

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GREGORY'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Shields

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108716

Head teacher: Mr K J Smithson

Reporting inspector: Miss W L R Hunter
3277

Dates of inspection: 28th – 29th March 2001

Inspection number: 194095

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Harton House Road East South Shields Tyne & Wear
Postcode:	NE34 6DZ
Telephone number:	0191 455 2909
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Father A Cornforth
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Gregory's RC Primary School is a voluntary aided school serving the Catholic parishes of Holy Rosary and St Gregory's on the edge of South Shields. The school serves a very diverse population ranging from estates with high levels of unemployment and social disadvantage to more affluent areas with adults in professional employment. The school is recognised as a 'Beacon' school. It is a very popular school and is currently over-subscribed. The school does not have a nursery and children come into the reception class from a wide range of pre-school settings. When children start in the reception class their attainment covers a very wide range but is generally below the levels expected for typical four year olds. There are 220 pupils in the school (121 boys and 99 girls). Most year groups are reasonably balanced but there are significantly more boys than girls in the current Year 3 class. Forty eight pupils have been identified with special educational needs – this is similar to the national average – and two of these pupils have statements of specific needs. There is a particularly high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 3 class. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in the school and no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. The excellent leadership and management, by the head teacher in particular, means that the school is constantly striving to develop and improve. Teaching is very good and pupils make good progress. As a result, standards are very high by the end of Year 6 and the school performs very well in the national tests for 11 year olds, although standards in information and communication technology are not yet high enough. The school's very strong pastoral system helps pupils develop excellent attitudes and relationships. The school is popular, welcoming and a wonderful place to be. It provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school are excellent.
- Teaching is very good with the result that pupils make good progress and reach high standards, especially in English and mathematics.
- The school is maintaining very high performance in the national tests for 11 year olds.
- The standard of pupils' writing is particularly good in Years 5 and 6.
- The pastoral care system is very good and pupils develop excellent attitudes and relationships.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough by the time pupils leave the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997 and has made good progress since then. All health and safety issues have been tackled effectively and the school now has secure systems for checking any risks. The provision for children in the reception class has been completely overhauled. A new teaching team has been established in reception and this is working very well. The classroom has been developed to provide attractive and stimulating learning areas for young children and the curriculum has been restructured and planned to bring it in line with the new requirements for children of this age. The school now uses assessment particularly well in the reception class to gauge what children can do when they start at the school and to track their progress through their first year. The

school has continued its well-established programme of monitoring and self-evaluation and this has proved very effective in identifying and supporting teachers' professional development needs. Art and design, and music are current priority areas and are receiving particular attention with additional funding to support developments. There has been a lot of development in information and communication technology. Extensive building work has just finished and this has provided the school with a computer suite. However, the equipment is not yet in place and staff have not yet had their training. Following criticisms of teaching in the last inspection, the school has employed additional staff to allow the information and communication technology co-ordinator, and another part-time teacher, to teach skills-based lessons. As a result, standards in information and communication technology have improved since the last inspection but are not yet high enough.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	B	A
mathematics	A	A*	A	A*
science	A	A	A*	A*

Key	
top 5% of schools	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The school reaches very high standards in the national tests for 11 year olds and has successfully maintained this over recent years. The school analyses its own performance very carefully and uses this, alongside assessment information for each group of pupils, to set challenging but realistic targets each year. Last year, the school's performance in English was above the national average. Results in mathematics were well above average and the performance in science was in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the results were even better. The school performed in the top 5 per cent of schools for mathematics and science and its English results were well above average. Following these tests, the school identified writing as a priority area and has put a lot of work into this. As a result, the standard of pupils' current writing is very high in Years 5 and 6 and pupils use their skills particularly well when writing in other subjects, such as history and science.

