

INSPECTION REPORT

MAWDESLEY ST PETER'S SCHOOL

Mawdesley, Ormskirk

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119477

Headteacher: Mr R Kershaw

Reporting inspector: A C Davies
3639

Dates of inspection: 30th April – May1st 2001

Inspection number: 194276

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 category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hurst Green
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. D Reynolds

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

A voluntary aided Church of England primary school, Mawdesley St. Peter's has 77 pupils, aged between 4 and 11, attending. It is smaller than most schools and has three classes of approximately 25 pupils. The school is situated in a small affluent village, which serves the needs of a diverse population including a number of professional families. Very few pupils are entitled to school meals free of charge. All but one of the pupils is white and none has English as an additional language. There is a comparatively large number of pupils with statements for special educational needs and the number on the special needs register who have dyslexia is also high. When they first start school the majority of pupils display academic and personal skills that are above those expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school where the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. The headteacher's energy and dedication ensures that standards remain high. The very good teaching apparent in Class 2 (Years 3 and 4) contrasts with the lack of challenge that sometimes exist for the oldest pupils. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' ability to express themselves eloquently and concisely is helping to raise their levels of confidence when dealing with new work or when carrying out independent research.
- The vast majority of pupils have a real love for literature and use their reading well when developing work in other subjects.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are good, with effective use made of their ICT skills in other subjects.
- The range of the curriculum in this small school is very broad with pupils benefit from a range of specialist support provided for them in literacy, music, modern foreign languages and ICT.
- The teaching in Class 2 (Years 3 and 4) is consistently very good, with pupils having to work hard and knowing what is expected of them.

What could be improved

- There is insufficient level of challenge provided for more able pupils in Class 3 (Years 5 and 6), especially in literacy and numeracy.
- The content of pupils' written work is of a higher standard than is their punctuation and presentation.
- There are inconsistencies in the way work in Class 3 is marked, with lost opportunities to help pupils know what they need to do next in order to improve.
- The headteacher is too isolated with no other member of staff being in a position to be able to take on additional responsibilities to help with aspects of leadership and management.

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 April 1997 and it has made satisfactory progress since that time. There has been noticeable improvement in standards at the school, as indicated by the national test results of 11-year-old pupils. However, the present staffing arrangements make it difficult for the oldest, more able pupils to be appropriately challenged. Pupils' attitudes to reading are now very good, and they read from a wider range of texts, including non-fiction, than at the time of the previous inspection. There has been noticeable improvement in the way the school now teaches design and

technology, art and design and ICT, all areas of weakness at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers' marking, a problem at the time of the previous inspection, still remains an issue.

STANDARDS

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

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

Due to the relatively small cohorts of children who take the national tests at the age of 7 and 11 respectively, it is important that test results are looked at with some caution. However, for the past two years the test results for 11-year-olds have been well above the national averages in each of the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Children's confidence in asking questions and using a wide vocabulary is helping them to attain high standards in many subjects. This has been as a result of very high numbers of pupils attaining beyond the level expected for their age. However, the present position shows that the level of challenge provided for the oldest pupils is a weakness. Although this will not necessarily make an impact on test results of the present Year 6, it is likely to make a difference in subsequent years if this is not addressed. The national test results for 7-year-olds have been at least above average for the past two years, with standards in reading being particularly good. Nearly all pupils attain the expected level for their age but relatively few are moving beyond this in writing and mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology are good, especially amongst the oldest pupils.

Children start school displaying academic and personal skills that are better than that expected for their age. The majority of reception-aged children exceed the learning goals anticipated for them in the six areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. They then make sound progress through to the end of Year 2. In Years 3 and 4 there is very good progress made with pupils using their literacy and numeracy effectively in other subjects. At present, this is not maintained throughout Years 5 and 6 because the more able pupils are not able to develop their knowledge and skills to the levels that they are capable of. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the high level of support that is available to help them, particularly with their literacy and numeracy work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The vast majority of pupils are extremely enthusiastic about their work. They particularly enjoy being given work to do that makes them think and involves them in research, either using books or the Internet.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Both in lessons and outside in the playground, pupils behave well. They are generally friendly towards each other and lunchtimes are normally calm and enjoyable occasions.

Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Although pupils show a great deal of maturity there is limited opportunity for them to be involved in taking on additional responsibility in the school.
Attendance	Above average. However, there are a small number of pupils who consistently arrive late for school, sometimes causing disruption to the lessons that have already started.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years (CLASS 1)	aged 5-7 years (CLASS 1)	aged 7-11 years (CLASSES 2&3)
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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

Teaching is of a very good quality in Class 2 (Years 3 and 4), where pupils are expected to work hard and to think very carefully about their work. There are many opportunities provided for these pupils to use their good oral skills in different situations to ask questions about their work. This results in pupils of all abilities having work that is well matched to their needs. At its best, there are good links between the oral and mental work in mathematics and problem solving. This is in contrast to the quality of teaching for pupils in the present Class 3 (Years 5 and 6), where more able pupils are not as sufficiently challenged. This is partly as a result of the teacher not being that familiar with the age group. In Class 1 (reception, Year 1 and 2), the teachers and support staff are using sensible methods to try and meet the needs of all the pupils by forming small groups, whenever possible, allowing greater focus for some pupils at any given time. This is working well to help the youngest pupils to develop their skills through practical methods and for the older pupils to participate in more formal work. The methods adopted helps the quality of teaching be good in Class 1.

Teachers explain to pupils what it is they are to learn at the beginning of each lesson. This is helping most have a real understanding about what it is they need to do next in order to improve. However, the marking of work in Class 3 is not helping to add to this knowledge, because it is too general and does not go into detail about improvements that can be made. Pupils do work hard and appreciate the additional support they receive from outside adults, such as the ICT consultant. The hard work that has occurred to improve the provision for some of the non-core subjects, such as design and technology, has helped children to learn new skills at the right time for their needs and age. Eight lessons were observed during the inspection. Two of these displayed very good teaching (Class 2); three showed good features (Class 1), two were satisfactory and one lesson in Class 3 was unsatisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school has supported the curriculum for pupils by using a range of outside experts to widen the pupils' learning experiences. The addition of a modern foreign language for older pupils is one such example. Good use is made of the local community to enrich the curriculum for all pupils.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The level of additional adult support in school to support pupils is very good. The needs of pupils are identified early and appropriate action taken to help gain the necessary support for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There are strengths in the spiritual development provided for pupils with regular time for pupils to reflect and a conscious effort made to focus on spiritual issues in all subjects. The lack of additional responsibilities provided for pupils is limiting their social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has developed good systems for checking on the progress made by pupils. The pupils are well known to staff and there is a real sense of them being well looked after and cared for.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a very committed and dedicated individual who is rather isolated. He manages the school effectively and leads by example. There is no other member of staff who is able to help him with developing his vision.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very involved in all that is happening at school. They are developing their role to enable them to support the management role of the headteacher more effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. This is a particular area of strength due to the work carried out by the headteacher and the actions taken as a result of what is found. He is aware of the staff's teaching strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	The headteacher and governors have been able to use the strengths of the staff to good effect in most cases. The exception being that the oldest pupils are taught by a teacher who has not the expertise and experience to meet all the needs of the pupils in her care.

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. • The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have a problem. • The school works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided for parents about the progress their children are making. • Inconsistencies in homework arrangements. • The behaviour of some children.

The parents have raised a range of interesting points. The reports that are sent home to parents are detailed but need greater emphasis on what children need to do next in order to improve. The teaching arrangements have some weaknesses at the moment because of the positioning of a teacher with an age group that is unfamiliar to her. The headteacher has made sure that all parents are able to approach the school to talk to staff. Parents make a very positive contribution to the pupils' learning by

the way they help in school and in the way they raise additional money for learning resources. There has been a problem with the homework arrangements for older pupils but the school hopes that this is now resolved. The behaviour in school is good and during the inspection there was no evidence of bullying noted. However, two parents did mention that this had been a concern in the past. The school has appropriate systems in place to deal with any such issue that is brought to their attention.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- **Pupils’ ability to express themselves eloquently and concisely is helping to raise their levels of confidence when dealing with new work or when carrying out independent research.**
- 1 Pupils are able to express themselves very clearly using a good range of vocabulary. This is helping to raise the standards of their work, particularly in writing and reading. In writing, for example, pupils are confident enough to use an extensive vocabulary and in reading they have less difficulty with more ‘demanding’ words. For example, a Year 4 pupil included this excellent descriptive vocabulary within a piece of writing setting the scene for a story.

