

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. SWITHUN WELLS R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Ruislip, Middlesex

LEA area: Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102421

Headteacher: Mr T. P. Campbell

Reporting inspector: Mr D. Hayward
21234

Dates of inspection: 9th – 10th May 2001

Inspection number: 192836

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant, Junior and Nursery

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hunters' Hill
South Ruislip
Middlesex

Postcode: HA4 9HS

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Miss Jean Heaslip

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Swithun Wells RC is an average sized primary school situated in Hillingdon, on the borders of Ealing and Harrow. The school is under the trusteeship of the Catholic Diocese of Westminster and has a very strong Roman Catholic ethos. Most of the pupils live in the local parish of St. Gregory the Great, but there are some who live outside the parish. The school is very popular and is considerably oversubscribed each year.

Currently there are 220 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (3 per cent) is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (3 per cent) is higher than in many other schools, although none of them is at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (15 per cent) is below the national average and the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need (3 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average.

Children start in the nursery when they are about three and a half years old. All children spend at least three terms there and start in the reception class in the term after their fifth birthday. From September 2001, children born between 1st September and the end of February will start in the reception class in September and those born between March and the end of August will start in January. There is a range of attainment on entry to school, but the attainment of the majority of pupils is generally in line with expectations for pupils at that age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Swithun Wells is a very good school. It is a happy, caring place that puts great importance on teamwork amongst all the adults and pupils who work there. It helps pupils to make very good progress. They achieve very high standards in national tests at 7 and 11 years of age and have succeeded in doing so over the last four years. Results in mathematics for 11-year-olds have placed St. Swithun Wells in the top 5 per cent of schools in the country since 1998. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- It uses assessment information very well to ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities make very good progress. It helps them to achieve very high standards in national tests for 7 and 11-year-olds.
- It provides a very strong Roman Catholic ethos and emphasises the importance of caring for each other. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils say, '*The school makes you feel comfortable. We know that God is behind us, and will help us*'. There are excellent relationships between adults and pupils.
- The school provides very good standards of teaching. Teachers are very hardworking and enthusiastic, and work well as a team. They have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve and give lots of praise to encourage them to do well. Pupils appreciate teachers' sense of humour and the support they provide. They say, '*The teachers make you feel special and equal. There are no favourites and no one gets left out*'.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a very effective partnership. They provide clear and consistent leadership. All staff and governors provide very good support.

What could be improved

- Subject planning is not straightforward enough.
- Opportunities for pupils to use a problem-solving approach.
- Outdoor play facilities for children in the Foundation Stage¹

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

¹ The Foundation Stage – This was introduced in September 2000 and forms a separate stage of education for children from the age of three until they reach the end of the reception year.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997, when it was judged to provide good value for money. Many of the strengths identified in that inspection, such as pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour, the leadership and management and links with parents, are still strengths. Areas identified for development in the previous inspection, such as the use of assessment information, monitoring teaching and matching work carefully to pupils' abilities, have been carried out very successfully. In fact, the school's use of data to help keep track of pupils' progress and to set challenging targets for them is now a strength of its work. St. Swithun Wells has also achieved the difficult task of maintaining very high results in tests for 7 and 11-year-old pupils over the last four years. The school now provides very good value for money and is very well placed to maintain its high standards in the future.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 |
| English | A* | A | A | B |
| Mathematics | A* | A* | A* | A |
| Science | A | C | A | B |

| Key | |
|--------------------|----|
| very high | A* |
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

Seven-year-old pupils' results have got better each year since 1998. The school has also managed to achieve the difficult task of maintaining 11-year-olds' very high standards in national tests since 1998. The school's results in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 over the last three years have consistently placed it in the top 5 per cent of schools in the country. It has achieved these high standards by very good teaching and high expectations of what pupils can do. During the inspection standards at the end of both key stages were judged to be well above average. The school's targets for pupils' achievements in end-of-key-stage tests are challenging and results are predicted to remain high.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They say, <i>'It is special because of the welcome it gives to adults and children'</i> . They admire, trust and respect the adults who work with them. They look forward to their lessons and work extremely hard. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Excellent. Pupils are very well mannered and helpful. They are extremely polite and welcoming to visitors. They think that good behaviour is important and say that they behave towards others as they would like others to behave towards them. |
| Personal development and relationships | Excellent. Pupils are mature, reliable and trustworthy. They enjoy looking after each other and the way they help each other adds considerably to the outstanding school ethos. Pupils in Key Stage 1 say, <i>'Junior children help us and are friendly. When we fall out, then our friends get us back together and it's all forgotten'</i> . |
| Attendance | Very good. Better than in many other primary schools. Pupils arrive at school punctually and lessons start promptly. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

