

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Harlow

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115274

Headteacher: Mrs B Swain

Reporting inspector: John Lilly
12487

Dates of inspection: 12 – 13 March 2002

Inspection number: 197750

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: First Avenue
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Essex

Postcode: CM20 2NP

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G Reynolds

Date of previous inspection: 29 September 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Alban's is a voluntary aided Catholic school of average size. There are 213 girls and boys on roll between the ages of four and eleven. The school serves a wide area, although most pupils come from the immediate locality. The pupils have varied backgrounds but most come from homes that are more favoured socially and economically than is usual nationally. A low percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals, and fewer pupils than average have special educational needs. Only one of these pupils has a statement of special educational need and the others have needs that are met from within the school's own resources. A higher than average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages; English is the first language of almost all these pupils, and no pupil is at an early stage of learning English. Children join the school aged four with higher than average levels of development. The headteacher took up post at the beginning of the term of the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Alban's is a very good school. Governors and staff are committed to achieving the highest quality of teaching, learning and personal development of the pupils, and to achieving the Catholic mission of the school. They are determined to help each pupil succeed, whatever their individual abilities, needs or cultural background. The headteacher leads the school very well, allowing her teachers to give leadership within their own areas of responsibility; together they manage the school effectively, creating an orderly, caring and purposeful community. Teaching is very good and, consequently, by the end of Year 6 most pupils have made very good progress and the majority attain high standards. Provision for the pupils' personal development is very good, and relationships between home and school, between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils are all very good. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

The school enables pupils to make very good progress and achieve high standards because:

- The school is very well led by the headteacher and she is strongly supported by other staff in their management roles;
- The teaching and learning are very good;
- The school uses assessment effectively;
- Provision for personal development is very good;
- Governors, staff and pupils show complete commitment to achieving very high standards.

What could be improved

- Planning for the longer-term success of the school, linked to better use of financial resources;
- Provision for children at the Foundation Stage;
- Involving parents in support of their children's learning;
- Helping pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1997. Standards since that time have continued to improve and are now well above average. Weaknesses in the planning for subjects have been rectified and there is a better balance to the curriculum. Teaching is now well monitored, and teachers are shown how to improve; there is a better link between staff performance and the training they receive. Provision for information and communication technology is now good, and the pupils are well prepared for life in a society of many faiths and cultures. Although the planning of the week-by-week work of the school is good, planning for the longer-term improvement of the school is still not clear enough. Improvement, overall, has been good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	B	A*	A*
Mathematics	C	A	A	A
Science	C	B	A	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

A means that the school's results were in the top five per cent of all schools nationally.*

Standards throughout the school are improving faster than the national rate. In National Curriculum tests in 2001 at the end of Year 6, the proportions of pupils attaining the expected levels in English, mathematics and science and the proportions achieving the higher Level 5 were well above average. Results in science were above the average for similar schools.

Children join the school aged four, with higher levels of development than usually expected at that age. They make good progress between joining the nursery and the end of Year 2. Results overall in National Curriculum tests for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were much higher than the national average. Compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in reading and writing, and above in mathematics. A much higher than average proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics. In writing, however, the proportion was average, and the percentage attaining the expected Level 2 or higher was lower than the average for similar schools. In National Curriculum assessments in 2001 for science, although the proportion attaining the higher Level 3 was much higher than average, that attaining the expected Level 2 or higher was only average. Pupils make extremely good progress in English between Years 3 and 6, very good progress in mathematics, and good progress in science. Standards of attainment for many of the current Year 6 pupils are well above average. Girls and boys of different levels of ability and of different cultural backgrounds make equivalent progress, and recent changes, for instance, additional 'booster' classes, are helping all pupils, and especially very able pupils, to reach very high standards, especially in English. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The school's targets are appropriate, but they

tend to be cautious predictions rather than challenges to the school to work towards the extremely high standards that it has the capacity to achieve.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils say they 'love' their school. They have very good attitudes to their work and other people.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in classrooms and outside is very good and there is a marked lack of any threatening behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils develop well as thinking, caring and balanced young people. Relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Attendance is broadly average, and pupils arrive punctually for school.

