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INSPECTION REPORT

BOTWELL HOUSE RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hayes, Middlesex

LEA area: Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102422

Headteacher: Mr Sean Reilly

Reporting inspector: Mr Selwyn Ward
9271

Dates of inspection: 30 April – 1 May 2002

Inspection number: 195295

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 -11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Botwell Lane
Hayes
Middlesex

Postcode: UB3 2AB

Telephone number: 0208 573 2229

Fax number: 0208 569 0286

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Sean Fitzpatrick

Date of previous inspection: 9 – 13 June 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Botwell House is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school for boys and girls aged 3 – 11 years. With 590 pupils, including 81 who attend the nursery part-time, the school is more than twice the size of the average primary school, and, following a recent extension to the buildings, the number of pupils is expected to increase over the next four years. Most of the pupils are white and of United Kingdom heritage. Around one in seven pupils are from other European countries and a similar proportion are from a range of different ethnic minority backgrounds. All of the pupils are Roman Catholic. Although the proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above average, only a few are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with special educational needs is a little above average, most with only slight learning difficulties. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is average and pupils are of broadly average attainment when they join the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Botwell House Primary School is a very good and effective school with a strong Catholic Christian ethos. The school is very well led and managed and the staff and governors share the commitment and vision embodied in the school's Mission Statement to encourage children to do as well as they can academically as well as learning to become confident and well-rounded young people. Teaching is very good throughout the school and, as a result, pupils learn and achieve very well in the national tests, although they have less opportunity to learn and develop their skills in some practical subjects. Botwell House Primary provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching is very good and, as a result, pupils make very good progress in learning.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and, as a result, pupils behave very well and are keen to learn.

What could be improved

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers or do practical work.
- There is too much absence.

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 June 1997. The strengths identified in that inspection have been maintained and further improved. The school has successfully addressed most of the issues identified in that inspection and, as result, there is a much higher proportion of very good teaching and test results have further improved, so that pupils are now achieving very well. There remain too few opportunities for pupils to fully develop their skills in art, music and other practical areas of the curriculum. Overall, however, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	B	A	A*
mathematics	A	A	A	A*
science	B	B	A	A

Key	
very high (top 5%)	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low (bottom 5%)	E*

Pupils make very good progress throughout the school and both boys and girls are achieving very well. The school sets appropriately ambitious targets for Year 6 test results, and results since the last inspection represent an improving trend. Last year's test results at the end of Year 6 were well above average and, in English and mathematics, were among the top 5 per cent of similar schools. Work seen in the current Year 6 broadly matched this picture, with particularly high standards evident in mathematics. Although pupils are not given the opportunity to tackle experiments or investigations in science in Year 6, which is a weakness, this has not affected test results as this aspect of science is not currently included in the tests. In the tests at the end of Year 2, there is again an improving trend, with pupils last year attaining results that were above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. In mathematics, test results were among the top 5 per cent of similar schools. Work seen in the current Year 2 showed standards that were well above average, overall, in both English and mathematics. Pupils are broadly average when they join the nursery. Almost all are on target to meet the *early learning goals* by the time they join Year 1, and many are likely to significantly exceed these nationally expected levels.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils enjoy school and have an exceptionally positive attitude to learning. They quickly learn the school's orderly routines, are attentive in lessons and work with enthusiasm and sustained concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils appreciate and respond well to teachers' consistently high expectations of good behaviour and this contributes to the very good progress that pupils make. There have been no exclusions over the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. Children are polite, friendly and considerate, and they are keen to volunteer to help. They help each other and work well together. Boys and girls of different abilities and from different backgrounds mix and get on very well together and are all included in the full range of school activities.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory. Too much schooling is missed, in many cases because parents take their children off on holiday during term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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.

