

INSPECTION REPORT

**CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Bromborough

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105081

Headteacher: Mrs Eileen Robb

Reporting inspector: Margot D'Arcy
23158

Dates of inspection: 5th – 6th March 2001

Inspection number: 192208

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:	5 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John McGreevy
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average-sized Catholic primary school catering for 342 boys and girls aged between four and 11. At the time of the inspection, all pupils were attending the school on a full-time basis, including the 61 children in the school's three reception classes. Most pupils are organised into classes that contain pupils of the same age, but Year 3 and 4 pupils are taught together for all subjects except English and mathematics. There is also one mixed class of Year 1 and 2 pupils. Most pupils are of white English heritage. Two speak English as an additional language (a proportion that is below the national average), but both are fluent in English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including a statement of special need (10 per cent), is well below average, but the proportion entitled to a free school meal (9 per cent) is broadly average. Most children live in the immediate vicinity of the school. Children's attainment on entry to the reception classes is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. The quality of teaching is of a high standard and results in pupils making very good progress. By the time they are 11, pupils achieve well above average standards in English and science and above average standards in mathematics. The school's ethos promotes pupils' high standards of academic and personal achievement. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they enjoy amicable relationships with each other and adults. Underpinning all of the school's successes is the very good quality of leadership and management from the headteacher and governors. This school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- High quality teaching results in pupils making very good strides in their learning so that, by age 11, attainment in mathematics is above average and in English and science it is well above.
- Teaching and learning in information and communication technology (ICT) is very good.
- Pupils' writing skills are promoted very effectively within a range of subjects.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to school, their very good behaviour and personal development are successfully promoted by the school's caring Christian ethos.
- The headteacher and governors lead and manage the school very well.

What could be improved

- Aspects of the school's implementation of the new Foundation Curriculum for reception children.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection in February 1997. High standards have been maintained against a rising national trend. Eleven-year-olds' test results in English rose significantly this year and science results have been rising sharply each year since 1998. The overall quality of teaching has improved and there has also been significant improvement to standards, teaching and learning in ICT. The two action points from the previous inspection have been dealt with successfully. There are now consistent and effective systems for assessing pupils, with very good use being made of the information gained to track pupils' progress and promote learning. The school's development plan now spans a longer period and is a useful document to help the school improve.

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	C	A	A
mathematics	A	A	B	A
science	C	B	A	A

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

The most recent test results (2000) show that, by age 11, pupils achieve standards that are, overall, well above average when compared to pupils of the same age nationally and to those in similar schools. Over time, the above average standards noted by the last inspection have been maintained, with significant improvements occurring year on year in science. Apart from the dip in English results in 1999, test results over time are in line with the national upward trend. Standards in English fell in 1999, resulting from a period of adjustment to implementing the National Literacy Strategy, which the school felt reduced the time available to develop pupils' writing within English lessons. However, the school's strategy to find alternative opportunities to promote writing has been very successful and is evident in the significant rise in English results in 2000 and the high standards of writing seen during the inspection. The apparent fall in mathematics results in 2000 is not significant. The results achieved by pupils in the 2000 tests shows that they have made very good progress in all three subjects during their time in the juniors. The school set challenging targets for 11-year-olds to achieve in the 2000 tests and these were met.

Infant pupils also achieve well. Children in the Foundation Stage (reception) make good progress in literacy and numeracy. From an average starting point when they enter the reception classes, many children exceed the early learning goals expected in these subjects by the beginning of Year 1. However, in the other areas of learning¹, standards and achievement are satisfactory rather than good or better because of some weaknesses in the curriculum and the way it is taught. By age seven, test results show pupils' standards in writing are above average, whilst in reading and mathematics they are well above. Indeed, seven-year-olds' mathematics results rose significantly in 2000 because many more pupils than in previous years achieved at a level above that which is generally expected for their age.

