

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brierley Hill

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103843

Headteacher: Mrs Teresa Cutler

Reporting inspector: Mrs Mary Speakman
21581

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd May 2002

Inspection number: 196199

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mill Street Brierley Hill West Midlands
Postcode:	DY5 2TH
Telephone number:	01384 818435
Fax number:	01384 818436
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr John Darley
Date of previous inspection:	7 th – 10 th July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
21581	Mrs Mary Speakman	Registered inspector
19664	Mr John Bayliss	Lay inspector
17263	Mr Andy Bond	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

*Criterion School Inspections
Juniper House
23 Abbots View
Abbotswood
Cinderford
Gloucestershire
GL14 3EG*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6-9
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10-13
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	13-14
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	14-15
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	16-19

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is situated in Brierley Hill, Dudley. Pupils are admitted from the two adjacent parishes although a few pupils come from further afield. The school serves a community that includes low cost social housing, some private housing and a site for travelling families. There are 184 pupils on roll, 104 boys and 80 girls. Twenty-four per cent of pupils are identified as having an entitlement to free school meals and 16 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register. These proportions are broadly average for a primary school. Four (two per cent) pupils have a statement of special educational needs. This is above the national average. The majority of pupils on the special educational needs register receive additional help with the learning of basic skills. Three pupils are identified as being autistic, whilst one pupil has emotional and behavioural difficulties and one has speech and communication difficulties.

Although the great majority of pupils come from a white ethnic heritage, one pupil is Indian and there are a few pupils of Turkish, Somali and Sudanese nationality. A number of pupils from travelling families attend the school. There are 16 pupils from refugee families. Five pupils, three per cent, speak English as an additional language; this is a typical proportion for a school in a metropolitan borough. Two pupils, who are in the early stages of learning English, receive additional support, as do some pupils from travelling and refugee families. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly average, but a significant number of pupils join the school in other year groups and many of these need additional support with their learning.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Mary's Primary School cares very well for all its pupils and has a strong and positive Catholic ethos. It is a good school with significant strengths. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and this enables pupils to do well. Overall, standards are above average. The leadership and management of the school are very effective. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good throughout the school and this enables pupils to achieve well.
- Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in mathematics and attain standards, at the ages of seven and eleven, that are above average.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other key staff provide very effective leadership.
- Pupils receive very good quality personal and educational support.
- Pupils' work and the progress they make are assessed very carefully. Teachers use the information they gather very well to plan for pupils' further learning.

What could be improved

- Too much time elapses between the coverage of history and geography topics in the junior department.
- Some lessons are too long to retain the pupils' interest.
- The governors' curriculum committee does not meet often enough to fulfil its role in overseeing the curriculum.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to the parents and carers of all pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a good level of improvement since its last inspection in July 1997. Detailed schemes of work that give teachers a good level of support in their planning have now been provided in all subjects. The school has devised a whole-school curricular plan, which ensures full coverage of the National Curriculum. However, in the junior department, too much time elapses between the teaching of consecutive geography and history topics to enable pupils to build consistently on the skills and knowledge they have already acquired. There are now workable systems of assessment and monitoring of progress securely in place across the whole curriculum and these are well used to inform target setting and curriculum and lesson planning. The curriculum provided for children in reception class implements national guidelines very well and provision for their physical development has been improved by the purchase of additional large apparatus. The school development plan has been revised and provides a good level of detail to support school improvement initiatives and forward planning very well.

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 ¹
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	B	A	A*
Mathematics	C	C	B	A
Science	C	D	C	B

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

In 2001, pupils' attainment in relation to all schools was above average overall. In relation to similar schools, their attainment was very high in English, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. Scores in the tests taken at the end of Key Stage 2² have risen in line with the national trend. The pupils presently in Year 6 are attaining standards, which are above average in mathematics and similar to the average in English and science. The test results at the end of Key Stage 1³ have varied over the last three years and in the tests in 2001 pupils' scores were low in reading and mathematics and very low in writing. The pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining standards considerably higher than this, being above average in English and mathematics. This shows that the school's strategies for raising standards at Key Stage 1 are beginning to have an impact. These findings are confirmed by pupils' performance in the recent national tests, which are, as yet, unvalidated. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment in science is average.

Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well. A significant number of pupils join the school during Key Stage 2 many of whom have additional learning needs and they, too, achieve well. Children in the reception class make good strides in their learning. At the end of the reception year they achieve above-average standards in mathematical development and average standards in all other areas of learning. At the end of both key stages, girls do better than boys in the national tests, although, by the age of eleven, the gap has narrowed considerably, particularly in mathematics. The school sets realistic targets for attainment in national tests at both key stages, and these are adjusted regularly to take account of pupils' pace of learning and, particularly at Key Stage 2, to take account of the attainment of pupils who join the school during this key stage.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. They respond well to the challenges they are set.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils usually behave well in class and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and pupils and adults are very positive. In the classrooms and playground pupils have a high level of regard for the effect of their actions on others.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory, although the school is doing all it can to promote better attendance levels.

¹ 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. This measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

² Key Stage 2 caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

³ Key Stage 1 caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory with the majority of teaching being good or better throughout the school. All lessons, however successful, are planned carefully, and the work pupils are required to undertake always takes careful account of their prior attainment and learning needs. As well, the better lessons are characterised by very high expectations of what pupils may achieve, a brisk teaching pace, and interesting activities. There is firm, yet friendly, classroom management and positive relationships between teachers and pupils. This does much to promote pupils' self-confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Where lessons are over long, some pupils, particularly the younger, find it difficult to sustain their concentration, or work as hard as they are expected to, in the last 15 minutes, or so, of the lesson. In the very occasional unsatisfactory lesson, although the work is very well prepared, the teacher's presentation is rushed so pupils do not listen or learn effectively as they could. The teaching of English and mathematics is good at both key stages and literacy and numeracy are developed appropriately in many subjects. Information and communication technology is used well in many subjects throughout the school and this enables pupils to acquire the expected skills and knowledge for their age. The teaching of children in reception is very well organised and provides the children with a wide and appropriate curriculum. Pupils with special and additional educational needs, and those whose speak English as an additional language, learn well because they are given a good level of support and work that is well suited to their particular needs. Overall, pupils learn at a good rate, they usually give of their best, take considerable pride in their work, and produce a good quantity of well-presented, accurate and thoughtful work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall, however, the provision for ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils is very good. The school's curriculum is broad and offers a wide range of worthwhile opportunities, which are further enhanced by many additional activities out of school hours. There is good quality provision for English and mathematics.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils receive carefully planned support from teachers and support staff. Arrangements for assessment ensure that pupils' needs are identified accurately and that they are set appropriate targets for their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is good support provided for the small number of pupils who need it. The majority have similar skills in English to their classmates and make the same amount of progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. This provision makes a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and values. Prayer is a regular and relevant part of pupils' everyday experience. All staff promote care and respect of others and set high standards of behaviour. Provision for pupils' cultural development is effective.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school and there are comprehensive procedures in place for child protection and pupils' personal and educational support.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives the school very effective leadership and is well supported by a capable deputy headteacher. The school is managed very well, with clear educational direction. Subject co-ordinators know what needs to be done to further improve provision in their subjects. They provide a high degree of support for their colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors know the school well and have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are appropriately involved in the school's planning for improvements. There are very efficient systems in place for the control of financial matters. However, oversight of curriculum development is not managed as effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school's management has a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve further. Plans for improvements are detailed, the action taken is appropriate and development takes place rapidly.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Resources are used very effectively to support the school's priorities of development. The budget that has accumulated is being used appropriately in view of uncertainties in the number of pupils on roll in the future.

The headteacher and governors have a very good understanding of the principles of best value. The school has very thorough procedures in place to compare its performance with others and to get best value from its development initiatives and expenditure.

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.• They would feel comfortable with approaching the school with questions or problems.• The school has high expectations of its pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few parents thought the school could work more closely with parents.

