

INSPECTION REPORT

BOOKER AVENUE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104522

Headteacher: Mr Jonathan McCausland

Reporting inspector: Ms Margot D'Arcy
23158

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 4th July 2001

Inspection number: 197000

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Booker Avenue Liverpool
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Telephone number:	0151 724 2941
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Rafferty
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average-sized junior school catering for 372 boys and girls aged between seven and 11. The balance of boys and girls is fairly equal, although in Years 5 and 6 there are significantly more boys. Pupils are taught in classes containing others of the same age; all pupils are set¹ for English and mathematics, and those in Years 5 and 6 are also set for science. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (18 per cent), including statements of special need, is just below the national average. The range of needs includes pupils with specific, moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties, and three pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many of these pupils are taught literacy and numeracy in small groups containing two consecutive year groups. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language (7.7 per cent) is high when compared with the national average, but all are fluent speakers of English and none require additional language support to assist their learning. Ten per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils live in the immediate vicinity of the school, which, overall, is socially advantaged. Standards on entry to the school at age seven are well above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school where pupils make good progress and achieve high standards. Much of the teaching is good. A rich and varied curriculum is provided, which extends beyond the school day. The dedicated headteacher leads and manages the school effectively and governors provide good support. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics, science and music².
- Much of the teaching is good or better and this promotes pupils' overall good progress.
- The school's rich and stimulating curriculum supports pupils' academic and personal development very well.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school.

What could be improved

- The roles and responsibilities of senior staff are not clearly defined, particularly in relation to supporting school improvement.
- There are weaknesses in the systems for assessing pupils' standards and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, and in the way teachers mark pupils' work.
- Reports to parents about their children's progress do not meet all legal requirements.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection in March 1997. The issue raised then about the need to improve science standards has been addressed very successfully; during the same period, English and mathematics test results have also risen. Safety issues about the school building have been successfully addressed. However, work is still needed to improve assessment systems and the quality of marking.

¹ Where pupils are organised into groups for teaching on the basis of their prior attainment.

² The limited time offered by a short inspection did not allow sufficient evidence to be collected to make secure judgements about the standards achieved in other subjects. The school negotiated that the inspection team provide a specific focus on music.

STANDARDS

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

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

The school adds to the good levels of attainment pupils have when they enter at age seven. Pupils, and the school, do well to maintain standards that are above and well above the national average. Overall, pupils' progress is good. The school's results in national science tests have risen significantly since 1998 and there has also been an improvement in English test results. The slight fall in mathematics results, depicted in the above table, is not significant and standards in this subject are also high. Moreover, since 1996, combined test results in English, mathematics and science have risen at a faster rate than nationally. Pupils' performance in national tests compares very favourably against schools with a similar intake³. The school's efforts to improve boys' performance have been successful and there is now no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement in any of the subjects tested. The school has high expectations of pupils and sets challenging, but realistic, targets for them to achieve in the tests.

The standards of work seen by inspectors support the favourable test results and show that pupils achieve well. By age 11, pupils are keen readers and writers. They read accurately, fluently and expressively and their knowledge of different authors' styles spills over into their own writing. Their stories unfold imaginatively, gripping the reader with their choice of words. Pupils have a thorough command of mathematical ideas and are quick at manipulating numbers mentally. They are budding young scientists who relish investigating ideas, which they have learned to do in an appropriate scientific way. Standards in music are also high. Pupils perform very well when singing, composing and playing musical instruments; they make thoughtful evaluations of their own and others' music. Although no physical education lessons were seen, the standards noted in many of the sport-related extra-curricular activities observed were particularly good. Pupils are skilled in many games and co-operate well with each other when working as a team.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. Many arrive early and leave late in order to take part in extra-curricular activities. Most apply themselves well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in class, when moving around the school, and at play. Most show good respect for teachers and other adults. A minority misbehaves in lessons and there is some inappropriate behaviour in the dining hall.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils participate fully in all that the school offers; as a result, they become mature and responsible. Most get on well with each other and have good relationships with adults.

³ Based upon the proportion of pupils having free school meals.

Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is generally well above the national average, Levels fell this year because of an influenza epidemic. Punctuality is very good.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Ninety-five per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better; 26 per cent is very good, but five per cent is unsatisfactory⁴. Since the last inspection, the proportion of 'very good' teaching has increased and the teaching of science and ICT has improved. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, with literacy and numeracy skills being taught well. Good and very good teaching is seen in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and music. Strengths are teachers' good subject knowledge, the challenging work they provide and the brisk pace they set in lessons. These features promote gains in pupils' knowledge and understanding and ensure they concentrate well.

In some lessons, which are satisfactory overall, teachers do not expect enough effort from pupils during the time they work independently. Occasionally, misbehaviour is too readily accepted or ignored. Marking is unsatisfactory, with variation in the amount between different teachers, and not enough comments to tell pupils how to improve.

Overall, the school meets the needs of all pupils well. Setting arrangements are supporting this by narrowing the range of attainment in different classes so that teachers can plan work that matches pupils' needs and builds upon what they already know. The system of organising pupils with special educational needs into smaller teaching groups, with more adults, is good. However, significant variation exists in the quality of teaching and learning for special needs pupils in Years 5 and 6 and those in Years 3 and 4, ranging from very good to barely satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. A good emphasis on the basics, but not at the expense of learning in other subjects. The extensive extra-curricular activities support learning in a range of subjects and promote pupils' personal development very well. Residential visits, for all pupils from Year 4 upward, enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils' individually devised work programmes are detailed and their progress is reviewed regularly; parents are kept informed. However, the quality of teaching and impact of support staff is variable, which results in a variable rate of progress for pupils in different year groups.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Pupils are given responsibilities and learn about important moral and social issues. Their cultural development is effectively promoted within a range of subjects, such as art, music and physical education, and through visits such as those to different places of worship.

⁴ Equates to one lesson.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Systems to assess and track pupils' progress are good in English, mathematics and science, but weak in other subjects.
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The good relationships engendered by the headteacher and some other staff gives many pupils confidence to express views or share concerns. However, there is no formal system (such as a pupils' council) through which pupils can broach issues about which they feel strongly.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher is very committed and manages the school well. Senior managers have worked hard to assist the head during the absence of the deputy, but their roles are not defined sharply enough to promote the best possible support for the headteacher in promoting school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors fulfil most of their legal obligations and are good friends to the school. They take an active interest in monitoring standards and evaluating the success of priorities in the school's development plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school checks its performance against other schools, identifies where improvement is needed and acts accordingly. Identifying the need to raise boys' achievement, and realising this, is a good example.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Use of the budget and specific grants is carefully thought through, with the principles of best value being applied well in all spending decisions. Good use is made of the school grounds and other accommodation. Overall, resources are used well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children enjoy school, behave well and make good progress. • The good quality of teaching and the approachability of staff. • That the school expects children to work hard and behave well. • The way the school helps children become mature and responsible. • The effective way the school is led and managed. • The good range of extra-curricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better information in annual progress reports. • Opportunity to discuss their children's progress in English, mathematics and science with the teachers who teach their children these subjects. • Some parents feel homework tasks are not challenging enough. • A few parents expressed concerns about bullying.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. Reports should be more informative and parents are justified in wanting to discuss their children's progress with those teachers who are specifically involved in teaching them, particularly in main subjects such as English and mathematics. The school is also sympathetic and is considering how it might make provision for this. There are satisfactory systems to deal with bullying and the school takes such incidents seriously. Inspectors judge that homework is appropriately challenging.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics, science and music.