Teachers generally plan lessons well so that activities are varied and pupils are well motivated. The teachers know the children well and relate very well to them. As a result, pupils are keen to please their teachers by settling quickly and without fuss to the tasks set them. Although some lessons are very long, with, for example, literacy and numeracy “hours” frequently extending to an hour and a quarter, almost all lessons are well paced so that children get a lot done. Teachers invariably have high expectations both of pupils’ behaviour and of their academic potential, so that work offers challenge to pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs. The school has taken the deliberate decision to invest in additional teaching and learning support staff, so that although some classes in the juniors are quite large, pupils’ learning is very well supported throughout the school. Literacy and numeracy are very well taught both in English and mathematics lessons as well as through other subjects. Marking is used very well to help pupils learn by clearly identifying what children need to do in order to do better.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The overall quality and range of activities provided for pupils are satisfactory. The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is good, being well matched to children’s needs. The <i>National Literacy</i> and <i>Numeracy Strategies</i> , taught effectively with children set by ability, have been used well to maintain and raise standards. Some lessons, though, are overlong, and pupils have too few opportunities to develop their skills in practical subjects or to undertake experiments in science in Year 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, mostly in lessons, and generally achieve very well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Only a very small number of the pupils with English as an additional language are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils are generally very well supported, both by the adults in the school and by the encouragement of children throughout the school to help one another. As a result, they make similar progress to that of other pupils.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very well for pupils’ personal development, which forms an important part of the school’s Catholic Christian ethos. Provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Aside from prayer, there are numerous opportunities for reflection and empathy with others, as well as opportunities to work and share activities together and to take on some responsibilities. Although pupils learn about other cultures, and provision for their cultural development is good, some opportunities are missed to learn more of and celebrate the increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds of the children in the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teaching and other staff are caring and supportive. There are satisfactory arrangements for dealing with child protection and welfare issues, although more could be done to promote better attendance. There are effective systems for keeping track of how well children are doing, with good use made of

	individual learning targets for pupils to help them to progress.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior management team provide very clear educational direction for the school based on a Mission Statement which is shared with and understood by both parents and children. All staff share a strong commitment to maintaining high standards and providing a supportive learning environment for the children.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They know the school well and are committed to and supportive of its continued success. They have played a key role with staff in successfully managing the changes involved in the enlargement of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teaching and learning have been monitored very well and this has contributed to the improvements in teaching and learning. The school has satisfactorily adopted the principles of " <i>best value</i> " to evaluate for itself what it does well and what it needs to do to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Spending is linked well to the school's improvement plan which is agreed among staff and governors.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. • The teaching is good and the school has high expectations of the pupils. • Behaviour is good and children are encouraged to become mature and responsible. • The school is approachable, works closely with parents and keeps them well informed about how well their children are doing. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils do not have enough opportunity to use information and communication technology. • There could be more opportunities for out of school activities.

Parents have very favourable views of the school and inspectors agree with these views. Inspectors also agree that children do not currently have enough access to information and communication technology. Although good use is made of visits and there are several lunchtime and after school clubs for music and sports activities, inspectors agree that there are fewer after school activities on offer than are frequently found in similar schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science