During the inspection 22 lessons were observed. Nineteen of them (86 per cent) were at least good, nine (41 per cent) were very good or better and four (18 per cent) were excellent. This is very high quality teaching that is found throughout the school. There is a very strong team spirit amongst the staff and they provide each other with lots of support. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is consistently challenging and has a significant impact on the attainment of pupils of all abilities. Work for pupils with special educational needs is well planned and they have lots of good support from teachers and classroom assistants. Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can do. They plan work very well at just the right level to ensure that pupils make very good progress. Pupils understand that their work is challenging when they say, *'You need to try hard and concentrate'*, but they also realise that, *'The teachers are really good and help us a lot. They explain things clearly'*.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good. The school provides a wide range of interesting subjects. Very good links are made between the school and the community. Pupils enjoy a range of visits and visitors linked to their work. The school has begun to make good use of information and communication technology, although computers are not used effectively enough in some subjects. The school has quite correctly placed much emphasis on English, mathematics and science. Now that these areas are very successfully established there is time for the school to encourage more problem solving activities for pupils. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good. Their work is carefully planned and the school keeps careful track of the progress they make. They receive lots of good support in class lessons and in small groups. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | The school makes good provision for the few pupils who are learning English. |
| Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | A strength of the school's work. It helps to develop a high level of tolerance, understanding and respect. It provides many very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and to mature. Everyone and their talents are valued. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | A strength of the school's work. There is a caring, calm atmosphere. Pupils feel very secure and say, <i>'You can always ask teachers any questions and always talk to them about any problems you might have'</i> . The school has very good ways of assessing pupils' achievements and keeping track of the progress they make. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong and supportive leadership. They work very hard to promote a clear sense of teamwork. Everyone in school is committed to its success. Subject co-ordinators work hard to ensure that high standards are maintained. Administrative staff play a very important role in the smooth running of the school. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors are very enthusiastic, supportive and knowledgeable. They are very involved in the running of the school and have worked very hard to help ensure its success. They fulfil their role of <i>'critical friend'</i> to the school very well. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school has at least maintained its strengths since the previous inspection and in many areas it has improved. It has a very clear understanding of what it does well and welcomes change and new ideas that will lead to improvement. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school uses its budget and resources very well to provide a very high standard of education. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

One hundred and twenty-six parents (57 per cent) returned their questionnaires and 37 attended the pre-inspection meeting.

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They think that their children make good progress and achieve high standards. • They think that their children are taught well. • They think that the school is well led and that it listens to what they say. • They say that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible and that they are happy there. • Most parents think that the school's arrangements for setting homework are good. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like to have more information about their children's progress. • A number of parents think that there is only a limited range of activities for children outside lessons. |

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments. Pupils are happy at St. Swithun Wells and make very good progress. The standard of teaching is high. In the opinion of the inspection team, the school provides good information about pupils' progress. Parents have regular opportunities to see their children's teachers and say that teachers are happy to arrange a meeting at short notice if they have any concerns. Pupils' written reports are very informative. Homework is set regularly and supports the work that pupils do in school. The school organises a number of after-school clubs, such as football, keep-fit and tennis. Pupils go on visits to places of interest, such as Gunnersbury Park Museum and Amersham Field Studies Centre, which are well linked to the topics they do in school. Visitors to school enrich the curriculum and talk to pupils about fund-raising activities for charities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

It uses assessment information very well to ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities make very good progress. It helps them to achieve very high standards in national tests for 7 and 11-year-olds.