Although pupils have very good attitudes towards other people and their work, the school does not do enough to help them evaluate their own work, set themselves targets and plan how to improve their quality of work independently.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching is a considerable strength of the school. It is usually well planned and based upon the teachers' very good subject knowledge and their assessment of pupils' work. Lessons have clear objectives, good pace and high challenge. The relatively large class size sometimes restricts the effectiveness of teaching, and, although teaching assistants make a major contribution to the pupils' learning, more are needed. When teaching is less effective, it is because learning is overly directed by the teachers or because the classroom is not well suited to the learning required, for instance in the reception class. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well, and a particular strength is the way teachers plan in ways that extend and use these skills in all subjects. Girls and boys of all abilities and backgrounds make at least good progress, and those with special educational needs are well supported. The school makes very good provision for very able pupils in Year 6, but provision for such pupils in lower years is sufficiently focused. Pupils work hard, fast and accurately, taking pride in their achievements.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' present and future lives. Clubs and visits enrich the pupils' learning, although more activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 could be considered. There are positive links with business and other areas of the community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	These pupils are well supported. Provision is very well managed and the pupils' individual education plans well considered; teachers use them effectively. Occasionally these pupils need more support from teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Even though there are no pupils at an early stage of acquiring English, more precise assessment is needed of the learning needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language, or who may speak English while their parents speak other languages.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very well for the personal development of pupils. It is a highly spiritual school and pupils bring this sense of reflective meaning into their own lives. The school builds the pupils' personal awareness of right and wrong and the part they play as young citizens. Particularly good is the way the school prepares pupils for life in a multi-racial and multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of the safety, health and welfare of its pupils.

There is a very good relationship between school and home, and parents say how much they value the school. This supports the pupils' learning. Even so, inspectors agree with parents that the school could do more to involve parents and carers in supporting their children's learning, perhaps through a home-school book to increase day-by-day communication. Although the school takes good care of pupils, opportunities are missed to show pupils why they succeed, why they meet problems and what they need to do to improve, for example, through marking and target-setting.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads her staff very effectively. The staff work as a close-knit team, providing clear leadership for their own areas of responsibility; their work is underpinned by efficient and effective management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors meet their statutory responsibilities and ensure that the school runs efficiently. Their longer-term planning, however, does not provide clear enough direction for the future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance rigorously and systematically. Even so, this process does not identify with enough precision areas for improvement.

The strategic use of resources	The school has a very large financial surplus at the end of each year, and this is because governors miss opportunities for necessary investment. Although governors use the principles of best value, they do not sufficiently compare practice in St Alban's with that in other very effective schools.
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There are enough qualified staff to meet the requirements of the curriculum, although more teaching assistants are needed. The accommodation provides a stimulating place in which to learn, but it has not been effectively developed to meet the needs of children at the Foundation Stage. In the main, resources for learning, for example, the computer suite, are of good range and quality. Resources for the Foundation Stage, however, need improvement, for instance, by additional large play equipment. Improved delegation to key staff is allowing greater innovation, but this needs to extend further, for example, to leadership and management of the Foundation Stage. Governors and staff make good use of outside advice and compare the school's performance with that of other schools. The new headteacher is beginning to lead the school to challenge the way things were done in the past, and this has been a good start to planning for future improvements that would allow the school to provide even better value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Teaching is good and helps their children make good progress • Their children are expected to work hard and do their best • They can discuss their concerns with the school • The school helps their children behave well and develop as caring young people • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Information on the progress of their children • Involvement of parents in their children's learning • Activities outside lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

A very high proportion of parents returned the questionnaires and almost all expressed very positive views about the school. Inspectors agree with these positive views. They find that teachers use homework effectively, but do not keep parents sufficiently informed of its point and purpose. Inspectors agree that more needs to be done to help parents to work in partnership with the school in support of their children's learning. There is a good range of activities outside lessons, although these are mainly for pupils in Years 3 to 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school is very well led by the headteacher and she is strongly supported by other staff in their management roles

1. The school has benefited from very strong leadership in the past. As one result, governors and staff are completely committed to providing high quality education and to achieving high standards of pupils' attainment. This is at the heart of the school's success and creates a purposeful and aspirational climate for both teaching and learning. The new headteacher continues this tradition but has already increased the appreciation by staff that they are a team that divides and shares responsibilities, while strengthening the sense of working together towards a common goal. This is beginning to help senior managers to see how their roles and responsibilities fit together as part of the planning and management for the future as well as for the day-to-day. This is helping them use information from assessment and observation of teaching more effectively to see where their strengths lie and what they need to change, adapt and improve.
2. The deputy headteacher has a clear understanding of the nature and importance of his unique role, and makes a significant contribution, for example, through ensuring good communication between staff and by taking assemblies. The main subject managers and the manager for assessment and special educational needs are effective and efficient managers, and now work as a strong and central school management team. This team provides strong leadership and an increasingly clear direction for the school. Many of the school's policies are out of date, and this team is now reviewing them so that they become a clear agreement of the quality required and the procedures that will ensure and continuously improve that quality.
3. The headteacher recognises that the school improvement plan needs to be more precisely targeted in order to provide an effective tool for further improvement. Targets are cautious predictions rather than goals to be achieved by using every part of the school's capabilities and by identifying precisely where things need to improve.

