

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Walmley, Sutton Coldfield

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103474

Headteacher: Mr P A King

Reporting inspector: A C Davies
3639

Dates of inspection: 26-27th February 2001

Inspection number: 192591

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Laburnum Drive
Walmley
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M L Jackson

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holy Cross is a Roman Catholic primary school with 214 children aged between 4 and 11 on roll. Although the school does not have a nursery most children have experienced some form of pre-school education. The school is situated in Walmley on the outskirts of Birmingham and serves an area that is reasonably affluent, which is reflected in the low numbers of children entitled to school meals free of charge. No child has English as an additional language. The percentage of children on the special educational needs register is below average. When they first start school the majority of children display academic and personal skills that are better than expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school where the strengths far outweigh any minor weakness. Standards are very high in literacy and numeracy. Children achieve exceptionally well as they move through the school with more able children and those with special educational needs being doing particularly well. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an effective team that ensures high standards are maintained. The good teaching combined with children's enthusiasm helps the quality of learning to be very good. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- High standards in English, mathematics and science have been successfully maintained for some years.
- Full consideration is given to the needs of more able children so that they achieve very well, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- The use of specific targets in literacy and numeracy is giving children good knowledge about their learning and what to do next to improve their work.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a very effective team that gives emphasis to maintaining high standards as well as ensuring that children benefit from their learning.
- The school works closely with parents to provide effective homework for children of all ages.
- The children respond positively to the school's high expectations for them to behave well.

What could be improved

The school has no major weaknesses but work needs to be done in the following three areas:

- There are not enough opportunities for children to show initiative or to take on added responsibility.
- The standards attained by older children in information and communication technology are not yet high enough.
- The attention given to cultural development, including multi-cultural issues, and gaining knowledge of cultures other than their own.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997 and it has made significant improvement since that time. Standards have improved due to greater attention being paid to the needs of more able children who now achieve very well. Standards in reading and writing have also improved with very effective use made of literacy skills in many other subjects. There has been significant improvement in the provision for information and communication technology, although there is more to be done to raise standards. There is greater efficiency in the leadership and management of the school with effective analysis of children's work resulting in focused action being taken to improve standards. The main issues identified at the time of the previous inspection have been dealt with very well with several areas regarded as weaknesses at that time now being strengths of the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	B	A	A*	A*	well above average A
mathematics	A	A*	A*	A*	above average B
science	A	A*	A*	A*	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The standards attained by 7 and 11 year olds in the national tests have been high or well above average for the past two years. The school has successfully maintained this excellent position by giving good attention to the needs of all children, especially the more able and those with special educational needs. In 2000, the tests show that more than two thirds of children have attained beyond the expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science and all children attained at least the expected level for their age. Standards in reading are particularly impressive for younger children, as are mathematics and science standards for older children. The present Year 2 and Year 6 groups are attaining at the same level as the 2000 cohort, which is well beyond the level expected for their age.

When children first start school the majority have academic and personal skills that are better than most of their age. They make good progress in the reception class and by the time they finish the foundation stage of learning the majority have exceeded the learning goals for children of their age in each of the six areas of learning. Very good attention to challenging more able children and effective support for less able children results in them achieving well and reaching high standards by the time they are 7. There is very good progress made by older children, especially in Year 6. When compared to schools of a similar nature, results are exceptionally good in all three-core subjects. Careful tracking of children's work, combined with the setting of appropriate targets in each class, is helping the school ensure that children are making good progress throughout.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very Good. The majority of children are keen to learn and work hard in lessons. They take pride in their achievements and are interested enough to find out information from home to aid their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Children are attentive and concentrate well. They respond well to class rules and lunchtimes are pleasant occasions.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Although relationships in school are good, children are not provided with enough opportunity to show initiative. Opportunities for older children take on added responsibilities are limited.
Attendance	Very Good. Attendance levels are well above average. However, a few

	children are persistently late.
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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.

Teaching is excellent in 6 per cent of lessons, very good in another 6 per cent, good in 53 per cent and satisfactory in 29 per cent. It is never unsatisfactory. A combination of very effective planning for the needs of children of different abilities, together with good use of on-going assessment, is helping the teaching be effective.