Inspection evidence supports the high standards reflected in the test results of seven and 11-year olds. Additionally, throughout the school, pupils are making good strides in their learning in ICT. Standards in this subject are rising and pupils are becoming very skilled at using ICT to support their learning in a range of subjects. Observations of lessons, discussions with pupils and analysis of their work in books and on display shows that, by age 11, standards are also above average in art and design, geography, history and music. The limited time offered by a short inspection did not allow sufficient evidence to be collected to make secure judgements about standards achieved in other subjects. Overall, pupils of all abilities achieve very well in this school and build knowledge, skills and understanding at a very good rate.

¹ Personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic, well motivated and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils show consideration towards others, play amicably and move around the school in a sensible manner.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils eagerly take on responsibility and work well together in pairs and small groups. Relationships between pupils themselves and between adults and pupils are very good.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils' eagerness to come to school is reflected in attendance figures that are well above the national average. They arrive promptly and lessons begin on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Very 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 overall quality of teaching is very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and 50 per cent is very good or better. Throughout the school, English and mathematics are taught very well. Moreover, the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is successfully interwoven throughout the whole curriculum, thus promoting very good learning in these subjects. Another significant strength is the teaching of ICT and the way teachers use the potential of this subject to support pupils' learning in many other subjects. Although there is good and very good teaching in the reception classes, better opportunities could be provided for children to become independent by trying out their own ideas and taking greater control in organising aspects of their work. There is also scope for these children to learn more through play. In some instances, reception children are inactive for too long as they sit and listen to teachers.

Overall, the high quality of teaching ensures that the school meets the different needs of all its pupils very well, including those who are more able and those who find learning difficult.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. There is a sensible balance between the time allocated to teaching the basics of literacy and numeracy, and knowledge and skills in other subjects. More work is needed to implement the requirements of the new Foundation Curriculum for reception children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are very well supported, which helps them to make very good progress. Individual work programmes are carefully constructed to meet pupils' needs and used effectively to provide them with essential experiences.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. In lessons, class discussions and times of reflective prayer pupils are helped to appreciate the beauty and good things in the world around them. They are taught the difference between right and wrong and have plenty of opportunities to mix socially, in a variety of contexts, and to take on responsibility. Pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is effectively promoted. Visitors to the school are struck immediately by the warmth, friendliness and purposefulness of learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Teachers care for pupils and promote their self-esteem very well. Procedures for child protection are very good and playtimes are well supervised. There are very good systems to care for and support pupils experiencing problems. Pupils are assessed regularly and their learning is carefully tracked to ensure they are achieving their potential.

The school's caring, Christian, Catholic ethos provides very good support for pupils' spiritual and moral development. The wide range of visitors to the school, and visits to places of interest, promote pupils' social and cultural development and enhance the work done in class.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads the school very well, giving it a very strong sense of direction and purpose. The infant and junior department managers have supported the headteacher very well whilst the school has been without a deputy.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are a strong and effective team who work hard to support the school. They ask the right questions at the right time and challenge the school to improve. Governors meet all of their legal responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher and governors have clear insights into standards and the quality of education. They know the school's strengths and where improvement is needed. There are good systems to manage change and check on the effectiveness of strategies to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Money and other resources are used very well to ensure pupils receive a very effective education. The school applies the principles of 'best value' very well in all the spending and other decisions it makes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The progress their children make as a result of good quality teaching.• The caring family atmosphere that promotes children's good behaviour and love of school.• The approachability of teachers and the headteacher and the confidence they have in them to sort out any problems.• The good information they are given about their children's progress and the school's work.• The way the school helps their children become mature and responsible learners.• The good way in which the school is led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An increased range of activities outside of lessons, particularly for infant pupils.

Parents are justified in having a high level of confidence in the school. Inspectors support all parents' positive views. Overall, there is satisfactory provision of extra-curricular activities and, eventually, all pupils get an opportunity to participate in these when they enter the juniors. There is scope, however, for the school to consider providing infant pupils with some activities outside of lessons, perhaps enlisting parental support in this venture.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

High quality teaching results in pupils making very good strides in their learning so that, by age 11, attainment in mathematics is above average and in English and science it is well above.

