

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY R.C.  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105221

Headteacher: Mrs. P. McTague

Reporting inspector: Mrs. G. Peet  
18842

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 192920

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

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Eastbourne Grove  
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Bolton  
Postcode: BL1 1LH

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Fr. William Byrne

Date of previous inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Thomas of Canterbury Roman Catholic Primary School is a larger than average sized primary school with 329 pupils ranging from four to 11 years of age. Children begin school in the reception classes and at the time of inspection, there were 45 children in these classes. Although the school has no nursery provision most pupils entering the school come from a variety of pre-school establishments that provide a range of good quality experiences. Attainment on entry to school is average. The school takes from three different parishes and although many of the pupils in the school come from socially advantageous backgrounds there are a significant number who do not. Nineteen pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. The inspection judgement is that because of the range of different backgrounds of the pupils more are likely to be entitled to these than claim them. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are thinly represented at the school but there are two pupils who speak English as an additional language and who are at the early stages of learning it. Twenty five per cent of the pupils are on the register of pupils with special educational needs, which is higher than the national average. Ten of these pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is well above average. The school has been awarded several awards for excellence. It is a 'Beacon' school, has the Quality Mark for the teaching of basic skills and has the Activemark Gold from Sport England. The school has a Mission Statement which is founded in the beliefs of the Roman Catholic faith and which permeates every aspect of school life.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective school with many good and very good features. It is successful because the staff, pupils, parents and governors all contribute enthusiastically to the life of the school. The pupils achieve high standards in all the aspects of their education that the inspectors were able to observe. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good, and pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. There are very good relationships in the school. The school is very well led and managed and provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teaching is good and enables the pupils to attain high standards, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Provision for special educational needs is very good and these pupils make good progress.
- The school makes the curriculum interesting and worthwhile for the pupils.
- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes very good behaviour, positive attitudes and very good relationships.

#### **What could be improved**

- Handwriting at age seven.
- The information on pupils' attainment included in their annual reports.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since its last inspection in March 1997 the school has made good improvement in the areas of concern highlighted then and almost all have been dealt with fully. The school analysed reading thoroughly and has adopted a more consistent approach to the teaching of reading, especially for the small minority who were underachieving. There has been a concerted effort to improve the match of work to individual pupils and this is now done well especially for those pupils who have special educational needs. The annual reports have been improved significantly although they still do not give parents a clear idea of whether their children are achieving all that they are expected to achieve at their age. The school day has been reviewed and is now longer. In addition there have been other improvements. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now even better and is very good. The range of fiction books available in the library has been extended. The hard play area outside, which was previously judged to be inadequate, has now been improved and

extended. The school has maintained good standards in English, mathematics and science at age 11, improving them in line with the national rate of improvement.

## 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*	B	B	C
Mathematics	A*	A	B	C
Science	A*	A	A	A

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

- Although the results of the National Curriculum tests over the last three years vary slightly from year to year, they demonstrate high standards in all three subjects. The number of pupils attaining highly in English and mathematics was also above the national average and the number of pupils attaining highly in science was well above the national average. The reason for the fall in standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics can be attributed to the high number of pupils with special educational needs in 1999 and 2000.
- The inspection findings are that for the pupils currently in Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is above the national expectation. Attainment in music and in games is also above the national expectation. It is not possible to make judgements about attainment in other subjects because in a short inspection there is insufficient opportunity to make judgements about all subjects.
- The results of the tests at age seven indicate that the number of pupils attaining the expected level in reading and mathematics is average and that in writing it is above average. The number of pupils attaining highly is well above average and some pupils even attained an exceptionally high level in reading and mathematics.
- The inspection findings are that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average at seven although they are only average in handwriting.
- Standards in literacy and numeracy are above average throughout the school. They are very high in reading at Key Stage 1.
- The school met its targets in mathematics in 2000 but failed to attain the very high target set in English. It is on line to attain the high targets for 2001.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. Pupils take full advantage of the many activities that the school has to offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are polite and courteous and their behaviour is very good. This contributes to the orderly environment and creates a good climate for learning.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school community are very good. Pupils are very willing to take responsibilities and would benefit from more opportunities to take initiative in their own learning and contribute their ideas to the life of the school.
Attendance	Above average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Overall 92 per cent of the teaching seen was good or better. Forty six per cent was very good and one excellent lesson was seen. This level of teaching ensures that pupils' learning is good and that they successfully acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in all the subjects they are studying. A particular strength is in the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Teachers structure lessons carefully and when teaching literacy and numeracy they follow the national strategies closely. Teachers often give pupils time to think and reflect on their learning and this helps pupils assimilate what they are learning more effectively. Teachers match work well to the needs of individual pupils and a particular strength is in the provision they make for those pupils with special educational needs. Special needs assistants make a significant contribution to the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported well in lessons and make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school meets statutory curricular requirements and teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. A wide range of visits, visitors, community links and extra curricular activities and events enriches the very good curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good.
The provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	Good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have opportunities to reflect and to develop an awareness of the needs of others and of the cultural influences that surround them.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are very good. Staff know the pupils well and provide well for their individual needs.

