

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTH WALKDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Salford, Manchester

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105922

Headteacher: Mr G Jones

Reporting inspector: A C Davies
3639

Dates of inspection: 27-28th November 2000

Inspection number: 224390

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Worsley Road North
Walkden
Manchester

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Councillor W B Pennington

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

North Walkden is a primary school with 205 children, aged between 4 and 11, on roll. There are a further 26 attending the nursery, full-time. The school is situated in Salford on the outskirts of Manchester and serves a mixed community, including people from private and rented accommodation. Parents are very keen for their children to do well. The percentage of children who are entitled to school meals free of charge is above the national average. The number of children on the special educational needs register is below average, although the numbers with statements is about that expected for a school of this size. No one has English as an additional language. When they first start school the majority of children have personal and academic skills that are below those expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many strengths, which far outweigh the weaknesses. Standards have been steadily improving, despite some variation from time to time. Teaching is making a positive contribution to helping children learn with specific attention given to more able children. The headteacher is very much at the heart of the school ensuring that children enjoy their education and behave well. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher's infectious enthusiasm results in all staff being dedicated to the needs of all children and ensuring that they have every chance to succeed.
- Children's excellent behaviour, keen attitudes to and enthusiasm for, learning helps them to achieve well.
- More able children achieve well because of the careful planning and imaginative tasks that are provided for them.
- The school provides a whole range of activities, including residential visits, for children that are well beyond just the subjects of the National Curriculum.
- There is a special atmosphere created within the school that puts great emphasis on the individual needs of children and all staff.
- Standards in mathematics are good because of the effective concentration on mental and oral work and the range of tasks provided for children of different abilities.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing are impeded by children's lack of use of appropriate punctuation, grammar and, to a lesser extent, opportunities to apply their writing in other subjects.
- Children's skills in using information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.

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 November 1996 and since that time it has made good progress. Standards have steadily improved, especially the percentage of children attaining the higher levels in mathematics and English. There has been significant improvement in reading. The teaching has now more positive features than before and the school's leadership is much more focussed on raising standards. The school has taken appropriate steps in dealing with the weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection. The improvements made in assessment and planning have been very significant with this area now being strong. The needs of more able children are now effectively

addressed resulting in this also being one of the school's main strengths. The health and safety issues identified have also been satisfactorily addressed.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	B	D	C
mathematics	B	C	B	A
science	B	C	C	B

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

The school's national test results have shown significant improvement over the past five years. Standards in mathematics and science are now at least in line with national averages and above, or well above those of similar schools. This is also the case with English although the 2000 results were, as expected, below the national average because of a significant number of children experiencing difficulties with their writing. However, even this group shows good progress compared to their standards at the age of 7 and when they started school. Standards in reading have improved because of the additional emphasis given to this area over the past few years. This has resulted in children of all abilities achieving well in reading. The school has not experienced the same success with writing although the higher ability children are successfully using a wide vocabulary. In mathematics and science older children achieve very well. This is mainly due to the good impact of the mental and oral session within the numeracy strategy and because there is good planning for the needs of children of different abilities. The school has set challenging literacy and numeracy targets through to the year 2002. These targets have been exceeded in the past two years.

The national tests for 7 year olds shows that there has also been steady improvement, especially in the past two years. Test results for 7-year-olds have been in line with the national averages in the past two years. Writing remains to be the area giving greatest concern. The significant improvement made in reading and mathematics with this age group has not yet had the same impact on the standards of writing. The inconsistent use of correct grammar and punctuation is the main barrier to children achieving well in writing. The good attention to providing tasks for children of different abilities is helping children achieve well in other areas.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Children are keen and enthusiastic at school. They display a sense of real enjoyment about their education and are working hard at improving the quality of their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Children are particularly polite and courteous. They find it easy to speak to adults and have a mature attitude to learning.
Personal development and	Very Good. Children are encouraged to take on additional responsibility.

relationships	This includes taking on specific duties, which they undertake with much pride. There are many examples of children being encouraged to think for themselves and show initiative.
Attendance	Despite the school's best efforts the attendance remains below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

There is a great deal of very good and good teaching evident in this school. All staff are particularly effective in teaching the basic skills of reading and number. This has the effect of improving standards and ensuring that children are achieving well. All children are making good progress because of the way teachers plan for and support the needs of children of different abilities. The teachers in Years 5 and 6, in particular, set challenging tasks and expect children to work at a demanding pace. This helps to move children's learning forwards and helps them to consolidate on what they already know.

