

INSPECTION REPORT

ST AIDAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Iford

LEA area: Redbridge

Unique reference number: 102846

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Brown

Reporting inspector: Mrs Joy Richardson
6676

Dates of inspection: 3 - 4 June 2003

Inspection number: 246248

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Benton Road Ilford
Postcode:	IG1 4AS
Telephone number:	(020) 8590 5223
Fax number:	(020) 8503 8344
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David O'Brien
Date of previous inspection:	03/11/1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
6676	Joy Richardson	Registered inspector
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector
7418	Kathleen Rollisson	Team inspector
8696	Abul Maula	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
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	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	13
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	16
 PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	17

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school. It has 381 boys and girls in 13 classes from Reception to Year 6. In addition, 37 children attend part-time in the Nursery. The criteria for admission give priority to practising Catholic families. Separate applications are made for admission to the Nursery and to Reception. Just over half the pupils currently in Reception attended the school's nursery. The school is oversubscribed. Its intake has become increasingly diverse. Almost two thirds of pupils come from an ethnic minority background. A third are of black African or Caribbean origin. About a third of pupils speak English as an additional language and 32 pupils are at an early stage in learning English. A wide range of different home languages is represented within the school. The school supports 75 pupils who have special educational needs, including a number who have emotional and behavioural difficulties or long-term disabilities. Nine pupils have statements of special educational need and this is above the national average. On entry, children's skills vary widely but their attainment overall is broadly typical for this age. There have been a number of staff changes recently, but the school has maintained a full complement of suitably qualified teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school where pupils thrive. Pupils are well taught and reach high standards by the time they leave. The school is very well led and intent on making pupils' education even better. The school provides a good range of activities beyond the classroom and is very effective in helping pupils with special educational needs. It gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve high standards by the age of eleven, particularly in mathematics and in English.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils learn and make progress.
- The headteacher gives a very good lead and builds effective teamwork.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and a strong sense of belonging.
- The school gives pupils many opportunities beyond the classroom.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

What could be improved

- There is more to be done in working for higher standards by the age of seven.
- High quality learning is not consistently promoted across all subjects and areas of learning.
- More attention should be given to the needs of higher attaining pupils, and of pupils who are becoming bilingual.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1997 and there has been a good measure of improvement since then. The standards achieved by pupils at the age of eleven have risen steadily. The school broadly meets the challenging targets it sets for attainment at this age. Although there has been a downward trend in results at the age of seven, the school is now taking effective action which is beginning to reverse this.

Issues from the last inspection report have been addressed effectively. The opening of the Nursery and, more recently, the re-organisation of Reception, have improved provision for children in the early years. Across the school, policies and schemes of work have been developed to give more continuity in planning and teaching, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The governors have developed a policy for sex education and this is beginning to be implemented. Provision for music has been extended. The school's use of assessment is thorough and focused and this is helping the accurate evaluation of pupils' progress. The headteacher, staff and governors are now planning purposefully for school improvement, confidently adapting to new challenges and working out how to make things better. This means that the school is very well placed to continue to improve.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	A	B	A	A	well above A average above B average C below average D well below E average
Mathematics	A	B	A	A	
Science	B	A	B	B	

Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 show a strong upward trend since the previous inspection. For the last two years, the school has received a School Achievement Award in recognition of its results. The results in 2002 showed particular strength in English and in mathematics, and this is also evident in the work of pupils currently in Year 6. Pupils are making very good progress between the ages of seven and eleven.

Results in the tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were well below the national average, in reading, writing and mathematics, continuing a steady decline over recent years. The school has acted to reverse this trend and to raise expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. The work seen in school, and provisional results from the 2003 national tests, show pupils in Year 2 doing better than in 2002. In particular, reading has improved. Many pupils are also doing well in writing, although achievement varies widely and too many are falling short of the level expected for their age.