1. The overall quality of teaching is very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and 50 per cent is very good or better. Of the remaining 50 per cent, 44 per cent is good and only six per cent is satisfactory. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is particularly good at Key Stage 2, where 67 per cent is very good or better and the remainder is good.
2. The analysis of pupils' work shows that the high quality of teaching seen is not just reserved for inspection week. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils and provide work that is demanding, stimulating and very well matched to their different needs. Teachers' planning is well thought through. They are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and plan lively and interesting explanations and activities that grip pupils' imagination and encourage them to work hard and achieve well. Teachers' plans also incorporate good opportunities to assess pupils. The information gained from assessment is then used very effectively to plan the next steps in learning.
3. Although there are many examples of very good teaching, two serve to illustrate the features outlined above:
 - In a Year 6 science lesson, the teacher began by sharing the learning objective with pupils and referred back to this on a number of occasions throughout the lesson to ensure that pupils were clear about what was expected of them. This served to involve pupils in evaluating their work and gave them a good insight into how effectively they were learning. The lesson proceeded at a brisk pace. The teacher set the context by quickly, but precisely, recapping and questioning pupils on previous learning about light. Detailed explanations followed in which the teacher promoted pupils' understanding of scientific vocabulary and challenged them to investigate ways in which they could change the direction of light. During the practical work that followed, the teacher intervened effectively, questioning and challenging pupils to explain their observations and hypotheses. During this time, the teacher continually assessed pupils' understanding and provided higher attainers with extension work in which they were required to draw 'ray diagrams' to record what they had learned about the relationship between the angles of incidence and reflection. As well as promoting pupils' scientific learning, the teaching in this lesson made very relevant links to numeracy, reinforcing pupils' understanding of angles.
 - In a literacy lesson for reception children, the teacher's high expectations and very good subject knowledge were evident in her planning and questioning. Children's good rate of learning was apparent as they identified features such as the author, title page, illustrator and publisher of the text being read. Children were taught strategies to help them read. For example, in reading the title of a new text, their attention was drawn to familiar words they recognised by sight and to the connections that could be made by looking at the initial letters of unknown words and the illustrations on the cover. Similarly, during a shared writing activity with the class, the teacher was very successful in encouraging children to formulate sentences for entry into a class diary. She modelled writing very well, drawing children's attention to how to form the letters, how words were spelt and to correct forms of punctuation. Throughout, the teacher involved many children. She used her knowledge of individual children's needs to specifically tailor questions to challenge each one, whilst allowing them to experience success. Her manner was continuously enthusiastic, which kept the children interested and promoted good attitudes to learning.
4. It is clear that the high quality of teaching seen is a significant factor in the well above average standards achieved by pupils in the National Curriculum tests and assessments. Although a minority of children each year enter the school with higher than average standards, a similar proportion has below average standards, whilst the remainder display the expected level of skills

and knowledge. From this mostly average starting point, the pupils' achievement, at age 11, is a notable accomplishment, as they reach well above average standards in English and science and above average in mathematics. This occurs because the momentum of teaching and learning is maintained at a consistently rigorous pace so that, regardless of their prior attainment, all pupils build knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate. During their time at the school, the quality of teaching ensures that all pupils, including those who are more-able and those who find learning difficult, make very good progress.

