

INSPECTION REPORT

St Austin's Catholic School

Aigburth

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104643

Headteacher: Mr N O'Neill

Reporting inspector: Mr K Cassidy
14848

Dates of inspection: 12th to 13th June 2000

Inspection number: 196644

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Saint Austin's Catholic Primary School Riverbank Road Liverpool
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend J Price O.S.B.
Date of previous inspection:	16 th to 20 th September 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Saint Austin's Catholic Primary School is situated in Grassendale, a suburb of Liverpool. It is a very much larger primary school than nationally, and serves the parishes of Saint Austin and Saint Bernadette, but also admits pupils from elsewhere. There are 493 pupils on roll, in 17 classes, with 62 pupils in the reception classes, of whom 17 are under five. The attainment on entry is average to above average. Compared nationally, the number of pupils with special educational needs, forty-eight, is low. There is a small proportion, of six pupils, who have statements of special educational needs. There are few children from ethnic minority backgrounds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school indeed, which achieves high standards when compared nationally. In turn, the school also is skilful in helping pupils' of all abilities to reach standards in line with their abilities, and is determined to stretch pupils to achieve even higher standards. The teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and now the overall quality is good, while the percentage of very good teaching has increased. There is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching and the teaching of children under five is now consistently good. Clear leadership impacts very positively on the standards achieved. The behaviour of the pupils is excellent, and throughout the school, the pupils are extremely highly motivated learners. They concentrate, work hard to succeed, and respond very well to the challenges the teachers set. Their listening abilities are particularly well developed, and their good speaking skills enable them to contribute fully to class discussions.

In management, there is some need to continue to improve the effectiveness of linking school development planning to the immediate and medium term priorities. Taking into account the high standards achieved, the income received, and the high quality of education provided, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- There are high standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- The attitudes values and personal development of the pupils are very clear strengths of the school.
- Teaching overall is good, and at times very good, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- The curriculum provides very well for all pupils.
- The school has very well established policies and practices for pupils' welfare, child protection and health and safety.
- The parents, work very well with the school, are extremely supportive, and express a consistently high level of satisfaction with all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher, with the support of his deputy, gives clear leadership to the school.

What could be improved

- Planning for school improvement has moved on, but there remains room for further improvement.
- There is need to build upon the progress made in information and communications technology, to implement fully, the clear plans for improvement.

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 previously inspected in September 1996, and found to be a good school, but with some key issues for improvement. Since then all these key issues have been addressed, although there remains one area for improvement, which although begun, has yet to be consolidated. This is the need to link school development planning to the immediate and medium term financial planning. Much more positively, there have been particular improvements in the curriculum provided; the teaching strategies for the pupils under five; the quality of teaching throughout the school; the teachers' planning; and the monitoring of classroom practice. The punctuality of the pupils is also an area where there has been a change for the better, since 1996.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A*	A	A	A*
mathematics	A	A	A*	A*
science	B	A	A	A*

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The latest end of key stage test results, and teacher assessments, in English, mathematics and science, indicate continuing high standards throughout the school. There has been particular improvement, in standards in these subjects since the inspection in September 1996. The achievements of the children under five have also shown a considerable improvement, since the previous inspection.

The comparative grades in the table for 11 year olds shown above, indicate an overall improvement in standards over the last three years. These standards at Key Stage 2, build very well upon the high standards already achieved at Key Stage 1. The grade A* means that the school's performance is in the highest 5% nationally, and the 1999 results are very impressive indeed.

The present inspection confirms the high standards achieved in English, mathematics, and science. The quality of the work in speaking, listening, reading, writing and numeracy contribute significantly to the pupils' attainment in other subjects. In science the clear focus on experimental and investigative tasks, supports the pupils' achievements very well. Standards in information and communications technology are at times good, but these standards not consistent throughout the school. The school wisely is targeting this subject as an area for development, to raise whole-school achievement, in the subject.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the pupils is excellent.
Personal development and relationships	Very good.
Attendance	Good.

