

INSPECTION REPORT

ST EDMUND'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Miles Platting, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105527

Headteacher: Mrs M Duffy

Reporting inspector: Mrs P K Parrish
22380

Dates of inspection: 28 – 30 November 2000

Inspection number: 224988

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Fr Michael Ryan
Date of previous inspection:	18 November 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Edmund's is a smaller than average primary school, with 133 pupils aged between three and 11 years on roll (58 boys and 75 girls), with significantly more girls than boys in Years 4 to 6. The school is organised into a nursery class, and five classes for the older pupils. All five classes include mixed age groups except for Year 6. The school's admission policy states that all pupils must be baptised Roman Catholics. The school building has been used for parish worship since the demolition of the old St Edmund's Church in 1994. Situated in an old suburb of the city of Manchester, the school serves an area of higher than average social disadvantage. The number of pupils who qualify for free school meals (63 per cent) is well above average. A below average number of pupils (12 per cent) are identified by the school as having special educational needs, and one pupil (0.75 per cent) has a statement of special educational need. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage. No pupils use English as an additional language. A wide range of attainment is represented on entry to the nursery class but for most children, attainment is below average for the age group.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is at the heart of its local parish and serves its Catholic community well. Children joining the school get off to a very good start in the nursery and the infant classes. Teaching is consistently good for children in the Foundation Stage (the nursery and reception years) and in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2). As a result, very good progress is made up to the age of seven, and attainment is well above the average for schools with a similar background by the end of Year 2. In reading and mathematics, attainment for seven year olds in 2000 was in the top five per cent of similar schools nationally. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, in Key Stage 2. Although standards for 11 year olds in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were below the national average, they were above average, overall, for similar schools and the inspection team confirms these standards of attainment. The leadership and management are effective and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils get off to a good start and achieve very well between the ages of three and seven years.
- Teaching is good overall, but strongest in the foundation years and Key Stage 1.
- Pupils demonstrate a good attitude to learning, overall, and their approach to their work is very productive where teaching is good or better.
- The ethos of the school is firmly rooted in the Catholic faith of the parents and the parish, and provision for the spiritual and social development of the pupils is good. Provision for their moral development is very good.

What could be improved

- Although the standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 2 are, overall, above the average for similar schools, it is possible to achieve further improvement. The school is focused on this improvement and is working towards achieving consistently good teaching and learning within Key Stage 2.
- Although attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection, it is well below the national average, overall, and for some pupils this is reducing attainment.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in November 1996, satisfactory improvement has been achieved. On average, standards have kept pace with the national trend.

- There has been satisfactory improvement in the school's monitoring of the quality of its curriculum planning, teaching and pupils' learning over the four years since the last inspection, when it was an issue for action. An effective system is in place for the monitoring of standards and teachers' planning. The observation of teaching in the classrooms is developing but is not yet at a level where problems are being identified and quickly resolved, such as those existing in Key Stage 2.
- Good improvement has been made to the curriculum for the children aged up to five years in the Foundation Stage and this now matches closely the nationally recommended areas for learning. Standards meet the nationally set Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning.
- There has been a good improvement in the results at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading and mathematics, at a rate which exceeds the national trend. Improvements in writing are not quite keeping pace with improvements nationally.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, standards have not kept pace with the national trend, overall. At the time of the last inspection, standards in English and science were above the national average but are now below. Showing a similar trend, results in mathematics were average nationally, but are now below.
- The governing body has made good progress in bringing the school's budget back into balance. It is no longer in deficit, as it was at the time of the last inspection. There is now a prudent underspend in preparation for expenditure on the school's environment. The national grants for improving standards in schools have provided useful support during this time of adjustment.
- Overall, the school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

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	E	D	D	A
Mathematics	D	B	D	B
Science	E	C	E	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