5. By age 11, pupils' above average reading skills provide very good support for their learning in a range of subjects as well as enhancing their enjoyment of the written word. Advanced reading skills of inference and deduction are developing well, with pupils being able to make some very perceptive comments about how authors use words and metaphorical phrases to convey meaning. Pupils' own written work is mature and reflects their skills in planning, structuring and developing different types of writing. Characters and situations unfold imaginatively and dialogue is used effectively to dramatise interpersonal features of quite complex plots. Paragraphs are used appropriately and pupils show skill in thoughtfully selecting vocabulary to create imagery to hold the reader's attention.
6. In mathematics, pupils show agility in manipulating numbers mentally. They have made good progress in learning about number patterns and relationships and gained skill in using different strategies to find answers to problems and to explain their methods. Analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them show that their knowledge and understanding of other areas of mathematics is very secure; a significant minority of 11-year-olds are working competently at a level above that which is generally expected for their age.
7. Underpinning pupils' above average standards in science is the clear emphasis given to experimental and investigative work. By the end of Year 6, pupils think up their own questions to investigate, design fair tests, make detailed predictions of outcomes, select their own materials and write up the results of work in a variety of styles.
8. Observations of lessons, discussions with pupils and opportunities to analyse some of their work in books and on display shows that, by age 11, standards are also above average in art and design, geography, history and music. For example, the good range of very high quality drawings, paintings, sculptures and textile work on display celebrates pupils' achievements and enhances the quality of the learning environment. In geography, pupils have gained good knowledge of water's effect on the landscape and people and can name the physical features of rivers and coasts. In history, they talk knowledgeably about significant historical figures and events from a range of times and cultures. Pupils' singing is in tune and shows a good sense of phrasing and musical expression. In a poignant rendition of *Bridge Over Troubled Water*, pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 performed very well, singing with clear diction and showing good control over breathing and the musical concepts of pitch, duration, dynamics and tempo. The nature of the short inspection did not allow sufficient time to collect enough evidence to make secure judgements on standards in other subjects.

Teaching and learning in information and communication technology (ICT) is very good.

9. By ages seven and 11, pupils' standards in ICT are in line with national expectations. However, standards are rising rapidly. By Year 2, pupils have gained good keyboard skills and are proficient in controlling the mouse. They use these skills to write stories and reports; to highlight, cut and paste parts of text; and to access pull-down menus in order to change the size and style of the font and to access, save and print their work. Infant pupils understand that computers can store lots of information in their 'memories' and talk about how they entered information about themselves onto the computers. They enjoy using the programmable robots and explain in some detail how to use the arrow and number keys to make them move, and turn, in different directions and for different distances.
10. By Year 6, word processing skills are highly developed. Throughout the school, and in a range of subjects, there are numerous examples of pupils' writing being presented in this way, including

science investigations, reports on visits to a local church and outdoor activity centre, and the interviews junior pupils conducted with members of staff and governors. Enhancing the latter was pupils' incorporation of photographs of the interviewee. To this end, pupils worked in pairs to take photographs of their subject with the digital camera, which they then downloaded onto the computer and imported into their texts. Year 5 pupils also employed this technique when using a publishing program to produce 'Greek Newspapers'. This lesson had a buzz of industriousness and excitement as some pupils took photographs of Greek artefacts, and of each other dressed in Greek costume, then downloaded them onto the computer and incorporated them into their newspaper articles. Others enhanced their writing with 'clip-art' images or scanned their own drawings and photographs from books onto the computer then into their work. To support the content of their writing, pupils made good use of CD-ROM encyclopaedia and the Internet to research Ancient Greece and made some very creative use of different font sizes, colours and styles to enhance presentation. In the centre of the room, 'editors' worked busily on draft articles, identifying where improvements could be made. This lesson was very successful in supporting pupils' learning in ICT, literacy and history.