Links with parents are very effective and parents are very satisfied with the school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. She is ably assisted by the two deputy headteachers and the subject coordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are well informed about the school and play a full part in the decision making processes of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school conducts extensive monitoring. The senior staff and governors are fully aware of the school's performance and have a very clear idea of what they want to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. All money available to the school is spent wisely and carefully.

The school applies the principles of best value in all major decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school expects their children to work hard and achieve his or her best.</li> <li>The teaching is good.</li> <li>They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of work their children get to do at home.</li> <li>The information they get on how well their child is getting on.</li> </ul>

Inspectors' judgements support the very positive views about the school. However they do not support the views about homework. Homework is consistently given and supports pupils' learning. The quality of information that parents get is generally detailed and helpful. Parents have three opportunities each year to discuss their child's progress with teachers and another opportunity at the beginning of the year to meet the teacher and discuss the curriculum. Written reports are sent home to parents at the end of each year. Whilst these reports sometimes identify their child's strengths and weaknesses this is not done consistently in all reports. In many reports vague phrases are used which do not inform parents whether their child is doing as well as expected for their age.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Leadership and management is very good**

- 1 The school benefits from the very good leadership of the headteacher and is very well managed. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had only been in post for less than two terms. In that time she has acquired a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has a clear vision for the future of the school, which is one that is in accord with the school's mission statement and the established ethos of the school. The two deputy headteachers provide a very high level of good quality support and the subject coordinators have well established systems to manage their subject areas successfully. The school's aims and values are explicit and are reflected in all aspects of the work of the school.
- 2 The headteacher knows what the school achieves and has identified areas for further development. For example, she clearly sees the need for some curriculum revision in order to accommodate the increasing need for mixed age classes. The headteacher and senior management team have rightly identified mathematics as an area for further improvement and have put in place strategies to deal with this.
- 3 The school has clear processes for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing performance. Subject coordinators have a very well developed role within the school and each has a rolling programme for monitoring their subject. All coordinators are given time out of their own class to do this. Criteria for assessing the quality of learning in each subject have been established. Pupils' work is scrutinised regularly and curriculum development plans drawn up as a result. The headteacher has observed all teachers teaching. Formal feedback is given and targets for improvement set. Coordinators also monitor the teaching of their subject. The headteacher and the senior management team analyse the results of tests and other data on how well the pupils are doing. In literacy the information has been used to identify previous weaknesses in reading and enabled new approaches to be established that have successfully maintained standards and encouraged some pupils to attain very highly. For example, the school has introduced more effective diagnostic strategies and reading conferences as well as more opportunities for silent reading in class.
- 4 The headteacher and senior management team monitor on a regular basis the planning of all aspects of the curriculum. Curriculum coordinators monitor planning and pupils' work to ensure that their subjects are fully covered and that pupils progress systematically, in what they know, understand and can do as they move through the school.
- 5 The governing body maintains a strong involvement in the life of the school and offers good support. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and those areas needing to be improved. They have a strong committee structure looking at different aspects of the school and are well informed by thorough reports and open discussion with the headteacher and staff. They regularly attend training courses and evaluate their practice in order to make themselves more efficient. They have been particularly involved with the financial management of the school and have been instrumental in budgeting to provide the money needed to employ three additional part time teachers next year.