‘Drifts of cloud flew in from nowhere, scattered among the vibrant shades of the midsummer fruit. The light, warm breeze rustled through the rare rainforest plants.’
 - 2 When discussing reading habits, pupils from the reception class onwards are able to express themselves with much conviction and also able to build on statements made by others. For example, one pupil offers an opinion on Elmer, a character from a well-known story, while another adds to the initial pupil’s view that he has extraordinary powers. During a mathematics lesson, pupils’ ability to explain how they arrived at answers is aiding the pace of their response to mental agility work. It is also helping pupils to extend their mathematical knowledge and is extending their intellectual thinking. In an English lesson, where the teacher is getting pupils to set scenes for story-writing, they come up with many interesting and stimulating responses to potential opening for stories. For example, one pupil suggests, ‘They stumbled into the pitch back cave.’ Other pupils quickly latch on to this focus and use terms like, ‘glowing into the far distance’. During a discussion on similes another pupil confidently comes up with, ‘his head like a football, rolling into the net.’
 - 3 The confidence shown in speaking out in front of others is also aiding pupils’ work in other curriculum areas, such as science. When they do have problems with their tasks they have the necessary vocabulary to explain where difficulties are arising. They are also better able to hypothesise making it clear what it is they are thinking. In information and communication technology lessons, pupils’ ability to explain the work that they have done during the week helps the consultant, who visits once a week, to be able to move on pupils with the confidence that pupils have understood the previous phase of learning.
 - 4 One of the main reasons for pupils’ confidence is due to the many opportunities that they have to speak publicly. In this relatively small school the opportunities for public speaking is shared between fewer pupils, therefore confidence levels have risen. In assemblies and when participating in plays, pupils have greater opportunities to play lead roles.
- **The vast majority of pupils have a real love for literature and use their reading well when developing work in other subjects.**
- 5 Reading is a strong feature of the school’s work and something that the school feels it has worked hard at improving. Although the previous report was largely supportive of the school’s reading standards, there has been much improvement in this area, especially in relation to the pupils’ attitudes to reading. The school successfully helps to develop children’s interest in

books resulting in many expressing a real joy for reading. This has meant that reading standards are particularly high – a point confirmed by the results of the national tests for 7 and 11 year olds.

- 6 Although we need to be cautious about drawing too many conclusions when the number of pupils taking the national tests each year is very low, reading results for 7-year-olds have been well above the national average for the past two years. The national tests for 11-year-olds reveals that pupils' attainment in English has also been well above average for the past two years. It does paint a positive picture of reading standards throughout the school. Added to this is the very positive attitudes pupils have to reading.
- 7 Pupils benefit from the strong support provided by their parents. They play a very active role in the 'home-school' reading partnership that exists. They also raise large sums of money to improve the range of books available in the library with approximately £500 per year being used to buy new books for this area. Younger pupils are expected to read at home and there is a good link between the teachers and parents to enable this homework to be relevant and help to improve reading skills.
- 8 Books form a central thread of most literacy lessons. For example, all Year 2 pupils who are developing their own story ideas very well know 'Elmer', a character from a well-loved series of books. They recall the way these books start as they search for their own ways of opening their individual stories. These young children use the knowledge from the books they have read to help them with the structure of their own stories. Similarly, older Year 3 and 4 pupils focus on the book, 'The Iron Man' to help them with improving the openings and descriptive passages within their own stories.
- 9 The overwhelming feature of the reading is that it does evoke a real sense of love for literature amongst the pupils. Year 2 pupils, for example, talk about the first story they can remember having read to them at school. Others are ambitious readers and have already attempted to read some of the 'Harry Potter' books. These pupils are able to talk about many extracts from the book and explain why they are 'desperate to read more'. Year 1 and 2 pupils also read non-fiction books and extract information from these to use as part of topics they are looking at. This interest in books is further intensified by their own good general knowledge and the hunger they have for more knowledge.
- 10 Older pupils in the 7 to 11-year-old range almost all enjoy reading. Some pupils have ventured into classical novels and talk knowledgeably about books such as, 'The Secret Garden' and 'Swallows and Amazons'. These pupils talk maturely about a range of authors and give very considered views as to why some authors attract them as opposed to others. They recognise that some books might initially seem more attractive to boys than girls but are quick to point out that books normally have something to offer everyone. Quite interestingly, a few more able readers revealed their disappointment when books they have read and loved have been made into films. The main reason is that the main characters in the film do not match their own imagined view of the same characters.
- 11 More mature readers expect books to deal with sensitive issues. One girl revealed that she was very moved when reading a book about a black girl that was not accepted into a friendship group because of her colour. This raised strong passion in the girl and helped her to understand what damage 'prejudice' can do. Another girl revealed that she desperately looks forward to reading adult books, such as, 'Angela's Ashes' because it is a book that has moved her own parents.