Teachers are very thorough in their planning and have a range of systems in place to help them assess how well children are doing. Children are made aware of what they need to do next in order to improve by having targets set out in the front of their books. This is helping them to focus on their learning and encouraging them to work hard. The planning is also ensuring that children's learning is benefiting by the way teachers build progressively on what has been taught before. The excellent behaviour that exists in all classes is also helping children to concentrate well. Teachers' good classroom management ensures that no time is lost to unnecessary distractions and there is no time wasted dealing with anti-social attitudes. Teaching is very good in 35 per cent of lessons, good in 45 per cent and satisfactory in 20 per cent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is wide range of activities provided for children outside school hours. In school, there is appropriate attention given to literacy and numeracy and a growing amount of time devoted to developing information and communication technology skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for children with learning difficulties in the classroom is good. Teachers have correctly identified steps that children need to take in order to improve and provide appropriate support for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very Good. The assemblies make a powerful contribution to spiritual development. Everything about the way adults relate to children is helping to reinforce what is and is not acceptable in terms of behaviour and attitudes. This is helping to create a very special atmosphere in the school. Children are provided with many opportunities to represent the school in a range of activities outside school. This is helping to foster

	good relationships with the outside community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Outstanding. Every child is well known to all staff. There is much time dedicated to care for the academic and pastoral needs of all children. The school has recently introduced very secure systems to help ensure that children and staff are aware of what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

Parents are encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school. There is a very positive relationship established between parents and the staff, which is helping everyone to work together to ensure that there is effective provision for children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very Good. There is a strong commitment to providing every member of staff with opportunities to develop professionally. This is having a positive impact on the way the school is able to respond to national and local initiatives. The headteacher is extremely popular with children, staff and parents and no-one is left in any doubt about his commitment to high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have appropriate committees in place to help them work effectively and efficiently. They are provided with enough information to enable them to recognise the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has developed very effective systems for using the school's test results to set future priorities. An effective system of target-setting has been developed as a result of this work which is aimed at further improving standards. Informal arrangements for checking the quality of teaching are having the desired effect of recognising strengths and weaknesses in teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Money is spent wisely and takes full account of the professional needs of staff as well as whole school priorities. The senior management team and governors are conscious of the need to link spending to raising standards or improving provision. This they do successfully.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher is very approachable and well liked by children and parents. • The standards of behaviour of the children in school. • The approachability of all staff. • What the school provides for the children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consistency with which homework is used by all staff. • The amount and range of activities provided for children after school.

