

INSPECTION REPORT

ST AUGUSTINE'S RC (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Meir, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124322

Headteacher: Mrs Ann O'Reilly

Reporting inspector: David Penney
23039

Dates of inspection: 4th and 5th December 2001

Inspection number: 243224

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sandon Road Meir Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST3 7DF
Telephone number:	(01782) 319504
Fax number:	(01782) 319504
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr James Gillen
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
23039	David Penney	Registered inspector
8986	Philip Andrew	Lay inspector
15011	Marion Wallace	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd

7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 8
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	9 - 14
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	14 - 15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	15
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	16 - 19

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Augustine's RC (A) Primary School is of an average size for this type of school and serves the economically deprived area of Meir, near Stoke-on-Trent. It has 197 boys and girls on roll, aged from 3 to 11 years. While there are similar numbers of boys and girls in the school as a whole, there are significantly more boys than girls in Year 2 and significantly more girls than boys in Years 1 and 5. Five pupils (2.6%), whose origin is the Indian sub-continent, speak English as an additional language; this is below the national average and none is at an early stage of acquiring English. There are 22 pupils (11.2%) on the school's register of special educational needs for a range of learning and behavioural reasons, which is below the national average. Of these, one (0.5%) has a statement of special educational need; this percentage is also below the national average. Forty-two pupils (21.3%) are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The school has a nursery unit that caters for 27 children. On entry to the nursery class, children are assessed as being of below average attainment, compared to national standards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school that gives very good value for money. Pupils make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics, through the school and this rate of progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 because of some very good, and often better, teaching. Teaching in other areas of the school is good because teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and have very high expectations of their ability to pay attention and apply themselves to work. In addition, relationships are at least very good and more often excellent throughout the school. This results in confident learners who enjoy taking part and do so politely and enthusiastically; pupils' attitudes and behaviour are exemplary. The guidance given to the pupils by all the staff is consistent and the school is very firmly committed to ensuring that all pupils receive the curriculum to which they are entitled. There is a shared commitment to provide the best possible care for the pupils in their charge. The standards of governance are good with many elements that are stronger. The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are very good and provide a very clear steer to the work of the school. The school is a strongly caring community that lives its faith to the full.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development, which results in mature and responsible individuals who behave in an exemplary fashion and have excellent attitudes to work and school.
- Teaching is of a good quality, overall, because of good subject knowledge, very high expectations and very good management throughout the school; in key areas of the school very good subject knowledge results in high quality teaching and learning.
- The headteacher gives a very good steer to the work of the school. The partnership and relationships between her and all staff are very good, which ensures that all adults work to a common goal and share a strong commitment to the pupils.

What could be improved

- Planning and provision in the nursery and reception classes.
- The way that assessment information is used to match work closely to pupils' individual needs.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1997, since when it has improved at a very good rate. All the key issues of the last inspection have been addressed diligently; some further work remains to be done to complete issues to do with the use of assessment information and to raise standards in

information and communication technology. Pupils make better progress because the quality of teaching has improved significantly and, as a result, standards in the national tests for English, mathematics and science for Year 6 pupils, which are normally either above or well above average, have risen at a rate that broadly matches the national trend. The improved provision for pupils' personal development has been very effective; pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are now exemplary. There have been many improvements in leadership and management, including the establishment of a clear strategic vision for school improvement and the delegation of responsibilities to enthusiastic members of staff; the co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved significantly. The school is very well placed to continue to improve still further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	A	B	A
mathematics	B	C	B	A
science	B	C	C	B

Key

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

The table shows that, in the national tests in 2001, pupils in Year 6 attained standards that were above the national average in English and mathematics and matched the average in science. When compared to similar schools (that is, those with approximately the same proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals), standards were well above average in English and mathematics and were above average in science. The school's trend of improvement over time broadly matches the national picture. The school's targets for English and mathematics were realistically challenging when set, but were exceeded because of high quality teaching. In the same year, pupils in Year 2 attained standards that matched the national average in reading, but were below average in writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, they were above average in reading and matched the average in writing and mathematics.

