

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY'S RAWTENSTALL CE (VC) PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Rawtenstall, Rossendale

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119368

Headteacher: Mrs J. Frazer

Reporting inspector: Mrs P. A. Simpson
1515

Dates of inspection: 18 – 19 February 2003

Inspection number: 248007

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 Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Haslingden Old Road Rawtenstall Rossendale
Postcode:	BB4 8RZ
Telephone number:	01706 216407
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D. McLoughlin
Date of previous inspection:	12 January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Rawtenstall Church of England (VC) Primary School serves the community of Rawtenstall in Lancashire. There are 183 pupils (83 girls and 100 boys) on roll ranging from four to eleven years of age. At the time of the inspection 39 children were under the age of six. There are seven classes each with a single year group. A high percentage of pupils (around 8 to 10 per cent) join or leave the school each year. Fifty-one per cent of the pupils of compulsory school age are of white British heritage and 46 per cent are Asian or Asian British. The percentage of pupils (40 per cent) whose mother tongue is not or believed not to be English is very high. The percentage of pupils (35 per cent) eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs (8 per cent) due to moderate or other learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average. However, the proportion of those with a statement of special educational need is above the national average. On intake, few children have experienced pre-school educational provision. The results of assessments conducted when children enter the school show that attainment is well below that expected for children's ages in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills, but there is a wide spread of ability. The school was granted the Investors in People Award in 1999 and the award was reaffirmed in 2001. For the last two years it has received School Achievement awards from the Department for Education and Skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Mary's is a very effective school. Pupils attained high standards in the 2002 Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science. Compared to their attainment when they entered the school, this represents very good achievement by this Year 6 group. This is because the overall quality of teaching is good, and the pupils are very well supported by the educational support staff. The very good leadership and management contribute substantially to the success of the school. As a result, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The overall standards in English, mathematics and science in the Year 6 national tests in 2002 were well above average.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and it makes a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The school promotes very positive attitudes to learning amongst its pupils whose behaviour, relationships and personal development are generally very good.
- The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The headteacher and key staff, supported by the active governing body, lead and manage the school very effectively.

What could be improved

- The procedures for improving the attendance of pupils and the establishment of a closer working partnership with parents in order to secure improvement in attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been very good improvement since the school was previously inspected in January 1998, when it was judged that the school's climate for learning was good. All of the key issues have been addressed and actioned successfully. Staff have received training in information and communication technology (ICT). The resources and opportunities for pupils to use computers have improved and, as a result, standards are now broadly average. The provision for music and physical education in Years 3 to 6 has been improved. Subject co-ordinators monitor the curriculum planning formally now. There is a whole school policy in place for assessment, recording and reporting on the progress of pupils.

Opportunities are provided for pupils to exercise independence in particular in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The school development plan gives budgetary implications and indicators as to how the school will evaluate whether targets set have been met. However, this only covers one year at a time. Information and communication technology is an ongoing priority for development; it is planned to modify the library so as to create a discrete ICT teaching area. The school's evaluation of its performance is systematic and focuses on improving standards particularly in the core subjects and ICT. By the end of Year 6 in 2002 standards in the core subjects were much higher than those reported in 1998. The very effective headteacher and key staff with good backing from its governing body are in a favourable position to continue to make even more improvements.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	B	A	A*
mathematics	D	C	B	A
science	C	A	A	A*

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils reached above and well above average standards in the 2002 Year 6 national tests as shown above. Comparison with schools which have a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals shows that standards in 2002 were well above average in mathematics with the school being in the top five per cent nationally in English and science. This represents very good overall achievement, given the well below expected starting points when the children entered the school.

English and mathematics targets set by the governing body for the 2002 Year 6 group were exceeded; a contributory factor was the provision of a 'booster' class. The realistic yet challenging targets set by the school each year are informed by the very good use that is made of prior attainment information in these subjects.