1. The results of the 2000 tests for 7-year-old pupils were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and very high in science. Results in all four subjects have improved since 1997 when the school was last inspected. Compared with those in similar schools, results at St. Swithun Wells were above average in writing and well above average in reading and mathematics. In the 2000 tests for 11-year-olds, results were well above average in English and science, and in mathematics they were very high compared with those in all schools nationally. This means that pupils' results in mathematics last year, and in fact since 1998, have placed St. Swithun Wells in the top 5 per cent of schools in the country. Compared with those in similar schools, results were above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics.
2. The percentage of 7-year-old pupils reaching the higher Level 3² was above average in writing and well above average in reading, mathematics and science. At Key Stage 2 the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 was above average in English, well above average in science and very high in mathematics. Higher attaining pupils are constantly being challenged to achieve above average results. With the exception of science in 1999, results for 11-year-olds have been either well above average or very high compared with those nationally since 1997. These are very high results that the school has done extremely well to maintain, and it is justifiably proud of them.
3. The school has developed very good systems that help it to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses and then plan work that is challenging, as well as identifying where additional support should be provided. It has become skilled at using a wealth of data extremely effectively in tracking the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils. It sets targets for them that are achievable yet challenging, in order to maintain the high standards that have been apparent over the last four years at both key stages.
4. For example, teachers assess children within a few weeks of starting school in the reception class to find out how much they know, for example, about their language and number skills and how well they concentrate and get on with other children. This is the beginning of the school's collection of information on each pupil that helps to track progress as they move through the school. The teachers use these very early assessments constructively to forecast pupils' levels of attainment at the end of each school year. A range of other assessments is carried out on a regular basis, and in the light of this additional information teachers review pupils' predicted levels of attainment. The level of difficulty of pupils' work is then adjusted if necessary and additional teaching support is provided accordingly. There is very good evidence that work at St. Swithun Wells builds quickly, logically and progressively from year to year on what pupils know and can do. The teachers' use of individual targeting has become increasingly effective from the time the children start school to ensure their rate of progress is maintained through the Foundation Stage and both key stages.
5. For example, pupils develop excellent speaking and listening skills, although their speaking skills when they start in the nursery are only average for their age. The school

² Levels – by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Those who attain Level 3 are, therefore, attaining above nationally expected levels. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to attain Level 4. Those who attain Level 5 are, therefore, attaining above nationally expected levels at the age of eleven.

provides many opportunities for them to develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons and assemblies as they move through the school. For example, in a very good lesson in the nursery, the teacher took every opportunity to extend children's vocabulary by involving them carefully in a cooking activity. The teacher's use of specific vocabulary, such as *'grains of salt'* and *'ingredients'*, and comparative terms, such as *'too much'* and *'not enough'*, helped to develop their use of language to describe events, rather than relying on words such as *'gooey'* to describe the cake mixture. By Year 1, pupils are able to talk confidently about books and the characters in them. They know that part of the background picture has been removed from a particular book cover, *'because it might give the story away'*, and talk about the pirate, *'whose face has an angry expression'*. By Year 3, pupils are able to use words increasingly effectively to describe an animal's actions such as, *'He slowly poked his nose out and sniffed once, then sniffed again'* or, *'He arched his back an inch or two'*. By Year 6, pupils listen very carefully to others' opinions and speak confidently to adults and pupils about a range of interests. For example, they know that the Pope on his recent travels, *'followed the route of Saint Paul, who was a disciple'*. They can explain the meaning of *'practising what you preach'*, and feel that, *'The way in which everyone in school is encouraged to look after each other is an example of that'*.

6. As well as developing speaking and listening skills, the school carries out a scrutiny of pupils' writing at both key stages. On the basis of this it has identified pupils who, it feels, will benefit from further support or additional challenge. Additionally, a detailed analysis of the end of key stage writing tests provides further information about how the school could improve pupils' skills. For example, the school is aiming to increase the number of pupils attaining Level 3 and Level 5 in writing. It is focusing on the quality of pupils' information writing in Key Stage 1 by concentrating on the need for more precise planning and using appropriate reference books. At Key Stage 2 there is a concerted effort to get all pupils, but particularly boys, to plan their writing in a much more structured way so that the quality of the finished work improves. Such careful analysis of pupils' writing also raises issues in individual classes throughout the school that need to be addressed; for example, increased written content or better presentation.