1. The school adds to the good levels of attainment pupils have when they enter at age seven. Overall National Curriculum test results⁵ for 11-year-olds in 2000 were well above the national average. Pupils' performance in these tests also compared very favourably against 11-year-olds from schools with a similar intake. Moreover, since 1996, pupils' combined test results in English, mathematics and science have risen at a faster rate than nationally. In particular, standards in science have shown very good improvement, rising from below average in 1997 to above average in 2000. Also worthy of note is the rise in boys' achievement. Although boys' achievement at age 11 has generally been above the national average in English, mathematics and science, prior to 1998, boys were underachieving in relation to girls at the school. The school's recognition of this and its efforts to address the issue have been successful; the gap between boys' and girls' performance in tests has narrowed considerably, to the point where there is now no significant difference between them. The standards of work seen by inspectors support the favourable test results. By age 11, pupils' standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. High standards are also achieved in music because the school gives the subject a high profile and ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument and to develop talents in this area.
2. By age 11, pupils' reading skills are highly developed. They read accurately, fluently and expressively. Advanced skills of inference and deduction are clearly evident when pupils talk about the books they are reading. Pupils know a good range of contemporary and traditional authors and speak with insight about their work and different styles. Pupils' written work shows their very good understanding of how different types of writing, such as letters, poems, newspaper articles, biographies and stories, are structured. Their choice of vocabulary to describe different characters, settings and events is highly developed and captures and holds the reader's attention well. English work shows that most pupils pay good attention to grammar, spellings and punctuation and are competent in these areas. However, some careless spelling mistakes of key mathematical vocabulary were noted in mathematics work.
3. By age 11, pupils have gained a thorough understanding of all the key mathematical areas. They show agility in manipulating numbers mentally and make very good use of what they learn about numbers, patterns and relationships to solve problems. Pupils understand that the process of finding the answer is as important as the answer itself and keenly rise to the challenge of exploring and explaining mathematical phenomena. In many of the lessons seen, pupils were not only accurate, but calculated the answers at good speed. Many have developed the ability to think flexibly when working with numbers, which will stand them in good stead in secondary education.
4. Underpinning the high standards in science is the clear emphasis given to experimental and investigative work, which permeates all lessons. By the end of Year 6, pupils think up their own questions to investigate, such as *'Which material*

⁵ The combined results of the statutory English, mathematics and science tests.

absorbs the most water? and *'Which material dries the quickest?'* They have a very good understanding of the principles of fair testing and design their own tests, identifying variables and making thoughtful predictions of outcomes. During practical tasks, pupils carefully consider the resources they will use and handle these sensibly and purposefully. They work well collaboratively and record work scientifically.

5. Standards in music are high. The significant number of pupils receiving specialist teaching for choir and orchestra clearly supports these high standards, as does the extensive range of extra-curricular music activities provided by specialist teachers. In addition, music lessons taught by non-specialist teachers are also of good quality and support effective learning. As well as observing a range of class lessons and out of school musical activities, inspectors watched performances by the orchestra and lower school choir. Both were of a very high standard, with pupils showing very good awareness of the role of the conductor and following the lead given extremely well. Pupils sang in unison and with good diction, competently managing an unaccompanied performance of a song with more than one part. Pupils' clear understanding of the importance of timing was also apparent in the orchestra practice, where those playing different groups of instruments joined the performance at the correct point and maintained their parts against others. Many pupils read standard musical notation and show good insight in evaluating their own and others' work. Their understanding of key musical ideas such as pitch, dynamics, duration, tempo, texture and structure are clearly evident in their performances.

Much of the teaching is good or better and this promotes pupils' overall good progress.

6. The overall quality of teaching is good. Fifty-eight per cent of teaching is good or better, with 26 per cent of this being very good. Teachers prepare their lessons well by identifying precise learning objectives, grouping pupils carefully and varying activities and teaching methods to promote the best learning. A key feature is teachers' very good subject knowledge, which allows them to teach with confidence and accuracy. This came through in virtually all the lessons seen and is evident in teachers' clear and detailed explanations and instructions, their penetrating and perceptive questions and the technical vocabulary they use and promote. A good example was seen in a Year 5 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, where the teacher made very good use of an introductory session to explain and demonstrate to the whole class how to interrogate a database and plot and read different types of graphs.
7. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace. The sense of urgency created by teachers keeps pupils interested and ensures they work hard. Similarly, throughout the school, the work set for pupils in English, mathematics and science is almost always challenging. Again this shows teachers' good subject knowledge and their clear understanding of the levels at which pupils are working in these subjects and exactly what is needed to take their learning forward. For instance, at the start of a mathematics lesson in Year 6, the teacher provided quick-fire questions, which continually increased in challenge, for pupils to solve mentally. This kept pupils alert, sharpened mental skills and prepared them well for the practical work that followed. In the same way, brisk and challenging lessons by other Year 6 teachers, in both English and science, were extremely effective in promoting very good learning.
8. The organisation of all pupils into sets for English and mathematics, and of Year 5 and 6 pupils for science, is working well. This has helped to narrow the range of