The pupils' excellent attitudes to school are especially evident, in their happiness, their motivation to succeed, their diligence, and in their responses to meet the high intellectual challenges set. The behaviour of the pupils is also excellent, in classes, in the playground and around the school. The personal development of the pupils is very good. The staff are justly proud of the high standards of the pupils' personal development, and the extremely high quality of positive relationships existing in the school. The attendance rates are good when compared nationally.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

It is quite clear that the teachers do their jobs very well indeed. They are confident, very effective, at moving the pupils on in their learning, and have well developed knowledge of the subjects they teach. They have high expectations, and are determined to stretch and challenge individual pupils of all abilities, to extend their learning. The parents are particularly pleased with the ways in which their children are taught, at Saint Austin's.

The monitoring of teaching and planning, provides staff with clear guidance, about their teaching, and gives helpful professional advice for improvement. In the years since the 1996 inspection, these two areas have shown significant improvement. The good quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science contributes significantly to the high standards the pupils achieve. The work provided is aimed well at building on what pupils have already achieved, enabling them to make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum, provides very well for all pupils, and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. It is particularly strong in English, mathematics and science, but is also broad.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for the pupils' with special educational needs is a strength of the school, and fully complies with the special educational needs Code of Practice.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils are very good. Cultural development is good overall, with particular attention paid to the cultural traditions of this country.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils, who are treated as individuals.

The core curriculum of English, mathematics and science is emphasised for all pupils to achieve higher standards. The rest of the curriculum remains broad, and the school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The wide range of extra curricular and other activities provided, are real strengths. These together with the strong links forged with outside support agencies, such as the Park Rangers, add significant dimensions of extra quality to the curriculum offered.

A further particular strength is the provision for the pupils' with special educational needs, which supports the pupils' learning. The school complies fully with the requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice. All teachers and support staff work closely with the coordinator for special educational needs and have a caring and sensitive approach when teaching. The early identification of learning needs are properly considered with regular advice from professional support agencies. There is good quality planning with careful, and clear short-term achievable targets. Progress is carefully monitored and records well kept. The parents are fully involved in reviews, and are kept informed when changes occur.

The provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils is very good, and contributes significantly to the pupils' rounded development as individuals. Cultural development is good overall, with particular attention paid to the cultural traditions of this country, supported by a range of visits. More could be done, however, to reflect the cultural diversity of our society. The staff care very well for the pupils, who are treated as individuals. The quality of care is very clear in the daily life of the school, and through the very well established policies and practices for pupils' welfare, child protection, and health and safety.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership contributes fully to its vibrant Christian ethos, which results in an excellent climate for learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body takes its responsibilities seriously, and fulfils its statutory requirements well. It is supportive, and contributes effectively to the high quality of the education provided.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is a good area and is developing. It is a particular improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher has a vision of whole staff ownership of the curriculum provided, and the evaluation of its effectiveness.
The strategic use of resources	The school is effective in providing best value principles, in particular through the strategic management and best use of available resources.

There is good humoured, confident, and professional leadership provided by the headteacher, well supported by his deputy. The aims of the school are communicated through a very simple, but powerful mission statement, and school motto, "*Laborare est orare.*" The staff and pupils take the motto very much to heart, and there is a clear picture of *working and praying* together daily, which helps constitute what is the exceptional spirit of Saint Austin's.