Older children in Years 5 and 6, in particular, benefit from the way children are highly motivated and know exactly what it is they need to do to improve their work. The setting arrangements for mathematics are proving effective in challenging all children and therefore raising standards. Good concentration by teachers on the basic skills in literacy and numeracy is helping the children improve their reading, writing and number work. There is a very effective homework system in place. This is helping children work closely with their parents on aspects of work that is happening in class. There is very effective support from a range of additional adults in different classes. These adults help children of all abilities and are well briefed and enable children to increase the rate of their learning. Teachers set demanding, yet realistic, expectations of the amount of work to be covered and the standards of behaviour expected of the children. This is working well in setting appropriate working atmospheres in each classroom. However, there are occasions when children are not provided with enough opportunity to show initiative.

The teaching of information and communication technology is improving rapidly since the recent developments, including the creation of a new computer suite and the influence of key members of staff with expertise in this area. At the moment not all staff are fully confident in teaching this subject but the school's effective development plan for this area is beginning to make an impact on this already.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Literacy and numeracy skills are well used in other areas of the curriculum. There is a wealth of opportunities for older children to be involved in extra curricular activities, Younger children are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop their academic and personal skills during the foundation stage of learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers plan effectively for the needs of these children. There are good systems in place to check the progress they make and to adjust the children's learning needs accordingly.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Children's spiritual development is very good, it stems from a deep commitment to a Catholic way of life. Children are helped to understand how to behave appropriately and know right from wrong. Whilst they are helped to appreciate their own culture through visits to

	places of local interest, they have limited knowledge of the range of different cultures represented in Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very Good. Excellent systems for keeping track of children's academic progress are used very well to plan for the needs of children of different ability. They are well known to staff and the children themselves feel that they are being provided with appropriate guidance and help when needed.

The school has made great efforts to involve parents more fully in the life of the school. Parents respond well to the information provided by the school, especially for helping their children with homework. There is very good support for any initiatives that the school has in improving links with parents or in involving parents more fully in the education of their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very Good. The headteacher's experience and commitment combines well with the deputy headteacher's drive and initiatives. They form a very effective partnership, which helps all staff know about the part they play in ensuring continued success.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are knowledgeable and have appropriate committee arrangements to help them be efficient and effective in their role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very Good. The school has extensive systems in place to help them make sense of test results and to predict future trends. The quality of teaching and learning is checked regularly and appropriate support provided for all staff, as is necessary.
The strategic use of resources	Good. There is a very good link between the school's use of the budget and giving emphasis on raising standards. The governors and senior management team work together in ensuring that they give careful consideration to gaining value for money from all their purchases, including the use of human resources.

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 standards attained by the children are high. • There is good provision for more able children. • The provision for children with learning difficulties is good. • The children and parents feel that they belong to a special community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A minority of parents felt that:</i> • The quality and arrangements for reporting on the progress made by their children was unsuitable. • The working parents are not provided with enough notice about class assemblies. • The range of additional activities provided for younger children is not wide enough.

The parents are very astute and recognise how well the school is providing for their children in the areas of literacy and numeracy. The parents are right to note that more able children and those with

special educational needs are well provided for. The school is a pleasant place to be and parents have also noted this. The school gives good information to parents about the progress made by their children and there is every consideration given to privacy during parents' evening. Although it is difficult to be sure that the right amount of notice is given to parents about all events in school, the period of notice given for most events is appropriate. Younger children do not fully benefit from the wide range of extra curricular activities available to older ones but the school's provision for the younger children is in line with that expected for this age group.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- **High standards in English, mathematics and science have been successfully maintained for some years.**