attainment in classes and allows teachers to plan work that matches pupils' different needs. Even within the sets, teachers often modify the work given to groups or individuals to ensure that all are suitably challenged and achieve success. The organisation of sets ensures that lower attainers, and pupils with special educational needs, are taught in smaller classes or groups so as to afford more interaction with teachers and the learning assistants that are attached to these classes. For the most part this works well. However, there is too much variation between the quality of teaching and learning for special needs pupils in Years 5 and 6 and those in Years 3 and 4, ranging from that which is consistently very good to that which is satisfactory at best. The impact of support staff is also variable. It is accepted that some of these staff are fairly new to the school and still in the process of training. Inspectors noticed that where teachers involve these staff in lesson planning, brief them thoroughly (sometimes with written notes) about their role, and check on the quality of their input during lessons, they provide good support for teaching and learning and are a valuable resource.

9. Teaching and learning in science has improved significantly since the last inspection. This has been supported by the very detailed scheme of work, which ensures that knowledge and understanding are developed progressively as pupils get older. The teaching of experimental and investigative skills is effectively incorporated in all lessons so pupils' learning in this aspect is developing exceptionally well. Similarly, the teaching of ICT is showing good improvement. The new computer suite is ensuring that all pupils have better access to resources, and carefully planned weekly lessons for the whole class allows teachers to focus on the sequential development of skills. Teachers also strive to incorporate the use of ICT in other lessons. For example, in many lessons, teachers plan for some pupils to complete written work at the class computer or to use programs to practise specific literacy or numeracy skills.
10. Only one lesson was judged unsatisfactory, primarily because of weaknesses in managing pupils' behaviour. Although not all of the teaching is of the same high quality as that exemplified above, there is enough expertise within the teaching staff to narrow the gap between that which is satisfactory (37 per cent) and that which is good and better.

The school's rich and stimulating curriculum supports pupils' academic and personal development very well.

11. Despite the strong emphasis on pupils achieving high standards, the school is not an examination factory. There is a strong commitment to education in its broadest sense and this is very successfully met. The curriculum contains all the required subjects, with a sensible balance maintained between the time allocated to developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy and that given to other subjects. In particular, the school provides very good learning opportunities in music and physical education. Curriculum planning in English, mathematics and science has been very carefully thought through to ensure that the work provided for pupils in different sets is challenging, well matched to their needs, and builds progressively on what they have learned previously. This is a key factor in the good progress pupils make in these subjects and the high standards they achieve at age 11. The logistics of many

pupils moving, daily, to different classrooms to be taught these subjects, are managed very well, with no loss of curriculum time or disruption to learning.

12. The school, rightly, sees ICT as a key element in the education of pupils in the twenty-first century, and gives the subject a very high profile, the impact of which is evident in improved standards and teaching quality. Pupils use ICT to support work in a range of subjects. Displays of their work show enhanced presentation through the use of ICT. For instance, much of their written work includes photographs taken with digital cameras and a good proportion is word-processed. Pupils produce graphs and tables to present information in mathematics, science and geography and use the Internet to research information in a range of subjects. The headteacher is particularly influential in promoting the development of ICT. A very good example has been the interactive Year Book he has created for each Year 6 pupil to celebrate his/her time and achievements at the school.
13. Although the curriculum is planned in such a way that each subject is taught discretely, links between learning in different subjects are capitalised upon very effectively. One Year 6 class exemplified this very well in an assembly based upon the theme of water. Here pupils enthusiastically recounted what they had learned about water from a scientific, historical, geographical, artistic, technological and religious perspective, and incorporated thoughtful moral, social and cultural viewpoints. Their presentation was enhanced by imaginative use of ICT, with their pictures and other work projected onto a large screen so that all present could fully appreciate their efforts. Furthermore, the pupil and parent audience was impressed by the entertaining use of drama and music, which included a *'Whale Rap'* and sound effects to enhance the telling and dramatisation of the story of the *'Mousehole Cat'*.
14. The curriculum is fully inclusive in that all pupils have very good opportunities to take part and achieve success in all that is on offer. The school is fully committed to extending the range of learning experiences available, both during and outside of the school day, to promote pupils' all-round development. For example, significant money from the budget has been allocated to purchasing specialist music tuition to supplement that provided by the school's own staff; there has also been substantial investment in purchasing a large range of musical instruments, which are loaned to pupils. Over 200 pupils are involved in learning to play a musical instrument, which is clear evidence of the school's success in this area. There is also considerable investment in providing a wide range of extra-curricular activities, both in terms of the time and effort given by the headteacher and other staff who run many of these, and in financing specialist tuition to lead some of the after school sports activities. The range of activities includes daily athletics, cricket and music groups, and weekly clubs for chess, choir, computers, drama, dance, football, netball, rounders and recorders. Other termly activities, such as rugby, water skills and judo, are also held alongside these. The number of pupils involved is high; on one morning, over 60 pupils were counted taking