The school's national test results at the end of Year 2, in 2002, show that the standards attained by the pupils at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The attainment of boys exceeded that of girls. A contributory factor was absences during the year which impacted on the rate of progress made and the final test results. Comparison with schools of a similar type shows that standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards seen during the inspection were similar to those recorded in last year's national tests with the exception of English which is now above average. This is due to higher than average pupil mobility in the current Year 6 group. Children make good progress during their time in the reception class. At the end of the Reception Year, children attain standards which are close to that expected for their ages. Standards in ICT are broadly average, but there is more to be done with regard to controlling devices and exploring models using computers in Years 3 to 6. This is planned for in the ICT action plan and the school development plan. Pupils' skills are well developed in literacy and numeracy.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
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Attitudes to the school	Very good and they are having a positive impact on enhancing learning. Pupils are interested in their work and support one another readily.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in general. There was one short-term exclusion during 2000. Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful of each other and of adults.
Aspect	Comment
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are productive between pupils themselves as well as between pupils and the staff. Pupils show respect for their own beliefs and those of their peers.
Attendance	Poor in comparison with national figures. Attendance was well below the national average in 2001/2002. The rate of unauthorised absence for the same year was above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	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.

The overall quality of teaching is good and it makes a positive impact on pupils' learning. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during this inspection. The main strengths of the teaching and learning are:

- Basic literacy skills are very well taught and the overall quality of the teaching of numeracy skills is good and, as a result, ensures that all pupils have full access to the school curriculum.
- Teaching and education support assistants know the pupils well and they are clear what they want different groups of pupils to learn and they assess what they actually learn.
- Teacher expectations of the pupils are high and as a result they are productive and work at a good pace.
- Pupils are managed well, they show interest in their work and behaviour is generally of a very good standard.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects being taught and as a result of training in ICT more attention is being given to improving pupils' ICT skills.

Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported throughout the school. Pupils who speak English as their additional language are also supported very well. Because of the quality of the teaching and support provided, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make progress that is as good as other pupils in the classes. The school meets the individual learning needs of its pupils well by modifying and adapting tasks to suit pupils with different prior knowledge and varying language skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad ranging and takes very good account of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. More opportunities are needed for pupils to speak and read aloud.
Provision for pupils with	Very good. Pupils with special educational needs receive focused support to meet their needs. They are integrated well into all aspects of

special educational needs	school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Bilingual support is very well deployed. The school's values place the focus on learning and the individual learners' needs. Diversity is celebrated and there are no barriers to learning.

Aspect	Comment
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good and it is based on traditional Christian principles. Spiritual and cultural development is good; this is an improvement on that reported in 1998.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Overall the school's arrangements for looking after its pupils' welfare are good. Procedures for improving attendance are ineffective. In 1998 it was reported that attendance was consistently below the national average. Comparison with national figures show the attendance rate at the school is now well below the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence in 2001/2002 was above the national average.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There is a shared commitment by all staff and from the governors to improvement in order that all pupils achieve their best. The school has explicit aims and values, including a commitment to equality of opportunity for all, and these are reflected in all of its work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body actively help in shaping the school and it is well informed about what is going on in the school. The latest (2002) Governors' Annual Report to Parents did not include all the required information.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. However, it does not in its monitoring and evaluation procedures formally link gender and ethnicity factors together when analysing the outcomes of pupils' attainment.
The strategic use of resources	The principles of best value are applied well. Strategic use of resources is made by linking decisions on spending to those priorities identified in the school development plan. As a means of obtaining cost effectiveness, the interests of pupils and staff are at the centre of the decision making process.