Good foundations are being laid in reading, writing and mathematical development from the start. Children in Reception are generally reaching or exceeding the national 'early learning goals' – the learning expected before they begin Year 1.

The school uses information from assessment to set challenging targets and to track pupils' progress from year to year. This provides a clear overview of how pupils are achieving, particularly in the older years, and contributes to the school's success in meeting its targets for attainment by the end of Year 6. The school is now looking to develop its tracking of progress from Nursery to Year 2, in order to set sights higher and to prevent underachievement.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve the targets set for them. The school is beginning to identify gifted and talented pupils. Many able pupils do well, but the school is working to meet their needs more systematically in and beyond lessons. Pupils who speak English as an additional language gain fluency and succeed in their work, although the school recognises the need to do more to ensure that they achieve their potential.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very positive in their attitudes to learning. They take pride in belonging to the school community and are

	eager to participate and to contribute.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils generally behave well. They are very attentive in assemblies. They concentrate well in lessons, though occasionally becoming noisy and distracted when not challenged. They play energetically but amicably, despite the constraints on playground space.

Personal development and relationships	Pupils are confident, friendly and outgoing. They co-operate well in work and play and enjoy good relationships with each other and with adults. They accept and respect others.
Attendance	Attendance overall is above the national average, although term- time holidays, and extended visits abroad, have increased and are detracting from the learning of some pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons seen during the inspection. In most lessons (seven in ten) the teaching was good or better, and in a fifth it was very good. The teaching is effective because:

- lessons are well planned with clear aims which are shared with pupils;
- teachers manage classes purposefully so that pupils concentrate on their learning;
- teachers ask questions and explain well, helping pupils to understand better.

Where teaching is very good, expectations are high and the pace of work is brisk. Pupils of all abilities are kept actively involved and thinking.

The teaching of mathematics has been a focus for staff development and teaching in all the lessons seen was at least good and often very good. As a result, pupils are developing a good grasp of number and enjoying the subject. Reading is generally well taught. The teaching of writing is frequently good, although less effective in some younger classes. Teachers have extended their skills in teaching information and communication technology and this is now a developing strength.

Children are well taught in the nursery and in Reception, although independent play activities are not always structured sufficiently to build on what has been learned with the teacher.

The school provides effective additional teaching and support in the classroom for pupils with special educational needs. This helps to secure pupils' learning so that they can keep up with the class. Extra teaching for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is effective where it is provided.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school teaches the full range of National Curriculum subjects and religious education. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the school has also enhanced its provision for information and communication technology,

	physical education and music. Other subjects, and the links between subjects, are not always given enough attention. The school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons. These enrich school life and extend pupils' interests and skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is a growing strength. The special educational needs co-ordinator and support teacher work very effectively with pupils across the school. They liaise closely with class teachers, support assistants, parents and carers, and external agencies. The support provided gives pupils confidence in learning and results in good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils' acquisition of English is assessed and good specialist support is provided for targeted pupils and classes. Provision does not generally extend to helping pupils who, though reasonably fluent in speaking, lack skills and confidence in written English.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school promotes pupils' all-round development very effectively. Pupils are valued as individuals, and as members of the community. They learn to consider moral issues and to care for others. The school encourages them to take an interest in the wider world and to seize the opportunities provided.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for. Their personal development and academic progress are carefully monitored. The school is orderly and has clear routines so that pupils feel secure. The staff work well together in looking after pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is leading the whole staff team very effectively in taking the school forward and working for improvement. The senior management team is contributing strongly to this process.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They are well informed and active in reviewing the school's work, articulating its mission, and planning for the future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school involves governors, staff, parents and pupils in evaluating what works well and what could be better. The school's leadership draws lessons from this process and takes effective action. Very good systems are in place for tracking pupils' performance and identifying weaknesses in reading, writing and mathematics. This does not yet extend to monitoring performance in all subjects.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well. It makes good use of a small site and is planning well to extend its facilities. When making spending decisions, careful thought is given to

	achieving best value in terms of improving the education of pupils.
--	---

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • The teaching is good. • Children are expected to work hard and do their best. • The school helps children to be mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work children do at home