- 1 In mathematics, the school's performance according to the national test results for 7 and 11 year olds has been well above average or high (in the top 10 per cent in the country) for the last four years. The present Year 6 is attaining at the same level as the previous cohort, which shows that this very good position has been maintained for another year. The picture is very similar for science for 11-year-olds and the science teacher assessments for 7-year-olds confirm that standards are high. In English, the test results for 7 and 11-year-olds have been maintained at a high level with the exception of the 11-year-olds group in 1998. The results for that year were above average but not as good as results in other years. When compared to similar schools, the school's results are well above average for 11-year-olds in each of the three core subjects.
- 2 This paints a very positive picture of the standards attained in the school. A deeper analysis shows that one of the school's strengths is the way more able children are able to move beyond the level expected for their age. For example, in the 2000 tests for 11-year-olds 67 per cent of the children attained this high level (Level 5) in English and mathematics and a remarkable 78 per cent attained it for science. The test results for 7-year-olds show that in reading 17 per cent of children attained the level expected for 11-year-olds (Level 4) and more than 54 per cent exceeded the expected level for their age. In writing, the number that exceeded the level expected for their age was more than three times the national average. In mathematics, 40 per cent attained beyond the level expected for their age.
- 3 As well as being able to move more able children on to a very high level the school successfully manages to ensure that 11-year-olds are all attaining at least the level expected for their age (Level 4) in each of the three subjects. They have managed this for the past two years in mathematics and science and in 2000 in English. The 7-year-olds' national test results show that in reading, writing and mathematics all children attained the expected level for their age (Level 2) in 2000 and only one child failed to do so in 1999. There is every indication that the 2000 position will be replicated in 2001.
- 4 When taking the last three years into consideration, a typical 7-year-old boy at the school is more than two terms ahead of boys nationally in reading and writing and mathematics. This seems like a strong position until it is appreciated that the girls' results are even better. In reading and writing a typical girl at the school is more than a year ahead of other girls nationally. In mathematics they mirror the position described for boys being two terms ahead of the national average for girls. By the time they are 11, the last three years' analysis shows that boys and girls' attainment has remained approximately two terms ahead of others nationally in English, but the gap between boys and girls in the school has closed slightly. In mathematics and science, boys' attainment has moved ahead of girls and the gap between the school's results and national results has increased.
- 5 One of the main reasons why the school has maintained high standards is because of the careful analysis of test results that is taking place. The analysis successfully identifies any area of weakness and there is appropriate action taken to deal with any issues that arise. This together with the attention given to more able and to lower attainers is helping the school to achieve high results in the national tests.

- **Full consideration is given to the needs of more able children so that they achieve very well, particularly in literacy and numeracy.**
- 6 The school is quick to recognise that it has a group of able children in each class. It has responded positively to the criticism levelled at this area in the previous report, when the needs of more able children were not as well addressed.
 - 7 There are several ways that the school shows that it does take full account of the needs of more able children. In the first case careful analysis of national and other tests indicates areas where there may be room for improvement. The school is particularly aware of the percentage of children who attain beyond the level expected for their age each year. Secondly, there is careful consideration given to planning and preparation with each teacher's plans showing that work is prepared for children of different ability. Thirdly, the school has considered the advantages of setting for different subjects and evaluated the potential impact such arrangements would have on standards.
 - 8 In all literacy lessons the teacher in each class directs questions to children of different ability when the class is gathered together. The questions are carefully thought out so as to take full account of their prior knowledge. When they move to tasks either individually or in groups the work is organised so that the ability range of the group is fully considered. In this way the children are challenged and their learning is moved on. Similarly, at the beginning of numeracy lessons, even when children are working in ability sets, the teachers direct questions during the mental and oral session at individuals according to their ability. This has the impact of keeping children very alert and challenges their intellectual thinking. The school has taken the decision to set for mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Three sets are formed and the most able children work to Year 7 objectives from the National Numeracy Strategy. In one lesson, this able group was working on developing strategies to help it solve multiplication facts. For example, they used the two times table to help them solve the twenty times table. In an extension to this work they had to work out multiplication facts that had been presented to them in the form of a 'letter code'. To solve this problem they had to have sound knowledge of their multiplication tables but more importantly they had to understand the way the tables are formed, for example, the five times table will always have a 0 or a 5 in the unit column, or that in the nine times table the unit reduces by 1 as you multiply by the next number. As well as having to think quickly the children are expected to explain their answers to the rest of the class. As the lesson develops the class move on to consider issues related to probability. During this part of the lesson, the needs of more able children were again addressed as the teacher introduced terms, such as, possible, likely, unlikely and impossible. The lesson as a whole relied on the teacher being very confident in his own mathematical knowledge and in his ability to explain new ideas with clarity. In both these respects the teaching was excellent. The impact on the children's learning was evident by the way they had to think deeply about the problems they faced. For example, in the 'letter code' work they had to recall everything they knew about multiplication facts in order to appreciate the problem let alone solve it. Similarly, in the probability work they had to get a clear notion as to the difference between terms like 'impossible' and 'unlikely' before thinking about setting out the chances on a 0 to 1 scale.
 - 9 In science, more able children in Year 4 and 6 show very good links with literacy and numeracy. The standard of recorded work is therefore of high quality. Year 4 children are making predictions and evaluating very precisely. By the time they are in Year 6, more able children are using a combination of descriptive writing and diagrams to record their scientific evidence. This is seen at its best with the recording of electrical circuits and the life cycle of a plant. There is a very good example of more able children investigating, which would be the most efficient and effective design to help a seed to be dispersed. The writing that