beyond the normal curriculum.	
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The parents are right to be very appreciative of the work and dedication of all the staff. They are quick to recognise all that the school provides for their children outside the main curriculum. They are also right to be delighted about the behaviour and attitudes of children. The homework provided for children is well organised and is directly related to the work that is taking place in lessons. Although the number of activities provided for children after school is limited, the children do not lose out because they have much more than many other children by way of additional activities in and out of school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- **The headteacher's infectious enthusiasm results in all staff being dedicated to the needs of all children and ensuring that they have every chance to succeed.**
- 1 Within moments of entering the school you are left in no doubt that children enjoy coming to school. There is positive feel to the relationships that exist at all levels. At a time when schools are feeling pressurised about raising standards there is a pleasing balance created which puts equal importance on children enjoying their education and attaining well.
 - 2 At the heart of the school is a headteacher who is exceptionally popular with the children, staff, parents and governors. His welcoming manner belies a person who has a real sense of pride in what his children achieve. He is fully aware of how his school is measured against performance in national tests but keeps a very careful eye on both the academic and pastoral care that is provided for children.
 - 3 He manages to be visible around the school. He therefore knows all the children and they know him. The ease of the conversation that ensues gives confidence to the children. He has a jovial manner but one that earns the respect of the children and staff. Children feel able to talk about aspects relating to siblings at home or about the work they have just produced. No child achieves a significant award or recognition outside the school without him knowing about it. At the same time he is very aware of each child's performance in relation to National Curriculum tests or interim standards attained in end of year or term tests. The same applies to the staff. He is extremely supportive of all his staff and they are provided with every encouragement to improve their professional standing even though this has meant that some have moved on to senior positions in other schools or have been seconded to work on specific tasks within the Local Education Authority. He views their success with more than a certain amount of personal pride.
 - 4 The parents were very quick to point out to the inspection team that the headteacher was very much at the heart of all that happens in the school. The parents' meeting and the additional comments on several of the pre-inspection questionnaires gave added testimony to this. He has an infectious sense of humour which he manages to use to good effect when dealing with large groups of adults or indeed when talking to groups of children. Discussions with children revealed that this was a significant feature in helping children feel confident when they were concerned about something.
 - 5 He has won the full and undivided support of his governors who feel very positive about his style of leadership and his professional standing. They feel very involved and well informed and have a great deal of faith in his management style and his ability to take difficult decisions when needed. He has also ensured that all governors are working for the good of the children and many work on a volunteer basis in the school.
 - 6 The most important attribute that his style of leadership brings is that all staff are committed to the children's needs. It is difficult to imagine a member of staff not believing that all children are capable of achieving well when the headteacher is continually reminding children of their potential to attain highly. There is a real sense of purpose and commitment amongst the staff to ensure that all children are provided with every opportunity to achieve as well as possible.

7 One could easily be misled into thinking that the headteacher's leadership style was wholly informal. However, this is far from the case. He has built around him a group of very able staff who carry out formal and very focused tasks as is seen in the target-setting procedures that are being developed. The headteacher is very aware of all that is happening and will give his undivided support to any initiative that is aimed at helping children improve their academic or personal skills.

- **Children's excellent behaviour, keen attitudes to and enthusiasm for, learning help them to achieve well.**

8 One of the strongest features of the school is the excellent behaviour of children. This is not only in respect of their attitudes in lessons but also in the way they talk to adults around the school and in the way they respond to their teachers.

9 In lessons the positive attitudes that children display is having a very good impact on their learning. In the reception class, for example, the firm but friendly approach of the class teacher helps children to feel confident about working independently. When they do so there are very good levels of concentration and maturity exhibited by the children. This is seen when children move to use the taped stories on their own and put on headphones and co-operate over the use of the tape recorder. In a Year 3 literacy lesson the teacher is effective in giving just enough direction for the children to make decisions on their own. During the initial session children are confident enough to ask a range of appropriate questions related to using information books. The enthusiasm is very apparent and results in one child finding information about the Ancient Egyptians and explaining what he has learnt to the rest of the class. Children's keenness, politeness and use of good manners are outstanding features of the lesson. They are excited about learning and are keen to be directly involved in finding out information for themselves. In Years 5 and 6 the very good attitudes and excellent behaviour of children is maximising the amount of time available for learning. The teachers are able to concentrate on teaching skills and new techniques and not have to worry about distractions. The literacy lesson on imperative verbs is a good example of children's minds being highly focussed therefore leading to discussions which is helping move on their learning. Similarly, at the beginning of an art lesson with the same group there is a very good discussion taking place, which allows the children to check that they are using the correct techniques when shading or using texture. In Year 6 the teacher feels confident about setting challenging tasks because she knows that the children will put a great deal of effort into their work but at the same time be confident enough to ask for help when needed.

10 The positive outlook that children have towards school is apparent from the moment they enter the classrooms in the morning. Year 6 children, for example, enter their classroom at the start of the day and find a problem awaiting them. They quickly and purposefully get on with the task at hand and give their full attention to it. They quietly greet their friends when they arrive but the noise level never rises. The register is taken almost incidentally with the teacher greeting each individual with a positive comment. Many children have already attended the 'breakfast club'. Each morning parents have an opportunity of joining their children for tea and toast. At these sessions there is a very positive atmosphere established with children greeting each other and chatting to their parents. This is a very positive way to start the school day and approximately a half of the children in the school take advantage of the facility available to them. The system relies on volunteer parents to organise and supervise the arrangements. It is a testament of the parents' commitment to school that it is extremely well run.