Parents are generally well satisfied with the school. The positive points above were agreed by almost all parents who expressed a view. A significant minority of parents were not satisfied with the school's arrangements for homework. A new policy has been drawn up for 'home learning', with contributions from parents, and this is now being implemented. Inspectors found that homework is being organised effectively in some classes, but this is not consistent across the school. Some parents felt they did not have enough information about how their children were getting on. The school is planning to extend its outreach to parents, particularly in meeting with them before pupils start, and ensuring good communication where English is not the home language. Inspectors agree that such moves are needed to strengthen the school's partnership with all parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve high standards by the age of eleven, particularly in mathematics and in English.

1. Pupils reach high standards in mathematics by the time they leave. They enjoy the challenge of working with numbers and relish the success they achieve. They learn number facts, for example, in Reception, suggesting pairs of numbers to make ten spots on a ladybird. They master multiplication tables and several pupils in Year 3 expressed their pride in belonging to the 'premier division' of those learning the seven times table. Pupils apply their knowledge in developing strategies for mental calculation. For example, pupils in Year 2 used what they had learned about place value, explaining how to add 25 and 9 by adding ten and taking away one. Pupils learn to use mathematical vocabulary in explaining their methods, and this reinforces their learning. This was seen when pupils in Year 3 mastered adding two and three digits numbers by 'partitioning and recombining'. Competence in calculation is steadily extended, as when pupils in Year 5 used their knowledge of number facts and of place value in tackling long multiplication.
2. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is secured by talking procedures through and making connections with previous learning. Pupils are confident in working mentally and readily spot patterns which help their calculation. In Year 6, pupils were able to relate fractions to percentages and to decimals, working to three decimal places. They drew on their knowledge of doubles and halves in quickly calculating 48 out of 50 as a percentage, or 20 per cent of 84.
3. Quickfire practice rehearses and reinforces learning. Pupils in Year 1 strove to 'catch the teacher out' when counting back in fives. In Year 3, pupils had to respond with true or false cards to statements such as 'there are eight tens in the number 48'. Such activities help pupils to think quickly and to apply their knowledge.
4. Staff training and the monitoring of teaching have helped to strengthen the school's provision in mathematics. This is beginning to have an impact on the standards achieved by younger pupils, and is strengthening attainment in the older years.
5. Pupils do well in reading and there has been a marked improvement in reading in the younger years. Pupils in Reception have made rapid progress in learning letter sounds and common words, and are progressing through a well-planned reading scheme. Pupils are helped to understand and to use what they read. For example, in Year 2, pupils searched simple information books to find the answers to questions, and some devised their own questions which could be answered from the text. In Year 4/5, pupils' comprehension was challenged in reading the story 'Cheat!' from a class text. They identified the moral issue at stake and discussed the 'dilemma' faced by the main character. As well as shared reading with the class, the school has developed its practice of guided reading so that pupils read frequently with a group, helped by the teacher. Pupils enjoy a good range of books in these sessions and this helps to develop their reading interests. At present, the school has no library and this is a constraint, but a library is to be included in the new building.

6. Pupils are making a good start in writing in the Reception year and some write several sentences independently, using their knowledge of sounds and common words. Although standards in writing by the end of Year 2 remain very variable, some children write confidently and at length. Progress in writing accelerates in the older years. Good connections are made between reading and writing, as when pupils in Year 6 developed their own story from reading 'The Demon Headmaster' by Gillian Cross. Pupils discuss the devices used by authors to engage the reader. They apply these in their own work, for example in Year 6 using simile and metaphor to develop their descriptions of the main character in the story. They chose adverbs which helped to reveal character: '...he struck his whip viciously...'; '...he moved back nervously...' Pupils write in different forms and for different purposes. Their work is marked constructively so that they know what they must do to improve.
7. In the national English tests for Year 6 pupils in 2002, 84 per cent reached the expected standard and achieved Level 4, while 47 per cent exceeded this and reached Level 5. Achievement in writing, showed significant improvement in comparison with the previous year.