11. Pupils learn about how ICT is used in the everyday world and compare manual and computerised methods of collecting, storing, interpreting and communicating information. Year 6 pupils talk about how much easier it is to amend writing that has been word processed, explaining that mistakes can be rectified without trace (leaving no 'crossings out') and that, with little effort, parts of the text can be moved around to make their writing 'sound better'. On the same theme, there was some excellent teaching to help pupils compare ICT and non-ICT methods of interrogating a database. Whilst most pupils accessed computerised records (formulated by themselves in an earlier lesson) to answer the teacher's challenging list of questions, including producing graphs and pie-charts, a small group carried out the same tasks using 'hard-copy' record cards. At the end of the lesson, pupils made some good observations about the speed, accuracy and amount of work involved by the two methods. In this lesson, the teacher's excellent preparation and very good subject knowledge guided pupils' learning very effectively. Clear and precise explanations about the program being used guided the way pupils phrased their interrogative questions in order to get the 'right search' and accurate answers. A good overview of all pupils' work was maintained and timely interventions sorted out some pupils' misunderstandings and gave others additional challenge. Numeracy skills were also very effectively developed alongside ICT skills.
12. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to acquire and practise ICT skills and to make use of ICT to support their learning in other subjects. Moreover, throughout the school, ICT is used very effectively to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, both in English and mathematics lessons and within science, geography, history, art and design and design and technology. For example, pupils use ICT to record results of science experiments, both in writing and in graphs, charts and tables; similarly they use sensors to monitor and measure environmental changes such as temperature and noise. In art and design, pupils use ICT to pursue their understanding of modern art and to create images in the style of Pablo Picasso and Andy Warhol.
13. The extra-curricular computer club is very popular and older junior pupils have been successful in using the Internet to make contact with both an English and Australian artist, both of whom are going to support them in a project linking ICT with art. Pupils are making good use of e-mail facilities to communicate with the artists. All pupils have their own e-mail address. Year 5 and 6 pupils also benefit from the very good links the school has with the high school, which provides enrichment classes that link ICT with mathematics, science and design and technology.
14. The school's management has ensured ICT has a high profile in the curriculum. There is a strong commitment to promoting pupils' ICT skills within a range of subjects and this is proving very successful. The very good curriculum is taught extremely well by teachers who have grown in confidence and competence since the last inspection. Other improvements have been the establishment of an ICT suite, which is used very efficiently, increased resources and the formulation of a very good assessment system. The quality of leadership and management from the subject co-ordinator, who is also an excellent role-model for teaching ICT, is a further strength, with many of the improvements noted being managed and effectively promoted by her.

Pupils' writing skills are promoted very effectively within a range of subjects.

15. The school has been successful in devising an effective strategy to extend, beyond the daily literacy lesson, opportunities for pupils to learn and practise writing skills. In implementing the National Literacy Strategy, the school underwent a period of adjustment in terms of coping with a reduction in the amount of time they had previously allocated to teaching writing within English lessons. This saw 11-year-olds' English test results fall to an 'average' level in 1999 from what had, for the previous three years at least, been well above average. Determined to regain the high standards in English the school knew pupils were capable of, a strategy was formulated to provide additional time for pupils to engage in extended writing tasks and to maximise the potential offered by other subjects to support the teaching and learning of writing skills. The success of this is evident in the significant rise in 11-year-olds' English test results in 2000, with significantly more pupils (over half) achieving at the level above that which is normally expected of pupils this age.
16. Pupils are given many opportunities to write in a range of forms and for different purposes. Teachers recognise the scope offered by subjects other than English to develop pupils' writing skills. They are skilled at maintaining the distinctive subject-specific nature of lessons in, for example, geography and history, whilst missing no opportunity to use and extend learning in literacy by incorporating relevant recording and research tasks that promote both writing and reading.
17. Examples of writing across the curriculum abound. Based upon their work in geography, Year 1 and 2 pupils write about what life is like in Polar lands. Linking with their work in religious education, Year 2 pupils retell parts of the story from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and practise using 'interesting' vocabulary to describe, in detail, the different characters from the book. In the juniors, pupils from Year 3 to 6 write up interviews they have conducted with members of staff, governors and each other. This work shows very good progression over the key stage, culminating, at Year 6, with lengthy, well organised, 'biographies' that paint interesting portraits of people by using carefully chosen words to absorb and amuse the reader. History lessons in Years 3 and 4 have resulted in pupils gaining skill in letter writing as they recount '*The Final Defeat of Britain*' from the perspective of a Roman soldier writing home. Similarly, poetry writing is promoted within history as these pupils write '*Odes to the God of Power*'. Year 5 pupils have produced some high quality extended writing about their residential visit to Oaklands outdoor pursuit centre. This writing is well-organised into paragraphs that convey a logical development of ideas and use well-chosen vocabulary to enliven the experiences that they recount. In the many individual pieces seen, spellings and punctuation are accurate and hand-written pieces show a mature joined style. These pupils also made very good use of word processing programs to draft and edit their work and to enhance its appearance. Similar standards were seen in Year 5 pupils' accounts of their visit to a local church. Following a geography field-trip to Thurstaston Nature Reserve, Year 6 pupils wrote detailed reports and used a range of techniques, such as bullet points, to present their work. In geography, the theme of rivers has resulted in pupils writing detailed reports and has also been used as a stimulus for poetry writing. In this work, pupils use language evocatively to create imagery; for example, one poem described the river as *sparkling, churning, tossing, 'a roller-coaster ride'*. In writing synopses of fiction texts, linked to their history topic, Year 6 pupils show good insight into the way that authors develop characters. For instance, one pupil wrote, "*In the beginning the author introduces Bronia as a quiet, but inquisitive girl, but as the story goes on she becomes bold.*" These pupils also showed good skills of empathy as they write diaries from the perspective of an evacuee in World War II.