The school human resources include an experienced range of teaching and non-teaching staff, whose expertise is used wisely and efficiently, within an effective team. There is also an impressive range of material resources, which are well used strategically. Recent spending on resources has improved those available for information and communications technology, literacy and numeracy. Special care has been taken to apply the best value principles, to the school's management and use of resources, which impacts positively on the pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>The overwhelming majority of the parents at their meeting, and in written responses are pleased with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standards which the school achieves. • Extra curricular activities, and visits which enhance the curriculum offered. • How the school helps pupils of <i>all abilities</i> to reach their full potential, with the more able being stretched. • The pastoral support given for school or home difficulties, and the prompt response to any concerns. • The encouragement given to the pupils to be mannerly, tolerant and genuinely care for each other. • The excellent levels of behaviour. • The very good links with parents, and the homework given. • The all- round improvements in the school over the past two to three years. 	<p>A very small minority in written responses added the following comments relating to improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emphasis on results in the basic subjects, at times, adversely affects other subject provision. • In some classes reading books are not always changed when necessary, and no reading cards given to help parental support. • Homework in some classes is not consistent. • Classes in some age groups are too large.

The inspection team agrees entirely with the overwhelmingly positive nature of parental comments. The emphasis on the basic subjects is common in schools, following the implementation and impact of the literacy and numeracy strategies. There is insufficient evidence to judge whether reading books in some classes are not always changed when necessary, or whether reading cards are effectively given to help parental support at home. There is a homework policy, about which the vast majority of parents are pleased. The size of classes is a matter for the governing body to decide, and parents have the right to have their views heard at the Annual General Meeting with the governors. Parents are encouraged to raise any particular concerns with the headteacher.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

There are high standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.

1. The 1999 end of key stage test results and assessments, in English, mathematics and science, show continuing high standards, throughout the school. They represent particular improvement since the inspection in 1996. The very impressive standards at Key Stage 2, especially in the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5, are built very well upon the high standards already achieved at Key Stage 1. The well organised setting arrangements at Key Stage 2, which ensure that smaller groups are targeted, with specially focused, and individual work, are very effective indeed. Saint Austin's is dedicated to continuing to achieve high standards year by year. Hence, it is very fitting that the expectation of the school is that the results for the year 2000 will show even further improvement.
2. While in the previous inspection, there was some criticism of the curriculum for the children under five, the real improvements made since then are now quite clear. The present curriculum provides very well for the all-round development of these young children. This is well demonstrated in their maturing, and developing personal and social skills. For example, they are able to select, use and tidy away resources in the classroom well, and show good understanding of the school routines. They can express themselves clearly, asking for help when needed. Many are beginning to read independently, recognise and use numbers to ten, or more, and that they can add and subtract small numbers. These achievements by the time the children are five, bear witness to the advances made by the school.
3. Standards in reading are very high throughout the school. The pupils read widely and enthusiastically for their own interest and for pleasure. They read with increasing fluency, expression, understanding, and use a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. Pupils write well in a wide range of literary forms, including letters, stories, descriptions, poems and factual reports. In Year 2, pupils discussing descriptive writing with their teacher suggested alternative words for *dark*, such as *dull*, *dreary* or *pitch black*. Pupils in Year 6 showed a particular understanding of the use of rhyme, rhythm, simile and metaphor in poetry. They made clear and thoughtful comments about the poet's choice of words to create poetic effects. A particularly clear example of this, was when a pupil was pressed by his teacher, to give an opinion why the poet had used some Latin words and phrases in "The Animal Carol." The very thoughtful and imaginative response was, "*All animals have their own language, and the poet is trying to show this by using a foreign language.*" The pupils speaking and listening skills are very good, and the teachers provide many formal and informal opportunities for these skills to develop.
4. The numeracy hour is well established, and is contributing to the high standards achieved. Pupils in Year 6 show confidence with percentages, can apply their knowledge of mathematics to solve problems, and can calculate accurately and efficiently. They can explain how they use mental methods, such as rounding, and subtraction to help them work out the cost of goods. Younger pupils, at Key Stage 1, accurately use terms such as *digit*, *plus*, *divide* and *remainder*. They understand the value of different coins and use this knowledge well to work out shopping bills.
5. The pupils cover a wide range of topics in science and achieve well in experimental and investigative tasks, for example at Year 2 in work on mini beasts. Pupils in Year 6, investigating the swing of a pendulum, were keen to carry out tests and to compare their results with their predictions. These older pupils were very keen to learn of the findings of Galileo, in order to compare them with their own. The work throughout the school shows a developing understanding of the concept that tests must be fair, if they are to produce valid results.