Good teaching ensures that pupils learn and make progress.

8. Teaching across the school is characterised by a number of good qualities which lead to effective learning.
9. Teaching is well planned to ensure continuity and progress over time. Teachers in parallel classes plan together so that pupils cover the same ground. The 'learning intentions' for lessons are shared with pupils so that they know what they are trying to achieve. The wording of these goals is discussed so that pupils learn technical vocabulary. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils worked with the teacher 'to identify and investigate factors which might affect the size of the shadow of an object'. They discussed key words in order to focus precisely on what they needed to do in carrying out a fair test.
10. Teachers ask questions well to recap previous learning and to ensure that pupils are ready to move forward, as when a teacher in Year 4 explored what pupils had learned about air resistance from an earlier parachute experiment. Teachers ask supplementary questions to make pupils clarify their thinking: 'What exactly do you mean?' 'What's another word for that?'
11. In many lessons, teachers motivate pupils by providing a challenge which intrigues them. In Year 5, pupils watched on the edge of their seats as a two-dimensional shape was withdrawn slowly from an envelope, striving to identify it from its properties: 'It could be a right angle triangle...'; 'That's an acute angle...'; 'It could be a trapezium...'. Pupils in Year 6 had to program a touch sensor, to make a robot vehicle turn away when its bumper hit an object. The teacher prompted them skilfully to find the source of problems in their programming when the vehicle would not respond.
12. Teachers give explanations and instructions in a clear and interesting manner which commands pupils' attention and develops understanding. They take learning forward a step at a time so that pupils understand what they need to do. For example, in Year 2, the teachers demonstrated how to find the answers to questions from a non-fiction text. Pursuing the question 'How does a snake shed its skin?', pupils identified the key word 'skin', consulted the index and extracted the answer from the relevant page. They then found the answers to other questions using the same procedure.
13. Teachers ensure that pupils' understanding is firmly rooted so that it can be built upon subsequently. In starting new work, they refer back to what has been learned before so that pupils remember it and use it as a basis for acquiring further knowledge.

The headteacher gives a very good lead and builds effective teamwork.

14. The headteacher, who has been in post for two years, is very effective in shaping the school's direction and developing the capacity of others to contribute within the team. The headteacher, and now the deputy headteacher, have participated in training for school leadership and the school is benefiting from this. The school's leadership actively promotes staff development and training, concentrating on aspects where improvement is needed.

15. The senior management team has been purposefully developed to share responsibility for key areas of the school's work. Members of the team provide leadership within each key stage. They also lead development across the school in the core subjects of English, mathematics and information and communication technology, and have a good overview of assessment and of development of the premises.
16. The school's leadership consults widely, with teachers, support staff, governors, parents and pupils, about perceived strengths and weaknesses in what the school does. This self-evaluation has developed awareness and generated energy in pursuit of improvement. For example, the school has responded to parental dissatisfaction over homework, inviting parents to join a working party to frame a new approach.
17. The school is honest and open about where it could do better, for example recognising that the downward slide in attainment by younger pupils had to be reversed. It seeks to adapt to new circumstances, as in developing its strategies for managing pupils' behaviour, which some parents and support staff consider to have become more challenging.