Pupils' very good attitudes to school, their very good behaviour and personal development are successfully promoted by the school's caring, Christian ethos.

18. The school's clear, Christian, Catholic ethos is shared, understood and promoted very well by everyone. It is very successful in meeting its mission to develop pupils' positive attitudes and in providing a curriculum that allows pupils to reach their academic, spiritual and moral potential through quality teaching.
19. Pupils enjoy school and like their teachers. They say that they do not like being off school because they miss the interesting lessons and the companionship of their friends. Pupils explain that their

relationships with each other and their teachers are very good. They are adamant that bullying does not occur and say that they have confidence in the teachers to sort out any such problems should they arise. Inspection evidence bears out pupils' positive views. Their attendance is well above the national average and they arrive punctually, eager to learn. Throughout the school, pupils' interest and enthusiasm to participate in lessons was noted by all inspectors. Their very good behaviour in class, whilst moving around the school, during playtimes and when eating their midday meal is also a strong feature. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour and independence and the warm and supportive relationships promoted by teachers gives pupils confidence to answer questions, ask for help or make suggestions. This provides effective support for learning and pupils' personal development. A good example was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where pupils took the initiative to chant multiplication tables whilst waiting for their teacher and confidently explained the methods they used to find answers to problems. Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities they are given to work in pairs or small groups and much successful learning occurs in these situations. For example, during practical work in science, Year 6 pupils negotiated roles and listened respectfully to each other's suggestions about how to tackle work.