On entry to the nursery class, attainment is generally below that expected of most three year olds. Teaching is good and the children make good progress, and most achieve at least the nationally set Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Good progress continues through Key Stage 1, and the standards in reading and mathematics achieved by pupils aged seven are higher than the national average. They are very high compared to similar schools, with results being in the top five per cent. In writing, results over the past two years for pupils aged seven have been below the national average, although well above those

for similar schools. However, standards in writing in Year 2 are rising and indications are that standards are close to the national average this year. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English and mathematics were below the national average for 2000 but above the average for similar schools in mathematics and well above in English. In science, attainment was well below the national average but average for similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that although some improvements are apparent, standards overall are similar in relation to national averages. The school exceeded the targets set by the governing body for 1999, broadly met targets in 2000 for English, but not for mathematics. Targets set for 2001 are suitably challenging in both subjects but indications are that they are unlikely to be fully achieved. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The great majority of pupils have a good attitude to work. However, a significant minority of pupils in all classes in Key Stage 2 lose concentration, and behaviour management techniques are not always successful in regaining an attentive approach to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall and very good in the classes for pupils aged up to seven years. Within school assemblies, behaviour is very good for the whole school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good between all in the school community. Most pupils are very sensible, show initiative and accept responsibility willingly. However, a minority shows less maturity than is usual for their age when tasks or the pace of work fail to provide sufficient challenge.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory overall. Well below the national average, with a significant minority of pupils arriving late each morning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

The quality of teaching is good, overall, as in the last inspection. In 94 per cent of the lessons observed, it was satisfactory or better and of these, 53 per cent were good and six per cent very good. In six per cent of lessons, the teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching was consistently good in all lessons for pupils up to seven years of age. For pupils in Key Stage 2, teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to very good, with 60 per cent being satisfactory, 20 per cent good and ten per cent very good. One lesson seen (representing ten per cent of lessons in Key Stage 2) was of unsatisfactory quality. The teaching in English is good, overall, but less successful in Key Stage 2 than earlier in the school. Learning progresses at a good pace in all aspects of English from starting the nursery class until Year 2. In Year 3

and for younger pupils in Year 4, progress continues at a good pace in speaking and listening and reading but slows significantly in writing. For the older pupils in Year 4 and those in Year 5, progress is maintained in speaking and reading, and gathers pace again in writing to a suitable level for the age group. In Year 6, the pace of learning slows again in writing because teaching lacks sufficient rigour and challenge. Not enough is demanded of the oldest pupils with regard to quality or quantity of work. In mathematics, teaching is consistently good up to the age of seven, but is satisfactory for pupils between seven and 11 years, where the pace of work slows and the challenge set for pupils is less. Also group work sometimes takes place within a noisy environment which spoils concentration levels and the speed of work. The needs of all pupils are met very well up to seven years of age but after this, the challenge for the older pupils is not always great enough.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. A suitable curriculum is in place to meet the needs of the pupils at all stages of learning in the school and priority is appropriately given to literacy and numeracy. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for these pupils is satisfactory overall and they are often supported by a classroom assistant within literacy and numeracy lessons. A suitable register is kept which tracks their progress through the national Code of Practice stages, but transfer between the stages is sometimes too slow.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is a strong element in the school's provision. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good, for spiritual and social development, it is good and for their cultural development, provision is sound. The Catholic faith is central to the school's ethos and links with the parish and its community are firmly established.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The staff are dedicated to the care of the pupils and ensure that their needs are suitably met. The school community generates a supportive atmosphere in which pupils feel confident and secure.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and staff work as a team to provide clear educational direction for the work of the school. Management is sound and, in this smaller than average school, suitable links are made with other local schools to supplement staff expertise.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors carry out their duties conscientiously and well, demonstrating a strong commitment to the pupils. They are familiar with the operation of the school on a daily basis and are aware of its strengths and areas for further development.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring of the pupils' performance now leads to systematic target setting and this is helping the school to track their progress, and the school is refining its approach each year. Curriculum planning is monitored increasingly well and leading to suitable developments in teaching. Staff work in liaison with other successful schools and this provides a valuable means of self-evaluation.
The strategic use of resources	The budget available is now in balance and the school is much better placed to move forward than at the time of the last inspection. Specific grants are very important to the school and generally used well to improve standards.

