

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wigan

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106460

Headteacher: Mrs P Bigland

Reporting inspector: Mr K Sharma  
4306

Dates of inspection: 21 – 23 January 2002

Inspection number: 194080

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hardybutts  
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Lancashire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G Baldwin

Date of previous inspection: 6 May 1997

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school has 320 pupils aged three to eleven. It is housed in two buildings on an open-plan site. The school is part of a closely-knit community around the church and parish and is situated in a neighbourhood of mixed housing including pre-war, post-war, local authority and private properties. Very few families live outside the school's catchment area. Nearly a quarter of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. About 30% of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, a figure which is above the national average. For most of these pupils the specific needs include moderate learning difficulties. Only a small minority has specific learning difficulties, of which six pupils have statements of special educational needs. The school has two pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for both English is an additional language. Attainment on entry to nursery is below that that can be expected for children of this age. Most pupils have attended the school's nursery prior to their admission to the Reception class.

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

St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School is a good school with many very good features. Pupils make good or better progress between the ages of three and seven. As a result, standards achieved by seven-year-olds are at least above those expected of pupils of this age in all the basic skills. The performance of eleven-year-olds is close to the national average in English and mathematics, but below the national average for science. However, in comparison with schools with similar backgrounds, the school fares better in all three subjects. The school is on course to reduce the perceived gap in performance between the ages of seven and eleven, because it is succeeding in minimising the dip in standards in Year 3 that has occurred in the recent past. Teaching makes a positive contribution to the good or better progress being made by all pupils across the school, including those with special educational needs. The school is making a real impact on standards by setting improvement targets for all pupils and by realising them for the vast majority. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and has an accurate view of what is going well in the school and what needs improving. The governing body and staff all share a commitment to continuing improvement. Pupils' behaviour and relationships are very good and help create an environment conducive to effective learning. The school gives all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs, equal access to opportunities on offer. Taking into consideration the about average expenditure per pupil, the good progress made by pupils and overall promising national results, the school is providing good value for money.

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

- Standards in literacy are above those expected of pupils in Years 1–2 and they are improving for pupils in Years 3–6.
- Pupils’ achievement in the nursery and reception class is very good and it lays sound foundation for later years.
- Teaching is good or better in just over four in five lessons observed.
- Pupils’ attitudes to their work are very positive and their behaviour is very good.
- The school’s curriculum includes ample opportunities to stimulate pupils’ enthusiasm for visual and performing arts and for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enrich work across the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, and pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) are well cared for by teachers and support staff.
- Parents have confidence in the school.
- The headteacher, other key staff and the governing body provide very effective leadership and management.

### **What could be improved**

- Standards for pupils in Years 3–6.
- Rate of attendance.

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

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

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in May 1997. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved considerably as has the quality of teaching. The school has also been successful in holding on to many of its strengths identified in the last report, particularly in the areas of leadership and management, role of the governing body and pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development. It has effectively responded to all the five Key Issues raised in the previous inspection. Appropriate schemes of work are now in place and guide teachers’ planning (Key Issue 1). A programme for regular assessments has been established and it informs the target setting within the school (Key Issue 2). Pupils’ attainment is systematically recorded, particularly in the core subjects, and the information is used to review their progress as they move through the school (Key Issue 3). Parents now receive an annual report on their child’s progress and those present at the pre-inspection meeting expressed their satisfaction with the quality of information contained in them (Key Issue 4). The school has attended to concerns about improving its accommodation (Key Issue 5). The school has gradually developed a strong capacity to improve further.



## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	C	C	B
mathematics	D	C	C	B
science	C	D	D	C

<b>Key</b>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In comparison with all schools nationally the school's 2001 results for eleven-year-olds are close to the average in English and mathematics, but are below average in science. Whereas the school has sustained average performance in English and mathematics, standards in science have remained below average for the last two years. When compared with schools that have pupils of similar backgrounds the school fares better - standards are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Overall, this indicates that the performance in science is not as strong as in the other two subjects. The inspection evidence confirms that standards remain about average in English and mathematics and just below it in science. In order to raise standards further the school needs to find ways of improving pupils' skills in explaining their reasoning in science and also in written work in mathematics. The school has already decided to focus on science as a priority for improvement. The school's results over the five-year period, 1997-2001, in all three core subjects have broadly followed the national trend. The 2002 targets for the performance of eleven-year-olds in English and mathematics are very slightly higher than those set for last year and are reasonably challenging. The modest increase over last year's targets reflects the different range of abilities within this particular group of pupils.