- 11 At lunchtime, there is a very pleasant environment established. Children sit sensibly and chat at an acceptable level and show very good manners. They enjoy these times and are courteous to the lunchtime supervisors. Older children have responsible tasks and look after younger children in a mature manner that does not take away the opportunities for younger children to show independence.
- 12 During sessions with the ballet company who visited the school at the time of the inspection the children show great respect for the adults who work with them. Despite the fact that many children are meeting new challenges and are presented with situations, which could easily have led them to snigger there is a very positive attitude shown with all children showing much respect to their visitors. This results in it being easy for the group to work with the children. The children often perform or are involved in visits out of school. During these times the children's behaviour is exemplary, which is a point that many volunteer parents who accompany the groups wanted to make. The staff feel it is a pleasure to take children on visits because of the many compliments received from the public.
- **More able children achieve well because of the careful planning and imaginative tasks that are provided for them.**
- 13 At the time of the previous inspection the provision for more able children was regarded as one of the school's weaknesses. Since that time there has been considerable amount of time given to looking at the needs of more able children and providing more appropriately for them. This has resulted in challenging work being set for them and in the teacher's planning making explicit reference to the tasks that are provided for them.
- 14 This is seen as early on as the reception class when tasks for the more able are identified in the planning. One of the great successes of this age group is the way the teacher has used resources effectively to free up adults to spend prolonged periods with different groups of children, including the more able. For example, most children are able to work purposefully and independently whilst the classroom support assistant is engaged with the more able children on a word or letter 'bingo' game. The availability of the classroom assistant helps make the learning that much more purposeful. For example, she is able to question children and therefore re-inforce the learning. The careful preparation and good deployment of the support staff is due to the careful planning that takes place to enable the classroom support to know exactly when to intervene. Children in the same class are independent in their use of the computer and tape recorder. This does not only help to engage them in appropriate learning activities but allows adults to focus on other children.
- 15 During literacy session with Years 1 and 2 the teachers are very conscious of the need to challenge the more able children. The whole class shared reading sees the teacher in Year 1 deliberately focussing her questioning related to appropriate use of punctuation to children who are ready to consider the use of exclamation and question marks. In Year 2 the teacher puts emphasis on specific spelling rules, such as, doubling the consonant before adding a 'ing' to certain verbs.
- 16 More able children in the older classes are also given careful consideration. The Year 5 teacher gives more able artists the task of considering which direction the light is falling on an arrangement of instruments. The expectation is that their sketches will contain appropriate shading with tone and texture being a prominent part of their work. In the same class, during a literacy lesson the teacher is challenging children to think by asking probing questions, such as,

'How could this be improved?' when considering instructional texts. Her careful use of questioning to help children recollect what they have covered previously helps one child to come up with the term 'imperative' to describe the type of instructional texts they are looking at. The Year 6 teacher uses a system of 'flash cards', which she hands out to all children to help children relate to the instructional text they are studying. The cards are graded in difficulty and the more able children have to consider when the content of their card is being featured within the text. The more able the child the more abstract the information on the card. This works well in keeping all children focused as they assiduously follow the text.

- **The school provides a whole range of activities, including residential visits, for children that is well beyond just the subjects of the National Curriculum.**