The governors and senior management team are gradually extending their awareness of the principles of best value, and applying them increasingly within plans for action and expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects the children to work hard and achieve their best. • The staff are welcoming and approachable and the school is well managed. • Behaviour is good and the school helps the children to become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good, the children like school and they make good progress. • The school works closely with parents and they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quantity of homework suitably matched to the age of the child. • The range of activities available outside lessons.

The inspection team supports the positive views of the parents, overall. The quantity of homework is in principle matched to the age of the child, but in practice, there is some variation between classes in how well this policy is carried out. There is scope to tax the Year 6 pupils further. The range of activities available outside lessons, at lunchtime and sometimes after school, is good compared to most schools of this size, and covers a considerable range of pupils' interests.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils get off to a good start and achieve very well between the ages of three and seven years.

1. On entry to the nursery class, the teachers' assessments of the children's achievements indicate that attainment is generally below that expected of the age group, particularly with regard to communication, language and literacy skills. The curriculum is appropriate, including all nationally specified areas of learning, and represents a good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good, and the children's confidence builds quickly, as does their ability to communicate successfully and to concentrate on the learning activities provided. Staff track the development of the children carefully through the activities led by adults and use this information as a basis for future plans. This ensures that the match of activities and the planned focus for teaching is productive in taking the children's learning forward. The children attend the nursery full time and this accelerates progress in all areas of learning.
2. Before the children transfer fully to the reception class, there are useful opportunities for the older children in the nursery to join those in the reception class for lessons in literacy and numeracy for four days of each week. This prepares the children well and enables a very smooth transition. Teaching is good in the reception class, and the children progress well in their understanding of the basic skills. All teachers and support staff working with the children within the Foundation Stage co-ordinate their work carefully and this enables a very well thought out programme of learning for the age group. As the children transfer to Year 1, the great majority at least meet the Early Learning Goals specified for the age group, and a significant proportion exceed them within mathematical development.
3. Most children enter Year 1 with a good understanding of letter sounds and how to blend them. They recognise a range of words that they meet regularly and are reading simple stories in books. Their discussion skills are less well developed but the children listen very well and respond with enthusiasm to tasks set. Numeracy skills are confident and well developed, and for most children, beyond the level which is expected nationally for their age. Most children are using addition and subtraction to ten, and about a third are calculating beyond ten.
4. The confidence of the pupils as they enter Year 1 serves them in good stead and provides a good springboard to further learning. Those working in reception are encouraged by their well-developed skills in comparison to the rest of the class and this, with good teaching, supports a good rate of progress. Those sharing a class with pupils in Year 2 like to try the more difficult questions intended for the older pupils and this encourages their learning to continue to move forward at a good pace. Good teaching for pupils in Year 2, combined with a challenging amount of homework in support of class work, keeps the pace of learning brisk.
5. In reading, at the end of Year 2, the high standards achieved in the national tests in 2000 are maintained. Most pupils read with a good level of confidence, fluency and accuracy. Their progress in writing is improving and is likely to meet the national averages this year. Independence in punctuation is developing to a suitable level. Handwriting is usually well formed, although the spacing of words is sometimes too

close to make it easily legible. Although spelling skills are making good progress, the range of words used is too narrow to achieve the higher level for seven year olds.