1. Throughout this report, references to *Key Stage 1* relate to the infant years (Years 1 and 2) when pupils are aged 5 to 7 years. Children in the nursery and reception years, who are aged 5 and under, are considered to be in the *Foundation Stage*. Schools are compared as against the national average, as well as against "*similar schools*". Schools are grouped as similar according to the proportion of children attending who are known to be eligible for free school meals. In judging standards, inspectors analysed results attained in the national standard assessment tests (SATS) taken at the end of Years 2 and 6, both in 2001 and in previous years. Inspectors looked at work currently being done in lessons and at samples of the work done over the course of the past year. They discussed children's work with them, as well as with their teachers. Whereas judgements on *attainment* relate to comparisons with nationally expected standards, *achievement* relates to the progress pupils make and compares how well children do as against their prior attainment. Although inspectors looked at work and sampled lessons across a range of subjects, particular emphasis was given to the "*core subjects*" of English, mathematics and science.
2. Children join the school with a wide range of abilities, including an increasing number from homes where English is an additional language, but overall children's attainment on entry is broadly average. Children make a good start in the nursery and reception classes and are quickly taught to adjust to the school's orderly routines. As a result of the very good teaching from which they benefit, by the time they join Year 1, almost all children are on target to attain all of the *early learning goals* in the *Foundation Stage* and many are likely significantly to exceed these nationally expected levels.
3. Despite high rates of absence, the children's excellent attitudes and the very good teaching throughout the school, result in the pupils making very good progress and achievement in English, mathematics and science. The high standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and further improved, with test results representing an improving trend. Last year, in the tests taken at the end of Year 2, pupils attained results that were above average in reading and writing, and well above average in mathematics. In mathematics, test results were among the top 5 per cent of similar schools. There was no national test for science in Year 2. In last year's tests at the end of Year 6, results in English, mathematics and science were all well above average. In both English and mathematics, test results were among the top 5 per cent of similar schools. In their questionnaire responses, parents view very positively the standards achieved by their children, with 97 per cent indicating that they felt their children made good progress.
4. The successful introduction of the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies* has contributed to the further improvement in standards since the last inspection. Success in national tests is enhanced through the emphasis that teachers have placed on children learning problem-solving techniques, an area that had been identified as a weakness in the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 have learnt to underline numbers and operators when approaching mathematical problems and, in Year 6, pupils tackling comprehension exercises in English are instructed to spend ten minutes carefully reading and re-reading the text before picking up their pens. Older pupils have well developed note-taking skills.
5. Work seen in the current Years 2 and 6 broadly matched the standards indicated in the test results. Standards are high, overall, in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2. In Year 6, standards in mathematics are particularly high, and they are certainly currently better than average in English and science, although pupils have not been given the opportunity to take part in practical work in science in Year 6. This weakness is unlikely to be reflected in test results, however, as scientific investigation is not currently included in the national tests. Throughout the school, pupils have learnt to take a pride in their work, and, as a result, the standard of presentation is high. In mathematics, mental agility with number is

a notable strength, so that, for example, many pupils in Year 2 are readily able to create “*number sentences*” to solve problems requiring two step calculations.

6. Boys and girls of all abilities, including the more able, those with special educational needs and pupils learning English as an additional language, all do very well, so that, for example, even pupils with identifiable learning difficulties are attaining the nationally expected levels by the time they reach Year 6. From the sampling of work and analysis of assessment information by inspectors, there is no evidence of any significant variation in achievement between children from different ethnic backgrounds. The margin of any difference between the overall attainment of boys and of girls is smaller than found nationally, with both achieving very well.

Teaching is very good and, as a result, pupils make very good progress in learning

7. Although this was only a Short Inspection, inspectors were able to see all teachers teaching at least once. In judging teaching, inspectors sought evidence that pupils were learning and making progress. Teaching ranged from satisfactory to excellent. It was good or better in two thirds of the lessons seen, and it was very good or excellent in almost a third. This represents a picture of very good teaching overall, with a very much higher proportion of good and very good teaching than was seen in the last inspection. Parents recognise the quality of teaching in the school. In their questionnaire responses, 98 per cent of parents said that teaching was good and almost all expressed the view that the school had high expectations of pupils.
8. Teachers generally plan lessons well so that activities are varied. This in turn means that pupils’ interest is held and their attention does not wane – even in very long lessons. In a mathematics lesson seen in Year 3, for example, a group of children with special educational needs learning about money and change were able to sustain their concentration because the teacher varied the tasks and did not allow too much time to be spent on each one. Relationships throughout the school are very good. The teachers know the pupils well. Some are on very friendly terms with their class, others have a firm no-nonsense approach, but all are effective in motivating their pupils to learn. Throughout the school, pupils are keen to please their teachers, and, as a result they settle quickly and without fuss to the tasks set them. Question and answer sessions, often recapping previous work, are lively, with teachers taking care to ensure that all are involved. Frequently in lessons, teachers’ infectious enthusiasm resulted in pupils’ enthusiastic learning, as, for example, in a Year 3 science lesson when every child became keenly involved in the naming of parts of a plant.
9. Although some lessons are very long, with, for example, literacy and numeracy “hours” frequently extending to an hour and a quarter, almost all lessons were well paced so that children got a lot done. Where preparatory tasks were set, for example in cutting out or pasting sheets into exercise books, teachers routinely ensured that such activities were completed quickly so that no learning time was wasted.
10. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils’ behaviour, and as a result of this consistency, pupils appreciate that the school’s rules and rewards are fair and are fairly applied. Expectations of pupils’ academic potential are similarly high, so that, in almost all lessons, work offered challenge to extend the understanding of pupils of all abilities, including more able children and those with special educational needs. Setting in English and mathematics is used to group pupils by ability, but teachers recognise that there can be a wide ability range even within a set and arrange work accordingly so that it offers good challenge to all.
11. Literacy and numeracy are very well taught, both in English and mathematics lessons as well as through other subjects. Lessons are organised in accordance with the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies*, which have been effectively introduced in the school and have contributed to the rise in standards. Pupils learn particularly well in mathematics because of a very effective emphasis on problem-solving in everyday situations. Children in Year 2 working on adding, subtraction, multiplication and division, know that they need to learn this “*because it will help us in everyday life*”.