- 12 Each pupil keeps a reading log and these contain some interesting entries that focus on reading for enjoyment, the author's style and predictions. Pupils' maturity towards reading can best be summed up by the following comment made by one girl.
- 13 She states that *'Roald Dahl books are very important for all pupils as they develop their own reading preferences, but they are phase that most go through. You still enjoy recalling the stories but you do move on.'*

- **Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are good, with effective use made of their ICT skills in other subjects.**

- 14 The school has joined forces with a group of other small schools to buy in an information and communication technology consultant. The oldest pupils in the school benefit most from his expertise. They benefit in several ways but particularly during the one afternoon a week when he spends time working with Class 3 (Years 5 and 6).
- 15 The impact of the consultant's work is seen in the way that standards are high for information and communication technology (ICT) by the time pupils are 11-years of age. For example, pupils in Class 3 have set up his or her own 'multi-media' project about themselves. Work for this project involves the pupils in being able to use the computers to their full capacity as they bring together aspects of photography, prose and music. The added advantage of having an 'expert' within the school is the benefit gained by the rest of the staff, whose own expertise level is enhanced.
- 16 During a lesson with Class 3, pupils are able to recall that in devising a 'multi-media' presentation there are four main phases: define, design, develop and refine. The pupils can talk with a great deal of authority about each phase. Within the same lesson, pupils reveal that they built up a wide experience of using the digital camera. Many of their individual pieces of work contain photographs that have been taken with the digital camera and then 'down loaded' into their personal work. When they have located the photograph within their work most pupils can then insert a 'speech bubble' containing text so that their work 'comes alive'.
- 17 Pupils are very proud of their skills. A group of pupils are very excited about demonstrating how they developed their own projects. At this time they show that they can work independently and reveal that each project differs from others. The range of skills used by the pupils is impressive. Many benefit from having computers at home and have continued to work on their projects there. They can link pages together and gain access to different parts of their work by using special links they have designed and inserted. The multi-media presentations are of a high quality and the attitudes demonstrated by the pupils are first class. Many pupils offer advice and support to others and are keen not just to show off their own work but to draw attention to particular features included in the work of others in their group.
- 18 As a result of the level of expertise that now exists amongst the pupils they feel confident in using ICT in other subject areas. There are examples of ICT having a very good impact in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and art. Pupils know when to use ICT to enhance work and their skill level is such that they are now able to save time by using the computer to present work.

- 19 The decision made by the school to be involved in the scheme that employs an outside consultant shared between a few ‘small’ schools has worked well. It is money well spent when looking at the level of expertise that now exists within the school. The permanent staff have also improved their own skill level and ICT is now making a good impact on work in other subject areas.
- **The range of the curriculum in this small school is very broad with pupils benefit from a range of specialist support provided for them in literacy, music, modern foreign languages and ICT.**
- 20 One of the most impressive features of the school is the way in which pupils are provided with a very full curriculum, despite there being a relatively few members of staff available to develop different areas. The main reason for this is that the school is quick to look for outside expertise and support to widen the curriculum for the pupils.
- 21 The impact of the outside consultant to help improve standards in information and communication technology has already been described. This is just one area. The school also uses outside support for literacy, music and modern foreign languages. The headteacher has seen this as an important part of ensuring that pupils do not lose out because they are in a small school community. He has therefore been keen to continue links, that already existed when he first arrived at the school, and to develop new ones.
- 22 Each week a teacher from the local secondary school, which most of the pupils move on to, works with the oldest pupils on a modern foreign language. It is either French or German, depending on the time of the year or the availability of staff from the secondary school. During the week of the inspection German was being taught to Class 3. During the lesson it was clear that the majority of pupils have grasped a very basic understanding of the language. They know the German words for most parts of the body and know enough German to describe these parts. For example, most could describe the colour and length of hair. The girls seem to be more excited about learning to speak a foreign language than boys and they were able to recall much of the French they had learned the previous year. Pupils are keen and hands shoot up when questions are posed. The arrangement works well because it gives pupils a ‘flavour’ of languages that they will meet in their secondary school and also familiarises them with the teaching style used.
- 23 A vast number of pupils benefit from additional music lessons taught by peripatetic teachers. The school gives great emphasis to helping pupils gain experience of musical instruments and works hard at meeting the individual requirements of both pupils and parents. In addition, many pupils participate in the recorders club that is provided by a member of staff and a parent.
- 24 The school has also benefited from additional support provided by the Local Education Authority’s literacy consultant. She used to be a teacher at the school and therefore her support has been particularly valuable because she knew exactly where the school was in relation to standards. She was also able to focus on the school’s areas for development without having to find out about the school in the first place. Although this additional support is only temporary it is none-the-less valued and has helped the school understand the direction it needs to take in order to improve still further.
- 25 In addition to the outside expertise that comes into the school on a regular basis, there are several other initiatives taken to help the pupils gain a broad and balanced curriculum. Visiting