Sixteen parents attended the meeting with inspectors and 35 returned questionnaires. Parents hold St. Mary's school in very high regard. The inspection team supports their positive views. In their responses to the questionnaire responses a few parents indicated that they thought the school could work more closely with parents. However, parents at the meeting with inspectors, and in discussion with inspectors during the inspection, were very positive about the school's links with parents. The inspectors consider that the school has good links with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Teaching is good throughout the school and this enables pupils to achieve well.

1. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. A higher proportion is now very good or excellent and there is a smaller proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching throughout the school is good. It is at least satisfactory in nearly all lessons and good or better in over three-quarters of lessons, with a quarter of those being very good or excellent. Only the very occasional lesson is unsatisfactory.
2. Throughout the school, all lessons are carefully planned. The purpose of the lesson is identified precisely and this is always shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. Towards the end of the lesson, a brief discussion takes place to enable pupils to reflect on how much they have learnt. In addition, some teachers then outline to the class what they can expect to learn next. This is effective in enabling pupils to develop an appreciation of how much progress they are making. A feature of all lessons is the provision of an interesting range of activities that are always matched well to the learning needs of the pupils. This enables less able pupils to work with confidence and to make progress in their learning and for the more able to be suitably challenged. Work plans for pupils who receive additional support are detailed and appropriate. This means that support staff are clear about what the pupils need to do and provide them with a good level of additional help and encouragement.
3. Another common feature of the most successful lesson is the stimulating and expressive style of teaching. Lessons start very promptly and the pace of teaching is brisk, there are high expectations of pupils' ability to work hard and concentrate well. Teachers are usually well rewarded by their pupils' efforts. In a very effective science lesson seen in Year 1, pupils were learning about how sound travels. The teacher set a very positive atmosphere at the start of the lesson and all the pupils were very keen to listen. The teacher's management of the class was friendly, yet firm. She would not allow any distraction from the task in hand. The pupils listened most attentively and the teacher listened carefully to their comments. Each pupil's contribution was valued, without the class losing the purpose of the lesson. Pupils were required to undertake a variety of investigative activities, which consolidated and extended their understanding of how sound travels. All the groups worked very hard, co-operating well with their classmates. This enabled the teacher to provide additional support and challenge where it was needed. She set the pupils time limits for completion of their tasks. These were illustrated by the use of a large egg timer and this promoted a useful sense of urgency. By the end of the lesson, all pupils had been given opportunities to predict how efficiently they thought sound would travel through a variety of objects. They tested their hypothesis and were able to reflect on whether they had been right or not. They were able to give reasons for their findings, such as 'I think the paper trumpet worked best because it is like a tube and it lets the sound go through easily'.
4. The quality of teaching for the oldest pupils is of a very high standard. Very careful planning of lessons is realised in pacy, interesting teaching. High expectations of pupils' understanding are well demonstrated by the teachers' use of language and the pace at which lessons move. The technical language linked to the subject is always used, and the pupils are quick to learn and use new terminology. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 6, pupils were learning how to use language to promote their points of view and ideas. In discussion, the teacher used the terms, 'superlative' and 'imperative', and the pupils very swiftly remembered what these words meant. They used them quite naturally in their class discussions and later when talking about the quality of their work with the teacher. Teachers' questioning is targeted to ensure that all pupils are involved. Marking is helpful and gives the pupils very specific targets for improvement. The lively and confident teaching, the high quality of support within the classroom, and the very careful lesson planning, ensure that pupils of all abilities are challenged to learn and achieve very well.

5. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good throughout the school. Teachers have a high level of expertise and teach with confidence and authority. They plan carefully and there are good links made with literacy and numeracy in other subjects. For example, in a design and technology lesson in Year 3, pupils were constructing sandwiches and the teacher took the opportunity to highlight the mathematics of fractions when they discussed the cutting of the sandwich into halves and quarters, and so on. In all lessons, teachers identify the key, subject-specific language. This is displayed, referred to and reinforced throughout the lessons, with pupils becoming increasingly confident in using such language. For example, in Year 2, pupils learn to use mathematical terminology during their 'mental maths' session, learning using terms such as digit and partitioning. In all subjects the teachers always use the correct terminology and ensure that the pupils do so.

Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in mathematics and attain standards, at the ages of seven and eleven, that are above average.

6. Pupils make good progress in mathematics because the quality of teaching, particularly teachers' level of subject expertise and the leadership and management of the subject have enabled all pupils, including the children in reception, to achieve well in mathematics. The arrangements for placing pupils in Key Stage 2 in sets, according to their ability, work well. This ensures more able pupils from all year groups are challenged to do their best and the less able receive the additional help and consolidation of skills and knowledge that they need. Standards seen in the school during the inspection were above average and these findings are confirmed by the results of the most recent national tests taken by the pupils currently in Years 2 and 6.
7. Children are given a positive start to their mathematical development in the reception class. Every opportunity is taken by the staff to teach mathematical ideas. For example, during registration, by discussing the days of the week, and how many children are in class. Children enjoy taking part in such singing games as 'Solomon Grundy' and 'The Grand Old Duke of York', which help them to consolidate their understanding of number as well as being fun to sing. Children count confidently up to 20. Some can count with understanding beyond that. When they count down from 20, they have to concentrate just that little bit harder. Older, more able children are able to count up and down in tens to 40 and are beginning to understand place value of tens and units. By the end of their time in reception, children are able to write number symbols clearly and some are recording simple addition problems.
8. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are reaching at least the expected level in mathematics and many are doing better. Most pupils are competent in adding and subtracting tens and units and in simple multiplication and division. They recognise fractions and understand the relationship between halves and quarters. They are able to work with shapes, recognising those that are symmetrical and are able to recognise right angles. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show a secure understanding of the four rules of number, both in their written work and mental calculation. The more able are attaining above the level expected and they work with very large numbers accurately. The majority of pupils have a good understanding of positive and negative numbers. They plot points on a graph covering all four quadrants. They have a good understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes, and are able to construct regular shapes, such as triangles, using compasses. All pupils achieve well and accomplish a considerable volume of work that is well presented. Pupils with special and additional educational needs make good progress because the work they are given is adapted for their learning needs and ensures that they cover the same mathematical ideas as those who are more able, although at a less complex level. These pupils receive good support from staff. For example, when pupils in Years 4 and 5 were learning about percentages and their equivalent fractions, the most able were required to work mentally at quite complex problems, using percentages and fractions, whilst those who found this task difficult worked with more familiar quantities such as 50 per cent, and halves, and had a number square to help them.
9. One of the key strengths in the school's approach to the teaching of mathematics is that regular opportunities are provided for pupils in all year groups to undertake problem-solving activities,

which give them the chance to apply their mathematical understanding. The subject is taught with confidence, expertise and pace, and staff are well supported by an effective and analytical mathematics co-ordinator and experienced support staff.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other key staff provide very effective leadership.

10. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher gives very strong and energetic leadership. She works in close and productive partnerships with the deputy headteacher, staff, and governing body. The headteacher has a realistic view of what needs to be done to promote further improvements and governors and staff share this. The school is committed to providing an education within a caring Christian setting and in this it is most successful. The strong Christian ethos is very evident in the daily life of the school and well promoted by all the staff. There is a most positive atmosphere within the school and a strong sense of a school community working with a common purpose to improve the quality of education and raise standards further.
11. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has worked energetically to respond to the requirements of the key issues and this has been successfully accomplished. So much so, that what was considered to be a major weakness, that is the procedures for assessing pupils' progress in the non-core subjects⁴, is now, with other aspects of assessment, a considerable strength. The school development plan is much improved and now provides clear proposals for further improvement and the impact that such actions should have on the provision in the school.
12. The co-ordinators of the key subjects of English, mathematics and science provide strong leadership in their areas of responsibility. They all have a thorough understanding of what is required, offer a good level of support for their colleagues, have a realistic view of the standards in their subjects and know what needs to be done next to improve provision and standards further. The two special educational needs co-ordinators work together in close and effective partnership and know the pupils well. They lead and manage a good range of systems to ensure that, within all classes, pupils with various additional needs are provided with appropriate work and are well supported.
13. The support given to pupils who have special educational needs and those who are in the earlier stages of learning English is most effective. This enables them to make good progress towards their individual goals and have full access to the curriculum. One of the strengths of this provision is that as well as formal monitoring of progress, a considerable amount of informal discussion goes on, before and after lessons, about the needs and achievements of these pupils. The staff know all the pupils extremely well and take great pride in their progress.