- 6 The governors understand the principles of Best Value and apply them to major financial decisions. For example, the governing body made the decision to employ a permanent full time member of staff to act as team leader to the special needs assistants.

### **Teaching is good and enables the pupils to attain high standards, especially in English, mathematics and science**

- 7 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The amount of teaching judged to be very good or excellent has risen from 17 per cent to 46 per cent. No teaching was unsatisfactory. Ninety-two per cent of all teaching was good, very good or excellent. The teaching in the school is consistently of a high quality and the needs of all pupils are well met. The teaching seen was mainly in literacy and numeracy lessons where there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- 8 Overall the teaching of children in the reception classes is good and pupils are well prepared for work on the National Curriculum. Activities are very carefully planned with the two teachers working closely together to ensure that both classes cover all aspects in of the nationally agreed curriculum for children of this age. Children are particularly well prepared for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. By the end of the reception year pupils follow literacy and numeracy lessons that are similar to those they will have when they enter Year 1. Good relationships and very good use of praise help to keep children fully involved. Good use of questions put in an encouraging and non threatening manner help children focus their ideas and learn effectively. By the time children reach the end of the reception class most are able to read and write simple consonant, vowel, consonant words and recognise how they can change the word by changing the initial letter. In numeracy most pupils count to 25 and are able to recognise numbers that are less than 25 but more than 10.
- 9 In both literacy and numeracy lessons for infants and juniors, teachers have high expectations of pupils and pupils respond positively to this. Lessons are well planned and organised, providing pupils of different abilities with tasks that are matched well to their needs. In a very good literacy lesson in the mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class, a good level of learning was promoted through carefully targeted and challenging questions that increased the pupils' understanding of the differences between the present and the past tenses. Another example of very good teaching was in a Year 6 lesson about different types of text. In this lesson a skilful blend of direct teaching and reflection by the pupils resulted in a high level of learning. By the end of the lesson nearly three quarters of the pupils in the class were able to create a well developed piece of persuasive writing. The lower attaining pupils achieved a good level of work that was in line with the expectations for their age. In numeracy, teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding and plan lessons that have imaginative activities to motivate pupils and retain their interest. For example, in Year 5, the pupils became very involved with an activity that required them to calculate how much it would cost to keep three dogs for a year. Pupils made good progress in learning how to organise themselves to solve a problem. A weakness in the teaching of numeracy is that sometimes lessons are planned strictly in accordance with the National Numeracy Strategy and some teachers are generally not confident at adapting their planning when assessment indicates that work could be more demanding. This results in classes sometimes moving along at the same pace when some pupils could be performing better.

- 10 A strength of the teaching in many lessons observed was in the opportunities teachers give to pupils to reflect on their learning. This was seen in a Year 5 science lesson when pupils were invited to think about the conditions a seed would need in order to germinate. This encouraged pupils to develop high level thinking skills that enabled them to make observations such as “a seed can’t need nutrients because it has no roots”. Some teachers use humour well and this encourages good relationships and maintains pupils’ interest.
- 11 Another strength of the teaching is the support that teachers and classroom assistants give to pupils on the register of pupils with special educational needs. This results in these pupils making good progress in line with their individual education plans.
- 12 Good teaching has resulted in pupils attaining standards that are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. In the 2000 national tests at the end of Year 6 pupils attained standards that were higher than the national average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. When these results are compared to schools that have a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals they are well above average in science but average in English and mathematics. Since the last inspection in 1997 standards rose in 1998 but dropped in 1999 in both English and mathematics. In 2000 they started to recover in English but dropped slightly again in mathematics. In science standards have maintained a high level since the last inspection. The reason for the fall in standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics can be attributed to the high number of pupils with special educational needs in 1999 and 2000.
- 13 In the 2000 end of Year 2 tests pupils attained standards well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. When these results are compared to those of similar schools results in mathematics were average, in writing were above average but in reading were well above average. In all three subjects the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well above average when compared nationally and when compared to similar schools were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. In both reading and mathematics some pupils attained Level 4 which is exceptional and is the level expected at the end of Year 6. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 14 The school is aware that although high, the results in mathematics at both seven and eleven are not as high as those in English and have taken steps to remedy this through better targeting of pupils and booster classes for some pupils. Teachers are being given more opportunities to develop their teaching skills through watching leading mathematics teachers. Support staff are also to be given more training opportunities. Some teachers plan lessons that closely follow the National Numeracy Strategy and do not always adapt their planning when assessment indicates that work could be more demanding. This limits the progress that some pupils are able to make in lessons.