theatre groups have regular involvement with the school and they participate in a range of residential and day visits to places of interest. The school is also involved in community initiatives, such as, best kept village competitions. The school was involved in the formation and development of the 'Millennium Green'. The overall impact made by the additional activities available is most pleasing with pupils being able to take advantage of many openings that are available to them. The school has managed to create a sense of working hard to try to meet any individual need that any pupil does have, both within, or outside, the 'normal' curriculum.

- **The teaching in Class 2 (Years 3 and 4) is consistently very good, with pupils having to work hard and knowing what is expected of them.**

- 26 The school benefits from having at least one very good classroom practitioner, who is able to have some influence on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. The headteacher is the person who teaches Class 2 for most of the time and he has been able to raise the pupils' expectations. The pupils in turn have responded very positively and work hard and are clear about what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and attitudes. The headteacher is therefore in a position where he is able to lead by example.
- 27 This attention to raising expectations is seen when looking at the work that has been produced by this age group. Written work, for example, reveals that pupils are searching for descriptive passages that help the reader paint a picture of a scene or develop greater knowledge of the thinking of one of the main characters in the story. Character sketches and story plans are very well organised making it easier for the writer to concentrate on descriptions and imagination.
- 28 During a literacy lesson in Class 2 the teacher uses the pupils' excellent range of spoken vocabulary to good advantage. He questions pupils in such a way as to help them move from their everyday conversational language into the more descriptive language associated with their written tasks. He then moves on to using a piece of writing as a focus for pupils to consider ways of starting stories. The attention given to the opening paragraph has the pupils engrossed and highly motivated. In this way he is able to move on to consider the use of pronouns while their attention is fixed on the story line. In the same way he re-enforces previous learning, covering areas such as, similes, powerful verbs and adjectives. Throughout the lesson the teacher stamps his authority in a quiet and persuasive manner and insists on high standards being maintained. He does this by seizing on the high quality answers that are given and underlines what he expects from all. The way he works helps pupils be efficient in their working habits, with very little time lost through unnecessary distraction. He uses a well known book (The Iron Man) to get the pupils interested and then moves them on to consider their own way of setting out work. Sometimes this requires the pupils to think back to the way the author (Ted Hughes) did it and sometimes to consider how they can develop beyond that style.
- 29 In another lesson, the teacher leads a mental agility session at a brisk pace as pupils rehearse their numeracy skills. He consistently asks pupils to think about how they got to their answers and works with the whole group on considering the most efficient way. He often punctuates a series of questions with, 'can you think of a rule...'. In this way he is demanding pupils to think for themselves and to be alert. The teacher is particularly aware of the most able pupils and directs questions to them. In other cases he makes good use of a range of resources to help him see if any pupils are floundering. The most impressive feature of the numeracy teaching in this class is the pace and challenge posed to all pupils, irrespective of ability. There is also very

good consideration given to the needs of one pupil who has a physical disability. He is fully integrated into the lesson and uses a special table when he needs to. This is done without fuss or disturbance.