part in activities before lessons began. Both adults and pupils use this time to very good effect, enjoying themselves and getting to know each other well.

15. A good range of interesting visits enriches the curriculum and provides pupils with first-hand experiences that help them to understand the relevance of what they are learning in class. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 take part in annual residential visits that extend learning in a range of subjects, including science, geography and physical education. Year 3 pupils take part in similar experiences on day visits to outdoor learning centres. These opportunities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development, as they learn to work and live together in a setting that is different to their previous experience of daily schooling or family holidays.

Pupils have very good attitudes to school.

16. Pupils enjoy coming to school; most are confident and well-motivated learners who take a keen interest in lessons and extra-curricular activities. They arrive punctually each day and their attendance rate is generally much higher than the national average.
17. Pupils clearly value the many opportunities provided for them to take part in extra-curricular activities. At eight o'clock every morning the school is alive with pupils, ready and eager to begin the athletics and other sporting activities on offer. Their enthusiasm overflows into the lunch hour and extends beyond the end of the school day; at these times too, there is an industrious buzz of excitement, and every corner of the school is a hive of activity.
18. In lessons, most pupils listen attentively to teachers and are keen to answer questions and give opinions. This was frequently seen in numeracy lessons, where pupils confidently explained to their classmates the strategies they used to tackle problems. Similarly, in science lessons, pupils provided thoughtful predictions and suggested ideas to test. Pupils welcome the opportunities to work collaboratively and do not abuse this freedom. For example, in a music lesson in Year 5, mixed groups of girls and boys worked purposefully, and with very good concentration, to compose sequences depicting the movement of different minibeasts, such as a 'spinning spider' or 'fluttering butterfly'. Pupils behaved sensibly, negotiated roles, and discussed, maturely, which instruments to use and how they should be played to convey the intended effect. They were rightly proud of their finished compositions and showed good respect for their classmates as they listened and evaluated each group's piece. During parts of lessons where pupils are expected to work independently, most do so well, concentrating and completing a good amount of work in the time allowed. Similarly, the majority of pupils present their work neatly and complete homework tasks on time. They treat the building and resources with respect.
19. Many pupils with special educational needs also have good attitudes to school. These pupils appreciate the increased attention they receive from

teachers and support staff and most respond very well to the consistent praise they are given for their efforts. Pupils like their teachers and try very hard to please them. A good example was seen in a numeracy lesson for Years 5 and 6. The teacher's carefully thought through questions and activities, which were designed to promote small steps in learning, considerably boosted pupils' self-esteem, as did the continual praise provided. Pupils revelled in the success they were achieving and invested substantial effort in working quickly, purposefully and neatly in order to please their teacher. It is a measure of the school's effectiveness that many of these pupils also feel confident in taking part in numerous extra-curricular activities.

20. Pupils take pride in their own and others' achievements, for example, in assemblies they spontaneously applaud when certificates are awarded for 'worker of the week'. They understand that all can aspire to these, regardless of academic ability, and appreciate the importance the school attaches to their efforts. For instance, pupils proudly pointed out numerous certificates on display for '*trying hard*', '*helping others*' and '*being a good sport*'. They are keen to take on responsibilities in class and around the school. All carry out their tasks diligently. They range from returning the register, monitoring safe movement up and down staircases, to saving energy by switching off lights.
21. Discussions with pupils show that they have developed great loyalty to their school and welcome the opportunities they have to represent it in various sporting and musical events. They are keen to try hard for their own personal satisfaction and also to win points to support their house team. Pupils speak highly of their school; older pupils appreciate the commitment shown by the headteacher in running different extra-curricular activities and the way he is always ready to listen to their views. Many pupils say they enjoy lessons and recognise the hard work put in by teachers.
22. The interesting lessons, wide range of out of school activities, together with the positive ethos and supportive relationships between most pupils and adults, promotes pupils' very good attitudes, which, in turn, supports their good progress.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The roles and responsibilities of senior staff are not clearly defined, particularly in relation to supporting school improvement.