Inspection findings are that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those identified as higher attainers, make good progress throughout the school, especially in English, mathematics and science. On entry to the nursery class, children attain standards that are below those expected nationally, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills. Standards in the reception class broadly match those expected, although many children still suffer some problems, particularly with speaking skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards, overall, are above average in English and match the average in mathematics, science and music. They are below expectations in information and communication technology (ICT) because of the legacy of past weaknesses, particularly the interrupted provision for these pupils during recent building works. Good progress is maintained through Years 3 and 4 and accelerates in Years 5 and 6. As a result, overall standards of English and mathematics in Year 6 are above average and standards of science and ICT match those expected nationally. The school's targets for 2002 in English and mathematics are challenging, but attainable.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school and work are excellent. Nearly all enjoy their lessons and show a great deal of enthusiasm for their work. A very small minority of identified pupils are sometimes challenging in class.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around school is exemplary. Pupils show an impressive awareness of the needs and concerns of others. Playtimes are characterised by a positive atmosphere in which pupils play and interact freely and safely.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent throughout the school, which is a safe and orderly community. All adults set excellent role models and show pupils what it means to live their Catholic faith.
Attendance	Good. Attendance rates are above the national average and there were no unauthorised absences in the last reporting year. There was one exclusion in the last reporting year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

No teaching is less than satisfactory. The quality of teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1 and 2, overall. It is very good in Years 3 to 6, overall, with the best practice to be found in Years 5 and 6, where half the teaching seen was of outstanding quality and the other half of lessons were very well taught. This quality of teaching ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the higher attainers, make good progress throughout the school and particularly good progress in Years 5 and 6. English and literacy skills and mathematics and numeracy skills are taught well. The emphasis on the teaching of personal and social skills in the nursery and reception classes is a significant factor in the progress pupils make later on in the school, because they have been taught good work habits and gain very good attitudes to their work. The excellent relationships and consistently high expectations shown by all staff throughout the school make a major contribution to pupils' learning, because they become confident learners who are willing to 'have a go' at the tasks set. Pupils try increasingly hard, enthusiastically and successfully to produce high quality and accurate work. Where teaching is most effective, it is because the teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are very high, they use the information gained from continuing assessment very effectively to provide continual challenge for individual pupils and they enjoy excellent relationships with the pupils, which is highly motivating for all concerned.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for pupils in Years 1 to 6, although pupils in Years 1 and 2 receive too little physical education each week. The school is aware that improvements are needed to the provision made for children in the nursery and reception classes. Provision for extra-curricular activities, while satisfactory, has been adversely affected by building works. National strategies for literacy and numeracy have been effective in helping to raise standards.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Targets for improvement are specific and attainable. Designated support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. For their cultural development, it is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent. The monitoring and promoting of pupils' personal development is informal, but very strong. While procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are sound, there is scope to improve the way teachers use the information gained from assessment to inform subsequent planning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides a very good steer to the school's work and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and other key staff. Subject co-ordinators are hardworking and manage their subjects well, overall. There is a very strong team ethic that gives the school a very good basis for further improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. They have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their involvement in setting the direction of the school is good. They fulfil their statutory obligations very well, although there are minor omissions in the school prospectus.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored regularly and evaluated incisively by the headteacher and others, including the governors. The school uses a good range of data to compare its results with those of other schools; principles of best value are applied well.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Teachers are deployed very effectively. Good use is made of accommodation. The available finances have been used very prudently to enhance the curriculum and to provide stable staffing.

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 helps their children to become mature and responsible.• Their children like school.• Pupils behave well.• The quality of teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of their children.• Their children make good progress in school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive comments made by parents. However, while building works have adversely affected the range of extra-curricular activities, provision is currently satisfactory for a school of this type. A small minority of parents attending the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector expressed concerns about the partnership between the school and the 'Friends of St Augustine's', the parent-teacher organisation. A large majority of parents do not share these concerns. The judgement of the inspection team is that the majority is correct and that the partnership between the school and parents is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils make good progress throughout the school, particularly in English and mathematics.