- 30 The pupils in Class 2 make good to very good progress in their work. They enjoy learning and many are extremely keen to be the first to get to answers or to provide the most exciting answer. This has been created by setting appropriate standards for the pupils to strive for and by creating a working environment that makes pupils feel that their work is valued.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- **There is insufficient level of challenge provided for more able pupils in Class 3 (Years 5 and 6), especially in literacy and numeracy.**
- 31 In contrast to the challenging work provided for pupils in Class 2, there are times when more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in Class 3. This is partly due to recent staff changes that has resulted in the present Class 3 teacher working with an age group that is unfamiliar to her. Until very recently she worked with the youngest age group in the school.
- 32 During a Class 3 literacy lesson the teacher fails to direct pupils' attention to using metaphors as part of the work that is taking place related to setting a scene for stories. She talks about adjectives and similes only, when pupils' written work reveals that they are more than competent in using metaphors. The pupils come up with a range of interesting adjectives and similes but there is a distinct feeling that they are capable of so much more. This is also the case when pupils move into their written work. Good, expressive language is used, for example, 'they stumbled into the pitch-black cave...', but again one is left feeling that more able pupils can produce much better work. The lack of challenge for these pupils tends to leave them being happy with their initial responses instead of searching for more potent and exciting phrases. The same position is seen when the lesson develops with pupils making verbal responses that are interesting and exciting. Words like, eerie, musty and gloomy, come easily to most pupils but too often these are not transferred into imaginative passages. This is particularly the case for more able pupils in this class.
- 33 During numeracy sessions, the teacher's own lack of subject knowledge is hindering the progress being made by the more able pupils. The objective of the mental agility session, (to encourage an accurate and fast recall of number work), is too open-ended and therefore is not helping the teacher or the pupils to measure the session's success. Pupils clearly have good number knowledge but at times they get themselves into difficulties because certain rules are not explained well enough to aid them. For example, one able pupil felt that the operation, $(5 \times 4) - \frac{3}{4} = 5$ was correct. The teacher was not able to pick up on the error and help move on the pupils' learning. During the main part of the lesson, the teacher set out a multiplication problem, which required the pupils to break down the tens and units and consider the most efficient way of finding the answer. An exceptionally able pupil offers the answer to whole problem very early on in the discussions. However, on this occasion his answer was incorrect. The teacher did not pick up on this and most of the next 20 minutes was spent trying to get to the answer proposed by the very able pupil. This caused some confusion to the majority of pupils. The teacher tends to lack the necessary presence with this group and therefore finds it difficult to extend their thinking.
- 34 At present, the impact of the teaching on Year 6 pupils' learning is not too detrimental because most of the pupils in the class are working from the sound foundations that they have benefited from previously in the school. However, the school may have considerable concern about maintaining the high standards with the present Year 5, if they are not being challenged sufficiently over a two-year period, which is the prospect facing them if changes are not made.
- **The content of pupils' written work is of a higher standard than is their punctuation and presentation.**

- 35 Most of the pupils' written work is enlivened by the exciting and interesting, descriptive passages that are used. Pupils are confident writers and this is seen from very early on. In Year 2, for example, most pupils are very confident when looking for a range of different ways to start their stories. They are well-read and they are able to use the conventions of story beginnings, found in well-loved books, to enrich their own story starts. They also use a wide-ranging vocabulary, which takes account of the main theme being studied. Space or monster stories contain specific vocabulary that is pertinent to the topic. However, their presentation is disappointing. Much of the work is presented untidily with letter sizes and spaces between words varying greatly. The same applies to some grammatical features with past and present tenses often being intermixed.
- 36 By the time pupils have moved to Year 4, the strengths outlined in descriptive writing for Year 2 pupils still exists. There are examples of excellent phrases, such as, 'drifts of clouds..' or, 'vibrant colours tinting the morning sky.' More able writers, in particular, have developed levels of confidence that helps them to take risks, usually resulting in very exciting phrases being written. However, just as with younger pupils, the use of grammar is not of the same standard. The presentation of work also leaves much to be desired with work often being set out in a rather uncaring way.
- 37 Year 6 pupils are very confident writers. There are many examples of them setting out an argument on paper in a very succinct way. One pupil sets out points in favour of fox-hunting in such a way that is well organised, putting the background in context and then moving on to make very clear his points in a concise and rational way. His points are answered by another pupil with the opposite view point. Her answer is extremely well organised and deals with each of the original writer's points in a very coherent and precise way. The pupils' use their wide spoken vocabulary to good effect. However, just as with younger pupils there are examples of very sloppy punctuation. Sentences sometimes do not have a full stop at the end or they have not started with a capital letter. Very few paragraphs are used. The grammar is, on the whole, better. Throughout the school therefore the impact of some of the pupils' good writing is therefore lost because aspect of presentation, grammar and punctuation are not of the same quality.
- **There are inconsistencies in the way work in Class 3 is marked, with lost opportunities to help pupils know what they need to do next in order to improve.**
- 38 The quality of teachers' marking varies considerably across the school. There are some very good examples of Class 2 (Years 3 and 4) being provided with very good information about what they need to do next in order to improve. This contrasts to the unsatisfactory information provided for pupils in Class 3 (Years 5 and 6).
- 39 The issue of teachers' marking was a minor weakness at the time of the previous inspection and this remains to be the case. The school does have a policy for marking, although it is in need of review. The present situation sees good practice, particularly in Class 2, not being disseminated effectively. As a result pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not provided with enough information to help them deal with issues that arise within their work. There are also examples of positive comments being made when the work clearly has been presented in a rather 'sloppy' way.
- 40 The contrast between the two classes is seen at its most extreme when looking at the following two examples:

In Class 2, a pupil was provided with the following remarks;

'You have good ideas but if you realise you need to edit your work and add adjectives it would be better to start again than cross out words, making your presentation so untidy.'

This clear information to the pupil contrasts greatly with information that is provided for Class 3 pupils. In Class 3, comments such as *'well done'*, often appear when the work is very untidy, or when it is clear that the pupil has not tried as hard as they could.

- 41 Most of the comments made with regard to Class 3's work tend to be brief statements, such as, 'well done' or 'Good', with little help given to moving the pupils' learning forwards. There is no indication that pupils in this class have a chance to work to targets. As a result the pupils do not have enough information to work on to help them focus on necessary improvements.
- **The headteacher is too isolated with no other member of staff being in a position to be able to take on additional responsibilities to help with aspects of leadership and management.**
- 42 The headteacher is a very dedicated and hard working individual who has put in place many systems that are aimed at keeping standards high. He is well supported and respected by his Governing Body. However, due to staff changes and part-time staffing arrangements, he is not supported at the level expected by a colleague able to take on senior responsibility. The only other full-time teacher in the school is not seeking to add to her responsibilities and this leaves the school with some difficulties.
- 43 The governors have made appropriate arrangements for dealing with the issues related to short-term coverage of the headteacher should he be absent or be attending any training. The long-term coverage is not as easy and would require the school to call on help from the Local Education Authority. Equally as concerning however, is the position of the headteacher not having anyone to use as a 'sounding board' or to challenge his own thinking. The school's Local Education Authority's link adviser is very helpful in this respect but there is naturally a limit to the amount of support that can be provided from that direction. Schools benefit from having key managers being able to consider new initiatives and to implement these in a purposeful and positive manner. The present situation makes it difficult for the Mawdesley St. Peter's to do this. Too frequently the headteacher has to deal with new innovations and try to make it work for the school. This is particularly worrying in view of the number of new initiatives that school's have been expected to take on board the past few years.
- 44 The headteacher has already shared with the governors his concerns about these shortcomings. It is something that the governors are intending to keep very much in their minds when it comes to future appointments. However, it is the immediate position that gives concern.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school has managed to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils. There are many things happening that enables the standards to be high. However, there are issues to be addressed. The governors, headteacher and staff need to:

- **Provide the more able pupils in Class 3 (Years 5 and 6) with more demanding and challenging work in literacy and numeracy; (Paragraphs 31- 34)**
- **Make the standards in writing even higher by improving the pupils' punctuation and presentation skills; (Paragraphs 35 – 37)**
- **Ensure that all the marking is helping pupils understand what it is they need to do in order to improve; (Paragraphs 38 – 41)**
- **On a long-term basis, find a way of providing the headteacher with support at a management level so that he is able to share his vision and delegate areas of his work more appropriately. (Paragraphs 42 – 44)**

As well as these main key issues the school needs to consider ways of developing actions to address the following issues:

- Help pupils take on additional responsibility;
- Improve the punctuality of a few persistent late-comers;
- Ensure that reports regarding the progress made by pupils include a clear view about what they need to do next in order to improve.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	8
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	25	38	25	12	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		76
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		14

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	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	5	6	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84(83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (100)	100 (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	4	4	8

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	3	4
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	8	7	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (100)	88 (100)	100 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	3	4
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	8	7	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (100)	88 (100)	100 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	64
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	170,928
Total expenditure	173,499
Expenditure per pupil	2,410
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,592
Balance carried forward to next year	15,021

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

53.9%

Number of questionnaires sent out	76
Number of questionnaires returned	41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	41	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	49	10	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	37	12	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	37	20	2	0
The teaching is good.	51	44	2	2	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	32	15	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	39	5	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	66	27	5	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	54	36	10	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	37	10	4	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	34	2	5	8