The attitudes values and personal development of the pupils are very clear strengths of the school.

6. Throughout the school, the pupils have excellent attitudes, and are extremely highly motivated learners. They work hard to succeed, respond very well to the high challenges set, and show considerable concentration and interest throughout lessons. For example, when writing imaginative stories, the majority of a Year 2 class became so involved in their work, that they were very disappointed when told it was time to finish, as they wanted to continue. A pupil remarked, *“Oh, Miss, can’t we go on?”* The oldest pupils take great care, and pride in performing their duties as prefects and monitors. They are extremely diligent, and are eager to explain how much they appreciate the increased freedom given to Year 6, saying proudly, *“The teachers treat us as grown up, and treat all of us, as special.”* These pupils show great pride, and care when acting as reading ‘buddies’ for the younger children.
7. This special care for others is very well reflected in the quality, sensitivity and insight, with which the names of loved ones, and prayers for families and friends, are specially written in the “Millennium Book of Remembrance.” For example, a Year 6 pupil movingly wrote, *“We pray that this Millennium is filled with peace and good will, not with fears, wars and regrets.”*
8. The pupils are keen to talk about the school and its achievements, and proclaim how proud they are to represent the school in sporting activities and musical festivals. Many pupils are very involved in the wide range of extra curricular activities offered, including musical, sporting and other activities. A very good example of this is the large number of pupils who take part vigorously in the voluntary early morning fitness training.
9. The behaviour of the pupils in the classrooms and around the school is excellent. The pupils show a developed awareness, and understanding of the agreed rules, and fully know the consequences of disobeying them. A dinner supervisor remarked that in sixteen years she had, *“never had to refer a pupil to the headteacher, for being naughty.”* The headteacher, in turn, confirmed that no child had been sent to him this academic year, remarking, *“I don’t remember the last time a child was sent to me for misbehaving”*
10. The staff respect the pupils, and make them feel that their work and contributions to school life are highly valued. A remark by pupil in Year 5 that, *“The teachers are good and kind and help you. They give you a fair chance to play something, or do something, even if you’re not good at it,”* completely affirms the positive attitudes pupils have to their teachers, and to school life in general.

Teaching overall is good, and at times very good, particularly in English, mathematics and science.

11. The teachers do their jobs very well indeed. Their teaching of English, mathematics and science, in particular, contributes significantly to the high standards the pupils achieve throughout the school, and the curriculum. Teachers are always busy, confident, and have a well developed knowledge of the subjects they teach. They are determined to stretch and challenge the pupils, whatever their ability, as individuals, to extend their learning. In lessons, all these aspects of the teachers’ professionalism stand out. The pupils are comfortable in the knowledge, that they can easily approach their teacher for any help needed.
12. The monitoring of teaching and planning provides staff with clear guidance on the quality of what is taught, and helpful professional advice for improvement. Since the last inspection, there has been a very considerable improvement in the teachers’ planning, and the clarity of what the pupils are expected to achieve shines through. Lesson aims are frequently shared with pupils, or written on the board to support the learning. The teachers manage the pupils very effectively, and this impacts very positively upon the learning.