The teaching and learning are very good

4. Strong leadership has helped staff become an expert and skilled teaching team. The teaching observed was in most cases good or better and half was very good or excellent. It is most effective in Years 5 and 6 and in the nursery. The good and very good teaching supports very good learning because:
 - teachers plan in detail with clear objectives, providing a rich variety of learning opportunities and work that is well suited to each level of pupils' abilities;
 - these teachers have a knowledge and understanding of the subject material, and choose and use resources well because they know what is needed;
 - they challenge pupils to achieve the highest standards and lessons have pace and excitement;
 - they use language extremely well not only to explain but also to drive pupils to think through problems for themselves;
 - they use assessment to ensure that each pupil receives the support they need and the level of challenge they require;

- they manage the lessons well so that time is not wasted and every pupil concentrates on their work.

The best teachers evaluate each lesson so that the next lesson is even better. When the teaching is less effective it is because:

- teachers have less experience with the ages of pupils in the class;
 - teachers overly control and direct the learning;
 - the room and resources are not well suited to the learning needs of the pupils.
5. When the teaching is very good, the learning is also very good. Girls and boys of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds usually make the same progress as other pupils. Pupils work co-operatively and collaboratively, clear in what they need to do and why and that they need to solve problems or improve their work for themselves. Even so, they do not always know how to do this. They take great pride in and care with their work, and work quickly while not forgetting the need to work accurately. They think about what they are doing and this increases the quality of their work. They complete homework conscientiously and attend extra lessons willingly.
6. When the learning is less rich and rapid, it is because:
- the teacher controls the learning too much and does not allow the pupils to try things out for themselves, for example, when learning music composition;
 - the class is large and there is no teaching assistant to address individual needs;
 - the work is too difficult for most pupils, for example, telling the time using half and whole hours;
 - the size of the classroom is too small and does not allow the range of activities required, for example, the reception classroom.
7. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well. Teachers plan these lessons meticulously and expertly, and help pupils to understand how important these skills are, for example, when arguing the case for and against corporal punishment. The learning is considerably enhanced because teachers do not treat these lessons as separate, but build this learning into other subjects such as geography and history. Information and communication technology is playing an increasing part in raising standards, again with teachers creating a good balance between discrete lessons and using these skills in other subjects.

The school uses assessment effectively

8. The school both assesses and uses analyses of assessment information very effectively. This allows teachers to set work at levels of difficulty appropriate to each pupil. It also enables teachers to plan their teaching in ways that move one step at a time, and to revisit areas that have not been learned securely, for example, when selecting pupils for 'booster' classes. Careful analysis identifies whether girls do as well as boys, and whether pupils of different ages and abilities make equally good progress; this led for example, to teaching inference and deduction in more detail. The school uses this information to track the progress of each pupil, highlighting when extra help is needed and deploying, for instance, a teaching assistant to give extra support. In this way, areas of general weakness are identified and all teachers pay increased attention to specific areas of learning or groups of pupils. This well-managed area of the school's work provides the data for even more probing interpretation of where the school is doing

well and where there needs to be improvement, for example, the progress of pupils who speak other languages than English.