The year 2001 national results for seven-year-olds are the school's best ever and the school compares very favourably in comparison with all schools nationally and those in similar contexts. Standards are very high in reading, writing and mathematics and put the school's 2001 performance amongst the highest 5% of schools nationally. Pupils' performance in science, as assessed by their teachers, is also very high. The inspection evidence confirms this promising picture as the overall performance of the current seven-year-olds is on course to be above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of the year. By the end of Reception, most pupils, particularly those within above average and average ability ranges, are on course to meet the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Most pupils make good or better progress in the nursery and in Reception and go on to achieve standards that are average or above on entry to Year 1.

Based on the 2001 figures, standards for seven-year-olds are much better than those achieved by eleven-year-olds. In the recent past the school has suffered from some staffing instability, which,

according to the school's own detailed and sound analysis, partly contributed to a dip in performance in Year 3 with consequences for later years. The inspection evidence indicates that this historical dip in Year 3 has now been substantially arrested and a better start in the juniors should help the school to narrow the gap in the relative performance between the infants and the juniors. Across the school pupils explore ideas and collect visual information to produce work of high quality in visual arts. Pupils' skills in expressing themselves through drama are well developed.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very positive: pupils like coming to school and show commitment to their work in lessons. They rise to their teachers' expectations and willingly participate in activities on offer, both in and out of school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school. They show respect for each other and for adults in the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils take responsibility for a number of routine tasks in their classrooms and in school, and they perform them with enthusiasm. They are keen to help each other and respect each other's contribution. Pupils can be trusted to work responsibly when they are on their own.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory: attendance levels have been well below the national average for the last three years.

The high quality of pupils' attitudes and their behaviour, as well as the excellent relationships in the school, make a significant contribution to the learning environment in classrooms.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 - 2</b>	<b>Years 3 - 6</b>
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very 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, the quality of teaching is good and often very good or excellent; it is never less than satisfactory. In just over four in five lessons teaching is judged as good or better and half of all the lessons observed as very good or excellent. The teaching of literacy is particularly effective and across the school staff are confident in implementing the National Literacy Strategy. The teaching of mathematics is also effective, particularly in equipping pupils with mental calculation skills in their work with numbers. The use of information and communication technology for teaching and learning purposes is extensive and it visibly fires pupils' excitement. The teaching of art and design, drama and dance is particularly impressive, as teachers succeed in drawing out pupils' creative and imaginative responses. In the most effective lessons, teachers have a thorough grasp of the content