6. In mathematics, skills develop quickly and confidently through Years 1 and 2. Teachers are placing great emphasis on the understanding of basic number concepts and this augurs well for the future as pupils move through the school. In Year 1, pupils learn to add and subtract numbers to ten, and sometimes to 20. They learn the pairs of numbers that make ten and can recall them mentally. They are familiar with counting backwards as well as forwards, and can counts in twos to 20 and in tens to 100. They can tell the time on the hour and match the time to daily activities, such as getting up in the morning. Pupils in Year 2 become more independent in finding the answers to calculations and recording them. Most already know the two and the ten times table, and can count on in fives to 100. They recognise half and quarter hours on both a digital and analogue clock. By the end of the year, current progress indicates that a higher than average proportion of pupils are on course to at least achieve the level set nationally for seven year olds.
7. On average over the past three years there has been little difference the attainment of boys and girls in reading and writing, but boys tend to achieve more than girls in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to previous attainment.
8. Discussions with teachers, a review of their planning and pupils' work on display indicates that standards in science are above average by the age of seven, and that attainment in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations for the age group. Attainment in religious education is subject to review by a different inspection.

Teaching is good overall, but strongest in the foundation years and Key Stage 1.

9. The quality of teaching is good overall, being satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons observed, and good or better in 59 per cent. It was of very good quality in one lesson (representing six per cent). One lesson observed (representing six per cent) was of unsatisfactory quality. However, the quality of teaching varies between the key stages.
10. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the teaching is consistently good. The two teachers sharing the nursery class integrate their work very well and provide well for the children. A suitable balance between activities led by staff and those selected for independent work by the children is achieved and progress is good from a lower than average starting point. The curriculum is carefully planned according to the requirements of the nationally set Early Learning Goals and shows good improvement since the last inspection. The needs of the children are suitably met, which is evident in the confidence the children quickly demonstrate in their personal, social and emotional development and their communication with others. Language, literacy and mathematical skills develop at a good pace, which stand them in good stead for future learning. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is suitably developed through a range of topics and interesting activities, supported by a good level of discussion and through prompts to secure knowledge, such as photographs and creative work. For example, a helpful series of photographs on display records the different stages of baking; and bulbs are planted outside by the children and observational drawings made of flowers, noting their important physical features. The children's physical development is suitably provided for through regular activities planned, indoors and outside, to extend control of smaller, precise movement and

larger body movement, such as through control of wheeled vehicles and small apparatus, such as balls and quoits. There is no climbing apparatus available within the nursery, but staff are aware of this omission in provision and plans are in hand to allow the nursery children access to the fixed climbing apparatus within the school hall. Creative development is provided through a range of artistic and musical activities. Both nursery teachers successfully track the progress of all children well, although there is some scope for extending the system for monitoring which children are engaged in the learning activities provided as options each day. Teachers and children are well supported by the nursery nurse, who provides effective teaching support, as well as full-time liaison within the nursery and a constant source of security for the children.

11. Liaison between the staff in the nursery and the reception class is very good. The two year programme not only takes account of the Foundation Stage, but also the experiences planned for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Planning is very carefully co-ordinated between the ages of three and seven years, to take account of the mixed age classes in the school. The curriculum is also tailored well to meet the differing needs of the children in each of the three classes and this provides a good foundation for the successful learning taking place and the very good progress up to the age of seven. The reception class teacher is a key member of staff in achieving this successful liaison between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
12. In the term before the children transfer fully to the reception class, they join the literacy and numeracy lessons four times each week and this ensures a very smooth transfer between the two classes. The confidence of the children is successfully maintained as they become accustomed to the greater rigour of learning in the reception class. Their new skills are successfully included within nursery activities and this ensures continuous progress. The children working full time in the reception class follow a suitable activity based curriculum for most of the time and teaching appropriately addresses the Early Learning Goals for the age group.
13. Although pupils in Year 1 are divided between two classes, careful planning ensures equal opportunities for both sets of pupils. Teachers confer regularly to check the progress of both groups of pupils and high expectations are set for the whole year group. Due to good teaching, the pupils in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) develop their basic skills in reading and mathematics at a rapid pace, and progress in writing is gaining fluency. A good awareness of the use of the five senses is developed during early observation work in science, and this develops to at least an appropriate level through good opportunities for exploration and investigation, such as through the use of simple electric circuits. In using the computer, keyboard skills are developed in addition to the use of the 'mouse' for the operation of on-screen buttons. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are appropriately integrated into most subjects.
14. Throughout both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the teachers' knowledge and understanding of all subjects and the teaching of the basic skills are good. Planning is carefully integrated and teachers' expectations are generally very high. Teaching methods are effective and the management of pupils is generally good, although, with the exception of the nursery, the working atmosphere throughout the school is spoilt by too much noise when the pupils are working individually or in groups. Time is generally used well and the timing within the literacy hour and numeracy lessons matches national guidelines. However, within the sections allocated to work in groups, the pace of work is more often set by the pupils than the teacher, and tends to slow to unproductive levels. For example, insufficient work is expected individually