7. A similar rate of progress is apparent in the development of pupils' writing skills throughout the school as it is in speaking and listening. The school's planned range of writing tasks gives pupils every opportunity to make the most of their existing vocabulary, whilst at the same time providing challenging opportunities to learn how to improve and develop the quality of their written work. For example, a pupil in Year 1 wrote, *'My most brill day at school wold be if it was sunny and I was playing with my best frend I wold play cowboys and indyons and we wod play outside. I love it how it is'*. By Year 2 the impact of the teaching is clearly apparent in the way in which pupils use punctuation and neat joined handwriting and put their developing writing skills to good use in their *'Space Adventure'* stories. *'I was walking down past the space centre with my gran and grandad. "Look grandad, look gran, can we see inside that rocket!" I asked. "Yes" said grandad. "No we can't go in that rocket it's not safe" shouted gran. "Oh come and have some fun for once" called grandad'*. Very good teaching encourages the steady development of pupils' writing skills. A wide range of subjects gives them every opportunity to develop an individual style. By Year 6 pupils are able to write sensitive, well-constructed and correctly punctuated stories and descriptions, for example in their *'What is the Moon?' verses.*

*'The moon is a lump of grey, mouldy cheese on a black, spotted plate.
It is a CD on black paper with white chicken pox.
It is a round, white plate covered with ice cream.
It is a cool, hard-boiled egg sitting in a tin of blue paint.
It is a bright, silvery ball bobbing on the waves of the sky.'*

8. By using information carefully and constructively the school has become adept at tracking trends in particular groups of pupils from year to year in order to set increasingly accurate targets for end-of-key-stage tests at 7 and 11 years of age. For example, it recognises that this year's cohort of Year 6 pupils is unlikely to achieve such high results as last year's. Nevertheless, it has worked very hard to provide successful *'booster classes'* on a twice weekly basis to improve pupils' results as far as possible as well as *'extended writing'* opportunities for higher attaining pupils. Thus there might be *'lower'* results this year, but they will come as no surprise for the school and will be viewed as the result of a determined effort on the school's part to help pupils achieve the highest results they are capable of.
9. The school also uses the data it collects to guide its staffing arrangements. It employs two *'additional'* part-time teachers who are extremely effective in providing extra support for individuals and small groups of pupils. One is specifically responsible for working with pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that the targets in their individual education plans are followed. The other provides group support for pupils of different abilities in literacy and numeracy; for example, to set challenging extension work for higher attaining pupils. As part of the school's particular view on providing equal opportunities, all pupils, regardless of their ability, are able to join in these special groups.
10. As a result of tracking their progress, teachers set challenging targets each term for pupils to achieve in literacy and numeracy. Pupils know their targets and think that they help them to be more focused about what they have to learn. For example, a pupil in Year 6 had to learn all her multiplication tables by heart as a mathematics target. She could quickly recall any multiplication sum in any times table, such as *'nine times seven'* and *'six times eight'*. Another pupil in Year 4 had learned to *'round'* any numbers to the nearest ten, hundred or thousand very quickly and accurately. Teachers assess when the targets have been achieved and then set new targets. Linked to the target setting is a very successful reward system of stickers and certificates. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the rewards. They say that they are not given too freely and that they feel very important when they receive one in assembly. They know that they are making good progress in school and enjoy looking back over their previous books, which they keep at home to see the improvements they have made.

It provides a very strong Roman Catholic ethos and emphasises the importance of caring for each other. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils say, *'The school makes you feel comfortable. We know that God is behind us, and will help us'*. There are excellent relationships between adults and pupils.

11. All parents in their questionnaires indicated that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. At the pre-inspection meeting they strongly supported the view that St. Swithun Wells promotes positive and worthwhile values; for example, caring for each other in the playground and the support the school regularly gives to various charities. The pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships that exist within school were also positively commented on in the previous inspection report. Pupils talk very enthusiastically about their school and their work. They are very proud of St. Swithun Wells, as are the staff and parents. Pupils' willingness to listen very carefully to what they have to do, to start work promptly and to concentrate and work hard means that no time is wasted in lessons. They have a real desire to do their best that starts with the youngest children in the nursery and continues throughout the school. For example, children in the nursery worked extremely well together sharing small construction equipment, whilst others were engrossed listening to a taped story and another group worked with the teacher making banana muffins. In Year 6, pupils talk about wanting to do really well for themselves and the school in their national tests, but at the same time

not feeling under any pressure that they **have** to do well. In several lessons, pupils spontaneously applauded other pupils' work because they thought it was really good. In an art lesson, pupils showed their appreciation of the quality of others' work with spontaneous comments such as, *'Who did that? That's really wicked!'*