Pupils come into the school with below average attainment at the age of four. By the end of Year 2, pupils are working above the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics and usually do well in the national tests for seven year olds. Last year's results dropped but this class (current Year 3) has a much higher number of boys than girls and nearly a third of the class have special educational needs. Work in the current Year 2 class shows that this group of pupils are working above the levels expected and the school is expecting them to perform well in the imminent tests. By the time they are ready to leave the school, at age 11, pupils are working well above the levels expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. Their information and communication technology skills have improved a lot over recent years but are still not yet as high as they should be.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their work and are very proud of their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils behave impeccably. They are quick to help and support each other and have perfect manners.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Older pupils take great pride in their 'special friendship' links with younger children and this is a wonderful relationship that sets the tone for the caring family atmosphere in the school.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence.

The excellent attitudes, behaviour and relationships among pupils are a particular strength of the school and contribute to the positive family atmosphere that exists.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Fifteen lessons were seen. Teaching was satisfactory in 20 per cent of these lessons, good in a further 40 per cent, very good in a further 20 per cent and excellent in the remaining 20 per cent. Teaching is particularly strong in the reception class, Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6.

English and mathematics are taught very well and the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught particularly well. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and make sure that pupils understand what they are trying to learn. This means that, by the end of each lesson, pupils have a good idea of whether they have been successful and what they still need to do to improve. Teachers use questions very well to engage pupils in discussion during lessons. This is particularly effective in mathematics where this approach encourages pupils to articulate and explain their methods and working to solve problems.

Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach although there are still some gaps in information and communication technology. Teachers have high expectations and encourage pupils to work hard and try their best. Pupils respond to this and apply themselves very well with the result that they make good progress in their learning. The school makes every effort to give pupils the best possible support depending on their particular needs and abilities. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully identified and teachers make sure that work is matched well to their individual requirements. As a result, these pupils make good progress and succeed in producing work at the correct level for their age. Higher attaining and gifted pupils are also identified and are given focused teaching and support to extend their learning. This is effective and means that these pupils are stretched and challenged to do well. This is why the school's test results are so good – few pupils perform below the levels expected and a higher number of pupils go beyond this than happens in most other schools.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in the reception class has improved since the last inspection and now provides a satisfactory range of activities. The curriculum for the rest of the school is broad and balanced but some areas of information and communication technology are not resourced well enough to be taught effectively.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils' needs are carefully identified and, where appropriate, they are placed in different year groups. Support for pupils is given sensitively against clear targets. Support staff are thoroughly briefed and deployed well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school is based around a strong pastoral family. Year 6 pupils provide excellent leaders and role models for younger children to look up to. This is a very powerful influence and supports pupils' personal development very well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a very caring community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Excellent. The head teacher has established a strong and effective programme of monitoring and self-evaluation. He delegates very well and is supported well by the deputy head. This means that everyone involved in the school knows their contributions will be valued and feel part of its continued development. Co-ordinators take very good responsibility for their subjects and hold themselves accountable for ensuring that development and improvements take place.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are well informed and fully involved in the life and work of the school. They support the staff well through their 'link' role to specific subjects and areas of the curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. All staff and governors contribute to the school's self-evaluation process and therefore share the knowledge of how the school is performing. Staff regularly monitor their own performance and that of their colleagues in a non-threatening and supportive way. The head teacher and co-ordinators carefully analyse the school's test results and use this information to help focus future areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The head teacher has successfully secured funding from a number of sources to improve and develop the school. Money is spent carefully and staff are held accountable for their budgets. The school has used funds very efficiently to provide high levels of teaching and support staff, to improve resources and to develop the building and

	grounds.
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The excellent leadership and management of the head teacher, and the strong contribution of parents, staff and governors, are setting a clear and purposeful direction for the school. This is contributing to the school's continued high standards and performance. Money is spent wisely and the school carefully applies the principles of best value to all spending 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"> • The teaching is good and their children make good progress. • The school is very welcoming and approachable and there are good links and communications with parents. • The school is well led and managed. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents did not identify any areas where they felt improvements were needed.