and are, therefore, able to give clear explanations. Careful planning ensures that lessons challenge pupils of all abilities. In these lessons teachers' personal enthusiasm and lively methods succeed in stimulating pupils' interest in their learning. As a result, pupils sustain concentration and produce work of good quality. In a few lessons, which are otherwise generally effective, the purpose of the activity is not fully explored with pupils and the emphasis given to supporting their reasoning and explanation is not quite enough.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: the curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of all pupils. The range includes numerous opportunities for creative expression in visual arts, music and drama activities. Residential and day visits, and a good range of extra-curricular activities, enrich pupils' experiences. The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively and pupils' literacy skills are successfully developed across the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: in deploying a large number of additional staff to work with these pupils, the school has shown a significant commitment to supporting them in their work. The school has effective systems for identifying pupils' needs and monitoring their progress against targets set in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good: the two EAL pupils are competent in the use of English and make good progress in lessons. They are given ample opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: pupils are given opportunities to explore feelings and to reflect on events for wider meaning. The school's behaviour policy and mission statement have clear expectations that pupils should know right from wrong. Ample opportunities are provided for pupils to work together and get along with each other. Provision for extending pupils' cultural horizons is extensive, as they are exposed to cultural traditions of their own and those of others near or further afield.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well: concern for the individual is well recognised by everyone in the school. There is no evidence of bullying. Procedures for child protection, health and safety and welfare are in place and are working well. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is fully in place and the information is used to set targets for individuals, which are systematically monitored. The two management teams are respectively delegated responsibility for regular monitoring of pupils' academic as well as personal development.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: the headteacher provides effective leadership. She is deeply committed to achieving high standards of personal and academic development. She is ably supported by a senior management team (SMT), which makes an effective contribution to the work of the school. Subject leaders provide good support for their colleagues. The school reflects a sense of purpose and has the capacity to continue to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very effective: the governors fully share the school's vision. They have an accurate view of how well the school is performing through the information they receive and regular contacts they maintain with the school. Governors are systematically involved in developing and reviewing school policies.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: the school's arrangements for collecting and analysing performance information are impressive. The headteacher and other key staff engage in a range of activities that enable them to find out what is happening in classrooms. Information gathered from these activities leads to further action. This means the school knows its strengths and areas where improvements are needed.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: the governors and the senior management team carefully manage the school's financial resources to meet the school's development needs. They make effective use of additional resources to support specific needs of pupils or curriculum areas.

The leadership and management of the school have many strengths. The delegating of responsibilities and the checking of progress of developments taking place in the school are good. The school development plan (SDP) has the right priorities overall and they are clearly costed. The control and monitoring of the school's finances are good. The headteacher and the governing body are aware of the need to apply principles of best value in the management and use of resources. They consult widely before major spending decisions are made and the agreed expenditure is justified. The school has also begun to use local benchmarks to compare its costs with similar schools within the local authority.

## 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>• Children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teachers and the headteacher are approachable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework given.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• Information given about how their children are getting on at school.</li> <li>• Working closely with parents.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the overwhelmingly positive views that were expressed at the parents' pre-inspection meeting and in the completed questionnaires.

A small number of parents are concerned that too much homework is given, particularly for younger children. Generally inspectors do not agree with this view, because homework is an invitation for parents to support their children at home. Any difficulty experienced can be communicated through the homework diary. The provision for extra-curricular activities is extensive. Mostly older pupils take part. In common with most other schools, opportunities for younger children (five- to seven-year-olds) are limited. Inspectors found that the information sent by the school to parents about how their children are getting on is quite acceptable. In addition to the written information sent, a range of opportunities is available for parents to receive feedback, if they so wish. Parents find the school very approachable. Inspectors found the school willing to listen and work with them.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Standards in literacy are above those expected of pupils in Years 1-2 and they are improving for pupils in Years 3-6.**

- 1 The 2001 national results in reading and writing are far above those expected of seven-year-olds. Work seen during the inspection confirms that pupils in Year 1 and 2 are making good progress. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils are on course to be at least above average in the two key literacy skills of reading and writing. Considering pupils' below average attainment on entry to school, standards in literacy are sufficiently high and one of the key factors contributing to this success is the meticulous implementation of the National Literacy framework for Years 1 and 2 pupils. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of opportunities for developing their competence in literacy. In Year 2, pupils write long stories, such as *Once upon a time* and *Mitzi was all alone in the window*, in which they demonstrate a good sense of story and narrative flows. Above all, pupils enjoy writing. In a mixed class of Reception and Year 1, pupils could recall events in a story and confidently talk about characters, for example, '*old woman is sad because they have no money.*' Pupils' skills in predicting what will happen next are well advanced. They listen attentively and are mostly able to make their point during conversation.
- 2 Pupils continue to make good progress in English as they move through the school, although standards at the end of Year 6 are yet to reflect the improving results being achieved by Year 2 pupils. In 2001 the school's results for eleven-year-olds were close to the national average. The work seen during the inspection confirms that the standards are on course to be broadly in line with the national average at the expected Level 4, but a higher proportion of pupils than in the previous year are on course to perform better than this level. As for younger pupils, a broad range of planned opportunities is offered. Pupils read a wide range of text and can locate key events and ideas. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were introduced to fables and traditional stories and, after the teacher's clear introduction, they were able to see their different features. In a similar vein, Year 5 pupils enthusiastically investigated features of myths and legends. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils successfully decided the extent to which the text they were reading evoked a response. By the time pupils reach Year 6, their writing shows maturity. Many are capable of writing powerful descriptions, such as '*Dim clouds emerged from the dusty sky while down below the ground was full of moss*' and '*A terrifying coldness was in the air above the heath*'. Their competence in writing grammatically complex sentences is growing, as are their skills in punctuation. Pupils plan their writing carefully and their skills in drafting are improving.
- 3 Effective teaching and the strong leadership provided by the subject leader account for success in developing literacy in the school. Marking is constructive and is used to set personal and achievable targets for individual pupils. The framework from the National Literacy Strategy guides teachers' planning and they make meaningful links with other subjects. For example, a text that focused on '*Andes Avalanche, World's Worst Year*' afforded pupils opportunities to read an interesting but factual article in geography as well as