accompanies the piece of work shows that the children have understood the principle of seed dispersal and also have a good idea about aspects related to flight.

10 Literacy books reveal that the work carried out by more able children is more demanding than that carried out by others in the class. Their work contains a full variety, for example, in Year 6 there is a good contrast between the formal letter written to complain about a service and the informal letter written to a visitor who came into their class to talk about World War Two experiences. More able children show that they can identify ways of creating mystery and tension in a story. They use similes, personification and description of physical symptoms well as they draw in the reader with such phrases as, 'As Amy clamped her hands around Linda's arm all her skin went pale blue as her blood stream was blocked'. In another extract, the writer lets the reader know the emotions experienced by a character by using vivid description, for example, 'His mouth went dry – eyes filled with tears...'

11 The good attention to the needs of more able children starts in the reception class where the classroom support is used effectively to work with different groups of children. Tasks are set out which are challenging, even when an adult does not directly supervise children. This is seen at its best when a group of children use pictures from a catalogue to design a playground. The teacher also selects groups of children very carefully to work on specific tasks. This is observed when more able children use plus and minus signs to make up number sentences.

- **The use of specific targets in literacy and numeracy is giving children good knowledge about their learning and what to do next to improve their work.**

12 The school has given very careful consideration to the potential impact of using children's individual targets on the work that is taking place in literacy and numeracy. The school has for several years used assessment effectively to link planning and the needs of different children according to their ability. The school has now developed its work to take account of the best practice that was in place and extending it to all classes.

13 Each teacher keeps a folder which summarises children's attainment and progress. Each class folder has very comprehensive statistical information related to national and other standardised test results. There is also a very detailed tracking system, which outlines each child's progress over a period of time. From this information a high achievement register is formed, which is aimed at making teachers aware of those children who have made better than expected progress over any given period of time. The school has also moved to embrace the education inclusion principles by checking on the progress of different groups of children according to their gender, social and ethnic backgrounds as well as dates of birth.

14 Most of the tracking has focused on reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, there is a movement towards including foundation subjects as well giving deeper consideration to the assessment needs of younger children as identified within the foundation stage of learning. These developments are at early stages but have already started to be used by key teachers who are piloting the systems.

15 The school has already produced a very detailed timetable for 'evaluating school performance and setting school improvement targets'. The timetable forms part of the school's 'School Improvement Cycle'. As a result of this work the school has now moved to a position of developing an action plan for incorporating target setting as an on-going part of the teachers' planning. This system has, in part, already been tried out in some classes. The system has moved on so that individual targets are now in place for individual children, which are

directly related to the National Curriculum levels. This helps the teachers and the children to appreciate what needs to be done next in order to move on their learning. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson for example, the teacher's marking relates directly to the targets that are set out in the front of children's books. In this way, there is good attention to what children need to do in order to improve.