Pupils in Year 6 were seen working with enthusiasm on very challenging problems involving the choice of mobile 'phone tariffs for specific types of usage because it was such an identifiably useful application. Literacy and numeracy are also used well to reinforce important learning points in other subjects. For example, in a very effective science lesson in Year 2, the teacher's drawing of a parallel between the words *circuit* and *circle* helped pupils of all abilities to understand that, like the circle, the circuit needed to be complete.

12. Mostly, teachers took the opportunity at the start of the lesson to explain to pupils what it is they would be learning and why. As a result, even some of the youngest children knew exactly what they were doing. Reception children creating symmetrical clown faces, for example, could clearly explain about symmetry and offered to demonstrate it using a mirror. On a few occasions, teachers omitted to write out the learning objectives, but even in these lessons, pupils usually had a clear idea not just of what tasks they were expected to complete but what it was they were supposed to be learning.
13. The school has taken the deliberate decision to invest in additional teaching and learning support staff, so that although some classes in the juniors are quite large, pupils' learning is very well supported throughout the school. Pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and those needing literacy support because they are at an early stage of learning English, receive help from teaching assistants, and in some cases from parent helpers, whose work is well co-ordinated by the class teacher. In the juniors, additional teachers are used to split the two classes in each year group up into three teaching sets for English and mathematics. These arrangements have proved very effective.
14. Marking is a notable strength of teaching. It is of a consistently high standard, offering pupils very helpful guidance on exactly what it is they need to do to make their work better. Marking is closely related to the individual learning targets that pupils have. Even in the infants, it makes the children aware both of what National Curriculum level they have reached and what they need to focus on to advance to the next level, so that, for example, a child was told that a piece of work "*would be level 2C if you checked your capital letters*".

The school is very well led and managed

15. The headteacher and senior management team provide very clear educational direction for the school based on a detailed Mission Statement that spells out the school's principles and priorities and which is shared and understood by both parents and children. The Mission Statement, which encapsulates the school's Catholic Christian ethos, is promoted through the school prospectus and is widely displayed around the school, including in classrooms, so that pupils themselves often refer to elements of the Statement when talking about the school. All staff share a strong commitment to maintaining high standards and providing a supportive learning environment for the children. Parents overwhelmingly express the view that the school is well led and managed, with 97 per cent indicating this in their questionnaire responses.
16. The strong ethos of the school is an important part of its success. The headteacher and staff lead by example and offer very positive role models for pupils. Rules and rewards are clearly understood by the children and, because they are consistently applied, pupils view them as fair. The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is the result of this very effective leadership, in turn results in the excellent attitude and very good behaviour of the pupils. This then contributes to the progress they make in their learning and in how well they achieve.
17. Teachers with responsibility for co-ordinating work in subjects have a good understanding of the strengths within their subject and of what needs to be done to improve further. The limited opportunities in the school for pupils to develop their practical skills in art, design technology and musical composition, for example, have already been identified by the subject co-ordinators. The school has also recognised and has already put in train plans to remedy the weaknesses in its current provision for information and communication technology, which is due to equipment incompatibilities. It has budgeted to upgrade its computers so that infants can benefit from increased access and all pupils can

have greater opportunities to use information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. Each year group has a leader who monitors planning to ensure equality of provision and consistency between the classes in each year. This structure also ensures that effective support is available within the staff team for newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school.