- 17 The school goes out of its way to ensure that children are provided with a broad and balanced curriculum. To this end the staff look at different ways in which the children's skills can be enhanced through residential visits, visits to places of local interest and through involvement of groups in school. The parents were particularly pleased about this aspect of their children's education and it was point that was made at the pre-inspection meeting with parents and one that came across strongly in the questionnaire replies.
- 18 During the inspection a ballet group was visiting the school and two classes (Year 2 and Year 6) benefited from working with the company. The workshop sessions conducted with the two classes resulted in a small production being put on to which parents were invited. The children benefited in many ways from their involvement with these experts. Firstly, the ballet dancers provided children with a positive role model to help them appreciate the training and hard work that has to be undertaken to enable dancers to reach the standard that they achieve. Secondly, the children learned many new skills, which they will be able to apply in many aspects of their work particularly in dance lessons. Thirdly, performing publicly in front of their parents raises the children's confidence. This brings with it a special sense of pride. The workshop sessions were very well organised by the teachers and the guest dancers and each class spent no more than two hours with the ballet company. The end product, that is, the presentation showed that time had been used productively. This type of event is one of many that occur in the school each year. The calendar of events shows that a visiting poet was working with children in February and a puppet theatre group worked with other groups of children in March.
- 19 The school makes good use of the local community including the Church. There are regular visits taken by different classes to Manchester Airport as part of on-going work. The school also has very good links with the local police and fire service. Children have benefited from seeing at first hand displays by police dogs and the fire service. This has helped to build a positive image of services often viewed negatively by individuals in the locality. The local vicar is on the Governing Body and is a regular visitor to school. The children frequently visit the Church and have often performed there. This involvement has helped them understand more about the working of the Church and the part that the Church plays in our society. Other worship centres including a Jewish Synagogue and Mosque have been visited in the last year.
- 20 Most children benefit from their involvement in the school choir. The children have performed in many local places of interest, including Manchester Cathedral and this has helped to raise the school's profile in the local community. This in turn has led to the headteacher's direct involvement with the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. The benefits from this direct involvement are many. For example, the children visited a very large supermarket to see what

happens to food from the moment it arrives to being sold. These activities help to give children an insight into aspects of everyday life that would otherwise be denied to them.

- 21 The oldest children have a week's residential visit each year and this is something that children look forward to from an early age. There are many other visits arranged to places of local interest, linked directly to work that is on-going in subjects such as science, geography and history. The school has also formed a strong relationship with the local Manchester ice-hockey team and the local rugby league side. Children have benefited from coaching conducted by professional sports persons. This has not just helped to raise the profile of individual fitness but has given the children many positive role models to look up to.

- **There is a special atmosphere created within the school that puts great emphasis on the individual needs of children and all staff.**

- 22 Every member of staff feels valued in this school. This has been recognised by the school being awarded investors in people status on two separate occasions. The school has been recognised for helping to improve staff's professional standing from two points. Firstly, encouraging staff to attend further training focused on improving the school's ability to deal with certain issues, for example, information and communication technology. Secondly, to encourage staff to improve their own skills level so as to develop their own professional needs. Naturally in many cases additional training is able to cover both the points.

- 23 There are very effective procedures in place aimed at helping everyone improve their professional standing. This has benefited not just the teaching staff, but other staff such as the caretaker who has attended formal training on health and safety procedures. This has given him a further qualification and raised his own self-esteem. Similarly, staff who joined the school as classroom assistants have been encouraged and supported to gain further qualification so that they are now qualified nursery nurses.

- 24 Teaching staff have always been encouraged to improve their professional status by undertaking further training. The special educational needs co-ordinator has recently gained further qualification after the school released her so that she could attend regular training sessions. The headteacher has regular discussions with all staff. This is aimed at setting targets for improving their own professional status. This has resulted in staff being very up-to-date with national and local initiatives. The staff have however been very much sought after when it comes to finding teachers who have specialist skills that can benefit other schools. For example, two senior teachers have recently been seconded to the Local Education Authority to support work in literacy and information and communication technology respectively. Despite the potential disruption to the school the headteacher views this as a complement to the school. The reputation of the school is such that there is never a shortage of teachers willing to come and work there.

- 25 The same opportunities are extended to all children. That is, there is every encouragement given to help them achieve as highly as they can. Children are encouraged to share with the rest of the school anything they do within or outside the school. A special assembly is organised for children to show certificates or awards gained during participation in clubs or societies outside the school. The school values this highly and the headteacher and staff are able to point out children who are excelling in activities that have no direct relationship with the school.