- 16 The parents have an over view of the targets because they are set out as part of on-going homework arrangements. They are clearly outlined for mathematics by way of the excellent 'Targets for Year R to 6' booklets that have been produced to help them work with their children. Each booklet makes it clear what the children in each year group are expected to learn by the end of each academic year.
- 17 The school sees its continued work in the target setting area as a key to continued improvement and to maintaining high standards. There is every indication that the school is right to feel confident. The comprehensive assessment systems together with the developments for targets for literacy and numeracy is helping to ensure that children are achieving well and therefore helping to raise standards.
- **The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a very effective team that gives emphasis to maintaining high standards as well as ensuring that children benefit from their learning.**
- 18 The headteacher has been at the school for some time and has already established effective systems, which helps him to convey to the rest of the staff exactly what the school's aims are and what he hopes the staff will achieve. The deputy headteacher has comparatively recently joined the staff and has brought with him a freshness and new ideas. The headteacher's receptiveness to these new ideas has been crucial to the school's continued success.
- 19 The headteacher acknowledges the important role played by the deputy headteacher in sharpening the school's analysis of performance data. This has helped the senior management team to convey to the rest of the school the implications for future planning and priorities. This work, which is now linked directly to target setting, has had a positive impact on the achievement of individual children especially the more able and those who need additional support. The analysis has helped the school to target its support more effectively and to give consideration to setting by ability for numeracy. For example, a group of children in Years 3, 4 and 5 regularly come to school early to receive additional support in literacy. The school has already recognised through its tracking and analysis of performance that they need support to attain the expected level for their age when they take their national tests at the age of 11. This system is one example of why the school rarely has children who do not attain the expected level for their age in national tests for 7 and 11 year olds.
- 20 The headteacher's monitoring of teaching is well advanced and has moved beyond the position of just ensuring that teaching and learning is at an acceptable level. The regular checking on the quality of teaching and learning has in the first instance helped the teaching to be at a better level than before. This is confirmed by the improved teaching noted at the time of this inspection compared with the previous one. The monitoring has moved to a position of checking on the impact of different aspects of teaching on children's learning. For example, checking on how teachers handle the 'plenary' sessions and beginning to analyse what this is doing to children's learning.
- 21 Subject leaders for literacy, numeracy, science and religious education have an important role to play in the monitoring that is happening. However, they have been provided with opportunities to be appropriately trained and handle sensitive issues well. The headteacher

and deputy headteacher take on the main monitoring roles. The way in which they have worked together to understand what they want for the school has helped to create a clear direction for all staff. This has resulted in staff acknowledging that the monitoring is helped and a positive feature of the school management system.

22 There is a direct link between the priorities identified as part of the data analysis and monitoring of teaching and learning and budgetary issues. The school has a relatively expensive staff and this allows limited room for manoeuvre when it comes to considering other resources. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have therefore developed very effective systems to help link the school improvement plan to future financial implications. All proposed developments are carefully costed and every effort is made to check that the school is getting the best possible value from its spending. The Governing Body, through its financial committee, is highly involved and understands its role in checking on value for money. The example of the careful consideration given to the potential impact of classroom assistants on standards is a good example of the school looking deeply into using money to improve standards. Another example is the sensible investment in the computer suite only when appropriate training support was available to staff.

23 The way in which the headteacher and the deputy headteacher complement each other is key to the success of the management structure that exists. Each has an important role to play and each is fully aware of each other's strengths. The staff have a great deal of faith in their style of leadership which is effective in maintaining high standards and in providing every opportunity for individual children to achieve well. This is also a strength noted by governors who feel very positive about the way the two senior members of staff work together. This has enabled them to have every faith in the way the school is organised and in the way the staff are supported.

- **The school works closely with parents to provide effective homework for children of all ages.**

24 The school has given a great deal of consideration to homework arrangements. According to the questionnaires that were returned by parents before the inspection began, ninety per cent of parents are happy with the work that their children are expected to do at home. The positive position was confirmed at the parents' meeting when parents expressed strong support for the school's efforts in this area. The system in place is very comprehensive and it is easy to see why parents are pleased. The inspection team acknowledges the amount of work the school has done to provide parents with good information about the way the homework system works and has worked hard to make the homework provision relevant.

25 There are several examples of the work that is on going in lessons being directly linked to the homework that the children are provided with. In mathematics for example, a group of able children working on a 'letter code' for multiplication tables have to design their own code at home. In another lesson the work being studied by Year 3 in literacy forms the basis of their homework. All younger children have book bags, which are taken home each night and returned to the class each day. Reading forms an important part of younger children's work at home. This is a process that the vast majority of parents appreciate.

26 Undoubtedly the most impressive feature of the homework system is the information provided for parents. The target-setting procedures, which have been recently introduced, are directly related to work to be done at home. Parents are informed of what they can expect children to achieve by a very well produced, informative booklet produced for each age group. This outstanding guidance outlines the learning intentions, what children are expected

to cover and also includes ideas for parents to try out at home with their children. The end result is a very comprehensive exchange of information between school and the home.