The school has a very good strategy for appraisal and performance management. All staff have clearly identified targets which are monitored and evaluated against individual objectives and against the school development plan. The school does not have a strategic development plan but this will be put into place from September 2003.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. • The standards of behaviour are good. • The quality of teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school helps their children to become 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information that is provided about their children's progress. • The school to work more closely with all parents. • The range of activities outside lessons.

mature and responsible.	
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Inspectors agree with the positive views and comments made by parents. Inspectors support the first two views which were raised during meetings with parents and in the parental questionnaires about what could be improved and they partly support the third point raised. The annual written report to parents: pupils' achievements do not contain particulars of pupils' progress in all subjects and activities studied as a part of the school curriculum. The school is aware of the need to work more closely with parents and very recently a draft plan has been formulated to 'raise the profile of St Mary's School with existing parents'. A range of sports, recorder, art and drama clubs have been made available for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Participation rates are high. The recent award of 'Sports for All' funding is intended to introduce in the summer of 2003 extra-curricular activities for younger pupils, and provide specialist cricket coaching for Years 5 and 6. Parents do not appear to be aware of the full range of activities provided outside lessons over the time their children are at St Mary's.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The overall standards in English, mathematics and science in the Year 6 national tests in 2002 were well above average.

1. National test results for Year 6 pupils in 2002 were well above the national average in English and science and they were above average in mathematics. This is a significant improvement since the school was previously inspected when standards in these subjects were reported to be in line with the national expectations. Information based on the prior attainment of this Year 6 group at the end of Year 2 in 1998 shows that pupils achieved very well, in particular in English and science. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs are given focused support and as a result, they make the same rates of progress as their peers. The overall 2002 Year 6 results show very good achievement given the well below average starting points when the children entered the school.
2. Comparison with schools of a similar type (those with more than 20 per cent and up to 35 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals) shows that, by the end of Year 6, pupils' standards were well above average in mathematics, and in English and science they were very high, placing them within the range of the top five per cent of schools across the country. The percentage of pupils who reached above the expected Level 4 (the expected attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 is Level 2 and at the end of Year 6 Level 4) was well above the national average in English and science and it was average in mathematics. Taking the average figures across the three core subjects in 2002 the school exceeded the national average in all three subjects and there was no overall significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in this Year 6 group. However, over the period 2000-2002 girls did better than boys in English. This is consistent with the national pattern of attainment.
3. The targets set in 2002 for the Year 6 group were exceeded by eight per cent for Level 4 or above in English and by five per cent in mathematics. Contributory factors were the provision of 'booster' classes and further support to meet the ongoing needs of individual pupils. The realistic yet challenging targets set by the school each year are informed by the very good use that is made of prior attainment information in these subjects.
4. The school's national test results at the end of Year 2 in 2002, show that the standards attained by the pupils at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. In 2002 the boys exceeded the national average for their age group in all three national tests whereas girls fell below the national average in this age group. A contributory factor, based on the monitoring of attendance by the school in this same year, was extended absence taken by some pupils which affected the rate of progress made and the final test results. The school has, as a part of its monitoring and evaluation strategy, looked at the performances of boys, girls and ethnic groupings, but it has not, as a part of its analysis and subsequent target-setting process, linked gender and ethnicity factors together. Comparison with schools of a similar type shows that standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assessment for this same year placed Year 2 pupils below average in science. As a result, attention has been given at senior management level to support the assessment and monitoring of standards in science and the subsequent improvement of standards in all aspects of science. Teacher assessment for the current Year 2 indicates that nearly all pupils will achieve Level 2 and a small number will attain Level 3 in science.