**Provision for special educational needs is very good and these pupils make good progress**

- 15 The school makes very good provision for pupils on the register of pupils with special educational needs. There are 82 pupils on the register, which is 25 per cent of the school and is higher than the national average. Of these, 10 pupils have a statement

of special need, which is also above the average number for a school of this size and is more than three times as many as at the time of the previous inspection. The statemented pupils have a range of difficulties including specific or moderate learning difficulties and Aspergers syndrome. The special needs coordinator is well qualified to manage the provision. The school has seven special needs assistants who are supported by an effective team leader who also works with pupils on the register. The governing body is very well aware of the complex financial issues of funding involved and has made the appropriate decisions to make the team leader a permanent member of the school staff in order to give continuity to the provision for these pupils.

- 16 Some pupils with learning difficulties are identified before they start school, but most are identified in the reception class or in Year 1 after they have taken the baseline assessment tests or the middle infant screening tests. This timely identification means that provision can be put in place early and that pupils quickly get the extra support they need. The class teachers, in consultation with the coordinator, the special needs team leader and the parents, draw up individual education plans. Progress is reviewed regularly and parents are invited to these meetings. Individual education plans have clear measurable targets and contain advice for parents on how they can help their child. Teachers plan lessons that take account of the targets in the individual education plans and in lessons pupils are given the support they need to enable them to have full access to the curriculum.
- 17 The strength of the provision lies in the very good organisation and the clear guidance to all those involved in helping these pupils. There is a handbook for special needs assistants which sets out clearly the extent of their responsibilities and the expectations of them. All involved are encouraged to work as a team and provide support as necessary for each other. In order to ensure quality provision, in service training is provided to enable support assistants to keep up to date with new initiatives. Good use is made of outside agencies, for example, the teacher who supports the pupils with hearing impairment not only works directly with pupils but also supports teachers in their planning for these pupils. Where statemented pupils are entitled to the one to one support of an adult, the school has a policy of attaching more than one support assistant in a rota to each pupil in order to prevent the pupil becoming too dependent on one person.
- 18 Very detailed notes are kept on each pupil on the register of special educational needs. All concerns are recorded and reviewed regularly. The school is barrier free, enabling it to offer admissions to children with disabilities. Careful thought has been given to the needs of all children, as demonstrated by the fact that the school has installed strobe lighting to supplement the fire alarm for hearing impaired pupils. The school has recently appointed a coordinator to manage the provision for gifted and talented pupils and plans to set up systems for writing individual education plans for these pupils when all teachers have had the training to do this.

### **The school makes the curriculum interesting and worthwhile for the pupils**

- 19 The school provides lots of experiences that make the curriculum for its pupils more interesting and worthwhile. Over the year all classes visit places of interest to support their work in lessons and recently Year 3 pupils have visited the Blue Planet Aquarium, Year 4 pupils have visited the Lovell telescope at Jodrell Bank and Year 5 pupils have visited the Millennium Dome. The whole school visited the Octagon Theatre, Bolton at Christmas to see The Owl and the Pussy Cat. A wide range of visitors comes into

school to talk to pupils. For example, pupils studying the seaside as it was in the past enjoyed hearing a visitor tell about their childhood experiences of visiting the seaside. When Year 6 pupils were learning about the Jewish faith they were interested to hear a talk about Judaism from a Rabbi. A visiting poet has talked to Year 5 pupils about his work and an artist has worked with pupils performing a Chinese dance. Last year the school worked with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra on a problem solving activity designed to help pupils identify and listen carefully to the different instruments.