12. The pupils are very conscious that this is a Roman Catholic school and that it stands for something distinctive. They talk confidently and openly about the important part that God plays in their lives in school. For example, they talk about the moral and ethical issues that come out of Bible stories. They feel strongly that the school promotes a very positive approach to working together. They feel that this means that they should not let themselves, their friends or their school down. Wherever pupils work, they work very well, including short periods of time when they have no direct teacher supervision. They bring positive and conscientious attitudes to all their work and carry out their tasks sensibly and thoughtfully. The school is now in a strong position to extend the opportunities pupils have to take responsibility for their own work through a problem solving approach. This could involve greater use, for example, of information and communication technology and traditional reference material. All pupils in Year 6 have an opportunity to act as monitors, for example collecting registers, and they regard the work as a real privilege.
13. Pupils work very well together on shared tasks. Not once was any pupil seen refusing to co-operate with another. In fact, the reverse is true. Pupils are very keen to help each other and see it as part of their responsibility to be helpful to others. This is what pupils mean when they refer to, *'doing to others as you would want them to do to you'*, and is very much based on a Christian approach to life. Younger pupils say that, *'Junior children help us and are friendly'*, and are not at all resentful that the older pupils have the larger of two playgrounds because, *'Older children need more space to run around in'*. Pupils from different ethnic groups work and play together very well. Older pupils take turns in looking after one pupil who has particular difficulties mixing with others at playtimes, and they support him very well. Pupils show the same spirit of co-operation and willingness to adults as they do to pupils. They have a tremendous feeling that the school is fair to them. The school mission statement stresses the importance of equal opportunity for all, and pupils feel that this is carried out. They comment that, *'Teachers are fair'*, that, *'The school makes you feel comfortable'*, and that, *'You can always talk to teachers. They will always listen to you'*.
14. Almost all parents think that pupils' behaviour is good inside school and when they go out on visits. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt that pupils' behaviour was a strength of the school. They talked about positive comments that adults had made about the behaviour of pupils when they were on trips to places of interest. Pupils regard good behaviour in a very *'matter of fact'* way. They are very aware of how they are expected to behave in school and are extremely polite to visitors and adults. All pupils played a part in drawing up the school code of conduct, even though there is no formal body such as a school council to oversee such decisions. Each year the pupils draw up their own individual class rules. Pupils say it is done sensibly and that they all agree that rules are needed. Pupils are well aware of the responsibility the school places on them to behave well. Pupils of all ages insist that bullying is not a problem at St. Swithun Wells.

The school provides very good standards of teaching. Teachers are very hardworking and enthusiastic, and work well as a team. Pupils appreciate their sense of humour and the support they provide. They say, *'The teachers make you feel special and equal. There are no favourites and no one gets left out'*.

15. In the lessons observed, teaching was never less than sound. It was at least good in just over 80 per cent of lessons, very good in almost 60 per cent and excellent in almost 20 per cent. This is very high quality teaching that is found throughout the school. Almost all parents in their questionnaires thought that teaching was good. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting said that teachers are very supportive and that their children like and respect them. They are very aware that the teaching promotes a feeling of self-respect amongst pupils. Teachers are very hardworking and are committed to the work and ethos of the school. They work very well as a team and offer a great deal of support. There has been significant staff change since the last inspection and teachers commented how strong support from other staff and pupils had helped them to settle quickly into the school.
16. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. In 1997, teaching was judged to be very good in 20 per cent of lessons, compared with almost 60 per cent in this inspection. Many of the strengths identified in that inspection are still apparent, even though there have been a number of changes in personnel. For example, teachers still have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that the school has high expectations of their children. During an excellent art lesson the teacher constantly reminded pupils about the high standard of work they should be aiming for, whilst still emphasising the importance of experimenting with different designs to create effect. During a very good gymnastics lesson the teacher constantly reminded pupils to work hard to improve their balances, with comments such as, *'I'm looking for perfection. Can you really stretch that leg?'* There are still very good relationships between teachers and pupils, and support staff who work with pupils who have special educational needs provide lots of advice about how to improve.
17. One of the improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection is in teachers' planning. Work is well planned by teachers to take account of all abilities in the class. However, the school could make its planning structure simpler and save time by using a more consistent approach that is shared by all teachers. The teachers' use of assessment to find out what pupils know, and then plan work that builds on their knowledge, is very good, whereas in 1997 it was identified as a *'key issue'* for the school to improve on. The regular monitoring of lessons and the consequent professional dialogue are accepted by staff as an important part of development and have led to improvement.
18. One of the reasons for the improvement in the quality of teaching is the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They have enabled teachers to focus precisely on particular skills in literacy and numeracy that have to be taught in a logical sequence. The teaching of literacy and numeracy at the end of both key stages was invariably very good or excellent. Another reason for high quality teaching is the way in which teachers share with pupils what they expect them to learn by the end of the lesson. This *'lesson objective'* is usually written in one or two sentences on the board at the beginning of the lesson. In the very best lessons, it is referred to during the course of the lesson and also in very good plenary sessions at the end. It helps pupils to focus on the main points of the lesson and helps teachers to find out whether pupils have learned what was planned at the beginning of the lesson.