13. Since the 1996 inspection, standards of teaching have risen, throughout the school. The overall quality of teaching is good, and the percentage of very good teaching has increased. There is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of the youngest children under five is now consistently good. Here, the teachers listen closely and respond constructively to the children's comments. This encourages the children to express their ideas and to speak confidently. During a discussion with the whole class about holidays, the children were very willing to explain where they would like to stay and why.
14. At Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching is good overall and is sometimes very good or excellent. The teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and much of the planned work provides high levels of intellectual stimulus. Pupils in Year 2 responded by concentrating hard when carrying out calculations involving both multiplication and addition and the use of brackets. Work is well planned to build on what different pupils have already learnt. This appropriate challenge fosters positive attitudes to learning and enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress.
15. The teachers' explain new work very clearly, building on what the pupils already know, moving on briskly to make pupils think, and succeed. In Year 6 the pupils were challenged by their teacher to finish an oral, *round the class*, mental test in a record time. This involved the use of mental problem cards, well designed by the teacher, to stretch all the pupils in the class. The pupils' smiling faces demonstrated very appropriately the delight they felt when they not only finished the test, but also shattered their previous record time score.
16. Where teachers recap on the learning objective at the end of the lesson, it helps well to consolidate new learning, enabling the pupils to gauge their own progress. Teachers use a range of successful strategies to boost the pupils' self-esteem, and foster in them positive attitudes towards learning. Good work is regularly celebrated at the end of lessons, pupils' comments are valued, and mistakes are used positively to move learning forward. When a young pupil wrote a number in the wrong column on a white board, the teacher was quick to praise him for writing the number 6 the correct way round, and then involved the class sensitively in helping him complete the task correctly.

The curriculum provides very well for all pupils.

17. While the core curriculum of English, mathematics and science is emphasised for all pupils to achieve high standards, the rest of the curriculum remains suitably broad. It is considerably enriched and complemented by the wide range of extra curricular, and other activities provided, where there are high standards achieved, for example, by the choir, the orchestra, and in sports. An example of their sporting prowess is that both the older and younger teams have just become City champions in gymnastics. These activities together with the strong links forged with outside support agencies, add a significant dimension of extra quality to the curriculum offered. An excellent example of these successful links, is the very special and productive work done alongside the Park Rangers to improve the school grounds, for the wider curriculum to be developed.
18. The spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils is a significant strength of the school. In assemblies at both key stages, the pupils are provided with real opportunities to reflect, spiritually, morally and socially, for example with the idea of life as a continuous process. They are shown school life as being part of a bridge, across which everyone needs to proceed, in order to move on in life. This is not always easy, but with determination, and thoughtfulness for others, success will follow. Following the assembly, the school chaplain linked well its content with Easter, and new life. Cultural development is good overall, with particular attention paid to the cultural traditions of this country, but more could be done to reflect the cultural diversity of our society

19. The provision for the pupils' with special educational needs is a strength of the school, and is particularly supportive to the pupils' learning. The available support is very well deployed, both in helping stated pupils, and also in supporting others in class who need an extra push in lessons. There is a caring and sensitive approach, and the early identification of learning needs is properly considered with regular advice from professional support agencies. The teachers and other staff know exactly what they are doing, and set clear short-term individual targets for the pupils, whose progress is carefully checked, with all records well up to date. The parents are kept informed, and properly consulted when any changes occur.

The school has very well established policies and practices for pupils' welfare, child protection and health and safety.

20. The school cares very well for its pupils, who are treated as individuals. It has very well established policies and practices for pupils' welfare, child protection and for health and safety, which are fully understood by all staff, and are effective in providing a safe environment for the pupils. The positive links with the professional support agencies make a good contribution to the pupils' welfare.
21. The induction procedures for the youngest pupils are very effective. They are welcomed to the school, and encouraged to settle into their new routines with the minimum of fuss or delay. The school works hard to ensure that individual requirements are effectively developed. This is considerably enhanced in the manner in which the teachers know the pupils well and are alert to their needs. There is good provision for pupils who might need extra help with their learning. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson the teacher took great care to ensure that a higher achieving group, was given sufficiently demanding work. A further example of this care was the additional help and support provided for a newcomer to the school, who had been involved in a serious accident. This was done sensitively and in partnership with the parents, which ensured that the pupil did not miss any important aspects of learning.
22. The school has developed a range of informative data, which is well utilised to target exactly what the pupils can do and to set realistic and challenging objectives for overall improvement. The procedures for promoting good attendance and behaviour are first-class. They have succeeded in reducing lateness, which was a key issue in the 1996 inspection, to insignificant levels.