5. The school makes a thorough assessment of children's language when they enter the school and uses this information well to identify which children are likely to need language support. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not or believed not to be English is very high. Children make good overall progress during their time in the Reception class based on their well below average attainment on entry to school, especially in their literacy and numeracy skills. All adults ensure that language is used for communication and thinking throughout the teaching and learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Work seen in the Reception class was below average, bearing in mind that the children have been in compulsory schooling for less than six months. At the end of the Reception Year, standards of attainment are closer to those expected for children of this age in regard to the early learning goals. Very good attention is given to developing children's communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal social and emotional development. The children write their own names and they make good progress in using writing for different purposes such as copying lists of words. Most of them clearly joined in the chorus 'Today it is Wednesday. It is sunny' and demonstrated their interest in the sounds and meanings of words. The children named two- and three-dimensional shapes and correctly used mathematical vocabulary such as 'corner' and 'face' and they are able to count accurately up to ten. The children worked together and nearly all of them followed the teacher's directions when preparing for 'Kipper's Birthday Party'. It is evident that the children have a developing awareness of their own needs and respect for their own culture and beliefs and of those of their peers.
6. Inspectors found standards to be similar to those recorded in last year's national tests with the exception of English in Year 6 where in 2002 they were well above average and now they are above average. This is due to the higher than average number of pupils in the current Year 6 group who have joined or left the school. In English in Year 2, higher attaining pupils showed noticeable improvement in their spelling and very good progress is made in their handwriting styles and they correctly used punctuation and full stops. Pupils of all ability groupings are given good speaking and writing development opportunities including using ICT as a means of checking improvements in their written work. As a result, their literacy skill development is consolidated by these cross-curricular opportunities. For example, in Year 5 the writing of Haiku poems about the people they know using similes and metaphors.
7. Standards in mathematics are broadly average in Year 2. Although good attention is given to developing mathematical language, some lower attaining pupils find difficulty in communicating and employing mathematical vocabulary. Most pupils, by the end of Year 2, can reliably count and write numbers to 20 or beyond and they can correctly identify the relationship between halving and doubling. Pupils have developed different mental methods to recall facts and they usually work! A display of mathematics vocabulary in Year 4 detailed mathematical language precisely as a means of encouraging the correct language when recording mathematical solutions. Year 6 pupils attain above average standards. They can nearly all solve word problems accurately involving money, make correct use of decimal points and can round up figures to the nearest whole number when converting poundage to other currency. Calculators are used confidently when it is deemed appropriate by the teacher to do so. Years 2 and 6 communicated their findings and solutions well using ICT, for example, graphic and picture scores in Year 2 music, and reflective symmetry work and spreadsheets in Year 6. A whole-school strategy has recently been put into place to improve all pupils' abilities to answer problem-solving questions in numeracy.

8. On occasions standards of handwriting and completed work are not presented as carefully as they could be. In English and mathematics the exercise books used are small in size, although in some classes commercial worksheets were used.

The overall quality of teaching is good and it makes a positive impact on pupils' learning.

9. Teaching is good throughout the school. A fifth of the teaching observed was judged to be very good. Nearly a further two-thirds of lessons were judged to be good. Slightly under a fifth was satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during this inspection. This is an improvement on that reported in 1998.
10. The strategy for teaching literacy skills is very effective. The overall quality of the teaching of numeracy skills is good. This ensures that all pupils have full access to the planned curriculum. Learning objectives in literacy and numeracy planning are particularly well defined for pupils of all of the different abilities present, including for those who are still learning English, those with special educational needs and for higher attaining pupils. The school's strategy for literacy and numeracy is now well established. The very good quality of the planning in a Reception session showed that the communication, language and literacy and numeracy activities were tightly based on the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Teachers and support staff are competent in their use of spoken sounds (phonics) so as to make language come alive for all pupils. In a Year 2 ICT lesson, there was good use of phonics by the teacher and pupils as a means of enabling corrections to be made to their work. Overall teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum.
11. Teaching and education support assistants know their pupils well and they are clear what they want different groups of pupils to learn and they assess formally what pupils actually learn. Staff have precise knowledge of the pupils. They keep very good records of progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT as a means of setting work that matches pupils' needs effectively. In a Year 3 numeracy lesson, support staff asked focused questions of the lower attaining pupils; this made them think for themselves and, as a result, they generally answered the questioning accurately. In a session where Year 5 pupils were supported, very good attention was given to the needs and interests of individual pupils. As a result of the positive climate that has been established for learning, very good progress was made and the self-esteem of those pupils involved was raised.
12. Teacher expectations of the pupils are high and as a result they are productive and generally work at least at a good pace. Teachers and support assistants use different but appropriate language in lessons so that all groups of pupils understand what is expected of them. Tasks are modified and amended to take account of the variety of pupils from different cultural backgrounds. The use of time was very efficient in a Year 4 mathematics lesson because the teacher expected that everyone would succeed in the task set before the lesson ended. Some boys and girls from ethnic minority groups, however, although they completed the tasks, did not have the self-confidence to present their findings in the oral discussions that ensued. Overall, pupils learned a lot about shape and space and this was rightly acknowledged by the praise given to the whole class. Year 6 made very good progress in their English work because of the challenging teaching and the good use of ICT opportunities made available to them as a means of presenting their work and ideas.