19. In order to find out what pupils know, teachers use very good questioning which involves everyone. Pupils cannot *'sit back'* and hope that they will not have to answer any questions. Lessons invariably start with a brisk question and answer session in which teachers ask searching questions to find out what pupils know. For example, in a very good numeracy lesson in Year 2 the teacher constantly asked probing questions. Pupils' answers were frequently met with a supplementary question to further test their knowledge. For example, *'What number is a multiple of five? Is that the only number? How can fifteen be a multiple of five? I thought they only ended in zero?'* Teachers cleverly use pupils' first names to direct questions, for example *'What do you think Ben?'* rather than leaving the question open for anyone to answer. During the lesson questions based on pupils' work provide very good opportunities to make on-going assessments; for example, *'What does that sentence tell you about the character? What is he feeling?'* In the very few lessons where teaching was not as effective, there was not the same sense of urgency in questioning, so that the lesson pace dropped. In the best lessons, teachers *'build up'* the excitement of the lessons to such a degree that pupils are *'desperate'* to answer questions.
20. There have been several staff changes since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, the relationships between adults and pupils noted in that inspection are still apparent and, in fact, are strengths of the teaching. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting commented that the strong, supportive and caring teaching had the positive benefit of raising pupils' confidence and self-worth. During the inspection the excellent relationships between teachers and pupils and the quality and frequency of teachers' praise had clear benefits for pupils of all ages. For example, in the nursery the teacher made *'new arrivals'* very welcome and used praise positively to highlight good behaviour and friendship, such as *'We make lots of friends at nursery'* and *'Look how quietly those children are working!'* In art, the teacher praised pupils' work by comments such as *'Oh that's great! That's a technique I hadn't thought of'* and *'Yes. I think that's brilliant!'* In numeracy, an occasional wink or a *'thumbs up'* from the teacher gave pupils a real boost when they gave the correct answer. The smiles, jokes, encouragement and familiarity with pupils reveal a real sense of care that teachers have and motivate pupils to do well. Teachers' comments, such as *'Important information should be flashing at you!'* in a numeracy lesson brought smiles to pupils' faces, but made them look carefully at their work. All this supports pupils' views that teachers are *'friendly and fair and really care about us'*.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a very effective partnership. They provide clear and consistent leadership. All staff and governors provide very good support.

21. Ninety-nine per cent of parents in their questionnaires agree that the school is well managed and led. Ninety-seven per cent feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems and 94 per cent feel the school works closely with them. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership and form a very supportive partnership. Senior staff have good opportunities to join the school's management team and take additional responsibility. The consistent management of the school is clearly one of the main reasons for the very high standards the school has achieved in national tests over the last four years, and its high reputation for pupils' academic and social development. All the key issues from the previous inspection have been successfully tackled.
22. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on teamwork and the important part played by teaching, classroom support, administrative and ancillary staff. A good start has been made in developing the role of the subject co-ordinators, despite the difficulties in recruiting permanent staff who are able to take on subject responsibility. All staff take part in analysing school data and identifying subsequent priorities. The school's plan for development is the result of collaboration between staff and governors.