- 27 The teachers take the children's homework seriously and there is a regular and appropriate system for receiving the homework when children enter the classroom in the morning. The work is marked and forms part of the profile kept by all teachers of children's achievement. The children appreciate that it is an important part of their work and they are quick to point out that they receive support if needed from both home and their teachers.

- **The children respond positively to the school's high expectations for them to behave well.**

- 28 The vast majority of children work hard in lessons and are keen to learn. They are polite, well mannered and a pleasure to spend time with. The good behaviour makes a positive contribution to children's learning because there is very little time lost to unnecessary distraction or disruption in lessons. Ninety-five per cent of parents agree that behaviour is good at school.

- 29 The school has an effective behaviour management policy, which is shared and understood by all. The children respond well to this and know what is expected of them in terms of behaviour. In lessons, this results in teachers feeling confident about the pace and the challenge that they can impose on children. Teachers are certain that the majority of children are willing to give their best and try hard. This is particularly helpful for more able children who are given problems that put demands on their concentration and perseverance levels. Good behaviour aids the process.

- 30 In assemblies, all children give full attention to the person or children conducting the lesson or service. There is due reverence given to prayers and enjoyment in singing. All children, including the youngest, know the routines well during assemblies. At the start of the day children come into the school in an ordered way and seem pleased to be at school, which is a point made the vast majority of parents. Parents who have helped out with school visits were quick to point out the positive comments that they receive about children's behaviour. The school has a positive reputation in the immediate community and many parents choose to send their children to the school because there is a perception that behaviour is good.

- 31 Lunchtimes are also pleasant occasions when children sit in small groups to eat their food in an atmosphere that is calm, yet not oppressive. Children are able to chat to each other but show good table manners and react quickly if there is a need for them to pay attention to the person on duty or to lunchtime supervisors. The staff that work at lunchtime try to make this a positive experience by their approach to the children. They, in turn, believe that the children are sensible and quick to help out if asked to do something.

- 32 In the playground, groups of children of different ages and backgrounds play sensibly together. There is limited equipment available but this does not deter children from making up their own games and in enjoying their break times. This results in children coming in after playtimes ready to get on with their work and teachers are not having to sort out difficulties that occurred during the break.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- **There are not enough opportunities for children to show initiative or to take on added responsibility.**
- 33 Despite the good behaviour that is so apparent there is relatively little added responsibility expected of children. This is particularly the case in relation to taking responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. When provided with the opportunity the vast majority of children respond positively to working together and making decisions. This is seen at its best during science lessons involving investigations. However, it is not happening as frequently as one would imagine when considering the responsible way children behave. On occasions children are not provided with opportunities to talk about their work or to contribute much by way of discussion. In these situations the demands on children to work quietly detract from a reasonable amount of interaction expected from children with regard to their own learning.
- 34 There are limited opportunities for children to take responsibility beyond quite low-key tasks, such as returning registers or helping with tidying up. There is a house captain system, which sees eight children chosen by teachers to act as representatives for their group or house. However, the tasks that these children are expected to get involved in are quite minor. They do meet with the headteacher on occasions and they do talk about issues such as privacy in toilet areas. However, their overall impact on the way the school is organised is minimal. The headteacher does have a vision for a school council with representatives made up of children of different ages. At present, the adults rely too much on informal methods of picking up issues that the children have regarding making their school a more pleasant place for them to be at. There are examples of older children spending time with younger children. However, these situations are not a main feature within the school. In contrast, children show much maturity when taking on major parts in productions and Christian celebrations.
- 35 Children do get involved in charitable events and play a full part in raising money, for example, red nose day. However, these are events that are organised by adults and the amount of responsibility given to children is again quite limited.
- **The standards attained by older children in information and communication technology are not yet high enough.**
- 36 Although there was some excellent work seen in this subject, there is a concern about the standards being attained by older children. The main difficulty is related to the fact that, until recently, the provision for information and communication technology was unsatisfactory, as was reported at the time of the previous inspection. This has meant that the older children in the school lost out on skills that they should have been taught earlier. The older children are therefore in a position of having to ‘catch up’ on what they missed out on earlier. Their present progress is good but it is not enough to ensure that they are attaining at the levels expected for their age.
- 37 The confidence level of teachers is variable. There are examples of some who have very good personal skills in this subject and are able to enthuse others. In one lesson taken by the deputy headteacher a small group of Year 6 children are exploring the possibilities of writing the web site for the school. During the series of lessons the children have explored other school web sites and have come up with some very imaginative and creative ideas. However, they do not have the skill level to match their creativity and rely heavily on the teacher’s guidance. The teacher is excellent and does his best to make up for their shortcomings. It is clear that the children are on a steep learning curve but this does not dent their enthusiasm or