Parents have very positive views of the school and are absolutely right to do so. The excellent leadership and management means that their children are being taught very well and are making good progress. The strong pastoral care system is supporting children's personal development very well and is helping to develop mature and responsible attitudes. The school is a very welcoming and friendly place where parents are encouraged to be part of the life and work of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The leadership and management of the school are excellent.

1 The head teacher is providing excellent leadership and management. He has a strong commitment to self-evaluation and, as a result, has a very clear view of how the school is performing and its priorities for the future. This is having a particularly positive influence on the standards in the school and its continued high performance in national tests. A particular feature of this school is the way in which all staff work together as a team and therefore share an understanding of what is working well and which areas are undergoing development. There are clear lines of delegation and responsibility and the head teacher is supported well by the deputy head teacher and other staff.

2 The school established a cycle of development and evaluation in subject areas prior to the last inspection. This has continued and is now very well established. As a result, there is a consistent approach to the development and evaluation of subjects in the school. Co-ordinators eagerly take responsibility and hold themselves accountable for the developments and improvements in their areas of responsibility. They know that they will receive priority treatment with regard to funding and allocation of management time and readily accept responsibility for planning and evaluating how this will be used to meet the school's needs and targets. For example, art and music are the two subjects currently 'on line' for development and the co-ordinators for these subjects are actively monitoring and evaluating the standards, planning and preparing professional development for staff, auditing and purchasing resources, and reviewing the school's curriculum and arrangements for assessment.

3 The head teacher has established a systematic programme of monitoring. This has been in place for several years and is leading to effective evaluation of teaching and learning across the school. Staff frequently watch each other teach. This is a rigorous process but is carried out in a supportive and non-threatening manner, with the result that everyone values and appreciates the feedback and support they receive after their lessons have been observed. This sharing of practice underpins the school's commitment to self-evaluation and provides staff with good opportunities for professional development, for example by understanding what is happening in different age ranges and classes in the school.

4 The governing body is very effective. The head teacher and staff have a strong and effective working relationship with governors. As a result, governors are very well informed and have good awareness of the school's priorities and strengths plus an accurate evaluation of where the school aims to develop. Governors are linked to individual subjects and they take this responsibility seriously. For instance, all governors meet their link co-ordinators at least once a term and these meetings are formally minuted. In addition, many governors come into the school to support and monitor the quality of work taking place.

5 The school's long term development is based on clear and decisive strategic planning. As a result, there is a purposeful educational direction set for the school that is shared and understood by staff and governors. Parents are also kept well informed and make a strong contribution to the school's work, especially through fund-raising efforts. The head teacher has managed to acquire funding from a variety of external sources and this money is being used very well to support the school's development. For example, contributions to the recent building programme have provided the school with a new library and computer suite, and the refurbishment and improved resourcing of the reception class have given the youngest children an attractive and stimulating learning environment.

6 The school's recognised Beacon status is an indication of its strength in leadership and management and this expertise is being shared well with staff in other local schools. The head teacher is also involved in a range of local initiatives, such as an Early Years Partnership, and has a good grasp of factors likely to influence the school in the future. This means that the school is well placed and prepared to tackle any future developments that may arise.

Teaching is very good with the result that pupils make good progress and reach high standards, especially in English and mathematics.

7 The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and this is one of the reasons why the school is so successful. Teaching is particularly strong in the reception class, Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6. In these classes, pupils are challenged extremely well and make particularly good progress in their learning.