23. Governors play a significant part in the running of the school. They are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and very supportive. They feel fortunate to be associated with such a successful school. The headteacher and chair of governors have an excellent working relationship and share common aims for the development of the school. Governors have regular and frequent contact with the school, including the monitoring of standards and links with individual classes. They operate a very effective committee structure to deal with areas such as the curriculum and finance. They and the headteacher play a very positive part in reviewing the performance of the school and support educational priorities very well through prudent financial planning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The school's arrangements for consistent subject planning.

24. Recent national initiatives have meant that the school has not given priority to reviewing its current planning systems. It is clear that there is a degree of duplication and that time could be saved if the staff were to review their planning systems as a whole-staff exercise. This would have the advantage of rationalising their existing documents and avoiding the need for repetition in future.

Opportunities for pupils to use a problem-solving approach in a range of subjects.

25. The school has, quite correctly, concentrated its focus of attention on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They have both been very successfully implemented and have had, and are continuing to have, a significant impact on standards of work throughout the school. As in many other primary schools throughout the country, the focus in these lessons is on teacher-led activities. Pupils make real progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding.
26. The school recognises that there are fewer opportunities than in previous years for teachers to extend opportunities for pupils to develop a problem solving approach to their work. For example, pupils do not use information and communication technology enough in their work. They do not use the library enough and are not confident in finding out information from books. It could involve pupils in making decisions about the pace and direction of some aspects of their work. The school has the advantage of pupils who are totally committed to all aspects of their work. They work extremely well together in small and large groups, are determined to complete tasks and can be relied upon to work well without direct teacher support or intervention.

Outdoor play facilities for children in the Foundation Stage

27. There is, currently, no large outdoor climbing apparatus for children in the nursery. The outside area is on a slope and is vulnerable to very wet conditions. Nevertheless, this means that there are restricted opportunities for nursery staff to help children make progress in the development of their physical skills, when they can control and co-ordinate their bodies when moving around, balancing and climbing. As the school's arrangements for admitting children into the reception class change from September, it is even more imperative that children in the nursery and the reception class, which now comprises part of the Foundation Stage, have regular access to outdoor climbing apparatus.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

28. In the context of its many strengths and the high quality of education it already provides, the school should now:
- i ensure that it follows a consistent planning structure that will save time;
 - ii extend opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for a problem solving approach to their work;
 - iii provide outdoor climbing apparatus for children in the Foundation Stage.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 22 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 11 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 18 | 41 | 27 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR– Y6 |
|--|---------|--------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 18 | 189 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | | 7 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR– Y6 |
|---|---------|--------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 4 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0 | 25 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 15 |

| 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 | 6 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.1 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2000 | 18 | 14 | 32 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above | Boys | 18 | 18 | 17 |
| | Girls | 13 | 13 | 14 |
| | Total | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | School | 97 (97) | 97 (97) | 97 (88) |
| | National | 83 (82) | 84 (83) | 90 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above | Boys | 18 | 17 | 18 |
| | Girls | 13 | 14 | 14 |
| | Total | 31 | 31 | 32 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | School | 97 (97) | 97 (88) | 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 | 16 | 16 | 32 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above | Boys | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| | Girls | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| | Total | 32 | 32 | 32 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | School | 100 (97) | 100 (97) | 100 (97) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above | Boys | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| | Girls | 14 | 14 | 15 |
| | Total | 28 | 29 | 31 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | School | 88 (91) | 91 (81) | 97 (97) |
| | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69) | 79 (75) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 2 |
| Black – African heritage | 2 |
| Black – other | 1 |
| Indian | 3 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 174 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 7 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 11 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 20 |
| Average class size | 27 |

Education support staff: YR - Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 5 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 119 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 37 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 2 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 33 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 18 |
|--------------------------------|----|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999/2000 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 471,136 |
| Total expenditure | 465,403 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,088 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 5,958 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 11,691 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 57%

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 220 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 126 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 62 | 37 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 54 | 44 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 54 | 45 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 42 | 46 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| The teaching is good. | 57 | 42 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 46 | 41 | 12 | 1 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 59 | 38 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 70 | 26 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 50 | 44 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 63 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 61 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 25 | 30 | 25 | 6 | 14 |