1. When children enter the nursery class at the age of three, their attainment, overall, is below that expected nationally for their age. There are particular weaknesses in their ability to communicate orally. For example, they are sometimes reluctant to speak to their teachers or each other and, when they do speak, their speech is not clear and they answer in single words or through gestures rather than in fuller phrases or sentences.
2. They make good progress in both the nursery and reception classes, because of a clear, early emphasis on developing their social skills. All adults share a common understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. They give a consistent and clear message about how the children should behave and interact with each other, which has a beneficial effect on their self-confidence and their response to the tasks set. This, in turn, engenders positive attitudes to work and to school and is a crucial factor in the progress that is made throughout the school.
3. Reception class children enjoy listening to stories and, when retelling them, sequence events in the correct order. They handle books with care and know that pages turn from left to right and that print works from top to bottom of the page. However, for many their speech is still limited and only about a quarter of them answer questions fully or initiate conversations. Many still do not speak clearly and a number of letter sounds are pronounced incorrectly. In their mathematics work, they sequence numbers to ten confidently as a group, recognise all digits and correctly recognise which numbers are missing from a sequence of single-digit numbers.
4. While improvements are needed in the curriculum for these young children, as indicated later in paragraphs 34 to 37, suitable opportunities for speaking and listening and for practising their mathematics are provided throughout the day in both classes. The good ratio of adults to children ensures that language is developed well through a variety of formal and informal situations.
5. By the time pupils are in Year 2, they attain standards that are above average in English and in line with the average in mathematics and science. Nearly all now listen attentively and speak clearly as a result of continuing emphasis in Years 1 and 2 on good social skills, including that of listening politely. They write legibly in their books, although some letters are not formed correctly. They punctuate their stories correctly into sentences. They choose words and phrases with care, sometimes varying the word order for effect. Higher attaining pupils work at higher levels and choose words very imaginatively. For example, one pupil wrote, "Listen to wings lighter than eyelashes stroking the air. Know what the thin breeze whispers on high to the coconut trees. Listen and hear".
6. In their mathematics work, average attainers in Year 2 add two-digit numbers generally correctly, have a reasonably secure understanding of odd and even numbers, calculate simple fractions of shapes by colouring and tell the time to the nearest half hour. Higher attainers tell the time to the nearest five minutes, add correctly to 100 and collect, collate and represent data accurately, for example, about the staff's preferences for drinks (tea or coffee!). There is a very good emphasis on pupils developing their skills of scientific enquiry; this results in them having made good progress during this term in gaining a firmer grasp of how to conduct experiments. The provision of a clear and appropriate framework for pupils to structure their work has been a helpful feature in this progress. They record their findings in a good variety of ways in their own words. They understand that living things need certain basic conditions to survive and are beginning to realise that animals live in specific habitats.
7. Year 6 pupils write neatly and spell nearly all common words correctly. They use a good range of punctuation correctly and, occasionally, to good effect. For example, in a ghost story, one pupil

wrote in a shaky hand, “Aaaaaaaaaaaaaargh!” which was entirely appropriate in context and added suspense to the story. Pupils have a good command of language. They speak clearly and confidently to each other and to adults, explaining their thoughts, ideas and opinions clearly and logically. The effect of their good vocabulary on their writing is evident, for example, when they choose words and phrases to good effect. A good example is, “The flowers knock together, shivering in the breeze”. In mathematics, average attainers are working securely at the levels that are expected nationally by the end of Year 6 and, in some instances, are already at higher levels. For example, they accurately divide large numbers by two-digit numbers, calculate bearings and distances correctly and understand basic probability. Higher attainers accurately work out how long television programmes and trips will last, apply their knowledge of the number system to include calculations with decimals and draw accurately to scale. In their science work, they understand the effects of air and water resistance on forces, recognise the effects of exercise on the heart and understand the need for a healthy diet. Higher attainers explain clearly the factors behind their observations, for example that puddles contract because of the evaporation caused by the heat of the sun.