- 20 The range of after school clubs for pupils is extensive and includes sporting activities such as badminton, netball, and football. Other activities include chess, library and drama. The school also arranges for outside agencies to provide tuition in gymnastics, tennis, dance and some music tuition. Although parents are expected to pay for these activities the parent teacher association has funds to pay for any pupil who would not otherwise be able to take part in these activities. Year 5 pupils go on a spiritual residential trip to Bollington and Year 6 pupils go on an activity visit to Grasmere each year.
- 21 Daily lessons are enriched whenever possible by imaginative and stimulating activities. An example of this was in the information and communication technology curriculum for Year 6 pupils. The class prepared a newspaper for submission to the Times Educational Supplement Newspaper Day. This was of such a high quality that it was considered to be in the highly commended category and four representatives from the school were invited to a presentation at the House of Commons. Year 4 pupils enjoyed a Tudor workshop.
- 22 Particular strengths of the curriculum are in the provision for physical education and music. The school has been awarded the Activemark Gold from Sport England in recognition of the school's commitment to providing opportunities for physical education and the fact that they provide a "broad and balanced range of sporting activities". The school enters teams for a number of sporting events and has been successful in many of them. For example, the school football team won a place in the semi-final of the Roman Catholic school's cup. For the last three years in succession, the school netball team has won the netball cup. Many pupils have won awards for gymnastics and dance. Pupils, at the end of Year 6, attain standards in games that are above national expectations.
- 23 The standard of teaching of music is very high and one excellent lesson was seen in the Year 1 class. In this lesson the pace was excellent because the teacher had a wide range of strategies to challenge the pupils, motivate them and give them opportunities to practise and learn new skills. The pupils sang with a degree of confidence beyond that expected for their age. They displayed a mature awareness of pulse and control of rhythm. In another lesson the same class had an understanding above that expected for their age, of how symbols can be used to represent sounds. Almost half the pupils in the school take part in some extra curricular musical activity. The parents were pleased with the provision for music in the school, one parent remarking that she did not realise her child was musical until he came to this school. There are three school choirs, which are well attended. All choirs have performed in concerts. There is also a percussion group and a school orchestra. The standard of singing throughout the school is exemplary and plays a significant part in the provision for pupils' spiritual development.

**The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes very good behaviour, positive attitudes and very good relationships**

- 24 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The ethos of the school is positive. A strong sense of caring for each other and the environment prevails throughout the school and is an integral part of daily life.
- 25 Collective worship is held each day and reflects the Christian ethos of the school. This and school assemblies make a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development, being conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. Worship is always accompanied by quiet moments of reflection. Pupils are also given time within lessons to reflect and quiet areas outside the school give pupils further opportunities to sit calmly. All classrooms have a quiet prayer area.
- 26 The attention given to moral development is very good. All adults in the school are good role models and encourage good relationships. Approaches to behaviour are positive and pupils are helped to understand the difference between right and wrong. Teachers use praise effectively and the majority of pupils understand the code of conduct expected. Pupils are encouraged to look after each other and this is displayed in the caring attitude pupils have to those pupils that have special educational needs.
- 27 There are many opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop social skills. For example, pupils work collaboratively when investigating the germination of seeds in Year 5. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility through becoming cloakroom monitors, house captains or taking responsibility for the playground bell. Older pupils escort and sit with younger pupils in Church. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour. When incidents occur pupils are encouraged to write down what has happened and what should have happened. Pupils learn to take social responsibility through activities such as collecting for charities. The residential trips Years 5 and 6 make provide pupils with opportunities to develop their independence and personal skills through a range of challenging and exciting activities. Pupils in the choir participate in public events such as the Victoria Hall Music Festival and the Lenten service. Pupils are very willing to take responsibilities but would benefit from more opportunities to take initiative in their own learning and contribute their ideas to the life of the school.
- 28 Pupils' cultural development is supported by their work, particularly in religious education, art and history. Pupils celebrate their own culture through learning about how the Tudors lived and through their visits to places of interest such as Dove Cottage where Wordsworth lived. Pupils learn about the culture of others when they listen to African music or when they make African masks or study Aboriginal painting. They learn about the cultures of other religions when they listen to a talk by a visiting Rabbi. Music plays a significant part in the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils.
- 29 As a result of this very good provision, pupils' attitudes to school and to their work are very good. In lessons they take great care and pride in their work. At playtimes and lunchtimes pupils play together happily. They share the playground equipment fairly and abide by the playground rules. Lunchtimes are a sociable occasion when pupils enjoy each other's company. Pupils enjoy school and younger pupils say that older pupils help them if they need it. They say that nobody 'plays rough'.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Handwriting at age seven**