to examine the use of connectives, complex sentences, sustained ideas and lively description. Improving pupils' literacy skills through other subjects of the curriculum is a sure strength of the school.

**Pupils' achievement in nursery and reception class is very good and it lays sound foundation for later years.**

- 4 On entry to nursery a significant number of children display insecure skills in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal independence. As a result of the school's impressive provision and effective teaching, including very good management of pupils, most are on course to achieve the early learning goals in all areas of learning observed during the inspection by the end of Reception. Some pupils are well placed to go beyond them.
- 5 Children join in group activities, listen to others and take turns. They form positive relationships with each other, and with adults around them. This means they work in an environment in which they are not hesitant to express their feelings. Overall, pupils learn to fit in well and their social skills display growing maturity. Most pupils can follow complex instructions and respond to adult questions with suitable comments. As they progress, their knowledge of initial and final sounds becomes better established. Most know letter names and can identify rhyming words. They are able to form recognisable letters and they can confidently write their own names. During physical activities pupils move with confidence and show good control and co-ordination. They show an awareness of space around them and move in safety. Pupils have begun to investigate materials on the junk table by observing and touching and enthusiastically dictate their observations to adults. They enjoy singing and are able to identify long and short sounds as well as clapping with their hands in rhythm. Altogether this represents an impressive range of achievements.
- 6 The Foundation Stage is well led because the leader has a very good grasp of the early years curriculum and has an acute awareness of how young children learn. Planning includes clear and appropriate references to small steps of learning which take into account the different needs of children and enables adults to track their progress systematically. All adults in the nursery and reception class show consistency in how they work with pupils. Parents work alongside teachers and support staff and make a valuable contribution to children's learning.

**Teaching is good or better in just over four in five lessons observed.**

- 7 Mainly the teaching of literacy and numeracy sessions was observed. A small number of activities in science, art and design, physical education, drama, dance, design and technology were also visited. Of all the subjects, the teaching of literacy was the most effective. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is particularly good because teachers and teaching assistants carefully plan their work and rightly focus on the development of basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Thorough planning and preparation for lessons is a strength across the curriculum. In lessons, what pupils are intended to learn is taken from the appropriate national frameworks and relevant schemes of work across the curriculum. As a result, teaching and learning are sharply focused. Lessons begin well with effective

introduction when teachers share their intentions for the lesson with pupils. This means in these lessons pupils always know what they are doing and as a result make good progress. These are also the lessons in which teachers' subject knowledge is at least good, and which proceed at a brisk pace because teachers make their expectations clear during the introductions. Pupils remain focused on the activities and achieve well.