Pupils receive very good quality personal and educational support.

14. This is a very caring school that looks after its pupils very well and enables pupils to feel safe, and happy. Within this secure environment, pupils are able to work hard and fulfil their potential.
15. The oldest pupils have very positive perceptions of the school, feel it has served them well and their parents share these views.
16. There are very effective procedures in place for child protection and all staff are alert to any concerns on which they may need to act. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and has undertaken appropriate training. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Pupils understand the school rules, which are displayed in their classrooms, and are clear about what is expected of them. Teachers exercise discipline in a firm and consistent manner, consequently pupils' behaviour, both in and out of classrooms, is generally good. When anti-social incidents occur they are dealt with appropriately and pupils perceive the school's systems of sanctions and rewards to be fair.

⁴ The non-core subjects are all subjects, other than English, mathematics and science.

17. Although pupils' attendance is below the national average and, therefore, unsatisfactory, the school has good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting attendance and is doing all that can be expected to promote and improve attendance levels. A few families who live permanently in the parish have a somewhat relaxed attitude towards school attendance but the school pursues poor attendance rigorously. Children from travellers' families attend the school regularly, when they are living locally, and the school keeps these pupils on the register when they are travelling, if they are expected to return to the local site.
18. Pupils who require additional help with their learning are provided for well. The use of additional support in classrooms is well organised, staff are well-prepared and able to support and encourage pupils' learning effectively. For example, in an effective literacy lesson in Year 2, the support assistant worked with a less able group that included pupils with special and additional learning needs. The pupils were required to work together to plan a story with a school setting. The pupils worked together with the assistant, giving lots of interesting suggestions and gaining confidence from the fact that this was a shared activity. They had good opportunities to extend their vocabulary and to improve their writing skills.
19. Teachers have good strategies for promoting and monitoring pupils' personal development. From the time that children start school, they are encouraged to develop their social skills and take responsibility for their own belongings and consider the needs of others. In reception, the youngest children show concern for each other's well being in a manner that is most impressive. One boy was seen apologising profusely to another because he had accidentally knocked against him when clearing up. Children in reception co-operate well for their age, share activities and equipment and understand that they are expected to clear up at the end of the session. These caring attitudes continue to be emphasised, as pupils get older. They are encouraged to take on responsibilities and show initiative both in lessons and in the daily life of the school.

Pupils' work and the progress they make are assessed very carefully. Teachers use the information they gather very well to plan for pupils' further learning.

20. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress as they move through the school is of a very high quality. Children are assessed during their first term in school and the findings from these assessments are used as a starting point against which progress is measured as they move through the school. Throughout the school, pupils are assessed in all aspects of English, mathematics and science and staff are very skilful in assessing accurately the level their pupils are attaining. Pupils' progress in all other subjects is monitored through classroom observation and scrutiny of their work. Records of pupils' progress are updated regularly, and teachers identify where a pupil's rate of progress or attainment is given cause for concern. Teachers analyse pupils' performance in the national tests and use this to identify any patterns in the gaps in pupils' understanding. This detailed analysis of pupils' progress enables teachers to project likely scores in National Curriculum tests, and the information feeds into the school's overall plans for improvements. The marking of pupils' work is very thorough and identifies what pupils have done well and makes suggestions to enable further improvement. Comments are precise and suggest short-term targets for improvement. Teachers set pupils longer-term targets in English and mathematics, but these are not shared with the pupils. Informal monitoring during lessons helps staff to adjust their planning on a daily basis. Parents at the meeting with inspectors commented that they were very surprised by the extent of teachers' detailed and precise knowledge of how well their children were learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Too much time elapses between the coverage of history and geography topics in the junior department.