Provision for personal development is very good

9. This is another fundamental strength of the school. Pupils develop as caring and perceptive young people, capable of taking even more responsibility for their own work and lives.
10. Compared with all schools, provision for spiritual development is excellent. Assemblies are highly reflective, allowing pupils quiet time to think about the purpose and meaning of human lives and their lives in particular. This provision flows naturally into imaginative and creative writing, expressive artwork, engaged singing and the study of the importance of faith and belief for other people. Much of the learning in religious education challenges pupils to ask searching questions about their faith and commitment in great depth, and then consider how they apply to their own lives. This allows them to express and investigate their own developing spirituality.
11. Provision for moral development is very good. Staff have high and clear expectations of pupils, and explain why things are right or wrong, for example, arguing for and against issues of public concern. They help pupils understand that deciding what is right and wrong is not always easy, and needs to be thought through carefully, for example, judging whether something is good or bad just because they like or dislike it. Pupils relate their spiritual development to their moral development, realising that their feelings can both help and hinder doing what is right.
12. Provision for social development is very good. In the main, pupils learn by playing their part in an orderly and purposeful community, realising that everyone depends on everyone else and has a part to play. Visits and activities outside school help them understand the wider society and the part they will need to play as citizens of Britain and the world. The house system involves all pupils in making a contribution to group success, and the roles of head boy and girl and prefect duties allow older pupils to take on responsibilities that demand initiative. The school is sensibly planning to extend this provision through the formation of a school council.
13. Provision for cultural development is very good. History and geography are well taught, introducing pupils to the cultural life in past societies and in present day societies. Art and music introduce pupils to personal creativity and the work of major artists and musicians. Many pupils are learning individual instruments. Even so, providing further opportunities for pupils to explore their own creativity remains an area for development. Especially strong is the way the school introduces pupils to other cultures and faiths, alongside and enriching their Catholic faith and heritage. A good example was the visit to a local synagogue. This is an area of considerable improvement since the last inspection, and, although governors rightly want it to be even better, pupils are well prepared for life in a multi-cultural and faith society, seeing difference as enriching not threatening.

Governors, staff and pupils show commitment to achieving very high standards

14. The school has many strengths and the previous paragraphs draw out the key strengths that inspectors found make this a very good school. Underpinning these strengths and driving them forward is the commitment of governors, staff and pupils, spurred on by the parents. The school has a determination to achieve the highest quality and the highest standards, and the expression of this commitment was seen in the focused teaching, in the determined learning in classes and the ambitions of the pupils expressed in discussion. Even so, and at this stage in its history, the school needs greater innovation and even greater skills to achieve its ambition, while building upon very secure foundations.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Planning for the longer-term success of the school, linked to better use of financial resources

15. The governors and staff need to plan more effectively for raising standards even further. At present, targets are cautious predictions rather than goals informed by performance in extremely effective schools in similar social contexts. The school often exceeds its targets, an indication that they were possibly too low. Targets at present are not specific enough because they do not specify the intended progress between Years 1 and 2, and Years 3 and 6, and the pupils who should attain each level, including the very high Level 6.
16. Currently the annual and three-year school improvement plans lack coherence and cohesion, and it is unclear why priorities are set in the order they are. There needs to be a clearer rationale for each decision scheduled over three years. There is not a strong enough link between targets for each year and the changes in provision, the staff development required and, above all, the finance necessary.
17. A feature of this imprecise long-term planning is that the plan does not set out a way of measuring progress against interim targets or display criteria to measure success. For example, present planning does not specify the nature and degree of the excellent or very good teaching required in each year, standards of attainment for pupils to achieve by the end of each year or improvements to the curriculum required to meet these numerical targets. Present planning lacks a systematic schedule for monitoring and evaluation, and agreed times to review progress and adapt planning if required.
18. Many of the school's policies are very out-of-date and require review. This means that the school becomes overly dependent on the generic skills and understanding of individual members of staff and, consequently, necessary improvements do not occur. For example, unless provision for the Foundation Stage is improved, future attainment at the end of Year 2 will be threatened. Similarly, the underdeveloped programme for target setting and individual planning by pupils will restrict their ability to reach higher standards.
19. One of the first things the new headteacher did was to audit learning resources. This led to immediate improvements in, for example, resources for learning in classrooms and a significant enhancement to multi-cultural texts in the library. Similarly, seeking the views of parents also identified areas for improvement. Governors and senior management see this inspection as part of this auditing process, and need to find ways to make this process of continual self-evaluation a more powerful way of driving

continuous improvement. Challenging present practices would be one way of increasing the school's value for money. For example, staff did not seem to be aware of the ways target-setting had been developed in other very effective schools or the importance of assessments that lead to explanations to pupils of how they might improve their work. The school does compare its own performance with that of other schools by using data produced by the government, but more use needs to be made of visits to schools that are even more effective. This should lead to more effective use of advisors who can bring a supportive but outside view.