8 Teaching in the reception class is very good and sometimes excellent. The 'team' teaching approach is working well. Two teachers work together, with the support of additional adult helpers, and this means that children's activities are well organised and supervised at all times. Lessons are planned very carefully to provide a good balance of work that meets the different needs of the children in the class, and the classroom is very well organised to give children plenty of practical experiences. For example, in one lesson, a group of children pretended to be pirates as they hunted for lost treasure in a cave then wrote simple notes to send home as a 'message in a bottle'. These children thoroughly enjoyed their work but also gained invaluable speaking and listening experiences as they shared their ideas with the nursery nurse. In another lesson, some children looked at flowers and seeds under a magnifying glass and recorded what they saw in simple pictures and words, while other children made telescopes, played a board game that helped them count to 6 or worked on the computer. This range of activities was very well managed with the result that children worked together very well and made good gains in their knowledge and understanding. The relationships in this class are excellent and children are very keen to answer questions and share their thoughts. The staff capitalise well on this by asking carefully chosen questions that challenge children to think and explain themselves. For instance, when a child read a sentence from the class book by pretending to be a bear, the teacher asked, "Why did you growl like that?". This started a great discussion about how different characters in the story might sound. As a result, the entire class was engrossed in this work and really began to think about what they were reading.

9 When children start in the reception class, most are working below the levels expected for typical four year olds, especially in the areas of language, literacy and mathematics. As a result of the high quality teaching they receive, children make good progress with the result that they quickly catch up. Consequently, by the time they move into Year 1, pupils are matching the levels they should be for their age and have a solid grounding in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Throughout Year 1, satisfactory and sometimes good teaching means that pupils continue to build on their skills and make steady progress. The pace of pupils' learning picks up significantly in Year 2, because the teaching in this class is very good and sometimes excellent. As a result, pupils usually do well in the national tests for seven year olds in English and mathematics.

10 In the Year 2 class, lessons are planned meticulously with a wide range of tasks and activities identified to meet the different needs of the groups of pupils in the class. The teacher has very good knowledge and understanding of the work being taught and sets challenging levels for pupils to aspire to. This is effective – pupils are highly motivated and thoroughly enjoy their work. The purpose of each lesson is clearly explained at the start so that pupils know precisely what they are expected to do and what they should have learnt by the end of the lesson. This helps them to evaluate their own learning and to identify where they could improve. For example, in a mathematics lesson where pupils

were asked to solve division problems the teacher deliberately let them learn from their own mistakes. She sensitively picked up on pupils' errors and used them to illustrate key points to the whole class before suggesting alternative ways of tackling the problem, such as using multiplication sums to check that their answers were correct. Again, the excellent relationships in this class set the scene in which the teacher can challenge and inspire pupils with carefully chosen questions. For instance, in an English lesson when pupils were asked to identify the features of the 'good' and 'bad' characters in the story of 'Three Billy Goats Gruff'.

11 Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good and sometimes very good. Consequently, pupils build well on their previous work from Key Stage 1 and continue to make good progress. For instance, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson where pupils used their previous knowledge of 'doubling' and 'halving' numbers to quickly find fractions of different shapes. Similarly, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, where pupils took this work a stage further by adding fractions that totalled more than one whole.

12 Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is very good and sometimes excellent. As a result, pupils' learning accelerates and they develop particularly mature and sensible attitudes to their work. Literacy is particularly strong in Year 5 where the class teacher is also the subject co-ordinator, and the excellent teaching in this area is starting to show positive benefits in pupils' writing skills. For example, in a particularly successful lesson, pupils studied the structure and features of a 'rap' to identify the use of metaphors and similes before going on to write their own versions. The class teacher's excellent knowledge of this subject meant that pupils were constantly reminded of the technical features and detail of their work, for instance maintaining a syllable count and the appropriate use of figurative language. In Year 6, pupils are prepared well for the national tests by a carefully structured programme of revision and past questions. This is effective and is one of the reasons why nearly all pupils succeed in reaching at least the level expected for 11 year olds, if not exceeding it. For example, in a mathematics lesson the teacher used some previous test questions very well to illustrate how easily graphs can be misinterpreted if the initial question is not read carefully enough.