21. The findings of the last inspection required the school to devise a whole-school curriculum plan. The school has accomplished this and there is now a plan in place that ensures that all National Curriculum subjects are covered and the time allocated over the year to each subject is reasonable. However, too much time elapses between the coverage of history and geography topics within the year. For example, in Year 4, pupils study no history from September to February

of the school year. In Year 6, pupils study no geography from September to April in the school year. Pupils, therefore, are not able to build on skills they have acquired earlier, as effectively as they might, because they are not having more regular practice in, for example, map-reading activities in geography, or research or evaluating evidence activities in history.

Some lessons are too long to retain the pupils' interest.

22. At both Key Stages 1 and 2, some lessons are taught in sessions that last for well over an hour and are far too long for pupils to sustain their interest and concentration throughout the lesson. This is particularly the case during the afternoon.
23. Sometimes, lessons that are effective overall, start off very well indeed, but the pace of lesson and the pupils' ability to concentrate and continue to learn effectively flags in the last 15 or 20 minutes, or so, of the lesson.
24. In an effective design and technology lesson, the pupils learnt how to make sandwiches. They discussed, at length, the health and hygiene issues connected with food handling, considered methods of making sandwiches, made the sandwiches efficiently, and discussed with the teacher the measure of their success. At this point the pupils had made very good progress in fulfilling the objectives of the lesson. They had worked hard and co-operated well, but after an hour of working very hard, energy was, quite naturally, flagging. However, there was still 15 minutes left until the end of the lesson. The teacher had prepared a writing task, which, although it linked well with the lesson, would have been more effectively used in a separate lesson when it could be dealt with at greater length and when pupils were fresh.

The governors' curriculum committee does not meet often enough to fulfil its role in overseeing the curriculum.

25. At the time of the last inspection the governors were judged to be effectively involved in the life and work of the school. Overall, this is still the case and there are particular strengths in the systems that are in place for monitoring and overseeing financial aspects of school management. The governors and headteacher have a very thorough understanding of how to use the principles of best value to assess the effectiveness of actions they have taken. However, although governors have a reasonable overview and understanding of the curriculum provision, best use is not made of the curriculum committee to deal with associated issues efficiently. The curriculum committee meets too infrequently to take a lead in overseeing curriculum matters on behalf of the whole governing body. Although there is a reasonable level of informal monitoring, and general understanding of the school's curriculum provision, this interest and expertise needs to be harnessed more efficiently.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

26. The governors, in partnership with the headteacher and staff, should ensure that:
 - θ Pupils build consistently on skills and knowledge they have acquired earlier the school by:
 - providing more regular and frequent learning opportunities in geography and history. (*Paragraph 21*)
 - θ Pupils' pace of learning and interest is maintained throughout the day the school by:
 - changing the school's timetable arrangements, particularly in the afternoon, through reducing the lengths of some lessons so that better use is made of the time available. (*Paragraphs 22 to 24*)
 - θ The governors' curriculum committee operates as an efficient element of the governing body by:

- defining closely the curriculum committee's function in overseeing the school's curriculum provision;
- acquiring a more precise understanding of curriculum developments taking place in the school;
- ensuring that the whole governing body has sufficient information about curriculum development to be able to play a more analytical part in monitoring and evaluating the school's curriculum provision. (*Paragraph 25*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

19

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	3	10	3	1	0	0
Percentage	10	16	53	16	5	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 five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	184
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	44
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	30
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	15	12	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	12	15
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	23	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (90)	78 (86)	89 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	13
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	22	24	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (90)	89 (90)	78 (93)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	12	19	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	18	17	18
	Total	27	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (82)	87 (75)	94 (82)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	24	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (71)	81 (75)	81 (82)
	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	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	6
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	154
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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	1	
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)	8.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	124

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	427,505
Total expenditure	442,768
Expenditure per pupil	2,406
Balance brought forward from previous year	52,450
Balance carried forward to next year	30,089

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.5

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	184
Number of questionnaires returned	35
Percentage of questionnaires returned	19

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	29	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	31	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	40	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	51	11	0	0
The teaching is good.	51	46	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	26	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	17	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	34	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	60	26	11	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	63	34	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	43	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	46	3	0	3