- within all classes in Key Stage 2; and expectations were too low in science within the lesson on forces in Year 6.
15. In Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory overall, but varies from very good to unsatisfactory. Of the lessons seen, 90 per cent were satisfactory or better; and of these, 60 per cent were satisfactory, 20 per cent were good and ten per cent very good. One lesson (representing ten per cent) was of unsatisfactory quality.
 16. The teaching in Key Stage 2, although satisfactory overall, generally expects less of the pupils than is the case in the rest of the school, particularly within the sections of lessons where individual work is undertaken. Lessons usually get off to a good start, with a class session to share information; for example, from a suitably selected class text. However, mathematics lessons, even at this stage, tend not to cater for the full range of ability within the class. An exception was the lesson in the Year 3/4 class where a successful, rapidly paced session started the numeracy lesson, where all pupils were required to provide an answer “two less than the number I say”. A suitable range of numbers was in use to encompass the skills of the whole class and some questions were directed at individuals requiring specific practice. Harder questions, such as ‘72 less 3’, were used for the most able. However, the pace of work slowed when the pupils transferred to group work because they were all required to write out the lesson’s learning objective, which took an inappropriate amount of time out of the mathematics lesson for most pupils. The pace of individual and group work, and sometimes its suitability for the age group, is a weak element of provision in Key Stage 2. Learning objectives are set and shared with pupils, but are not always sufficiently emphasised within the lesson. For example, the science lesson in Year 6, based on investigating forces on the floating or sinking of model boats, did not review the possible impact of these forces on the success or failure of the pupils’ models.
 17. In the unsatisfactory lesson in literacy, although the initial class discussion of story types and then verbs was satisfactory, the group work planned was not adequately matched to the needs of the pupils, the pace of their work was too slow and too few tasks were completed. A large proportion of time was spent copying out a lengthy learning objective and, for one group, too much time was spent colouring drawings and too little on writing. Worksheets in use were not closely linked to achieving the specified learning objective. As a result, pupils’ progress was limited to an unsatisfactory level.
 18. The very good teaching provided high quality experiences within the geography curriculum to learn about the background decision-making system within the development of facilities to serve the local community. Pupils in the Year 4/5 class were able to interview a civil engineer and a member of the local planning department with regard to the proposed development of land neighbouring the school. The interview was well prepared and researched, seeking the needs of the pupils’ families and friends as well as summarising their own views on the needs of the locality. The interview was conducted efficiently, with the pupils in role as journalists reporting to the community. The lesson was duly followed up with the preparation of articles for a news sheet, to be published and delivered to the families of the pupils.
 19. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately planned for and supported throughout the school, with extra assistance available from classroom assistants within most lessons in literacy and numeracy.
 20. Homework for all pupils generally supplements class work well and is carefully tracked by teachers.

Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a good attitude to learning, overall, and their approach to their work is very productive where teaching is good or better.

21. The attitude of the pupils to their work is good overall, and sometimes very good. Pupils are generally co-operative and helpful, responding well to their teachers and working well together when required to do so. Where teaching is good, most pupils produce a good quantity of work in the time available and this enhances their skills through frequent practice. For example, the pupils within the Reception/Year 1 class responded well to the good teaching in their English lesson, and most pupils in Year 1 wrote five two-line poems to annotate pictures of animals. Where teaching is less than good, the pace of most pupils' work slows significantly as the lesson proceeds, and individual work is not completed by a high proportion of pupils. Examples were evident within most lessons in mathematics and English in Key Stage 2.