20. The school has an extremely large financial surplus. It is running at almost 20 per cent of annual revenue when the expected level is six per cent. The reasons are complex, but are related to the school's insufficiently rigorous and systematic auditing of strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, although class sizes are relatively high, governors have not invested in sufficient teaching assistants. Similarly, because there is no up-to-date policy for the Foundation Stage against which to evaluate provision, resources for learning and accommodation are inadequate. There is no rolling programme for maintenance and redecoration of the buildings.

Provision for children at the Foundation Stage

21. The school has invested in new accommodation for the nursery. This provides an attractive setting, although it is still rather cramped. The internal accommodation is arranged in ways that do not allow easy opportunities for children to enjoy free-play activities and the outside area is small and does not have a sufficient range of large play equipment. When on her own, the teacher cannot see all the children in the class room, and this poses a safety concern. The reception classroom is much too small for the number of children, and does not have easy access to large-scale play equipment outside.
22. The curricular provision is well planned so that children cover the required areas of learning. The manner in which the school manages the way children can steadily move from joining the nursery to the end of the reception year is good, and enables a smooth transition to work within the National Curriculum. Even so, the provision for the Foundation Stage as a whole is not sufficiently integrated; the children in the reception class cannot benefit from learning resources available to the nursery, for instance, outdoor play facilities.
23. Teaching in the nursery is very good and children make very good progress. Most children join the nursery with above-average attainment and move on to the reception class with well above the expected levels of attainment in all the areas of learning. However, learning in the reception class slows. This is for three key reasons. The teaching is less effective because: first, the class is too large; second, the accommodation is too restricting and, third, the teacher is less experienced with children of this age. Even so, most children are on target to exceed their early learning goals in all the areas of learning by the time they move on to National Curriculum work.
24. These weaknesses have come about because the school does not have a coherent and comprehensive policy for this stage. Consequently, governors and senior managers do not have a measure against which to evaluate what needs to improve, or to form a secure basis for planning longer-term improvement.
25. The school does not have a key manager for this stage. Consequently, evaluation and monitoring are not focused enough, and staff development is not sufficiently related to improving performance. So that the school gains a clearer view of what needs to be

improved, staff could benefit from visiting very good provision elsewhere and comparing what these schools do with present provision at St Alban's.

Involving parents in support for their children's learning

26. There are very good relationships between home and school, and parents say how much they value the school. Parents welcome the way the new headteacher has sought their views and they find it easy to discuss any concerns with teachers. Even so, parents feel they could be more involved with their children's work, working in more productive partnership with the school. Inspectors agree. Existing good relationships provide the school with an important opportunity for improving standards.
27. At present, teachers do not use a common format for informing parents of homework tasks. Similarly, reading diaries are not used consistently to inform parents or encourage their support at home. Parents do not feel they know enough about targets for their children or how they can help their children to achieve them. Annual reports do not always set targets for improvement. A possible way forward is to institute a home-school book that brings together the pupils' targets and plans for their achievement, homework records, reading records and records of individual achievements. Improved communication will enable parents to play a greater part in support of their children's learning.

Helping individual pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning

28. Teaching tends to direct the learning of pupils too much. While this approach is effective, it means that pupils complete tasks as defined by the teacher, rather than find solutions to problems through their own experiments and investigations and research on their own that finds ways to extend, enrich and improve their work. Thus, all pupils, and especially the very able, miss opportunities to reach their full potential. The overly controlled learning restricts the pupils' ability to learn for themselves.
29. Classes are larger than in most schools, and inspectors found that pupils made the best progress when a teaching assistant was available to work alongside the teacher, helping and guiding individuals or groups of similar ability. When teaching assistants were not available pupils of different ability did not make equally good progress. This was because either the more able pupils completed tasks that they found they could do quickly and could not see how to extend, or pupils of just below average ability found the work too difficult because they had not quite understood the first part of the lesson. Similarly, however fast the teachers worked, they often could not get around to helping each group enough. Inspectors saw pupils waiting some time for help because the teacher was engaged with helping another group.
30. Teachers are very good at asking questions that force pupils to think for themselves. They then build on pupils' contributions by helping them understand why the contribution was successful or not, and bringing in other contributions to improve on the point made. In the best lessons, this assessment of the success of pupils played a central role in the final session of a lesson, but in other lessons this session was not given enough time.
31. Objectives for lessons were usually appropriate, but teachers tended not to make absolutely clear what the pupils were to learn, and what particular skill the teacher would later test. This meant that pupils missed the focus of the lesson, and, therefore, the particular skill or understanding their work needed to help them learn and to show. This restricted their ability to reflect upon and evaluate their own work.