23. The headteacher is highly committed to the school and works hard to provide the best for pupils. He has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, is knowledgeable about current educational issues and dedicated to maintaining and improving the high standards achieved and the broad curriculum provided. He manages the school well.
24. The course of improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, with some good improvements occurring in standards in science as well as in

national test results in English and mathematics. There has been an increase in the amount of very good teaching, but there is scope to further improve the proportion of good lessons. Improvement in some areas, such as assessment and marking, has not been as good as expected.

25. To some extent, improvement has been hindered by the impact of the deputy headteacher's secondment to the local education authority. The school is committed to promoting the professional development of all staff and viewed this one-year secondment positively, in that it offered obvious benefits to the deputy, but also to other staff. Accordingly, many of the deputy's duties were divided, with remuneration, between five other teachers to support their professional development. This was seen to be an appropriate solution to what was expected to be the short-term loss of a key management figure. However, although all of the staff concerned have shown good commitment and worked hard, their management roles have not been defined sharply enough to support the headteacher in promoting continuous improvement in all areas. For example, although the headteacher regularly monitors teaching and the co-ordinators for English and mathematics have also monitored lessons, other aspects of monitoring have not been implemented with sufficient rigour. This is principally because the job descriptions for members of the newly formed senior management team are not specific enough in detailing their duties and accountability. For instance, no one checks that co-ordinators have fulfilled the school's expectation that they formally monitor pupils' work; inspection evidence shows that in some cases this has not occurred. Continuing weaknesses in marking have gone undetected and, despite a very large senior management team, no one has overall responsibility for monitoring assessment, even though this aspect was identified as weak by the last inspection. Many of these monitoring responsibilities came under the remit of duties delegated to the deputy; although his general duties have been divided among other staff, the specifics are not identified sharply enough. This is limiting the school's drive to move forward at the rate it wants and of which it is clearly capable.
26. During the deputy's secondment, the headteacher has experienced a significant reduction in opportunities to discuss important aspects of the school's development. The termly meetings of the new senior management team are insufficient to compensate for this. Although one of the senior managers meets the head daily, discussions focus primarily on day-to-day management issues rather than longer-term strategic ones. The governors have recognised the impact that the loss of the deputy has had on the headteacher's workload and have made some adjustments to improve the situation for the coming year, as the deputy's secondment is to continue. Principally, this will provide the head with more opportunity to discuss important school matters with one individual from the senior management team. This is good, but the job descriptions of senior managers still lack precise definitions of their roles and responsibilities, particularly in relation to their role in supporting the headteacher in monitoring and improving pupils' standards; the quality of teaching and learning (including the use and impact of support staff); and aspects of co-ordinators' management roles.

There are weaknesses in the systems for assessing pupils' standards and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, and in the way teachers mark pupils' work.