13 Throughout the school, teaching is characterised by careful and effective planning for lessons and clear explanations of the purpose of each lesson at the start. Teachers use questions very effectively and take advantage of pupils' excellent attitudes and relationships to encourage them to think for themselves and to explain their work. The school's programme of monitoring lessons has given all teachers valuable opportunities to see their colleagues at work and this is supporting the high quality of teaching that is taking place.

The school is maintaining very high performance in the national tests for 11 year olds.

14 The school reaches very high standards in the national tests for 11 year olds and has successfully maintained this over recent years. For instance, in 1998 and 1999, the school's performances in English and science were well above the national averages for these subjects, while the performance in mathematics was also well above average in 1998 and was even higher in 1999.

15 Last year, the school's performance in English was above the national average. Although, at first glance, this appears to be a slight drop from 1999, nearly all pupils achieved the level expected for 11 year olds and an above average proportion went through to the higher level in the test. Boys and girls performed equally well. When compared to similar schools, these English results were well above average and reflected the fact that this group of pupils had made particularly good progress during their time in the school. Following these tests, the school carefully analysed pupils' answers and identified writing as an area for improvement. There has been a lot of work put into developing pupils' writing skills and broadening the range of their writing experiences over the past year, and this is showing particularly good effects in Years 5 and 6.

16 Last year, the school's performance in mathematics was well above the national average. All pupils achieved at least the level expected for 11 year olds and a good proportion went through to the higher level in the test. As a result, this placed the school in the top 5 per cent when its performance was compared with similar schools. Boys performed slightly better than girls in the test but both did particularly well when measured against their previous achievements. Science followed a similar pattern, with all pupils achieving at least the level expected and a very high number reaching the higher level. Consequently, the school's performance in science was in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally.

17 The school achieves such high performance in the tests in Year 6 because pupils are prepared well by particularly good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Test results are carefully analysed and any perceived weaker areas, such as writing last year, are picked up and handled effectively. The school evaluates its own performance very carefully and uses this, alongside assessment information for each group of pupils, to set challenging but realistic targets each year. For example, the targets for 2001 show that teachers expect the current Year 6 pupils to continue the school's trend of high performance.

The standard of pupils' writing is particularly good in Years 5 and 6.

18 Writing has been a high priority in the school for the past year. Under the direction of the literacy co-ordinator, staff have paid particular attention to different styles and approaches to writing. This has been extremely effective and is showing maximum impact with the older pupils in Years 5 and 6.

19 In Year 5, pupils are exposed to a wide range of writing styles. This helps them to develop their own ideas and to appreciate the need to write in different ways for different reasons. For example, pupils have looked at how to present instructions before compiling their own recipes based on the theme of Halloween, such as 'Worm Bolognaise' and 'Insect Stew'. They show a good understanding of the need to make instructions clear and simple, while keeping a straightforward and logical sequence. On a similar theme, pupils explored how to write sets of rules to define a sequence of procedures, such as how to play board games, including 'Vampire Chess'. Pupils have developed their knowledge and understanding of dialogue and characters by looking at the playscript of 'Alice in Wonderland' before producing their own plays, paying particular attention to dramatic conventions. When writing stories, pupils have focussed their attention on developing introductions with action and vivid description. For example, 'Jack came panting out of the woods. The wolf was behind him, growling and slaving'. They have also worked hard on using description and dialogue to add interest to their writing, such as 'Kiki wailed in pain as her leg gave an agonising crack. "Oh, no!" exclaimed Mike'. Pupils continue to develop their creative writing skills by looking at different styles of poetry, ranging from Kennings to Limericks, and have produced their own poems with good use of descriptive language. For example, 'Mrs Wormwood has a fat stomach like a big fluffy cushion'.