- **Standards in mathematics are good because of the effective concentration on mental and oral work and the range of tasks provided for children of different abilities.**

- 26 The national test results for 11-year-olds for the years 2000 shows that the school's results are above the national average and well above that of similar schools. This represents an improving trend which has been gathering momentum since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and since the school has been focusing more on the needs of more able children. Older children therefore achieve very well. This is mainly due to the good impact of the mental and oral session within the numeracy strategy and because there is good planning for the needs of children of different abilities.
- 27 The standards of children aged 7 have steadily improved to a position of being in line with the national averages for the first time in many years in the year 2000. The school is now successful in getting many children to a position where far more children are attaining the expected level for their age than ever before. This reflects the good achievement being made by the lower attaining children. The percentage of children attaining above the expected level for their age tends to fluctuate each year but there been steady improvement in the progress being made by children who are not so able or have special educational needs.
- 28 Amongst the reasons for the improvement has been the impact the teaching has had on children's learning. Teachers have focused on teaching the basic skills of number with very good work being carried out at the beginning of lessons (during mental and oral work). In Year 2 for example, the teacher uses resources such as a number square or number snakes very successfully to help children work out a variety of number operations. The same resource is used effectively to explain to children how to speed up the way they work out the answers. The teacher is very aware of the children that need support and ensures that questions are directed at individuals according to what they are able to cope with. The Year 3 teacher successfully motivates children by using interesting methods to help them deal with potentially difficult mathematical ideas, such as, learning about the values of fractions. The use of a dice makes the learning interesting and the majority of children are able to compare the various fractions with ease.
- 29 Older children in Years 5 and 6 work at a demanding pace. More able children are expected to complete a given amount of work within a certain time scale. The planning in a Year 5 lesson is very good. There is careful consideration given to the needs of all children and different tasks organised according to ability. The same awareness of the differing needs of children is seen when the teacher intervenes effectively with different groups giving appropriate support, when needed. Two of the most noticeable features of the lesson are the high work rate of children and the positive working ethic that exists. In Year 6, many of the same features are evident. During a registration period one morning children are presented with a difficult problem, that of working out the number of squares present in a chess board. All children are trying very hard to work out a formula for solving this demanding task. No-one gives up even when they discover that the problem is much more difficult than it first seems. The good pace of the mental and oral work at the beginning of the lessons is challenging children. This is mainly because the pace of the session is so brisk. However, it is evident that the vast majority rise to the challenge with many stating that mathematics is their favourite subject.
- 30 The staff in each class have established a good working ethos. The children's mathematical work benefits from this. The children are keen to do well and children of different abilities are

appropriately supported. This has helped to raise standards in mathematics and especially raised children's confidence in the subject.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- **Standards in writing are impeded by children's lack of use of appropriate punctuation, grammar and, to a lesser extent, opportunities to apply their writing in other subjects.**
- 31 The school is successful in getting children to write at length and standards in writing are in line with those of similar schools. However, throughout the school the standards of written work are inhibited by the poor quality of children's punctuation and grammar. In Year 2, for example, children sequence their work well and their stories make sense. However, the lack of use of punctuation and poor spelling detracts from the overall quality of the work. Occasionally the children do not check the writing and therefore words are omitted. For example, an able Year 2 child writes, 'I went to the pub in night.' Very seldom are full stops or capital letters used and too frequently the word 'and' is used instead of starting a new sentence. Spelling is also an issue with age group. Common words that they meet frequently in their reading are spelt incorrectly. For example the word 'said' is written as 'sead'; the word 'they' as 'thay'; the word 'every' as 'evry'; and the word 'again' as 'agen'. Children do however write lengthy stories as is seen in stories like, 'Dragon in the Playground'. The work is interesting but contains several basic errors and tends to be related as a series of unpunctuated dialogue. Less able children are still at the stage of forgetting to leave spaces between their words.
- 32 Older children in Years 5 and 6 still have the problem of demarcating sentences. The writing of over-long sentences makes it difficult for the reader to follow the writer's train of thought. Sentences often start with unnecessary words such as, 'Well, it started...' The main issue remains the lack of punctuation that exists, which takes away from the quality of the writing. Most able Year 5 children demonstrate an extra-ordinary capacity to use descriptive words well, for example, 'a monstrous, dark, green shape rose slowly from beneath the white-capped waves.' New sentences start with interesting words, such as, 'Suddenly..' This helps the story to engage the reader immediately. This is seen at its best when one writer starts, 'Too late, the ship's look-out shouted...' However, much of this good quality work lacks appropriate punctuation, including speech marks, commas and question marks. Less able children do not have the same width to their vocabulary and they also have problems related to their grammatical terminology.
- 33 Year 6 children suffer from many of the problems outlined for Year 5. The same issue of limited use of punctuation impedes the quality of the written work. Good descriptive passages are prohibited to the reader because of the lack of punctuation or poor spelling. The lack of capital letters for proper nouns is a particular problem.
- 34 The improvement of punctuation, paragraphing and issues related to spelling pre-dominate the targets that the teachers have identified for children. Some of the targets need to be more specific however to allow the writing to make a greater impact on the reader. For example, a story with the following opening, 'It was 1603, a gloomy, miserable day and poor Queen Elizabeth had died from a terrible illness....' has poor punctuation and spelling therefore making it less likely that the reader would want to carry on.