The parents, work very well with the school, are extremely supportive, and express a consistently high level of satisfaction with all aspects of school life.

23. The overwhelming majority at the parents' meeting, and in their written responses, are pleased with, the standards achieved, the extra curricular activities offered, and the visits which serve to enhance the curriculum offered. They recognise that the school helps pupils of *all abilities* to reach their full potential. Certainly they acknowledge with special gratitude, the high quality of pastoral support available for school, or home difficulties, and the prompt response to any of their concerns. For example, a parent remarked, *They bend over backwards here to help, and couldn't do any more if they tried.* They appreciate the encouragement given to the pupils to be so well behaved, mannerly, tolerant and genuinely to care for each other. There are obviously very good links, and a really productive partnership with parents. The parents are keen to point out the quality of the all-round improvements in the school over the past two to three years.
24. The school has a particularly effective "Parent School Partnership" course, which enables the parents to understand how literacy and other curriculum areas are taught. Consequently, many parents have become very effective helpers in the classroom and at home. One parent commented, *"I would be happy for my children to spend their entire education at St. Austin's."* This typifies the high status given by parents, to the overall performance of the school.

25. The parents appreciate the openness of the staff, with whom they frequently engage in conversation, both before and after school. They are especially grateful for the manner in which their questions are dealt with, and any problems resolved, promptly and effectively. Thus, the parents are extremely satisfied with all that the school provides, not least the quality of teaching throughout the school, which they see as a particular strength. The inspection findings entirely confirm their views.
26. In turn, the school is swift to acknowledge with considerable gratitude the fine quality of the support they have from the parents. This is not least through the hard work of the Saint Austin's School Parents' Association, which not only provides considerable funding for school improvements, but also enriches the community spirit, through the events arranged. Their efforts also fund visits from experts and groups, for example artists, and the "Young Shakespeare Company," which contribute so much to the wider quality of the pupils learning.

The headteacher, with the support of his deputy, gives clear leadership to the school.

27. The good humoured, confident, and professional quality of leadership provided by the headteacher, well supported by his deputy, contributes fully to the vibrant Christian ethos of Saint Austin's. Springing from this leadership, is the exceptional staff team work, which coupled with the pupils' response, results in an excellent climate for learning. The aims of the school are communicated through a very simple, but powerful mission statement, "*In our school, where everyone is special, we will love and serve as Jesus taught.*" This statement is demonstrably shared and lived, by the whole school community, and shines through, in the totality of hard work and commitment. The school motto, "*Laborare est orare,*" is very fitting, and strongly reinforces this statement. The staff and pupils take this, motto very much to heart, for there is a very clear picture of working and praying together, totally in accord with the whole exceptional spirit of the school.
28. The teachers readily exchange good practice, and willingly support the school's range of enrichment activities, showing a genuine commitment to driving the school forward. The headteacher conducts full and regular staff reviews of performance, and of their individual professional development needs. This in turn leads very positively to appropriate programmes of staff training. The careful analysis of the strengths of the school, helps to identify any shortcomings, and indicates good professional practice in the subsequent action taken to rectify them. This positive action enables the staff, and the school to develop even further. A good example here, is the way in which the subject leaders are now becoming empowered to plan, manage and develop their own subjects more effectively.
29. The governing body supports the work of the school, is properly constituted and discharges its statutory duties well. The school has a well-qualified and experienced range of teaching and non-teaching staff whose expertise is used wisely and efficiently, within a very effective team. The painstaking management of the school premises, results in a well-cared environment for learning. This reflects very well on the hard work of the site manager, and his cleaning staff.
30. The recent spending on resources has improved facilities for information and communications technology, literacy and numeracy, which are used well by the teachers, to make a real impact on the pupils' learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Planning for school improvement has moved on, but there remains room for further improvement.