20 In Year 6, pupils continue to broaden their range and styles of writing. For example, following a study of 'Macbeth', pupils have analysed the key ingredients that make it such an interesting tale, such as the range of characters and their personalities, the action, mysterious and unexplained events, conflict, complications and twists. They have re-written scene 1 in modern prose, produced a newspaper report (Who killed the King?), written a critical review of the film version of Macbeth, and also written their versions of 'Macbeth 2000', where they put the story into a modern setting. All this work has helped pupils to develop a good understanding of language and setting and has shown good improvement in their writing skills over the past year. In addition to this topic, pupils have also produced some excellent examples of extended story writing and poetry. They use exciting descriptive

language to create atmosphere and mood, and have a very good understanding of the need to carefully structure their stories.

21 Pupils use their writing skills very well in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, when producing a piece of text in science to explain how bees make honey, Year 5 pupils allowed their writing to flow but kept a clear structure and interspersed it with diagrams to complement and illustrate their work. When describing the ‘water cycle’ in geography, they used good subject specific language such as ‘condensation’, ‘evaporation’ and ‘precipitation’. Year 6 pupils produced some highly emotive writing in history, when they used a flashback technique to tell a story of an old person reliving memories of World War II, and when they wrote persuasively to argue for and against capital punishment.

22 The school’s focus on writing is reaping benefits. Standards are improving and pupils are confident to make good use of their writing skills to present and support their work across the curriculum.

The pastoral care system is very good and pupils develop excellent attitudes and relationships.

23 The school operates a ‘family’ based pastoral care system where pupils from all year groups are organised into ‘family groups’ that meet together every Friday. This system has been running for six years and is firmly embedded into the life and work of the school. As a result, the current Year 6 pupils have been involved the whole way through their time at the school and the effect of this is clearly shown in their excellent attitudes and relationships. These pupils take great pride in their ‘special friendship’ links with the younger children in the school and set excellent examples as role models for the behaviour and attitudes expected by the school. For example, one Year 6 pupil specifically put time aside at lunchtime to help a reception child in the same family group when he experienced difficulty carrying his lunch tray and cutting his food. This is a wonderful relationship that sets the tone for the genuinely warm and caring family atmosphere in the school. For instance, when putting together the school’s ‘promise tree’ older pupils all had younger partners to help them decide on promises that they could try to keep for Lent.

24 The weekly meetings of the family groups are planned and co-ordinated carefully to make sure that all aspects of pupils’ personal and social development are covered. Pupils are taught to be considerate of others and to be aware of the different views and opinions people hold. They learn to respect different faiths and cultures alongside developing an understanding of their own individual needs and those of the others in their family group. Pupils develop very good social skills by working together and sharing responsibility. For example, older pupils often act as ‘scribe’ for younger children and partner them on visits to church. Pupils respect the school’s pastoral system and take great pride in their roles. For instance, Year 6 pupils are conscious that they are ambassadors for the school, while a child in the reception class proudly announced that, “next year when I’m a Year 1, I will help the new children”.

25 Pupils of all ages are confident and comfortable in the school. They know that they can turn to their teachers and ‘family’ members if they have any problems or concerns and use a ‘worry’ box to explain anything that is bothering them. Pupils are polite, friendly and have perfect manners. They instinctively help each other, during lessons and at break times, and behave impeccably. For example, when the reception class teacher waved a ‘fairy wand’ that made a musical tune, children moved effortlessly into their groups and started work. Similarly, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils almost fell over each other to answer the teacher’s questions and show that they had been listening carefully. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their work and respond very well during lessons. They are clearly very proud of their

school and its achievements, such as success in local sporting events and raising money for different charities.

26 Parents recognise the school's strength in this area and are right to do so. The harmonious and caring atmosphere provides an excellent environment in which pupils can learn and develop.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough by the time pupils leave the school.

27 The school has put a lot of effort into improving provision in information and communication technology since the last inspection and this has raised standards in the subject. However, by the time they leave the school, pupils are still not working at the levels they should be for 11 year olds.