The ethos of the school is firmly rooted in the Catholic faith of the parents and the parish, and provision for the spiritual and social development of the pupils is good. Provision for their moral development is very good.

22. The school is strongly committed to the Catholic faith and its mission statement is clearly put into practice within the school. The school is used as the church of the Roman Catholic parish of St Edmunds, and so links with the parish are strong. Mass is held by the parish priest on most days in a quiet room set aside for the purpose. Parents are invited to join school assemblies and many do.
23. The sense of spirituality extends into the classrooms and pupils have frequent opportunities to reflect on the events of the day. The school encourages good social skills through teaching respect for others, and older pupils are enabled to develop a sense of responsibility for others through the prefect system. They are taught that responsibilities are earned through the need to apply for the position of prefect. From the earliest days in the nursery, class responsibilities are allocated to specific pupils each day to help the smooth running of the class.
24. Through stories, discussion times and the establishment of class rules, pupils develop a very good awareness of right and wrong. They are able to say what is and what is not acceptable behaviour in school and the majority observe these principles. The moral code is underlined by the behaviour policy of rewards and sanctions, and the weekly school assembly devoted to acknowledging good work.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Although the standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 2 are above the average for similar schools, it is possible to achieve further improvement. The school is focused on this improvement and is working towards achieving consistently good teaching and learning within Key Stage 2.

25. In English, most pupils enter Key Stage 2 in Year 3 with a sound understanding of the basic skills. They communicate effectively and enjoy discussions based on books and stories. They can see common themes in stories, such as good prevailing in such stories as 'The Lion and the Mouse'. However, within written work, descriptions of characters and places are generally slow to develop. The use of adjectives, adverbs and descriptive phrases are slow to appear, overall. During Year 3, the advantages of the early start in writing begin to fall away. Discussions are lively but the expectations for written work are not clearly set and the teacher's marking does

not sufficiently highlight skills achieved or those in need of development. Comments from the teacher, spoken or written, are general, such as “That’s not bad” or “Good work”, which fail to inform pupils clearly of their achievements. At present, written work is deteriorating overall for the pupils in Year 3 and the younger pupils in Year 4. Presentation of work is becoming less careful and improvements in spellings are slowing. Too many incorrect spellings are overlooked or marked as correct by the teacher.

26. In the Year 4/5 class, learning is progressing at a good pace again, in both reading and writing skills. The teacher uses imaginative tasks to capture the pupils’ interest and makes very clear what skills are required to be developed. The marking of pupils’ written work includes some very detailed responses to achievements and areas for development. The quality of written work improves, with spelling knowledge moving forward well and punctuation skills progressing at an improved pace. Written vocabulary improves through the use of thesauri and reminders within the classroom of alternative words, such as for ‘said’.
27. In Year 6, pupils’ progress slows again. Although reading skills develop well for the higher attaining pupils, others are not always sufficiently well challenged by their reading books. Shared and guided reading activities with the teacher include a good range and variety of texts but those for individual use and practice at home are not of the same quality and generally challenge the pupils less. Not enough is expected of Year 6 pupils with regard to written work. They are praised for quite a moderate level of work and not sufficiently stretched forward to new achievement. Pupils are capable of achieving more. For example, when engaged in group work activities, the pace of work slows and pupils set their own pace for work. Individual targets have been introduced and these are proving helpful to both staff and pupils, but some are too general to provide a clear and specific message to pupils on the next steps for development.
28. In mathematics in Key Stage 2, pupils generally calculate to an appropriate level for their age and more pupils are on course to achieve the nationally set level for the oldest pupils than in 2000. However, a review of pupils’ work indicates that fewer are on line to achieve at a higher level. By the end of the key stage, pupils can convert fractions to equivalent decimals, working to two decimal places, and use all four rules of calculation. The school has recently changed the scheme of work it follows in mathematics in order to raise standards in line with the national trend. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented in principle, but practice varies from class to class, with teachers developing their own strategies for the three-part lesson. Better subject co-ordination and more staff training is needed, especially with the introductory mental arithmetic session, to ensure consistency throughout the school. The pace of work is generally too slow when pupils are engaged in group activities and too little is expected of them in terms of quantity. This reduces opportunities for practising skills, improving fluency and raising standards. The working environment sometimes becomes too noisy, which is not conducive to completing extensive amounts of work. In addition, pupils need more opportunities to practise problem solving and investigational work based on number. The school is aware of this area for development and anticipates that the new scheme will provide support to staff in extending this area of the curriculum. Further staff training is necessary to ensure effective links with the requirements of the national strategy within all aspects of the subject.
29. In science, only one lesson observed and this was in Year 6. Together with a review of previous work completed, the indications are that the pupils are covering an