- 30 By the time pupils are seven they have clear legible handwriting and a significant number of higher attaining pupils use a cursive script. There are, however, a number of pupils who are working above the expected level in many aspects of the English curriculum who are not yet joining their writing successfully. The content of the writing of these pupils is carefully structured and punctuation and capital letters are generally correctly used. The only thing that prevents these pupils from attaining the higher Level 3 in the end of Year 2 tests is the fact that they are unable to join their letters successfully.
- 31 Joined handwriting is introduced in Year 1 and whilst many pupils make good progress they are not encouraged to develop their handwriting by seeing it regularly modelled by teachers or by seeing examples of well-formed joined text in the labels for displays around their classrooms and the school. Consequently there is a lack of urgency to their progress and they become more established in using a printed style.

### **The information on pupils' attainment included in their annual reports**

- 32 Information given to parents about their child's progress is generally good. There are two meetings each year when parents meet teachers to discuss their child's progress. They also meet with teachers at the beginning of the autumn term when they discuss what their children will be studying that year. This information is well supplemented by regular newsletters and parents feel comfortable about approaching the school whenever they have a problem.
- 33 Written school reports are sent home near the end of the summer term each year and these contain information on how well pupils have been doing in each of the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Whilst these reports sometimes identify their child's strengths and weaknesses this is not done consistently in all reports. In many reports vague phrases are used which do not inform parents whether their child is in line to achieve the standards expected when they are seven or eleven. This is particularly true of subjects other than English and mathematics. Sometimes comments do not tell parents how well the pupil is attaining the knowledge, skills and understanding pertinent to that particular subject, for example, in one report a comment about science was for the pupils 'to take greater care with presentations and recording of results' but did not say how well they understood the subject.
- 34 The school is aware that this is an area where further improvement can be made and it is already in the School Improvement Plan for next year.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

To maintain the quality of education and promote further development, the governing body, the headteacher and the staff should:

- Improve handwriting at the age of seven by:



- adopting a consistent policy throughout the school on the style of joined handwriting to be used and the methods for teaching it;
  - take steps to ensure that it is consistently used by both pupils and teachers throughout the school;
  - modelling the good use of the handwriting in the labels for displays around the school.
- The information on pupils' attainment included in their annual reports should give parents a clearer idea of what their children understand and whether their children are working at the level expected for their age.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	42	46	8	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)	0	329
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	72

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	.05
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	16	33	

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	15
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	29	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (87)	94 (95)	94 (89)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	14
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	28	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (87)	88 (93)	91 (89)
	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	21	27	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	18	21
	Girls	22	20	25
	Total	40	38	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (82)	79 (90)	96 (94)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	18	18
	Girls	20	20	22
	Total	37	38	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (78)	79 (92)	83 (92)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	98.6
Any other minority ethnic group	1.4

*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)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	29.9

#### **Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	236

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999 - 2000
	£
Total income	624 764
Total expenditure	609 240
Expenditure per pupil	1841
Balance brought forward from previous year	62 900
Balance carried forward to next year	78 424

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	329
Number of questionnaires returned	248

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	38	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	44	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	37	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	45	12	1	1
The teaching is good.	66	33	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	49	10	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	33	4	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	24	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	42	52	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	57	40	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	37	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	61	35	2	0	2