8. The very good ethos of the school, which is consistently and firmly shared by all adults and pupils, is a powerful factor in maintaining good progress throughout the school. All pupils develop very good work habits and enjoy their learning. In addition, improvements in planning and teaching quality have meant that an interesting and relevant curriculum is provided. This motivates pupils to learn at a rate that is good, overall. Progress is often better in Years 5 and 6 because of the quality of teaching, which is explained further in paragraphs 18 to 26 of this report.
9. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively, which has helped to raise standards. In addition, the Literacy Strategy has been adapted to provide extra opportunities for oral and written work in other subjects. For example, in Year 6, pupils wrote a letter in their science lesson to someone who smoked to explain the dangers to their health; this use of literacy skills in other subjects is good practice. Provision for other subjects is firmly based on national guidance, which assures progression in learning between classes. Where possible, the units of work have been adapted satisfactorily to match the needs of the pupils and the context of the school. For example, work on being “Proud of the Potteries” in Year 6 provides very good opportunities for pupils to research into historical, geographical and social aspects of the topic for themselves, both in and out of school time.
10. Pupils with special educational needs, including those identified as higher attainers, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Their needs are correctly identified and the targets on their individual education plans, which teachers keep readily available, are specific and attainable. Planning and support for these pupils’ needs are good, which ensures that they are supported and challenged well.
11. Improvements in the provision and planning for information and communication technology have raised standards in this subject. The further development planned in this subject is appropriate. As a result, pupils’ standards in Year 6 are generally in line with those expected, while, in Year 5, they are above the expected levels, for example, when working with spreadsheets. However, because of interruptions in learning caused by building works recently and because of insufficient computers in class, standards in Year 2 are below those expected. The school has firm plans to address this matter early in the next term. Pupils’ standards in music in Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally, overall. Because of the timing of the inspection, no other lessons were seen and so no further judgement about pupils’ standards can be made.

The school makes very good provision for pupils’ personal development, which results in mature and responsible individuals who behave in an exemplary fashion and have excellent attitudes to work and school.

12. The very clear emphasis on developing good personal, social and work habits given to children in their first few terms in the school, as mentioned in paragraph 2, is consistently reinforced by all adults as pupils move through the school. As a result, all pupils’ attitudes to school and work,

including those of pupils with special educational needs and those identified as higher attainers, are excellent, overall. Pupils enjoy coming to school; the attendance rate, which has improved since last year, is above the national average. They enjoy their lessons, especially where they are conducted at a good pace and work is well matched to their needs. They show a great deal of enthusiastic support for clubs, activities and events. They are keen to be chosen to help younger pupils, for example hearing them read, and being responsible for areas of the school during playtimes and dinnertimes.

13. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. The school is a very orderly environment in which pupils know that they are safe and valued for their individual gifts. Pupils are invariably friendly and polite. There were no examples of bullying, sexism or racism and the pupils themselves, when asked, reported none. All adults care deeply for the pupils in their care and have the highest expectations of how they should work and behave – a message that is consistently given by all staff. They set excellent role models and show pupils what it means to live their Catholic faith.
14. Behaviour in and around school is exemplary. Pupils routinely hold doors open for adults and each other. They say 'Please' and 'Thank you' without being reminded and show outstanding awareness of the needs and concerns of others. Playtimes are characterised by a positive atmosphere in which pupils play and interact freely and safely. On rare occasions, the behaviour in lessons of a very small number of pupils, already identified by the school as having special educational needs, is challenging. These pupils are, however, entirely untypical of the school as a whole. They respond more slowly to their teachers' demands and call out answers when they should put up their hands. This behaviour is managed very well and is in sharp contrast to that of their peers. There is a high degree of mutual respect throughout the school, even in those classes with challenging pupils; other pupils are very forgiving of their unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour.
15. The school makes outstanding provision for pupils' moral, social and spiritual development. Pupils are very well aware of their responsibility to act in acceptable ways, because it is reinforced consistently and explicitly. Points are awarded in each class for work or behaviour that is good. The points accumulate for pupils' houses and a cup is awarded at the end of the year for the house with the most points. Each week, the class with the best attendance during the previous week receives the Attendance Cup. In addition, each class teacher nominates pupils to receive either the courtesy, the good conduct or the merit badge, which are awarded in the 'Merit Assembly' and which are worn with pride. Other achievements, both inside and outside school, are celebrated fully and regularly. For example, one girl had won a competition to have her singing recorded onto a CD and this was played to the school as they came into and left the assembly.
16. Pupils accept a wide range of responsibilities willingly and discharge them diligently and with good humour. There is a well-established system of prefects, including the appointment of house captains and a head girl and a head boy, each with deputies. Those holding office are proud to do so. They know what is required of them and are very keen to fulfil them to the best standards possible. Some pupils are responsible during playtime and dinnertime for areas of the school, such as playing with younger pupils at playtime, controlling and clearing up their table in the dining hall and assuring good order in toilets and cloakrooms. Older pupils hear younger readers.
17. Pupils' responsibilities to those less fortunate than themselves are reinforced well through stories, prayer, donations to charities and displays. For example, in Year 3 a display clearly showed how little it takes to feed a person for a year in under-developed countries, with the result that the school raised a large amount of money to send on to those people. Some pupils even gave up their crisps for a fortnight!
18. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Work in history, geography and religious education lessons and the displays arising from them of, for example, Egyptian artwork and Islamic patterns reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge of other cultures. In addition, work on being "Proud of the Potteries" gives them a good insight into their own heritage.