appropriate range of activities, but discussions for the pupils in Year 6 lack sufficient rigour in deducing cause and effect. The specialist vocabulary of the subject is not sufficiently emphasised or defined, and this reduces pupils' ability to discuss their work scientifically. It also reduces their ability to memorise concepts and principles in the subject. In the lesson observed, pupils were studying the forces acting upon a floating object, such as a boat, and deducing the most favourable shape and structure to float successfully. Pupils found it difficult to discuss the principles of gravity and the water's 'up-thrust', and none were aware of the need to achieve a balance. Discussions were too simple for the age-group and focused on the success of floating without the need to explain the variables involved. Thus opportunities were missed to extend learning to higher levels.

Although attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection, it is well below the national average, overall, and for some pupils this is reducing attainment.

30. Attendance remains well below the national average for primary schools in England. However, it has improved significantly since the previous inspection four years ago. The school encourages good attendance by giving certificates to the class with the best weekly attendance, and awards are given to individual pupils who have no absences during the previous month. The prospectus asks parents to make medical appointments outside school hours, and states that holidays should be taken during school breaks and not in term time. However, the availability of cheaper holiday deals during term time is regarded by the school as a major reason for the current attendance levels. The school works closely with the local education authority's education welfare officer and is currently looking at ways in which attendance might be improved.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

31. The governors, headteacher and staff should work to improve the school further by:
- a) Continuously seeking to improve standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2 through:
 - extending and making more specific the target setting procedures already established, and the school's marking policy, so that pupils are clear about their successes and areas for development; *[paragraphs 25 and 27]*
 - ensuring that a good working atmosphere and pace of work is maintained, at a suitable level of challenge, throughout the whole lesson, including times when pupils are set tasks to be completed individually or in small groups; *[paragraphs 2 14, 16 and 27]*
 - extending teacher training with regard to the National Numeracy Strategy; *[paragraph 28]*
 - improving the pupils' understanding of subject specific vocabulary in science; *[paragraph 29]*
 - b) Continuing to explore strategies for improving pupils' attendance and punctuality. *[paragraph 30]*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
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	6	53	35	6	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)	15	118
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		84

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	14

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	9	4

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	8
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	11	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (83)	85 (78)	92 (89)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	9
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	11	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (83)	92 (83)	100 (94)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	6	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	3	4
	Girls	8	6	7
	Total	10	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (67)	56 (78)	69 (83)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	4	4
	Girls	8	6	7
	Total	11	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (67)	63 (72)	69 (78)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	98
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.6
Average class size	23.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	291,762
Total expenditure	277,952
Expenditure per pupil	2,029
Balance brought forward from previous year	545
Balance carried forward to next year	14,355

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	133
Number of questionnaires returned	62

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	24	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	32	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	39	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	31	16	2	2
The teaching is good.	76	23	0	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	31	3	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	16	2	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.	61	39	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	77	21	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	24	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	31	11	5	6