- 8 Teachers select activities that appeal to pupils, which means pupils are enthusiastic about their work and remain committed. In reception, pupils investigated movement over different surfaces by using everyday familiar materials. In another lesson nursery children learned one-to-one correspondence when they counted how many drinks and how many snacks would be needed for the 17 pupils present. Teachers are very good at asking searching questions and, as a result, challenge pupils' critical thinking. In a Year 6 science lesson the teacher's persistent, but appropriate, questions '*What happened when..?*', '*How did you find out ... ?*' and '*How did we know that?*' kept pupils mentally alert and interested in the lesson. Similarly, in a numeracy lesson in Year 2, the teacher stirred pupils to find an '*easy way of adding up three numbers*' and successfully drew out the appropriate strategies from them.
- 9 As lessons progress teachers intervene to assess pupils' growing knowledge and understanding and give comments to improve their work. As teachers and pupils have mutual respect for each other, pupils willingly accept suggestions for improvements. In some lessons teachers' enthusiasm for what they are teaching is infectious and is reflected in their pupils' commitment to the tasks in hand. In these lessons pupils concentrate for a considerable time and produce work of good quality. In an art and design lesson, Year 4 pupils produced observational drawings and paintings after close observation of stuffed birds and mammals. In most lessons pupils have opportunities, which many take, to form a view on the quality of their own work, although not all pupils are confident in doing so. Homework is given to all pupils across the school and often consolidates their on-going work in class.

**Pupils' attitudes to their work are very positive and their behaviour is very good.**

- 10 Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to get on with their work. A group of Year 5 and 6 pupils summarised their views about why they like the school as '*lessons that are exciting*', '*children who are co-operative*', '*mutual respect between children and teachers*', '*extra-curricular activities*' and an approach to sort out '*disagreements by discussion*'. In lessons pupils express themselves with confidence and most are keen to talk about their work. Most pupils display responsible attitudes towards others, particularly when they do not agree with their opinions. Pupils' consistently very good behaviour indicates that they are fully aware of how they are expected to conduct themselves in classrooms, during lunch-time and around the school. No bullying or other oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and pupils who were interviewed did not regard this as being a concern. Pupils' positive attitudes and very good behaviour contribute to a purposeful teaching and learning environment. This means pupils can concentrate on their work, have mutual support from other pupils and adults and, above all, make good progress in lessons.



**The school's curriculum includes ample opportunities to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm for visual and performing arts and for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enrich work across the curriculum.**

- 11 The school's curriculum is meeting the statutory requirements and the time allocated to various subjects is generally within the nationally acceptable range. Just over half of the weekly teaching time is allocated for the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Displays in the teaching bases and common areas reflect the broad range of subjects being taught. Art work of good quality is proudly displayed in all parts of the school.
  
- 12 The school maintains its emphasis on including a range of performing arts activities to enliven its curriculum. Its provision is wide-ranging and impressive. Pupils are adept at role-play in a range of situations. For example, in history *'The Great Fire of London'*, *'Boudica's Revolt'* and in geography *'human and physical features of St.Lucia'*, all offered rich opportunities for pupils to express themselves in a variety of roles. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were successfully interpreting the story of The Last Supper through music and movement. A group of Year 6 pupils interpreted the water cycle through drawing and their representation of waves was very creative and imaginative. Visual arts are effectively linked to work in a range of subjects across the whole school. The study of Tudors in Year 3 provided opportunities for pupils to draw on evidence from portraits of that time and translate them into their art topic 'Portraits'. An environmental visit allowed pupils to explore maps in large-scale art work and to capture some aspects of the visit in sketch form. Pupils also made large-scale friezes to represent the landscape of St.Lucia and exchanged landscape paintings with children from Holland to compare and develop techniques involved. The thriving school choir plays a very important part in school life and pupils have participated in concerts for the local community. They have also seen musical recitals to enhance their understanding.
  
- 13 The use of information and communication technology for teaching and learning purposes has grown considerably since the last inspection. Recently the school has developed its own website, which contains a large amount of information about the school. The school already has plans to extend this by including more information on its curriculum and by seeking contributions from pupils and teachers. Pupils now make use of computers for an increasing variety of purposes across the curriculum. Each class has access to information and communication technology in literacy and numeracy lessons. Some pupils with special educational needs use a 'catch up' program to improve their reading and spelling. Databases and spreadsheets are used regularly in science across the school. The use of the Internet is being used to find information in history and geography. Pupils in Year 1 use a graphics program to enrich their work on self-portraits. The use of the interactive whiteboards bring alive teachers' explanations and the examples they wish to share with their pupils, as well as motivating pupils to demonstrate their growing knowledge and understanding in front of an audience. Overall, the use of information and communication technology has generated greater excitement in pupils as well as improving the quality of their learning.

**Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, and pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL), are well cared for by teachers and support staff.**

- 14 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and reflecting on others' and one's own actions is at the heart of this provision. The acts of collective worship provide good opportunities for reflection on the deeper aspects of daily life and about human values. As a result of the tragic events in America on the 11th September pupils wrote and sent prayers to St Patrick's Cathedral in New York. A ten-year-old boy wrote '*Dear God... Please help the rescue teams to find the bodies and thank the team for putting their hearts and souls into this work*'. Pupils in the school display a strong sense of fairness and are able to distinguish between right and wrong. Much of this is reflected in the daily work of the school. The school's agreed behaviour policy expects high standards of behaviour and achieves them. Pupils are positively encouraged to work co-operatively in a range of situations and opportunities are given to develop socially responsible attitudes. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of cultural traditions. Music, art and literature all have offered pupils opportunities for multicultural awareness. Displays in the school genuinely reflect the school's commitment to extend pupils' cultural horizons.
- 15 The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides effective leadership and ensures that all staff are aware of the need to identify pupils who may have such needs. Due to improved screening, the number of pupils needing help with their special educational needs has risen over the last four years. Through careful planning teachers ensure that these pupils are set work to extend their prior knowledge, understanding and skills. Although the main focus of support is literacy and numeracy, their curriculum remains as broad as for all other pupils. Meticulous records are maintained and the individual education plans (IEPs) are of good quality. Pupils' progress is checked regularly and it determines the next steps for them. The support staff are appropriately trained and are one of the main reasons why pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The two pupils for whom English is an additional language, are competent in the use of English language across the curriculum. Nevertheless teachers make sure that they are given opportunities to explain their knowledge and understanding of the work in hand and build their vocabulary further to stretch their command of English when it is appropriate.

**Parents have confidence in the school.**

- 16 Parents are well satisfied with what the school has to offer to their children and fully recognise many of the effective features of its provision. They find the school very approachable and willing to listen to their concerns – big or small. Parents appreciate the school's success in promoting good behaviour and work habits. They overwhelmingly recognise and support the school's high expectations of their children. Parents have high respect for the headteacher as '*she knows all the children by name*' and appreciate that their children are '*in a caring environment*' and that '*teachers speak with children, not to them*'.

**The headteacher, other key staff and the governing body provide very effective leadership and management.**

- 17 The headteacher provides a clear leadership that is focused on pupils' academic and personal development. To secure others' commitment to the school's mission and its aims she leads by example. The ethos of the school is welcoming as it values all pupils and their parents and the contribution they make to the life of the school. Teachers and support staff show care in dealing with each other and with pupils, who feel they are fairly treated in the school. As a result, pupils' behaviour is very good and it contributes to improving standards of work in classrooms. Such an ethos goes a long way in fulfilling one of the school aims, *"to provide a welcoming, caring and safe environment, where pupils can develop self-respect, sense of individual worth and are able to co-operate with and show consideration to others"*. To ensure the best for her pupils the headteacher provides an effective system of monitoring and evaluation throughout the school. One of the system's most impressive features is the collection of assessment information on each individual pupil, using it for the setting of clear targets and tracking the progress each pupil makes. This system has given the school a powerful tool in raising standards further, because it clearly identifies who is, and who is not, making the expected progress. The school's capacity for developing appropriate plans and follow-up actions in the present system should stand it in good stead in the future.
- 18 In achieving the high goals the headteacher sets for the school, she is fully supported by a senior management team. Its members have a clear brief about their responsibilities, which again focus on setting high expectations and ensuring that they are met. The two key teams of teachers, the standards team and the pastoral team, are skilfully led by senior team members. This system is working well because responsibility is effectively delegated to both team leaders and they have the necessary management skills to make things work. Their contribution is significant to the school's growing success. The school's arrangements for monitoring and evaluation are suitably linked to the management of the performance of teachers. The setting of information and communication technology as their professional development objective has proved to be appropriate. As a consequence, the use of information and communication technology in lessons has grown and it is making an effective contribution to pupils' and teachers' work in lessons.
- 19 Planning for future developments is thorough and is appropriately linked to financial considerations. A timetable for linking them together is clearly established and allows adequate time for consultation and sound decision making. The school comprehensively checks the implementation of its development priorities. The decision to spend more financial resources to deploy additional support staff to help pupils with special educational needs is proving to be a wise one, as these pupils are making good progress. The use of Standards Fund money to release subject leaders and other key staff is serving the school well in monitoring, evaluating and supporting developments in classrooms. The arrangements to support the newly qualified teacher (NQT) are well thought out and provide necessary opportunities for him to receive feedback on his performance.
- 20 The governing body makes an effective contribution to the life of the school. It is

