficulties of the past two years, standards at age seven and 11 have remained high in English, mathematics and science. Pupils enter the school with above average language and mathematical skills and good social skills that enable them to settle quickly into school life. Their past experiences, whether at home or in the more formal setting of a nursery or playgroup, give them a good start in finding out about the world around them. The teachers build well on what the pupils already know and can do. They have high expectations and this spurs the pupils on to try even harder.
13. Pupils write with increasing confidence and more sophisticated vocabulary as they move through the school. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can write independently in correctly punctuated sentences. By the time they reach Year 6, they spell correctly and use a good range of imagery to engage the attention of the reader. A good example of this was seen in an average attaining pupil's book, 'Dominated by its rocky wave lashed coastline, Cornwall is most renowned for its rugged cliffs and sandy coves....'
14. In mathematics, pupils develop good mental skills that they use effectively to solve problems. They understand the meanings of mathematical terms and use them to explain how to solve problems. By the end of Year 2, they can measure accurately in centimetres and have a good understanding of reflective symmetry. Pupils in Year 6 understand place value to seven digits and use this knowledge to solve decimal problems to two places. They have a good understanding of fraction equivalence including decimal fractions. They can draw and measure angles accurately and use negative numbers in four quadrants to explore rotational symmetry of more complex two-dimensional shapes. They construct and interpret graphs accurately.
15. In science, pupils develop good enquiry skills because they are given good opportunities to carry out their own investigations. This deepens their understanding of the scientific knowledge that they acquire. The test results at 11 have been consistently high for the past three years. In 2000, they were in the top five per cent in the country.

The very good relationships within the school, and the good support of parents make the school a happy place where the pupils feel relaxed, secure and ready to learn.

16. Despite the difficulties the school has faced over the previous two years the vast majority of parents have remained supportive. The school is aware that a few parents lost confidence and removed their children from the school. Some parents at the pre-inspection meeting said that, although they had considered moving their children to other schools, they were glad now that they had not done so. The support parents have provided can be seen, for example, in the significant sums of money raised by the hard working parents and friends association. As a result of their work and the support of other parents, not just by raising money but also by giving freely of their time, improvements have been made such as the provision of outside play equipment and an environmental garden.
17. Many parents work, so only a few are able to support activities in classrooms, but there is a great deal of support for the work their children do at home. Homework arrangements have recently been revised and there is now a published timetable of regular homework activities that support the work pupils do in school. Although the term has only recently started, there are supportive comments in the homework and reading diaries.
18. Parents agree that the very good relationships between the pupils and the between the pupils and all adults make the school a happy place where their children feel relaxed and secure. They feel that the warm ethos contributes strongly to their children's success in learning. Some parents at the meeting said, "Every time I come into the building it feels like entering a large family." Although analysis of the parental questionnaires reveals a somewhat negative picture, written and verbal comments praise the new head teacher. Parents appreciate that, after a period of instability, a new head teacher has been appointed and some expressed the view that he has already instigated change for the better. Those who have spoken to him state clearly that he has proved approachable and interested in what they have to say.

19. The school recognises that there are still improvements to be made to improve both information and parental involvement in day-to-day school life. The head teacher has identified these areas for review, but he recognises that everything cannot be rectified at once.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) in Years 3 to 6 are too low.

20. Standards in Years 1 and 2 match national expectations for pupils' ages, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. The required programme of study is taught, although in a rather uncoordinated way, and computer programs are used to support work in mathematics, English and art. Extra adult support is an advantage in this.
21. In Years 3 to 6, standards have fallen from those found at the previous inspection and they are now well below expectations for the pupils' ages. The revised curriculum for information and communications technology requires a more rigorous and far-reaching approach to its planning and teaching, and a wider range of software and hardware. In the past few years, the lack of continuity in leadership and other school priorities has meant that there has been no consistent plan to update equipment and train staff to use it. The Internet connection has not been used so the pupils are denied access to a wide range of different types of information. They are unable to send and receive e-mails and there is no equipment to monitor environmental factors such as temperature. As a result, the statutory curriculum is not being taught. In addition, there is a very limited range of related equipment; there are no digital cameras or scanners for example. This means that the pupils have a very narrow experience of the applications of computers and microprocessors, which limits their experience and hence their attainment.
22. Programs are available to teach word processing, graphics and data handling, and to enable the pupils to control events through a sequence of instructions. The lack of a whole school teaching programme means that these are not used in a progressive way to develop the pupils' ICT knowledge and skills. Pupils in Year 5 wrote a play script on screen, developing initial ideas and organising the text correctly. Their word processing skills have not been developed, for example in combining text and illustrations, and the equipment is not available to allow them to use moving image text to enhance their understanding of how words, images and sounds combine to convey meaning and emotion. Lack of monitoring of provision and standards has meant that the extent to which ICT has been taught and used to support learning in other subjects has depended on the enthusiasm of individual teachers. The ratio of pupils to computers in use is almost twice the national average and the computers are arranged one per class. This makes teaching of new skills difficult and means that time available for each pupil to practise them is very limited, so that for some pupils there is a long time gap. For example, it took almost a term for each pupil in one class to make Christmas cards on the computer. This problem has been further compounded by the lack, until very recently, of extra adult help, so that pupils are often left unsupported as they work their way through a program.
23. Discontinuity in school management has delayed the introduction of government-funded training so that even the most enthusiastic teachers have been unsupported in developing ways in which ICT can be used to enhance learning in, for example, history and geography. In geography, one class used a paint program to draw the view from their window, but cannot access Internet aerial photographs of their own, or contrasting, localities. Lack of curriculum time has meant that some pupils have had very limited time to use CD-ROMS to research topics and have not had time to save and download relevant text and graphics. Opportunities to use ICT within other subjects are not identified in teachers' curriculum plans, further limiting pupils' progress. At present the school is not building on the experiences of the many pupils who use computers very competently and successfully at home.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory in the infant and junior classes. It does not meet statutory requirements in the junior classes, and some pupils do not receive their full entitlement to all subjects.