31. Since the previous inspection, the school development plan has now developed from a very basic format, lacking in targets, clarity and costing, to a plan which now includes achievable targets and success measures. Thus, the school has laid better foundations, but realises that more needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of its development planning.

32. The quality of financial planning, which was an issue for improvement during the previous inspection, is certainly starting to develop. The headteacher is, for example, using computerised systems to provide budget options, and to analyse the consequences of each proposed course of action. Thus, there is now a more rigorous approach to financial management, and the school keeps detailed and accurate records of its expenditure. However, there is recognition of the need to extend school improvement planning, so that immediate and medium term priorities are fully linked to the finances available to the school.

There is need to build upon the progress made in information and communications technology, to implement fully, the clear plans for improvement.

33. The inspection of 1996 judged that the standards and progress made in information technology were below national expectations at both key stages. In particular it found that, the *“pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge expected in the National Curriculum.”*
34. The plans to create an information and communications technology suite, with a number of linked computers, for whole class usage, are in the early stages of development. Thus, the work remains at present classroom based, and while clear progress has been made since 1996, with some effective work going on in the classrooms, this is not consistently so, throughout the school. The school sees that improvements are still to be made. For example, the high quality documentation, states forcefully, *“In our school we want to give our pupils and staff access to the latest technology and for this to support and enhance teaching and learning throughout the curriculum.”* Undoubtedly this is being done already in some classes but not all, so in essence, there is still a lack of whole school coherence.
35. In moving forward, a lucid statement for improvement is found in the “Information and Communications Technology Handbook.” This statement aims to enable, *“The whole school teaching, support, and administration staff to have a greater confidence in using information technology equipment, so that the majority of the children leaving our school will be achieving standards higher than national expectations, especially in literacy and numeracy.”* These are very positive intentions indeed. The additional aim that the school should extend beyond this, to the promotion of the, *“teaching of information technology through parents, industry and the wider community,”* is also constructive. Linked with the intentions to improve school standards, the school feels that this is the way forward. It is in fulfilling these aims that the school wishes the vision to become reality, and for improvements to follow.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36. In order to consolidate on the very significant strengths of the school, and move the school even further forward, the headteacher with his staff team, with the support of the governing body should now:
- improve the quality of the school development plan, by ensuring a clear focus on the immediate, and medium term priorities, fully linked to the finances available to the school.
 - carry through the clear plans for improvement in information and communications technology, contained in the subject handbook.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	20	57	20	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	493
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	70

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR- Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	48

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	34 (52)	34 (30)	68 (82)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31 (52)	31 (51)	33 (51)
	Girls	30 (29)	29 (29)	30 (30)
	Total	61 (81)	60 (80)	63 (81)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (99)	88 (98)	93 (99)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	86 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33 (52)	33 (51)	34 (52)
	Girls	31 (29)	30 (30)	33 (30)
	Total	64 (81)	63 (81)	67 (52)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (99)	93 (99)	99 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	38 (40)	32 (30)	70 (70)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31 (35)	35 (34)	35 (37)
	Girls	30 (27)	26 (24)	27 (25)
	Total	61 (62)	61 (58)	62 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (89)	87 (83)	89 (89)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31 (33)	34 (35)	34 (36)
	Girls	29 (26)	25 (24)	24 (25)
	Total	60 (59)	59 (59)	58 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (84)	84 (84)	83 (87)
	National	68 (65)	69 (59)	75 (69)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	490
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6]

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	207

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
	£
Total income	733893
Total expenditure	672122
Expenditure per pupil	1361
Balance brought forward from previous year	73022
Balance carried forward to next year	134793

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	493
Number of questionnaires returned	233

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	28	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	31½	½	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	76	23	½	0	½
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	34	13	1	2
The teaching is good.	72½	26	1	0	½
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	31½	4	½	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	20	3½	½	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	20	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	73	25	1	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	80½	19	0	0	½
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	26	½	0	½
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	27	9	1	6