13. Pupils are managed well, they show interest in their work and behaviour is generally of a very good standard. Pupils learn through a range of different experiences. Throughout the school available resources are planned to be used effectively so that learning can be improved and concentration levels maintained. For example, in a Year 1, personal and social education lesson, the rules about sharing individual views were reinforced so as to establish pupil concentration and self-confidence. In consequence individual pupils were confident when talking to the class about their special person(s). It was as a result of the very good relationship between the teacher and pupils that they were able to talk about their special person and why this was so within the context of the multicultural nature of the school.
14. Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects being taught in particular in English and mathematics. As a result of training in ICT, careful attention has been given to the quality of teaching in ICT and to improving pupils' ICT skills. Attainment and learning have improved in ICT since the last inspection in 1998 when no teaching was observed. Standards are now broadly average due to the better teaching of skills in ICT, but the school is aware that there is more to be done with regard to controlling devices and exploring models using computers in Years 3 to 6. This is planned for in the action plan and the school development plan, which have identified the need for a discrete ICT teaching and learning base and improving the range of computers and software.
15. Pupils who have learning difficulties and medical needs are very well supported throughout the school. Pupils who speak English as their additional language are also supported very well. Because of the quality of the teaching and support provided, pupils with special educational need (SEN) and those for whom English is an additional language make progress that is as good as other pupils in the classes. The school meets the individual learning needs of its pupils well by modifying and adapting tasks to suit pupils with different prior knowledge and varying language skills. More opportunities should be provided for pupils of all ages to read aloud across the curriculum supported by a whole school speaking and listening policy.
16. Homework is set from the Reception class onwards in accordance with the (undated) school policy and comprises mainly literacy and numeracy activities to reinforce and extend what has been learned in school. The setting of homework in the junior part of the school also provides an opportunity for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.

The school promotes very positive attitudes to learning amongst its pupils whose behaviour, relationships and personal development are generally very good.

17. The school aims to present pupils with positive and realistic objectives and to develop their talents and skills so that they enter society as effective and responsible members after their formal schooling. Pupils' very good attitudes to learning, their generally very good behaviour and very good relationships within school are strengths of its work. This is a similar picture to that identified in the last inspection. Nearly every parent who returned the parental questionnaire agreed that their child likes school and inspection evidence supports this. Pupils are interested in their lessons, follow directions and share their ideas and work with others. In a Reception lesson the children played enthusiastically with toy animals and constructed simple houses individually and together. Year 1 made an enthusiastic start in a literacy session and willingly shared their work orally using descriptive vocabulary about the characters in the story. Year 2 enjoyed solving time problems in a numeracy lesson. Year 3 politely and positively followed instructions related to their independent group activities on mathematical

measurements. Year 6 pupils collaborated well when using computers and readily share their ideas with each other.

18. Overall pupils' behaviour is generally very good. This is also the view expressed by the majority of parents who completed questionnaires and at the pre-inspection parents' meeting. The maintenance of good behaviour is seen as essential in the school. The behaviour policy is firmly underpinned by the Christian character of the school and its Mission Statement. There was one fixed term exclusion in 2000. Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful of each other and of adults. The behaviour management strategy is promoted consistently by all staff and pupils are rewarded when they display good behaviour and work habits.
19. There are very good relationships throughout the school. Pupils relate well to each other and are tolerant about the beliefs, cultures and backgrounds within the school. Pupils who receive additional support for behavioural or language development are fully integrated due to the quality of relationships and the purposeful working atmosphere that has been created as in a Year 4 numeracy lesson. Older pupils are confident and motivated to learn as in a Year 5 science lesson where they participated fully when learning about the water cycle. Very good learning took place when a small group was withdrawn for additional help. There are strong relationships between pupils and educational support staff. Ninety-five per cent of parents agreed that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Pupils develop self-confidence and are willing to share the outcomes of their work; for example, in assemblies and to carry out duties in class and around the school. All this contributes to the way pupils learn academically and in preparing them to play an active role as citizens.
20. There is one area of concern. Pupils' overall attendance in comparison with other schools is well below the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is above the national average. Despite the efforts of the school in monitoring attendance patterns, attendance has not improved since the last inspection. As a result, the learning of those pupils absent for short and longer periods of time is not as good as projected.