24. The curriculum in the infant and junior classes is unsatisfactory. The organisation of the school day means that lessons in English and mathematics are over-long and there is not enough time left for pupils to have worthwhile experiences in other subjects. Although literacy and numeracy skills are taught well in the designated English and mathematics lessons, the pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects. For example, they do not have enough opportunities for research in geography and history lessons. This means that they do not learn the necessary enquiry skills in these subjects.
25. The lack of resources and the teachers' lack of confidence mean that the full programme for information and communications technology is not taught and the curriculum does not, therefore, meet statutory requirements. During the recent period of instability, the teachers have lacked guidance in their planning and practice. This has led to them deciding for themselves what to teach. The school did not pay sufficient attention to the requirement in September 2000 to reinstate fully all the subjects of the National Curriculum. Until very recently there was no overall curriculum plan and there were glaring examples of pupils in the same year group receiving different amounts of teaching time across a wide range of subjects. The head teacher has now implemented a whole school plan. Although there are still some anomalies, the school has made good progress in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities in all subjects.

The school day is not long enough in the junior classes.

26. The time available for teaching is twenty-two hours and twenty minutes per week for all classes throughout the school. While this is above the recommendation for pupils in the reception class and Years 1 and 2, it falls below the minimum recommended time of twenty-three hours and thirty minutes for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Over the year, this amounts to a significant amount of teaching time that is lost. A high proportion of teaching time is devoted to English, mathematics and science so that other subjects are 'squeezed'. Here, the pupils are not covering the curriculum in the breadth and depth that is required. In information and communication technology, they are not receiving the curriculum to which they are entitled. The overall effect is that their learning experiences are less rich and varied than they might otherwise be, and there is little time for fun to excite the pupils and involve them more fully in learning.

The governors' involvement in running the school is unsatisfactory.

27. The governors' involvement in the running of the school is unsatisfactory. Although they support the school in a pastoral sense, they do not provide effective support for the head teacher. They have had some recent training but they rely very much on the information that the head teacher provides. For example, although they retain an overview of the school's finances, they are very reliant on the head teacher to provide the information. They have not yet begun to apply the principles of best value. They are starting to become more involved with strategic decision-making and have made a start on establishing procedures for gathering information about some aspects of the school's provision. However, they do not yet sufficiently review and monitor the school's policy and practice. They do not yet adequately fulfil their responsibility to balance support with challenge to remedy shortcomings, such as the curriculum for information and communication technology not meeting statutory requirements, the length of the teaching week being below the recommended time in Years 3 to 6 and the fact that some pupils do not receive their full curricular entitlement in all subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Raise standards in information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6 by:

- Improving teachers' subject knowledge;
- Improving the level of resources;
- Ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities across the curriculum to develop their skills.

(Paragraphs 20 – 23)

Improve the quality of the curriculum in the infant and junior classes by:

- Revising the times allocated to subjects to ensure more effective coverage of the non-core subjects;
- Further refining the overall curriculum plan to ensure that all pupils receive equal entitlement to all subjects.

(Paragraphs 24 – 25)

Lengthen the school day in the junior classes.

(Paragraph 26)

Improve the effectiveness of the governors in running the school by:

- Undertaking further training so that they have a better understanding of their duties;
- Taking a more pro-active role in running the school.

(Paragraph 27)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	10	6	0	0	0
Percentage	4	22	43	26	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage points

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)	265
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	50

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	23	17	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	23
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	38	39	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (100)	98 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	20	23
	Girls	17	16	17
	Total	39	36	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (100)	90 (100)	100 (100)
	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 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	200	18	15	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	17
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	27	31	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (90)	94 (95)	97 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	18
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	29	32	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (93)	97 (95)	100 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	18
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	238
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	1
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)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.8
Average class size	29.77

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162

Financial information

Financial year	200/01
	£
Total income	486,944
Total expenditure	477,244
Expenditure per pupil	1,774
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,759
Balance carried forward to next year	40,459

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	268
Number of questionnaires returned	134

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	31 (42)	64 (86)	2 (3)	1 (1)	2 (2)
My child is making good progress in school.	42 (56)	51 (68)	4 (6)	1 (1)	2 (3)
Behaviour in the school is good.	42 (56)	57 (76)	2 (2)	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29 (39)	43 (58)	24 (32)	4 (5)	0
The teaching is good.	51 (68)	43 (58)	4 (5)	1 (1)	2 (2)
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27 (36)	43 (57)	23 (31)	6 (8)	2 (2)
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66 (89)	30 (40)	4 (5)	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55 (74)	39 (52)	2 (3)	0	4 (5)
The school works closely with parents.	34 (46)	43 (58)	19 (25)	2 (2)	2 (3)
The school is well led and managed.	39 (52)	44 (59)	10 (13)	0	7 (10)
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47 (63)	48 (64)	2 (3)	0	3 (4)
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29 (39)	40 (53)	18 (24)	6 (8)	7 (10)

Percentages may not add up to 100 because figures have been rounded up.

Figures in brackets indicate number of responses.

Other issues raised by parents

Twenty-four written responses were received. The majority of the points made supported the answers to the questionnaires. Several parents paid tribute to the staff for their commitment and determination in coming through traumatic period when the school was without effective leadership. The negative responses to the question about leadership and management refer to the previous leadership.