20. In every class, those pupils chosen to be 'special helpers' for the week wear their badges with pride and carry out the various tasks assigned to them enthusiastically. The oldest pupils enjoy being prefects and take their responsibilities seriously. They welcome opportunities to support the smooth running of the school, for example, by answering the telephone at lunchtime and preparing resources for assemblies. Particularly popular with the oldest pupils has been the 'Buddy' system where each Year 6 pupil is paired with a new reception child and given the responsibility of helping them settle into school. Parents of both sets of children are also very pleased with this initiative, recognising the opportunities for Year 6 pupils to show maturity and appreciating the added sense of security it affords to the youngest children.
21. The school's Christian ethos impacts powerfully on the development of pupils' moral codes. Pupils gain a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and are taught to be patient, courteous and caring. Pupils clearly understand and try hard to embody the message in the school's mission statement; *'to treat others in the way in which they would like to be treated themselves'*. Pupils have opportunities to think about and discuss moral issues and the plight of people experiencing hardship of one form or another. They welcome the chance to respond to such issues and have been active in raising funds for a variety of charities and good causes. The school is successful in supporting pupils' development into people who care, share and give a warm welcome to others.
22. The promotion of pupils' spiritual development is another of the school's strengths. It is evident that teachers have a good grasp of what spirituality is all about. During collective worship, form times and in lessons, teachers give pupils very good opportunities to pause, reflect and wonder at their work and things around them. There is a richness in lessons and activities, which ensures that all pupils will find something uplifting in their work. A good example was seen in Year 6 where a teacher led a discussion about 'feelings', prompting pupils to share their experience of a recent 'bad day' or incident. The teacher also shared his own experiences and helped pupils to think about how they can tackle such incidents and turn a negative situations into a positive ones.
23. Pupils' cultural awareness is effectively promoted. In addition to their own Catholic faith, pupils learn about Judaism, Islam and Sikhism, comparing the different beliefs, customs and festivals of these world faiths. Geography and history lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to learn about life in different times and cultures, whilst lessons in art, design and music give pupils good insight into historical and present-day cultural differences and similarities. Pupils' cultural awareness is also enhanced through an extensive programme of visitors and visits. These include visits from poets, authors, artists and performers and visits to museums, theatres and historical and geographical places of interest.

The headteacher and governors lead and manage the school very well.

24. The aims of the school are reflected in its everyday life and make a strong contribution to pupils' high standards of academic and personal achievement. The headteacher is an enthusiastic, people-

focused leader who is popular with staff, governors, parents and pupils. She provides very good educational direction, articulates a clear vision for the school's future and has identified the correct priorities to help the school improve. Although the school has been without a deputy for the past six months, the Key Stage 1 and 2 managers have provided good support for the headteacher during this time.

25. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching effectively and has provided time for subject co-ordinators in English, mathematics and science to do the same. These co-ordinators, and those for other subjects, are also involved in monitoring colleagues' planning and pupils' work, thereby gaining a good understanding of standards and the quality of learning in their subjects. They then use this information to inform decisions and relevant action to secure improvements to standards and provision. The headteacher has ensured that pupils receive a rich and varied educational programme and that all have opportunities to succeed. She has implemented effective systems to assess pupils' attainment and track their progress, thereby ensuring that learning is successfully built upon as pupils get older. Information from assessment is also analysed carefully to help identify areas that need developing and to set targets for improvement. A very clear school development plan ensures that the action, resources and time needed to secure improvement is carefully planned and systematically implemented and monitored. The two key issues identified by the previous inspection have been successfully addressed.
26. Governors are a strong and effective team that contributes substantially to the effectiveness of the school. Many, including the Chair, are regular visitors and some help out in classrooms. They receive regular training and take their responsibilities seriously. They are involved in the formulation of the school's development plan and monitor this regularly at meetings, asking questions to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's action in addressing priorities for improvement. By asking the right questions at the right time, governors gain a good understanding of the standards being achieved by pupils and actively compare these with those achieved by other schools. This good insight means that governors are fully involved in setting the statutory targets for 11-year-olds in English and mathematics, challenging the school to improve upon the previous year's results. The governors' high expectations and commitment to providing quality education and management was also evident in their pursuit of a replacement deputy headteacher, re-advertising and re-interviewing until they found the right candidate.
27. The high standard of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governors underpins all of the school's successes. There is strong commitment to improve even further and very good capacity to do so.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Aspects of the school's implementation of the new Foundation Curriculum for reception children.