18. Spending priorities are linked well to the school improvement plan which is agreed among staff and governors. Specific grants are appropriately spent. The school's decision to invest in additional teaching and classroom support to mitigate the effects of large class sizes in the juniors has been effective. It has contributed to the very good rate of learning, and to the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, so that they achieve in line with the other children in the school. Test results are analysed and changes made in response so as ensure pupils continue to achieve their best. For example, the introduction of target-setting for individual pupils and the extension of setting to cover all infant and junior year groups were actions taken by the then headteacher and senior management team following analysis of the 2000 national test results. The school has satisfactorily adopted the principles of "*best value*" to compare how well it is doing against other schools.
19. Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They know the school well and have a very good understanding of both the strengths of the school and the challenges that the school faces to maintain standards and further improve provision for its pupils. They actively monitor the school's performance and are committed to and supportive of its continued success. They have played a key role with staff in successfully managing the changes involved in the enlargement of the school.
20. Leadership and management was judged to be very good at the time of the last inspection and that strength has been sustained both under the leadership of the previous headteacher and by the present headteacher, who has been in post since the start of the current school year. Most of the issues identified in the last inspection have been tackled well. Teaching and learning have been monitored very well and this has contributed to the improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Teachers' planning and assessment has improved, and the school has this year introduced further modifications to its assessment arrangements to better monitor how well pupils are doing, although these do not yet provide comprehensive monitoring information on the progress of different groups of pupils, such as, for example, those from different ethnic backgrounds. The changes made as a result of the decision to increase the size of the school has resolved the problem of large class sizes in the reception year. The last inspection identified the need for more opportunities for pupils to undertake problem-solving and investigative work. Although there are no opportunities for investigative work in science in Year 6, pupils are otherwise given good opportunities for independent work and problem-solving. In a geography lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils had undertaken their own research into plans for a local redevelopment site and had formulated their own questions to pose to the local Member of Parliament when he came to visit the school. Improvements to the library since the last inspection have contributed to this improvement in opportunities for pupils. The only issue that has not been fully dealt with is the need, identified in the last inspection, to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop the expressive arts and extend the multicultural aspects of the curriculum.

The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and, as a result, pupils behave very well and are keen to learn

21. The school provides very well for pupils' personal development, and this forms an important part of the school's Catholic Christian ethos as reflected in the school's Mission Statement. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, and as a result pupils get on very well with one another, behave very well and develop an exceptionally positive attitude to learning. Parents appreciate this, with 95 per cent indicating that their children like coming to school and that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Almost all parents describe behaviour as good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the school was last inspected and pupils' attitudes to learning, now excellent, have improved very considerably since the last inspection, when they were described merely as satisfactory.