27. There are good systems for assessing pupils' standards and tracking their progress in English, mathematics and science, but in other subjects the use of assessment to support teaching and learning lacks rigour. The quality of marking in all subjects is unsatisfactory and does little to tell pupils how to improve.
28. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, no formal assessments are conducted. Rather, teachers complete a brief evaluation at the end of each topic or unit of work. Scrutiny of completed sheets shows that the information relates primarily to what has been *covered* rather than an assessment of pupils' achievements, what they have learned, or had difficulty learning. Consequently, there is a lack of information upon which to base future planning for teaching and learning. Overall, the time taken to fill in these sheets is not productive since most simply reiterate, in short form, and sometimes in numerical code (simply referencing National Curriculum programmes of study), what has already been detailed at the planning stage.
29. In ICT in particular, the lack of a formal assessment system limits support for teaching and learning. The school is firmly committed to promoting pupils' standards in ICT and improvements to many aspects of provision for the subject are occurring. Of note is the increasing confidence and competence of teachers, which is being supported by training. However, the limitations of the use of assessment in this subject, which were pointed out in the last inspection report, have not been addressed sufficiently well. There is no formal assessment system to identify the variation in knowledge and skills that clearly exists between pupils. Some teachers are particularly 'expert' in their knowledge of this subject and of how to teach it and in these cases very good use is made of ongoing informal assessment to promote learning. For example, tasks are made easier or more challenging as the teacher quickly responds to pupils' different needs; any difficulties experienced during practical work are sorted out in the plenary⁶. However, whilst all teachers are becoming more confident in using and teaching ICT, not all are as adept at making such accurate, 'on the spot', assessments; consequently in some lessons, the process of learning is slowed somewhat.
30. Throughout the school, the quality of marking is weak, even in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science; this was also highlighted by the last inspection. Pupils' work shows significant variation in the amount and extent of marking between year groups, sets and classes. Some teachers clearly spend considerable time commenting on pupils' work, whilst others have made virtually no comments throughout the whole year. Where teachers do make written remarks, these mostly relate to praising pupils' efforts. This is good, but there is a distinct lack of pointers to tell pupils how to improve. In particular, the work of higher attainers in all year groups rarely contains constructive comments of this sort. While these pupils generally produce work that is of a very high standard, there is always a 'next step' that will help them to improve.

Reports to parents about their children's progress do not meet legal requirements.

⁶ The end part of the lesson.

31. The annual reports to parents about their children's progress generally contain good detail in the sections for English, mathematics and science. However, in other subjects, the information is restricted to what pupils have *experienced* during the year, rather than what they have achieved. Moreover, in each year group, the comments are the same for every pupil. This system does not give parents all the information to which they are entitled and means that the reports do not meet the legally required standard. Part of the problem may be attributed to the weaknesses that exist in assessment systems as outlined above. The lack of information about pupils' standards and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, mean that teachers, understandably, find it difficult to convey this sort of precise information to parents at the end of the year; they have nothing substantial to draw upon except what has been covered.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher and governors should now:

(1) Review the current management structure and the roles of senior managers to provide more effective support for the headteacher in improving the school by:

- sharply defining the roles of senior managers in terms of clearly determining their individual and collective responsibilities for key areas of monitoring standards and provision. Particular emphasis should be given to monitoring assessment and the quality of marking, and to promoting greater consistency of the best quality teaching and learning; and
- organising more frequent meetings of the senior management team to discuss the school's work and progress, and to determine action to support school improvement.

(Paragraphs 24 – 26)

(2) Improve assessment procedures and the quality of marking by:

- deciding upon a useful and workable system for assessing pupils' standards and evaluating the quality of their learning in those subjects where systems are presently weak. Particular attention should be paid to ICT, where teachers are still in the process of developing their own subject knowledge and skills; and
- ensuring that, throughout the school, there is consistency in the quality of marking and that this form of assessment provides an appropriate balance between comments that celebrate pupils' efforts and those that tell them how they can improve.

(Paragraphs 27-30)

(3) Improve the quality of annual reports to parents on their children's progress by:

- ensuring that for every subject of the National Curriculum and religious education, each pupil's standards and progress, strengths and weaknesses, are reported individually.

(Paragraph 31)

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	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	26	32	37	5	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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	372
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	67

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	29

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	13

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	53	49	102

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	46	51	51
	Girls	44	41	46
	Total	90	92	97
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (88)	90 (87)	95 (89)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	49	52	47
	Girls	46	47	36
	Total	95	99	83
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (87)	97 (84)	83 (79)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	9
White	344
Any other minority ethnic group	9

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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	31

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	250

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	696,277
Total expenditure	723,912
Expenditure per pupil	1,857
Balance brought forward from previous year	68,089
Balance carried forward to next year	40,454

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 43%

Number of questionnaires sent out	372
Number of questionnaires returned	159

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	33	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	48	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	44	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	45	21	2	1
The teaching is good.	50	45	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	48	15	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	31	6	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	45	15	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	57	36	2	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	37	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	62	30	3	3	3