commitment. The teacher's subject knowledge is crucial in helping these children with their tasks.

38 Another problem that faced the school until recently was a lack of appropriate resources to support work in this area. However, this has now been overcome with the creation of a computer suite and matching the software available in the suite with that available in classrooms. Each classroom is now linked to the Internet. The school now feels it is in a good position to move on and extend the skill level of children. Younger children are working at the levels expected for their age because they have benefited from the new resource level earlier in their school life. Staff training is planned, although the majority have good skill levels. At the moment it is only two class teachers who feel that they need additional confidence to meet all the requirements outlined for the subject.

39 There is a very comprehensive action plan in place and the subject is led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator who is clear about the way forward for the school. She has been responsible for much of the work that has already taken place and is very confident that the school will be up to the level expected soon. The involvement of parents, through the computer club link, is part of the wider determination that the school has to improve the present provision. Almost everything the school has done, since the computer suite has been established, gives every confidence that the older children's skill level is likely to be improved at a rapid rate. The creation of a school magazine by Year 6 children is one example of this working well.

40 The school is aware of what it needs to do to improve the skill level of older children. These issues are well documented in the action plan for the subject. The other areas that need to be developed are the assessment and recording of progress within the subject. The school has already in place very secure systems for assessing and recording in other subjects and this could well be extended to include information and communication technology.

- **The attention given to cultural development, including multi-cultural issues, and gaining knowledge of cultures other than their own.**

41 As part of its work in religious education the children are made familiar with a range of different faiths across the world. Children are confident talking about these different faiths but are not as familiar with the way different groups of people live and worship. They therefore have good theoretical knowledge of other faiths but are less aware of how this affects their lives and way of working.

42 They are limited in their knowledge of multi-cultural issues, especially in relation to the lives of people of different faiths and cultures who live in Britain. The school does recognise this as a weaker feature of the work that they are involved in and few policies at present take multi-cultural issues into account. This is the weakest part of the school's provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43 The school has no major weakness. However, in order to maintain standards and build on this good position, the governors, headteacher and staff need to:

- **Extend the opportunities provided for children to use their initiative and to take added responsibilities for their learning; (Paragraphs 33-35)**
- **Improve the standards attained by children in information and communication technology; (Paragraphs 36-40)**
- **Give more attention to cultural development; including multi-cultural issues and help children gain knowledge of cultures other than their own. (Paragraphs 41-42)**

It is recognised that the school has already developed an appropriate plan for improving standards in ICT and this is already beginning to make a difference to the quality of learning and the achievement of children in this subject.

In addition to the main issues identified, the school needs to **seek ways of working with the parents of children who are persistently late.**

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	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	6	53	29			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		214
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		29

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	14	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	30	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (97)	100 (97)	100 (97)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	30	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100(97)	100 (97)	100 (97)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	14	13

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

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	27	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (90)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	208
Any other minority ethnic group	5

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)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.9
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	93

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	

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

Number of pupils per FTE adult	
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	464,461
Total expenditure	464,511
Expenditure per pupil	2191
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,098
Balance carried forward to next year	12,048

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

37.9%

Number of questionnaires sent out

214

Number of questionnaires returned

81

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	37	1	1	
My child is making good progress in school.	47	46	6	1	
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	58	5		
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	60	9	1	
The teaching is good.	54	40	6		
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	57	17	5	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	37	1	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	2		2
The school works closely with parents.	35	51	12	1	
The school is well led and managed.	53	41	6		
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	35	5	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	49	9	6	