The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

21. The Mission Statement of the school is '...to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of its pupils within a caring, supportive and Christian climate'.
22. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. This is an improvement on that reported in the last inspection. The school assemblies are a key focus for spiritual development. Principal beliefs and values are celebrated and they enrich the personal development of pupils. Pupils during a whole school assembly sat silently and thought about their experiences of friendship following the reading of the story about 'The Little Red Hen'. Years 4 and 6 pupils confidently shared their poetic and ICT experiences with the whole of the junior pupils who listened attentively throughout. Although pupils were asked to think about aspects of the assemblies, there was too little time given at the end to reflect on their own experiences and the development of self-knowledge, because the background music was switched on promptly and the assembly dismissed. Teachers show pupils how they value the intellectual, physical or creative effort they put into their work by displaying this work to full advantage, for example, in art, ICT, literacy and religious education. Year 6 portraits, using a digital camera, were presented thoughtfully, as were the Year 5 poems with illustrations. Throughout the

school very good attention is given to the presentation of displayed work. More recently collaborative efforts have taken place to consolidate the links between the school and St Mary's Church; this appears to be working well. A great number of services are planned to be celebrated in church in the future.

23. The provision for moral development is very good and is fostered through the Christian values that the school promotes. The school successfully encourages in all pupils, commitment, self-reliance, responsibility and respect for others and a sense of self-worth. Nearly all the parents who responded to the survey of parents and carers agreed that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. There is a clear code of conduct and the school has high expectations about the way pupils should respond to each other and to adults. Pupils move sensibly around the building and walk into and out of the hall in an orderly manner. The school rules are displayed in classrooms and they are well known to the pupils. A system of rewards and celebration assemblies take place. Pupils are proud when they receive merits and awards, with class successes being displayed on noticeboards for all to see. The school's personal, social and health education policy and programme enables pupils to discuss openly the positive aspects of their learning and any issues which concern them.
24. The provision for social development is good overall. From the outset children are provided with a good range of opportunities to promote their social development. Relationships are based on mutual respect. Teachers provide very good role models. Year 6 pupils look after younger pupils, for example, through the lunch-time 'buddying' system. Extra-curricular activities are provided for Years 5 and 6. They include seasonal sports coaching and competitions, art and drama clubs, a residential Year 6 journey to Tower Wood, Cumbria, and involvement in school productions, school fayres and the raising of funds for charities. Participation rates are high. The school has not yet provided any extra-curricular clubs for younger pupils but a recent successful bid from 'Sports for All' means that there will be some sporting activities provided for infants in the summer term 2003.
25. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. This is an improvement on that reported in the 1998 inspection. The school makes good use of the locality, for example, by visiting the Helmshore textile museum, as a part of Years 1 and 2 studies of Victorian Britain. The excellent display of pictures and artefacts in the library, with regard to shoe and slipper making, illustrates very well the history of the Rossendale Valley. The school works in partnership with its local special and secondary schools including using the ICT facilities at Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School. The school promotes respect and understanding of diverse cultures, languages and ethnic groups including faith groups. In a Year 1, personal, social and health education lesson, pupils were both surprised and pleased when the teacher shared with them the Bengali for 'I am special'. Puppets were used by pupils as a learning resource when thinking about someone special and some of them confidently talked about their friends to the whole class. Where necessary pupils translated what had been said into the first language of those for whom English is not their mother tongue. This was a very good example of teaching pupils to understand the need for mutual respect in a diverse society.