35 Another feature of the writing is the lack of use of the skills that are being taught in literacy sessions being used in other lessons. Children are dealing with some very complicated grammatical issues in lessons but there is very little carry over into non-literacy lessons. The writing in history, geography and religious education do not match the quality of work that appears in literacy books. This is an issue for the school to deal with in its medium-term planning structure.

- **Children's skills in using information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.**

36 Due to a lack of resourcing in the recent past and a lack of confidence amongst teachers until recently the standards of children work in information and communication technology is below that expected for their age. There is limited use of information and communication technology to support work in other subject areas. However, there has been significant improvement in the past three years.

37 The school has now moved to a position where the statutory requirements are being met and although the skill level of children is unsatisfactory at least there are now the resources in place to enable children to make rapid progress. The lack of resources was an inhibiting factor in the past two years. The school has been able to use the national funds dedicated to improved provision in information and communication technology to good effect in setting up a computer suite, which has 15 computers linked together. Difficulties related to getting a main server has resulted in the school not having access to the Internet yet but this is only a matter of time.

38 The children are still at the stage of getting used to the keyboard skills. This has resulted in work being completed very slowly and in children requiring much support when anything does not go according to plan. Many of the children, at the moment benefit from the expertise of the teacher who has been recently seconded to the Local Education Authority for supporting local developments in information and communication technology. However, even with expert tuition the children's skills level is only slowly improving.

39 The development of the computer suite has only just begun and as yet children are not timetabled to take advantage of the facility available to them. At the beginning of the next term there is provision for all classes to have regular access to the suite and the staff are gearing up for this now. The school's development plan is very comprehensive and shows how the school intends to improve the skill level of children. The vast majority of staff are now confident in teaching the subject and there are secure plans in place to ensure that there is greater use of information and communication technology in other subjects. The plan indicates that it is likely to be another two years before the children's skills are brought up to date to be in line with other children of their age.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44 In order to maintain the strengths and improve still further, the school now needs to:

Improve the standard of children's written work by:

- Providing more opportunities for children to use their writing in other subjects;
- Focussing on the quality of punctuation and grammar;
- Making greater links between the grammatical work covered in the 'Literacy Hour' and other written work.

(Paragraphs 31 –35)

Raise the standards of children's skills in information and communication technology by:

- Continuing to ensure that children are provided with regular opportunities to use the computers;
- Ensuring that there is a planned programme to help children improve their current skills;
- Looking for more opportunities for children to use their information and communication technology skills in other subjects.

(Paragraphs 36-39)

As well as these main two issues the school also needs to address the following point:

- Continue to work at improving the attendance rate of children. (Summary)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	35	45	20	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	207
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		67

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	nil	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	13	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	9
	Girls	12	13	12
	Total	21	23	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75	82	75
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	21	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75	75	75
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	12
	Girls	12	11	11
	Total	22	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76	72	79
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	10
	Girls	7	10	7
	Total	16	20	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55	69	59
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.1
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	144

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/9
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	£
Total income	380,575
Total expenditure	371,157
Expenditure per pupil	1,636
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,552
Balance carried forward to next year	41,970

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

28.8%

Number of questionnaires sent out	233
Number of questionnaires returned	67

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	25	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	69	28	0	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	34	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	40	12	6	2
The teaching is good.	67	30	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	55	1	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	22	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	22	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	61	39	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	27	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	42	22	9	6