22. Because religious education and collective worship were separately inspected, Ofsted inspectors did not observe religious education lessons. Nevertheless, aside from prayer, pupils are given numerous opportunities for reflection and empathy with others. In history, for example, pupils in Year 4, having previously researched the lives of Celts and Romans produced some thoughtful “letters home” from the perspective of a Celtic or Roman soldier and were able to act in character in answering questions. Pupils in a science lesson in Year 2 were awed at the success of their circuit building when, at the end of their endeavours, a bulb lit up. This literal moment of enlightenment was obviously a spiritual experience for many of the children.
23. With its foundation in Catholic doctrine, pupils are given from an early age a very firm understanding of right and wrong. From the nursery onwards they are introduced to and quickly understand the school’s rules and its system of rewards. Because rules and rewards, including merits and house points, are consistently applied throughout the school, pupils appreciate that they are fair. Teachers expect a very high standard of behaviour and pupils respond accordingly. With very good behaviour both in lessons and around the school, sanctions are rarely called upon. Pupils refer to “*loss of privilege, rather than punishment*” and there have been no exclusions over the past year. Pupils’ very good behaviour contributes to the very good progress that they make.
24. Pupils quickly learn and readily follow the school’s orderly routines, so that they settle without fuss to individual or shared tasks and there is very little calling out in lessons. In a Year 1 information and communication technology lesson (taught without recourse to any computer equipment!), pupils were set a task of working in groups to pose questions to one another on sorting of shapes and defining search criteria. Even though they were working among themselves, pupils put up their hands before answering one another’s questions. Because they develop an exceptionally positive attitude to learning, pupils are consistently attentive in lessons, work with enthusiasm and are able to sustain concentration, even in lessons that are very much longer than are usually provided for children of similar ages.
25. Pupils are given lots of opportunity to work productively in collaboration, both in pairs and in small groups, and relationships throughout the school are very good, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. Boys and girls mix, play and work well together, as do children of different abilities and those from different backgrounds, including different ethnic backgrounds, so that the school functions as a very inclusive and civilised community. Pupils are taught from an early age to treat one another with respect, and as a result they are polite, friendly and considerate. They listen carefully to one another’s contributions in lessons, which also contributes to the progress they make in their learning, and they readily offer each other help. Pupils are eager to please their teachers and keen to volunteer to help. Children of all ages happily take on classroom monitor responsibilities and older pupils take on some whole school responsibilities, such as setting up the hall for assembly. There is currently no school council, however, so pupils do not have an opportunity to develop their involvement by contributing their ideas and suggestions to the running of the school.
26. Although pupils have generally good opportunities to learn about other cultures and beliefs in religious education, geography, art and music, with the school now having a good range of musical instruments from different cultures, provision could be further improved by extending these multi-cultural opportunities. Although all of the children in the school come from Roman Catholic faith homes, the school is increasingly drawing pupils from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. More could be done to reflect and celebrate the growing range of cultures represented in the school as well as in the surrounding community.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers or do practical work

27. Although the curriculum, overall, is satisfactory, a relative weakness is in the school's provision for pupils to develop their skills in practical areas. Investigative science is undertaken by pupils in Years 1 to 5, and so National Curriculum requirements are met. In Year 6, however, science lessons are limited to revision of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject and include no practical experiments. The national tests in science at the end of Year 6 do not currently examine pupils' practical skills, so this omission has not adversely affected test results, but it does not offer pupils a sufficiently stimulating science curriculum in their final year at the school.
28. Opportunities to use information and communication technology are also too limited. This was raised as a concern by several parents. It is a weakness that the school has recognised and has agreed plans to remedy. Compatibility problems with the school's computers have meant that its computer programs for infant classes will not run on the equipment in the computer suite. As a result, infants are limited to using the computers in their own classrooms, which restricts them to working in pairs at the keyboard rather than benefiting from whole class teaching. Infants do, however, have the opportunity to use information technology other than computers. For example, pupils in Year 2 use programmable toys. Although older pupils are taught information and communication technology in the computer suite, they do not currently have enough opportunities to use computers to support their learning in other subjects. Some good examples were seen in the inspection of pupils having undertaken their own research, but, again apparently due to equipment problems, they are not currently able to use the internet for research.
29. In other subjects too, too little time is given to developing pupils' practical skills. In music, which has many strengths, including the recent introduction of a good range of instruments from different cultures, pupils do not have enough opportunity to learn and develop skills in their composition. Again, computer compatibility problems have contributed to this by preventing teachers from using composition software programs. In design technology, pupils do not have enough time to develop and construct their designs. In art, although some examples of good work were seen, standards are generally lower than might be expected because pupils do not have enough opportunity to build on and develop their practical and creative skills.
30. The school has itself already identified these weakness as part of its own evaluation of its performance. It is considering a review of the school timetable to make better use of time and find more opportunities for practical activities. Under the present timetable, many lessons are much longer than is usually found. In many other schools, infant numeracy lessons commonly run for just 45 minutes. In both the infant and junior classes, literacy and numeracy "hours" frequently extend to an hour and a quarter. Some science lessons were also very long, sometimes extending to an entire afternoon of more than two hours. Although, due to the hard work of teachers and the exceptionally positive attitude of the children, inspectors saw no evidence that time in long lessons was wasted or that pupils' attention waned, adjustments to the length of some of these sessions could free up a significant amount of teaching time to broaden the curriculum and further enrich children's education.