The headteacher and key staff, supported by the active governing body, lead and manage the school very effectively.

26. The headteacher, key staff and governors have established a clear direction for the work of the school. There is a shared commitment by all staff and from the governors to school improvement in order that all pupils achieve their best. Staff feel valued and this helps both pupils and staff to succeed. This has made a significant impact on learning and consequently on the higher than average standards attained by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. The quality of such leadership led in 1999 to the school being granted the Investors in People Award and to the re-affirmation of this award in 2001.
27. The school's values embrace the inclusion of different groups of pupils within St Mary's very well. Its practices promote equality of opportunity for all pupils, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, attainment or background. The race equality policy of October 2002 builds upon the Mission Statement, core values and ethos of the whole school Christian community. An inclusion policy, based on the inclusion principles of the local education authority, is in place. The action plan for inclusion, 2002/2003, focuses on assessing the current inclusion arrangements for all groups, including those with special educational needs, gifted and more able pupils and for those for whom English is an additional language. The school has established a very positive climate for learning. It provides a caring, disciplined community and as a consequence of this, the school cultivates the personal development of all pupils very well.
28. The governing body actively helps in shaping the school and it is well informed about what is going on in the school. The chair of governors visits the school for a day every week and is very conversant with school developments and other school initiatives. Designated governors for literacy, numeracy, special educational needs, and child protection take particular interest in their field of responsibility, supported by governor training to enhance this role. The special educational needs policy was reviewed in October 2002 to meet the requirements of the 2002 Code of Practice for SEN and to improve the provision for pupils with SEN in compliance with the revised Code of Practice. The latest (2002) Governors' Annual Report to Parents did not include all of the required information for parents.
29. The school development plan has improved since the previous inspection. The school development plan now gives budgetary implications and indicators as to how the school will evaluate whether targets set have been met. The main three committees of the governing body routinely review aspects of the school development plan related to such matters as curriculum, staffing, finance and buildings. However, the school development plan only covers one year at a time. It is the intention of the school to have a strategic development plan in place from September 2003 following specific training of senior staff.
30. The principles of best value are applied well. The strategic use of resources is made by linking decisions on spending to those priorities identified in the one-year plan. Although the school has a budget surplus of over ten per cent, most of this money is earmarked for the future benefit of pupils. Information and communication technology is an ongoing priority for development; it is planned to relocate the library so as to create a discrete ICT teaching area. As a means of obtaining best value for money, the interests of pupils and staff are at the centre of the decision making process.

31. Effective use is made of ICT as an administrative tool. The school's internal financial regulations are formally documented; the latest financial audit (May 2002) reported a good level of financial control in the school. Given the very good overall achievement in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, the well above average standard attained in the Year 6 2002 national tests, a significant improvement since the previous inspection and the overall effectiveness of the school, it provides very good value for the funding it receives.
32. The school's evaluation of its performance is systematic and focuses on improving standards particularly in the core subjects and ICT. The headteacher and key staff monitor and evaluate subject planning, the outcomes of entry assessments, national tests, additional tests conducted by the school and social and economic data made available to the school by the local education authority. The evaluation made of the National Curriculum test results at the end of the Year 6 includes that of the performance of boys and girls and refers to pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds for whom English is an additional language. However, it does not in its monitoring and evaluation procedures, formally link gender and ethnicity factors together.
33. The school has a very good strategy for appraisal and performance management. There is an annual cycle of observing teachers and giving feedback to them. All support staff are appraised on a yearly basis as a part of the performance management arrangements and targets are set and reviewed for all staff as a means of raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Subject leaders, special educational needs and ethnic minority achievement staff are all actively involved in monitoring and evaluating those areas of work for which they have responsibility. They all complete an annual audit and action plan, which in turn contributes to the areas for development in the yearly school development plan.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The procedures for improving the attendance of pupils and the establishment of a closer working partnership with parents in order to secure improvement in attendance.