supportive, but governors also act as ‘critical friends’ of the school and they do not hesitate to ask questions about the school’s performance and the effectiveness of spending decisions made. Governors ensure that the school meets its statutory responsibilities and they have a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. For example, during the inspection, governors were aware of the school’s less than satisfactory performance in science for eleven-year-olds. The governing body has played an active role in deciding the school’s priorities for development for the next year. At meetings members involve themselves seriously in reviewing the school’s progress towards its objectives in the school development plan (SDP) and other action plans. Governors visit the school regularly and have a good knowledge of how the school works. They are becoming increasingly aware of the principles of best value. They consult widely before making firm decisions and always seek justification before the allocation of resources is sanctioned.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Standards for pupils in Years 3-6**

- 21 With the exception of reading in 1997, the school’s results for seven-year-olds have never been below the national averages in all three key basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. The school’s performance has improved significantly in the last two years, with its 2001 results being exceptionally good and putting it in the top 5% of all schools nationally. This means that the school is successfully laying sound foundations on which to build in Years 3-6. Although the recent results for eleven-year-olds are respectable, particularly in English and mathematics, in future they will need to reflect better the pupils’ promising performance at the age of seven. Effective teaching is ensuring that in the current Year 3 the momentum of success is being maintained. The school’s monitoring, evaluation and support arrangements, including target setting and checking for individual pupils, are effective in assisting it to raise standards across the school, but they are thinly spread. They now need to be more sharply focused on Year 4-6 classes to ensure that the improved gains in the current Year 3 are maintained. Pupils generally make up ground by the time they reach Year 6; however, the need for tackling the consequences of staffing instability experienced by current Year 4 and 5 pupils, as indicated by the school’s own robust analysis, still remains. The school also needs to focus on these pupils’ performance to speed up their progress further.
- 22 Standards in science have been below the national average for the last two years and in 1998 they were well below. The school is fully aware of the need to raise standards in science and has already drafted an appropriate plan of action, correctly indicating the need to improve planning for the subject and to refine teachers’ assessment. The intention to develop pupils’ skills in scientific enquiry is also clear, which the inspection evidence confirms is an area for improvement. In one Year 6 lesson pupils were making predictions about which type of water contained dissolved materials and testing their predictions. In this effectively planned lesson the teacher was explaining well by using the appropriate vocabulary, such as *soluble*, *insoluble*, *filtering*, *solution* and *residue*. Although many pupils generally understood the point the teacher wanted to make, a significant number of pupils had difficulty in explaining what they learned and their use of appropriate vocabulary

was insecure. This lack of skills in explaining is also confirmed in teachers' marking of pupils' written work, where pupils are encouraged to give fuller explanations. In another lesson in Year 4, pupils were learning about different habitats. Most pupils showed good understanding of words such as *vertebrates* and *invertebrates*, but some had difficulty in explaining *organism*. When they were required to identify animals by pursuing a chain of decisions and recording them within a key, some pupils grasped the idea quickly and could see the sense of doing it, whilst some others found it difficult to explain the purpose of the activity. Teachers need to pay attention to giving clearer explanations and to building pupils' scientific vocabulary so that they can develop and explain their understanding of ideas in science accurately and more fully.