18. The headteacher is intent on identifying and remedying underachievement. To this end, the school is making increasing use of systems for tracking pupils' progress from year to year. This analysis, for example, shows that pupils in recent years have made less progress than expected nationally in Years 1 and 2, but that their progress has accelerated in Years 3 to 6. Data is also being used to track the progress of individuals with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. The headteacher has introduced a new policy for meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils. This is helping to raise awareness that pupils may be underachieving, or might have unappreciated talents.
19. Governors are valued as members of the team. Individual governors are linked to subjects and areas of the school's work, helping to evaluate what is being achieved and contributing to strategic development. They are very well informed about the school and take decisions with a good knowledge of the educational issues involved.
20. The school is about to embark on a major building project to provide a new hall, classrooms and library. Everyone has been kept informed, for example with an explanatory leaflet about the plans. There has been full consultation with parents about lunch arrangements while building is underway. The headteacher enlists practical help and weekend working parties, including staff, governors and parents, have set to in painting classrooms and railings, to save money for other projects.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and a strong sense of community.

21. Pupils take pride in the school and have a sense of ownership. Their views are respected and taken into account. This was evident in the attitude of pupils who were keen to talk to inspectors, to tell them about the school and to find out about the inspectors' impressions. Pupils' views about their experience of school are surveyed as part of the process of school improvement planning. The school recently reviewed its mission statement, and pupils were involved in defining this. They understand how it relates to their life in school.
22. The school council has been in operation for eight years, with a boy and girl representative from each class, from Year 3 onwards. They can point to how they have made a difference, for example in tackling litter, or persuading the school to provide tomato sauce with lunch. They are currently deciding how to spend an allocation of money for playground equipment. Council members collect ideas from their classmates, through a suggestion box, and report back to them on the council's discussions. The use of the limited playground space gives rise to lively debate and pupils learn that their ideas can help to make things better, although it is not always possible to satisfy everyone. Pupils know about the plans for the new hall building and are looking forward to the improvements it will bring.
23. Pupils are given individual targets, relating to behaviour where necessary, and to English and mathematics. For example, pupils say that they are working to make better use of connectives, or of commas, in order to improve their writing. Pupils are helped to evaluate their own work. This sometimes becomes a useful dialogue, as seen in the marking of pupils' work in Year 6. A pupil noted: 'I now need to work on lining up decimal and money multiplication sums', and the teacher wrote back: 'Good thinking – it is always worth estimating to see if you've put the

decimal point in the right place'. Pupils are now included in consultation meetings with parents and teachers and are involved in the discussion of targets. This generates a sense of partnership in learning.

24. Children in the Nursery and in Reception develop independence in choosing activities, and in developing their ideas in co-operation with others. For example, in the outdoor play area in Reception, a wedding procession took shape with a bride in a long white dress, a police-helmeted groom and a clay wedding cake. In many classes, good teaching results in pupils feeling good about themselves as learners. A pupil who was new to the school, speaking little English, bubbled with enthusiasm as she commented: 'I love being in this class... this is a very good school.'

The school gives pupils many opportunities beyond the classroom.

25. The school is extending opportunities for pupils in activities beyond the classroom, offering a growing number of 'Out of School Hours Learning Clubs'. Many pupils, mainly in Years 3-6, participate in clubs which are held before or after school. They proudly wear badges showing club membership, for example of the choir.

26. The school's leadership, with the support of governors, is raising the profile of music within the school. Around 80 pupils are now learning to play a musical instrument. Tuition, in small groups, is available in a range of instruments, including woodwind and strings. Three teachers are also learning an instrument at school. There is fellow feeling amongst teachers and pupils as they discuss their music practice and prepare for exams. As well as a choir, the school has an embryonic orchestra of violin, flute and clarinet players. The school has acquired a complete set of African drums. All classes learn to play them, taught in turn by a specialist teacher who visits weekly and also takes an after school club. The teaching is excellent and pupils are fascinated and highly motivated as they learn increasingly complex rhythmic patterns, developing physical co-ordination as well as musical sense.
27. The school's clubs allow pupils to work with skilled enthusiasts. The range of activities introduces pupils to creative traditions from different cultures. For example, pupils took pleasure in mastering 'progression' in learning a formal English country-dance. They spoke of the patterns involved in dancing around the school's maypole. Other pupils, of all backgrounds, enjoyed Indian dancing, practising the movements of folk dance with feet pointing one way and hands in the opposite direction.
28. Other clubs include French, gardening, art, maths, computers and a puzzle club. Clubs for sports, such as netball, football and cricket, have a strong following, giving pupils the opportunity to learn skills and to take part competitively in school teams. Younger pupils, from Reception on, can join a music club.
29. The headteacher, staff and parents contribute their time and enthusiasm generously in running these clubs. The activities introduce pupils to new interests and skills. They develop self-esteem and cultivate creativity and sociable relationships, enriching school life.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

30. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the support teacher spend the equivalent of about three days a week teaching groups of pupils, alongside the teacher in the classroom. They provide high quality teaching which is well targeted to pupils' needs and builds on what they can do. For example, in Year 6, the support teacher taught pupils strategies to help them when the class was calculating percentage discounts. The teacher's careful, explicit explanation gave pupils confidence as when one boy managed to work out a 10 per cent discount and then saw how he could use this in finding a 20 per cent discount. In a literacy lesson in Year 2, the special needs co-ordinator helped a pupil to identify the 'important' words in a passage about birds, in a lesson on note-taking. This individual support, often in a small group within the class, helps pupils to behave and to concentrate well, and to take pleasure in what they can achieve.
31. Learning support assistants work effectively with pupils who have severe difficulties, building their confidence and helping them to master small steps in learning. For instance, one pupil benefited from special games to reinforce counting skills, taking great delight in his success. Other pupils are understanding and accepting of those with special needs and readily celebrate their successes.

32. Needs are carefully identified and Individual Education Plans are carefully drawn up, focusing on the next steps to be taken in learning. Pupils' progress is tracked over time to monitor how well they are doing. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises effectively with external agencies. There is effective teamwork among all those working to support pupils with special needs. This is underpinned by the school's leadership which places a high priority on helping all pupils to achieve, whatever their individual needs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

There is more to be done in working for higher standards by the age of seven.

33. National tests at the end of Year 2 show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have declined since the last inspection. In 2002, average attainment in these subjects placed the school in the lowest five per cent of similar schools. This was also the case in science, judged by teachers' assessment of attainment.

34. In 2002, many pupils did not achieve beyond Level 1. Only 54 per cent in reading, 36 per cent in writing and 63 per cent in mathematics reached Level 2B, showing secure attainment within Level 2. Few pupils attained highly and reached Level 3. Because of weak attainment in Year 2, pupils in Year 3 this year have been working from a low base, though they have been making good progress.
35. The school identified problems leading to underachievement. It has been working hard this year to raise expectations and to build stronger foundations in learning from the start. It has re-organised provision in the Reception year and raised the level of achievement in literacy and numeracy. More attention is now being paid to the teaching of phonics in Reception, and to ensuring that children make steady progress in reading and writing independently, using their knowledge of letter sounds and common words. 'Reading Recovery' and 'Early Literacy Strategy' programmes have been provided in Year 1 to help pupils who have not made a good start in reading to catch up. The introduction of guided reading sessions, and development of the reading scheme have also helped to lift standards in reading. Results in national tests for seven year olds in 2003, as yet unmoderated, show a big improvement in reading. The percentage reaching Level 2 has risen to around nine out of ten, with almost eight out of ten achieving at least Level 2B. Around a quarter of pupils attained Level 3. Although some pupils continue to be limited by weakness in their phonic knowledge, the school is moving rapidly in the right direction.
36. Results in writing in the 2003 national tests for seven year olds also showed improvement, particularly in the number of pupils achieving Level 3. However, one in four pupils achieved only Level 1 and this is reflected in standards in writing in Key Stage 1 which are very variable. Many pupils lack basic skills in writing, and work from this year shows pupils starting in Year 1 from a very low base. Problems persist because pupils have too little opportunity to write at length. In some lessons, teachers set tasks and leave pupils to get on independently while they work with another group. There is not enough attention to the quality or quantity of the writing produced, or to securing improvement. Pupils lack resources to support them in trying to spell accurately. Those who enjoy writing and find it easy forge ahead, but poor writing skills are not systematically addressed.
37. Results in mathematics, in the tests for seven year olds in 2003, remain lower than average though better than in 2002. However, the quality of teaching is good, and the work seen during the inspection shows pupils making good progress. The school has been active recently in working to improve the teaching of numeracy and to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve. Good foundations in numeracy are being laid in Reception. Pupils currently in Year 2, like those now in Year 3, are achieving well and making up lost ground. Although standards in mathematics are not yet as high as they should be by the end of Year 2, the school is well on the way to remedying this.
38. The school is making good use of information from assessment in tracking progress from year to year. This clearly shows a past pattern of pupils making less progress than they should in the younger years. Pupils who did well at the end of Year 6 in 2002 had also done well in tests at the end of Year 2 in 1998. Since then, however, attainment has dropped in Year 2 and accelerated progress has been needed in Years 3 to 6 in order to maintain good standards by the time pupils leave the school.