32. Teachers mark work conscientiously. They rarely show the pupils, however, why the work is good or how it could be improved; comments were rarely related to the learning objectives of the lesson. Marking that does not help pupils understand where they have succeeded and how to improve holds back their progress and restricts their ability to move forward.
33. Target setting linked to plans to achieve those targets is not well developed in the school. Consequently, pupils do not have a clear understanding of the standard they need to achieve and how they can achieve it. Better use could be made of the school's assessment information to set targets for pupils that help them understand what standard they need to reach. Currently, pupils do not develop sufficiently the skill of evaluating their own work and planning ways to improve. The school could profitably investigate such programmes in other very effective schools, perhaps considering including in home-school books, pupils' targets for the week, plans for their achievement and self-evaluation at the end of the week.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

34. The school has many strengths and few weaknesses. In its striving for further improvement, however, governors and staff should consider the following areas for improvement.
35. To raise standards of attainment further, governors and staff should:
- (1) Create and implement a better long-term plan linked precisely to financial investment by:
- ensuring that targets are ambitious, becoming challenging goals informed by performance in other very effective schools; (paragraph 15)
 - designing the improvement plan so that every priority is chosen to contribute to the achievement of these targets and goals; (paragraph 16)
 - ensuring that the plan makes clear the quality to be achieved so that progress can be measured; (paragraph 17)
 - ensuring that the school has policies that describe the quality required and how that quality is to be achieved; (paragraph 18)

- basing the plan on better auditing of the school's strengths and weaknesses, identifying opportunities to be taken and threats to be avoided; (paragraph 19)
 - making certain that finance is invested prudently but sufficiently to support chosen priorities. (Paragraph 20)
- (2) Improve provision for the Foundation Stage by:
- ensuring that this stage is the responsibility of a key manager; (paragraph 25)
 - drawing up a policy for this stage that makes clear the accommodation and learning resources required, related to provision for each step in the children's learning; (paragraph 24)
 - improving resources for learning, in particular large-scale outside play equipment; (paragraphs 21 – 23)
 - reviewing the accommodation and its use so that provision can be integrated and enriched. (Paragraph 22)
- (3) Help parents to play a greater part in supporting the learning of their children by:
- improving the day-to-day communication between home and school concerning pupils' learning and progress; (paragraph 26– 27)
 - drawing together information for parents on homework, reading, targets and records of achievement on a continuous basis as well as through school reports. (Paragraph 26– 27)
- (4) Help pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning by:
- planning teaching in ways that allow pupils more opportunities to work independently; (paragraph 28)
 - increasing the support and guidance for individual pupils by increasing the number of teaching assistants; (paragraph 29)
 - using assessment information to give more feedback to pupils, enabling them to understand more clearly how to improve their work; (paragraphs 30 – 32)
 - Develop further ways for pupils to agree targets, plan ways to achieve them and evaluate their own progress. (Paragraph 33)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	12	8	6	0	0	0
Percentage	10	41	28	21	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	3	207
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	9

FTE means full-time equivalent. **Some children attend the nursery in the morning and the reception class in the afternoon.**

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
%	%

School data	5.5
National comparative data	6.1

School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	16	14	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	16
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	27	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (100)	90 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	16	13
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	27	30	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (100)	100 (100)	90 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	14	12	14
	Total	27	25	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (90)	86 (90)	97 (93)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	13
	Girls	13	12	12
	Total	26	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (83)	90 (90)	86 (77)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	172
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	29.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	1.5
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	487465
Total expenditure	509381
Expenditure per pupil	2337
Balance brought forward from previous year	110314
Balance carried forward to next year	88398

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	216
Number of questionnaires returned	110

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	31	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	40	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	52	10	1	2
The teaching is good.	69	30	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	39	9	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	26	3	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	19	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	51	43	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	29	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	41	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	43	7	3	3

Other issues raised by parents

- They welcomed their impression that the new headteacher was approachable and wanted to work more closely with parents.
- Some felt that more teaching assistants would help all pupils and particularly those with special educational needs.
- Some parents felt the school needed to review the setting of homework over holiday periods.
- Several parents were concerned over admission procedures to the school because they said that the admission procedures meant their children needed to attend different primary schools. Inspectors checked these procedures and found they are managed correctly, even though this has led on occasion to children not being able to attend the same school as their brothers or sisters. The reasons could have been explained to these parents more clearly.