28 By the end of Year 6, pupils have sufficient experience of simple word processing to allow them to present information in various ways. For example, when writing poems, they change the size, style and colour of text, and put borders around their work. Pupils combine text and graphics by using clip-art and pictures scanned from photographs or downloaded from the Internet. For instance, Year 6 pupils have incorporated photographs of 'The Blitz' and 'blackouts' in their narratives of life during World War II. However, despite their ability to produce and print colourful work, pupils do not know enough about the features of the word processing software they use and cannot electronically combine information created in different applications.

29 Pupils know how to create simple spreadsheets and appreciate that they can use the functions of the spreadsheet to perform calculations, but they do not use this often enough to experience mathematical modelling of different situations and scenarios. As a result, pupils tend to see a spreadsheet simply as a way of presenting data in a table from which they can quickly draw different types of graphs.

30 There is currently insufficient use of databases for the storage and retrieval of information, and the school does not have the equipment necessary to give pupils opportunities for sensing, measuring and controlling physical events. Pupils gain some experience of electronic mail, for instance by corresponding with the chair of governors during his holiday in Florida and missionary work further afield, and use of the Internet but these areas are not as well established as they should be because the school has had insufficient resources to teach them effectively.

31 The school is fully aware that standards in this subject have been too low and has taken positive steps to rectify the situation. For instance, additional staff have been brought into the school to allow the co-ordinator to leave her own class and provide skills-based information and communication technology lessons for pupils in other year groups. This has been effective. The quality of this teaching is good and pupils are making good progress in developing their basic skills. For example, in a Year 6 lesson where pupils used compact discs and the Internet to research information about World War II. The school also funds an extra teacher to provide additional opportunities for pupils in Year 6 to broaden their experience and use of information and communication technology. This work is carefully planned to dovetail with pupils' activities in other subjects while still developing their knowledge and skills in information and communication technology. For example, pupils have used a spreadsheet to collate survey data collected from Year 5 pupils, then sorted it alphabetically and produced different types of graphs to illustrate the relationship between their height and weight. This activity linked well to the current work on data handling and interpretation of graphs in mathematics.

32 The school has recently benefited from a building programme that has established a new computer suite. The equipment is not yet in place but sufficient computers have been ordered to provide an effective learning resource for pupils. Some teachers are confident and comfortable with information and communication technology. For instance, the co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and a part-time teacher has good experience in teaching basic skills. However, some other teachers lack confidence and have gaps in their knowledge and expertise in this subject. This

has been recognised and the school has appropriate training arranged for staff in the near future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

33 The school should now:

Raise standards in information and communication technology by the age of 11. Do this by:

- improving teachers' knowledge and expertise in information and communication technology;
- providing sufficient resources to equip the computer suite and to allow pupils to sense, monitor and control physical events;
- making sure that pupils are given more opportunities to use spreadsheets to model and investigate different situations;
- teaching pupils how to bring information that is produced in different software packages together electronically;
- teaching pupils how to use computers to sense, monitor and control physical events.
(Paragraphs 27 – 32)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
20	20	40	20	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	220
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	48

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	22	11	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	21
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	27	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82% (97%)	88% (97%)	97% (91%)
	National	84% (82%)	85% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	17
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	29	30	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88% (97%)	91% (88%)	85% (100%)
	National	84% (82%)	88% (86%)	88% (87%)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	13	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	26	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93% (88%)	100% (96%)	100% (96%)
	National	75% (70%)	72% (69%)	85% (78%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	15
	Girls	12	11	13
	Total	25	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89% (88%)	86% (85%)	100% (85%)
	National	70% (68%)	72% (69%)	80% (75%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	185
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)	11.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.6
Average class size	31.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

Financial information

Financial year	1999 – 2000
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	£
Total income	354,419
Total expenditure	349,127
Expenditure per pupil	1,602
Balance brought forward from previous year	42,578
Balance carried forward to next year	47,870

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	220
Number of questionnaires returned	161

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	37	5	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	63	34	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	30	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	40	8	1	2
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	36	4	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	21	1	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	16	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	65	30	3	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	83	17	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	28	0	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	43	12	2	7