39. Assessment in Nursery and Reception has been used extensively to identify the needs and achievements of individuals in these years. It has not, however, been aggregated to track the relative attainment of groups, classes and year groups and to question whether it is good enough. This means that there has been too little consideration of what pupils should or could be capable of achieving by the end of Year 2, in order to set sights high for them from the start.

High quality learning is not consistently promoted across all subjects and areas of learning.

40. The school has improved learning in English and mathematics, and enriched its provision beyond the classroom. It has also developed the quality of its provision in information and communication technology, physical education and music.
41. In some other subjects, however, work does not always develop coherently across the school as a whole. Teachers' subject knowledge, for example in science and art, is not strongly developed. Work in geography and history, though often interesting and appropriate, is spasmodic and thin in quantity. This means that pupils' learning about past times and other places is not systematically developed, building on what has gone before.
42. The application of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects is not planned across the school. For example, the extent and quality of writing, in subjects such as science and history, does not develop steadily across the school.
43. Members of the senior management team provide effective subject leadership in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The guiding of planning and teaching is not consistently well-developed in other subjects, although the school has been working to extend the role of the subject leader in monitoring and planning for improvement.
44. The school has re-organised the use of space and time in the Reception unit, to provide more appropriately for the Foundation Stage curriculum. The classrooms are linked to provide a range of activities for children in both classes, with access to an outdoor area which is extensively used. The teachers work very effectively with their classes, for example when introducing work on addition and subtraction, or leading the lively singing of number rhymes. They extend children's thinking, as seen when a piece of lava rock generated lively discussion about volcanoes and how they were different from pyramids.
45. For much of the day, children move freely between a choice of activities, while teachers work with individuals and groups, mainly on literacy and numeracy skills. Children make a lot of progress when working with the teacher, as shown in the good standards they are reaching in reading, writing and number. Children are happy and confident in choosing their own activities, with supervision from the support staff. Where play activities are well structured for a purpose, children take pleasure in what they can achieve, as when children made and decorated their own paper aprons and showed them off with pride. However, activities do not sufficiently serve to reinforce and extend what has been learned with the teacher. The resources are not always well structured to prompt investigation and imagination. Few activities present a challenge which has to be followed through to a conclusion, in order to take learning forward. As a result, the quality of

children's learning, and the amount of progress they make, during long periods of free choice activity are very variable.

Further attention should be given to the needs of higher attaining pupils, and to those who are becoming bilingual.