There is too much absence

31. Although most pupils arrive at school on time and the rate of unauthorised absence is a little better than average, attendance rates are below the national average and not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection. Although the school's attendance rate at 92.7 per cent might seem close to the national average for primary schools of 93.9 per cent, the difference is sufficient to place the school among the lowest 10 per cent of schools. Sampling of registers suggests that the most significant cause of the high rate of absence is the number of children being taken out of school by parents during term time for family holidays. It is a mark both of the effectiveness of the teaching and the enthusiasm for learning of the children, that the unsatisfactory attendance rates have not had a perceptible adverse effect on standards of attainment in the school.

32. The school awards certificates to reward pupils with 100 per cent attendance records, but opportunities are missed for better promotion of attendance. For example, although the school prospectus gives a quite detailed breakdown of the attendance figures, there are no comparisons drawn with national figures and so parents are not made sufficiently aware that the school's attendance rate is low.
33. Monitoring of attendance is also unsatisfactory. Although registers are completed diligently by teachers at the start of each session, absences are not always regularly totalled. Analysis of absence is done using a computer but this, rather clumsily, involves office staff having to manually transfer attendance data from the registers. This is not only inefficient but also introduces opportunities for transcription errors. A consequence of this laborious system is that the school is not currently able routinely to contact parents on the first day of any unexplained absence.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

34. In order to further improve the standard of education provided to pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) Broaden the curriculum offered to pupils by
 - (i) reviewing the length of some lessons to make more time available for pupils to develop their skills in art, in musical composition and in design technology construction
 - (ii) resolving the difficulties which restrict pupils access to using information and communication technology and giving pupils more opportunities to use computers to support their learning in other subjects
 - (iii) ensuring that pupils in Year 6 have opportunities to undertake investigative work in science
 - (2) Improve attendance rates by
 - (i) doing more to discourage parents from taking their children out of school during term time
 - (ii) reviewing the practice of manually transferring attendance data from registers to computer
 - (iii) ensuring that if register books are maintained, absences are regularly totalled so that absence rates can be better monitored
 - (iv) considering the introduction of a policy of contacting parents on the first day of any unexplained absence

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	9	11	12	0	0	0
Percentage	3	27	33	36	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

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)	41	509
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		49

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		140

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	42

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	92.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4

National comparative data	93.9
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	40	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	39	40
	Girls	27	29	30
	Total	65	68	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (91)	97 (91)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	40	39
	Girls	28	29	28
	Total	66	69	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (93)	99 (97)	96 (99)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	34	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	31	33
	Girls	32	29	32
	Total	65	60	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	98 (82)	91 (77)	98 (87)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	32	31	31
	Girls	30	29	27
	Total	62	60	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (75)	91 (69)	88 (67)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	14
Black – African heritage	11
Black – other	3
Indian	32
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	385
Any other minority ethnic group	60

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)	22.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	29.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	412

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	40.5
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	69
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
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	£
Total income	974,388
Total expenditure	961,380
Expenditure per pupil	1,947
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,203
Balance carried forward to next year	58,211

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	547
Number of questionnaires returned	146

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	31	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	40	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	36	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	39	13	1	1
The teaching is good.	63	35	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	43	9	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	32	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	27	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	42	48	8	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	56	41	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	44	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	32	15	5	27

(Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding)

Other issues raised by parents

Several parents raised concerns over the lack of access to information and communications technology, particularly in the infant classes.