Teaching is of a good quality, overall, because of good subject knowledge, very high expectations and very good management throughout the school; in key areas of the school very good subject knowledge results in high quality teaching and learning.

19. The quality of teaching is good, overall, for the youngest children in the nursery and reception classes and for pupils in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 it is very good, overall, because all the lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 were either very well taught or of outstanding quality. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
20. During the inspection, 22 lessons or part lessons were observed. Each lesson, therefore, represents nearly five per cent of the total and great care should be taken when interpreting statistics. No teaching was less than satisfactory. Over four-fifths of the lessons were good or better and over a quarter of lessons were taught very well. In just under a further fifth, the teaching was of outstanding quality; these lessons were in Years 5 and 6 and in music in Year 2. It is because of this overall quality of teaching that pupils make good progress.
21. Throughout the school, teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and application to task and manage their behaviour very well. As a result, pupils generally work hard and concentrate for long periods of time to produce good amounts of careful work. Where lessons are most effective, these expectations are applied with great sensitivity and tact. In these lessons, teachers are very aware of pupils drifting off-task and gently but firmly remind them of how they should be concentrating. As a result, pupils tend to work very hard for good lengths of time and produce impressive amounts of work. Even when pupils were challenging and moderately defiant, as in a Year 3 English lesson, the teacher maintained a firm but fair line throughout, balancing the needs of the difficult pupils, their classmates and the lesson skilfully and effectively.
22. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is good. This means that they can help pupils to overcome difficulties by presenting information in a variety of different ways. The basic skills are taught well and, sometimes, imaginatively so pupils are well prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary to complete the tasks they are set. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher used a toy very well to show the pupils how to add on by ten before giving them tasks to check their understanding of place value. In the most effective lessons, as in Year 5 and Year 6 English lessons, teachers' understanding of the subject is very high. This enables them to capture pupils' interests because they bring in a wide range of associated information to retain pupils' avid interest and to challenge and extend their understanding, for example, of spelling patterns or of the meaning of parts of Shakespeare's "Macbeth".
23. While teachers mark pupils' work regularly and often write encouraging remarks to motivate and support their efforts, they do not all give indications to pupils of how they could improve their work. In lessons, however, teachers and other adults intervene to good effect to check that pupils are working hard, to support them and explain points of difficulty and, in the most effective lessons, to provide constant and renewed challenges. In all lessons, teachers use the results of these interventions well to help pupils make progress. Where teaching is most effective, these assessments are used to devise work that meets the specific needs of individuals. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, the classroom assistant sat and worked with one pupil whose previous work had shown a poor understanding of the topic; this helped the pupil make very good progress in that lesson.
24. Teachers' planning, overall, for their lessons is satisfactory. It clearly identifies the focus for the lesson and provides suitable activities to meet the objectives. These objectives are routinely shared with the pupils so that they know what is expected of them; teachers frequently return to the objectives at the end of the lesson, so that pupils understand what they have learned and what remains to be done at a future date. Where lessons are more effective, different activities have been devised that closely meet pupils' developing needs, as identified through the rigorous use of assessment information. In a number of lessons, however, the same work is given to the whole class, irrespective of need or prior attainment and additional support is given to some, for example

with special educational needs, to ensure that their progress is as good as that of their peers. While learning is broadly satisfactory in these lessons because of the support given, it does not move some pupils, particularly the higher attainers, swiftly enough onwards.

25. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Consequently, pupils are confident learners who are willing to 'have a go', secure in the knowledge that their efforts will be appreciated, right or wrong. Teachers enjoy teaching the pupils, who, in turn, enjoy learning. In some classes and lessons, for example a Year 2 music lesson taught by a regular visiting specialist, humour and jokes are used to very good effect. In this lesson, the teacher's whole manner was very encouraging and his obvious enthusiasm was communicated successfully to the pupils, who concentrated for long periods of time and tried very hard, if somewhat unsuccessfully, to sing in tune.
26. As pupils get older and move through the school, the cumulative effects of the consistent messages they receive about good work, study and social habits result in improved concentration spans, application to the task set and interest in producing good amounts of well presented work. By the time pupils are in Years 5 and 6, for example, their skills in these respects are very good, which makes a very good contribution to their progress and the standards they attain.

The headteacher gives a very good steer to the work of the school. The partnership and relationships between her and all staff are very good, which ensures that all adults work to a common goal and share a strong commitment to the pupils.

27. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good.
28. The headteacher has a very good and clearly articulated vision for the school's educational, pastoral and spiritual direction. Because the lines of communication within the school are open and professional and because relationships are so strong, this vision is shared by all adults who work in the school and by the governors. The school's efforts are directed to a common purpose, which is reflected in the excellent way that its aims are translated into practice. The team ethic is very strong, which gives the school a very good basis for further and sustained improvement.
29. The headteacher evaluates the quality of teaching and learning regularly and provides feedback to teachers about the quality of their performance. Her comments are incisive and include good targets for further improvement. This process has been very effective both in raising the standards of individual performance and in establishing a common understanding of what the school is aiming at.
30. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a very strong team. Their personalities and strengths complement each other to very good effect. All adults in the school support them very well. Tasks are delegated well. All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, which are specified in their job descriptions. These, while comprehensive and appropriate, would benefit from being brought up to date, signed and dated and being closely linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan.
31. Subject co-ordinators get a very good amount of time out of class during the week. This is used well for a variety of purposes that include monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, auditing equipment and future needs, supporting colleagues and reviewing the subject development plans. All receive good amounts of continuing professional training and attend the subject briefings organised by the local education authority as often as they are held, which is normally once a term. This ensures that they keep up-to-date with all the developments in their subjects and share good practice with their colleagues in other schools.
32. The governing body has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, because many of them come into school on a regular basis to see it in action. For some time, they have monitored the quality of teaching and learning according to a schedule that is agreed by the teachers; this is a very good feature because it gives them a first-hand understanding of what is

happening in school. They are involved well in setting the direction for the school through their input into the school development plan and the budgeting process. They use grants and specific funds well. For example, their decision to allocate a large sum of money at the beginning of the financial year to cover possible staffing problems was very prudent and their decision to employ a music specialist on one day each week has been very influential in maintaining a broad curriculum for all pupils. The partnership between the governors and the school is very good. They fulfil their statutory obligations very well.

33. The school development plan is a good tool for further improvement and provides a clear strategic vision for school improvement. It identifies all the main areas for development, including those identified as key issues for improvement in this report. It is produced following full consultation with all staff, governors and the local education authority. It is to a good format and contains actions that are both clearly targeted at raising pupils' attainment and improving provision and are achievable in the time frame proposed. There is a good emphasis on continuing training to enable all staff to gain the skills and understanding necessary to sustain improvement.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Planning and provision in the nursery and reception classes.