46. A new policy is being implemented in order to make provision for gifted and talented pupils. High attaining pupils are being identified in each class. Staff development has focused on how to provide for these pupils, for example through homework matched to their ability, but the policy has yet to be fully implemented. In some lessons, there are more demanding requirements of able pupils or extension work for those who finish quickly, but this is not always the case. Teachers, with the help of support teachers, are very aware of the steps in learning which need to be taken, particularly by those who find the work difficult. They more rarely explore how far the highest attaining pupils are capable of going, for example in calculating mentally or in pursuing a scientific investigation.
47. The school supports pupils well who are at an early stage in learning English. The support teacher, funded by the Ethnic Minority and Achievement Grant, identifies needs and monitors progress. She works to good effect in lessons, helping individuals and groups to participate and to make progress. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson, the support teacher worked with three pupils, two of whom were at an early stage in learning English, reinforcing their knowledge of letter sounds. In many lessons, however, there is no additional support for pupils who are becoming bilingual. Specialist support is directed towards the classes where the need is greatest, and little is provided in the older years.
48. The support teacher gives informal advice. In addition, the staff has had some general training, but this has not focused enough on classroom methods and resources to help the increasing number of bilingual language learners. Some practices, such as the focus on technical vocabulary in talking about learning intentions, are helping pupils of all language backgrounds to extend their understanding of word meanings. The diversity of languages spoken is recognised and celebrated so, for example, children in the Nursery recognise the scripts of different home languages. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make gains in spoken fluency, although the school has identified the need to promote speaking skills more actively, for example through drama. Some bilingual pupils continue to lack skills and confidence in written English. The school recognises that, in some cases, this leads to underachievement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. In order to build on its strengths and to improve further the school should:

Continue to work for higher standards by the age of seven by:

- developing the tracking of progress from Nursery on, to set sights high for the end of Year 2;
- clarifying the progress expected in writing each year and setting clear goals for pupils;

- ensuring, through the provision of resources, teaching and marking, that pupils apply what they have been taught when writing independently;
(paragraphs 33-39)

Ensure that pupils' learning is systematically developed in all subjects and areas of learning by:

- developing the overview of science and foundation subjects by subject leaders;
- auditing the use of time and the strength of teachers' subject knowledge across the curriculum;
- planning the application of skills, particularly in literacy, within other subjects;
- ensuring that activities in Reception reinforce and extend specific skills in each area of learning;
- structuring play so that materials and resources lead learning forward and present a challenge;
- organising the use of time and space by children to maximise their learning.
(paragraphs 40-45)

Give more attention to the needs of higher attaining pupils, and of those who are bilingual by:

- sharing good practice in challenging higher attaining pupils within lessons and through homework;
- clarifying expectations of higher attaining pupils and reflecting these in marking and target setting;
- identifying and encouraging special talents, in and out of the classroom;
- monitoring the progress of all bilingual pupils and pinpointing underachievement;
- extending training for all staff in helping bilingual pupils to develop their skills, particularly in written English.
(paragraphs 46-48)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	20	13	0	0	0
Percentage	2	19	48	31	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two 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)	19	381
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	65

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	75

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	121

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	27	32	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	17	22
	Girls	21	25	26
	Total	41	42	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (76)	71 (87)	81 (80)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	22	21
	Girls	21	24	23
	Total	39	46	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (72)	78 (78)	75 (78)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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
	2002	22	27	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	16	17
	Girls	24	24	26
	Total	41	40	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (94)	82 (86)	88 (98)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	17
	Girls	23	24	24
	Total	39	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (80)	82 (86)	84 (96)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
116	0	0
9	0	0
28	0	0
11	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
9	0	0
6	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
19	0	0
52	0	0
41	0	0
13	0	0
2	0	0
6	0	0
4	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	29.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	384.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	914107
Total expenditure	872956
Expenditure per pupil	2233
Balance brought forward from previous year	41813
Balance carried forward to next year	82964

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	400
Number of questionnaires returned	98

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	38	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	47	5	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	51	8	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	47	22	7	1
The teaching is good.	39	57	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	55	13	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	43	7	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	47	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	38	51	7	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	36	53	7	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	58	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	47	14	4	3