34. Attendance is poor when compared with the national attendance figures. The attendance rate at the school (93.3 per cent) in the 2001/2002 academic year was well below the national average for primary schools. The attendance rates for 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 were 93 per cent and 93.7 per cent respectively. The rate of unauthorised absence for 2001/2002 was above the national average.
35. The last inspection in 1998 reported that the attendance level in the school had remained at approximately 92 per cent since 1995, the date of the last available data and as being below the national average. A reason given for this in the last report was the rising trend of families taking holidays and extended trips overseas during term time.
36. The school policy of 1999, Registration and Attendance, aims to improve the overall attendance in school. Details are given about the procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Information is provided about holidays and extended leave during term time. The governing body has agreed a concessionary period of ten days within each school year. The policy states that authorised extended leave for extended holidays is only granted in exceptional circumstances. Registers are marked in accordance with the regulations.
37. Analysis of the attendance figures for the beginning of the autumn term 2002 showed attendance as 92.63 per cent and that 2.61 per cent of pupils were on holiday at this time. In the week prior to the school inspection (February 2003), attendance was 86.83 per cent. This was largely due to sickness in school with pupils absent for more than one day and up to a week. The figures also showed that nearly two per cent of pupils were on holiday. The school has analysed attendance data since the last inspection and figures show that the percentage of ethnic minority pupils who were away from school on extended holidays of more than six weeks during term time, has been as high as 12 per cent in some years and in 2001/2002 was 11 per cent.
38. There is a brief reference to school attendance in the school prospectus, which reminds parents that absence from school 'is damaging to the child's educational progress' and that the school 'actively encourages good attendance'. When pupils are absent for extended periods, work is set for them to complete while they are absent from school. Extra support is given by the Ethnic Minority Achievement staff to reintegrate pupils back into school life on their return.
39. Despite all the attempts made by the school, supported by the Educational Welfare Service, attendance rates are now well below average, showing little improvement since 1995. The school's own analysis on the impact of poor attendance on standards shows that, as a result of being absent from school for long periods of time, the learning and progress of those pupils are slowed down and are not as good as they were predicted. There are still parents who do not co-operate fully with the school in its efforts to improve attendance. The school plans to work more closely with the Educational Welfare Service and it is anticipated that visits by the Educational Welfare Officer to the school and families will revert to the 2002 levels of fortnightly visits to St Mary's. A recent initiative, which is in the early stages of development, is to work more

closely with the faith communities as a means of promoting regular attendance and the better accommodation of extended holidays.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

40. In order to sustain the many notable qualities that are a part of the school, to raise standards further, to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential and be an improving school, the headteacher, governors and staff should now focus on:

- reviewing the school policy on attendance and seek ways of working more closely with parents in liaison with the Educational Welfare Service to secure improved rates of attendance.
(paragraphs 4, 20, 34-39)

The school has identified in the 2002/2003 school development plan the need to continue to foster and develop parents' involvement in school. A draft strategic plan has recently been documented as a means of 'raising the profile of St Mary's' with existing parents. However, it does not make any reference to engaging parents in supporting the regular school attendance of their children.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	4	12	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	21	63	16	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 five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	183
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	65

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	74

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

National comparative data	5.4
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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
	2002	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	26	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (92)	90 (92)	97 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	26	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (92)	86 (88)	90 (96)
	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	12	17	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	12
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	25	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (80)	86 (77)	100 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	12
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	26	26	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (80)	90 (83)	100 (97)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	83	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	20	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	54	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	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 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	266

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	504,659
Total expenditure	486,731
Expenditure per pupil	2,689
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,950
Balance carried forward to next year	54,878

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.49
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.45
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.45
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	183
Number of questionnaires returned	65

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	23	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	31	3	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	37	2	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	31	11	2	0
The teaching is good.	72	23	0	2	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	38	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	25	3	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	32	3	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	28	9	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	69	25	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	36	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	33	9	20	3