34. In both the nursery and reception classes, planning is firmly linked to the Early Learning Goals. (These are the expectations of what should be achieved by the average attaining child by the time they transfer into Year 1.) Provision in both classes is securely planned in the six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. However, planning is not done together as a complete Foundation Stage unit, but separately in each class.
35. In both classes, assessment information is used at least soundly and often better; for example, liaison between the classes about children's particular and special needs is very good. Continuing and day-to-day assessment is satisfactory; this ensures that children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, because there is a good understanding, overall, of what children need to do to move on. However, neither these assessment systems nor subsequent planning are linked rigorously enough to the 'stepping stones' within the framework, which are the more detailed and progressive steps expected as children develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.
36. Planning would benefit from a closer reference to Foundation Stage guidance, with equal weight being given to all areas of learning and from being carried out as a joint exercise to ensure that progress in all areas of learning is clearly identifiable.
37. For some time, the school has recognised that there is a need to improve provision for children's physical development. It has worked closely with the local education authority to improve teachers' skills, the classroom environment and planning systems. The school intends, as soon as possible, to develop an 'outside classroom', to ensure that all children have routine and regular access to structured play. It also recognises the need to increase and improve the opportunities for creative, imaginative and independent play by, for example, enriching role-play areas and providing more situations where children can develop their curiosity. These priorities, already contained in the school development plan, are appropriate.

The way that assessment information is used to match work closely to pupils' individual needs.

38. Provision for assessment has improved since the last inspection and the co-ordinator has a very good grasp of what is needed to develop this area still further. The improvements in assessment needed in the nursery and reception classes are dealt with in paragraph 35 above.

39. The results of annual testing in English and mathematics from Years 2 to 6 are used well to check pupils' progress, to set targets for further improvement and to influence future planning by identifying areas of strength and weakness in pupils' learning. There are no annual tests available in other subjects. The school devises its own tests in all subjects annually and uses the information gained to inform parents about their children's progress. The school is aware that it now needs to develop the way it uses these data to inform teachers' planning for individuals' needs.
40. Procedures for assessing what pupils have learned at the end of units of work are satisfactory in English, mathematics and, more recently, in science. Pupils' results are recorded against 'key objectives'; the format for this is currently being trialled, but is not being used consistently by all teachers. It is, however, a good format that has the potential to allow teachers to identify much more closely and specifically what individual pupils have achieved and what they subsequently need to do to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding further. The plans for assessing attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory, but not yet developed fully enough. There are no comparable tests in other subjects currently.
41. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Some marking is very helpful in helping pupils identify how to improve their subsequent work, for example in Years 5 and 6, but this style of marking is not consistently applied in all classes. The school is aware of these inconsistencies in practice.
42. The assessment co-ordinator has plans to use a very good assessment software package to record pupils' attainment and to track their progress, initially in English, mathematics and science, against the 'key objectives' being used already in the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43. In order to improve standards still further, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:
 - (1) Improve the planning for, and provision in, the nursery and reception classes to ensure that all children have full access to the required curriculum.
(Paragraphs 4 and 34 to 37)
 - (2) Develop, as intended, the way that teachers use the information gained from assessment to ensure that work is planned to match pupils' needs closely in all subjects.
(Paragraphs 23 and 38 to 42)

N.B. The school has already included these issues in the current school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	6	8	4	0	0	0
Percentage	18	27	36	18	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	172
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	42

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	22

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

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	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	9	9	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (92)	89 (81)	100 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (73)	83 (85)	100 (85)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Because there were fewer than either ten boys or ten girls in Year 2 in 2001, details of how many of them achieved the expected levels in the tests is omitted to avoid any possibility of a breach of confidentiality. This is standard practice in all inspection reports.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	16	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	14	13	16
	Total	25	24	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (88)	89 (81)	100 (85)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	14	14	15
	Total	24	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (85)	93 (85)	96 (92)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	141
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.9
Average class size	24.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	87.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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	1	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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	391 537
Total expenditure	377 927
Expenditure per pupil	1 899
Balance brought forward from previous year	12 780
Balance carried forward to next year	26 390

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	197
Number of questionnaires returned	108

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	40	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	47	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	37	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	49	11	0	1
The teaching is good.	57	41	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	52	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	35	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	31	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	52	6	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	46	49	1	2	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	43	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	46	14	3	0

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

A small minority of parents attending the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector expressed concerns about the partnership between the school and the 'Friends of St Augustine's', the parent-teacher organisation. The table above shows that, in their returns to the questionnaire, other parents do not share these concerns. The judgement of the inspection team is that the majority is correct and that the partnership between the school and parents is very good.