28. There are many good features of provision for reception children that support their good progress in their first year at school and prepare them for beginning the National Curriculum in Year 1. However, there are some shortcomings that need addressing to ensure that provision is in line with the expectations for teaching and learning embodied within the Foundation Curriculum for children this age. The school is aware of these and has already identified the implementation of the Foundation Curriculum as a priority for development.
29. Teachers' planning is good and addresses all of the six areas of learning covered in the Foundation Stage. Teaching and learning in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development is good and sometimes very good. In the other areas, however, namely, personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical, and creative development, there are some weaknesses that reduce the quality of learning and children's attainment to a level that is satisfactory rather than good or better.
30. Specifically,

- there are not enough opportunities for children to initiate aspects of their own learning;
- there are not enough opportunities for children to learn through well-planned play; and
- children are sometimes required to sit for too long listening to teachers.

Although a 'free-choice' period is identified on timetables for Friday afternoon, many more opportunities could be found for children to plan and initiate aspects of their own learning, thereby promoting skills of autonomy and increasing children's motivation and self-confidence. Although many children are mature and able to sustain concentration for fairly long periods, they are sometimes required to sit and listen for too long. Eventually they become restless and their attention wanders, even when the content is interesting and being delivered well by teachers. For example, in a session about seasonal weather changes, the teacher's 20 minute introduction, though interesting and very well delivered, was too long for the children to sustain interest in after having already sat and concentrated for 15 minutes prior to this on a literacy activity. Similar levels of 'wandering attention' were also noted for the other groups of children who were listening to teachers' introductions to art and design tasks after having had the same literacy input. In addition, during the practical work that followed, children's creativity was somewhat stifled by teachers controlling, too rigidly, the outcomes of tasks. For instance, the children who were making 'scarecrows' were not given any choice about which material they would use. Teachers had pre-cut squares of material of one design for the jacket and one for the trousers and provided one colour of straw for the scarecrows' hair. The result was that all children produced work that was virtually identical. In the design and make task, children drew a picture of a trailer, but had very limited choice over the materials they would use to make it. Specifically, only commercial construction resources were available; therefore, children had no opportunity to plan for the use of, for example, reclaimed materials, or to explore and experiment with different ways of joining materials. At the end of the activity, most children's models looked very similar.

31. The school is looking forward to receiving its training from the local education authority (LEA) about the implementation of the Foundation Stage and has already planned for the LEA adviser for this phase to visit the school and talk to parents about the new curriculum. There are also plans to improve the outdoor play facilities and resources to support children's physical development.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to build upon the school's strengths, the headteacher and governors should now:

Ensure that teaching and the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage supports better development of the skills of independence and creativity and takes account of the limitations of very young children's attention span. They should do this by:

- giving children more opportunities to make choices about how to plan and carry out aspects of their work;
- giving children more opportunities to learn through play (both child initiated and structured by adults);
- ensuring an appropriate balance of time² between activities in which children are actively involved in exploring, observing and interacting with their environment and those that require them to sit and listen to adults; and
- seeking the support of the local education authority in terms of advice, training, monitoring and evaluation of the teaching and curriculum for children in this phase.

Paragraphs 28-31

² That takes account of the stage of intellectual and physical development of these young children, in terms of their capacity to sustain periods of 'inactivity'

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	44	44	6	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	342
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	31

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	35

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.1
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	29	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	26	26
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	49	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (95)	92 (89)	92 (97)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	28	28
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	49	50	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (89)	96 (92)	96 (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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	30	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	23	27
	Girls	20	19	19
	Total	42	42	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (78)	82 (82)	92 (90)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	25	26
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	43	44	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (84)	88 (86)	90 (92)
	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	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	4
White	337
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	26.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	550,371
Total expenditure	531,578
Expenditure per pupil	1,554
Balance brought forward from previous year	-13,627
Balance carried forward to next year	5,166

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 54%

Number of questionnaires sent out	342
Number of questionnaires returned	183

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	27	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	36	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	45	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	46	13	2	0
The teaching is good.	63	35	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	39	7	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	22	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	50	45	4	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	65	35	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	43	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	42	23	5	13

N.B.

Parents' written comments on the back of returned response forms and comments made at the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector showed that the negative response to the final question about the range of activities outside of lessons relates to the lack of extra-curricular activities for infant pupils.