- 23 For the eleven-year-olds, results in mathematics have been close to the national average for the last two years and are an improvement on the two previous years. The school has responded positively to the National Numeracy Strategy. The written work in mathematics indicates that the coverage of number is extensive and is appropriately matched to year groups and pupils' prior attainment. Pupils' knowledge and skills in counting, place value, fractions and rounding of a number are good. They are confident in making calculations, often with large numbers. Appropriate attention is given to the development of pupils' skills in mental methods so that they can correctly carry out a range of calculations. However, their skills in estimation and the ability to check the reasonableness of their answers are less secure. In a Year 6 lesson, a number of pupils experienced difficulty in estimating  $22 \times 19$  and  $22 \times 21$ . Pupils' written work presented little evidence to suggest that they are progressing from their strengths in the understanding of, and competence in, using mental approaches to calculations. They need the same strong competency in their use of a range of written methods of calculations, including informal jottings. To raise standards further the school needs to build pupils' capacity in the two key areas of approximation prior to calculation and written approaches to calculation.

### **Rate of attendance**

- 24 Due to a high incidence of authorised absence, the rate of attendance at the school has been well below the national averages for the last three years. With one exception in 1997/98 when the school's rate of attendance equalled the national average for the year, the attendance has remained virtually at the level reported in the last inspection in 1997 and has not, therefore, improved. However, the school has managed to reduce the unauthorised absence in the 2000/01 academic year to broadly in line with the national average, which was above the national average in the previous year.
- 25 The school wisely seeks the support of the local Education Welfare Service to visit parents of pupils with poor attendance. This strategy has had some success in reducing the unauthorised absence. It is the high level of authorised absence that still needs to be tackled, because parents taking their children on holidays during term-time often affect it. The school's arrangements for marking and maintenance of attendance registers, and reporting of absence, conform to requirements. However, the system of monitoring and analysis of attendance data needs to be strengthened to identify patterns of long- and short-term absences, the differences between boys and girls and between year groups. Additionally the

school needs to consider ways of promoting better attendance at school by seeking parents' and pupils' support.

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

The school should now:

### **Improve standards for pupils in Years 3-6 by:**

- ensuring that monitoring, evaluation and support are strengthened further so that the promising gains made by the current Year 3 pupils are maintained, and that the performance of pupils in the current Years 4 and 5 is regularly checked to tackle the effects of staffing instability they encountered in the past;  
*(see paragraph 21)*
- improving pupils' scientific vocabulary and their skills in explaining what they have learned in science;  
*(see paragraph 22)*
- developing further pupils' mathematical skills in approximating and their written approaches to calculation.  
*(see paragraph 23)*

### **Consider ways of improving rate of attendance by:**

- regular monitoring and analysis of attendance data;  
*(see paragraph 25)*
- continuing to seek parents' and pupils' support in promoting better attendance at school. *(see paragraph 25)*

## 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	17

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	9	8	4	0	0	0
Percentage	12	38	33	17	0	0	0

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

### *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)	20	280
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	69

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	67

#### **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	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	17	11	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (91)	100 (89)	100 (98)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (100)	100 (98)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	26	16	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	19	20
	Girls	14	13	13
	Total	34	32	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (76)	76 (78)	79 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	19	20
	Girls	14	14	13
	Total	34	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (76)	79 (78)	79 (90)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	2
White	238
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	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	28
Average class size	28

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	137

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	56

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.7
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-1
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	£
Total income	583482
Total expenditure	576437
Expenditure per pupil	1763
Balance brought forward from previous year	37158
Balance carried forward to next year	44203

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	322
Number of questionnaires returned	148

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	36	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	56	39	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	48	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	41	14	3	2
The teaching is good.	62	33	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	36	11	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	26	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	50	33	11	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	61	34	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	35	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	33	12	9	16