

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MICHAEL'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bamford

LEA area: Rochdale

Unique reference number: 105813

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Jayes

Reporting inspector: Mrs Diane Lever
13132

Dates of inspection: 29 - 31 January 2001

Inspection number: 190907

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bury and Rochdale Old Road Heywood Lancashire
Postcode:	OL10 4BB
Telephone number:	01706 369339
Fax number:	01706 625295
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Stephen Grey
Date of previous inspection:	13 January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
Diane Lever	13132	Registered inspector
Bernard Morgan	15522	Lay inspector
Beryl Walker	1530	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Staffordshire and Midlands Consortium

Kingston Centre
Fairway
Stafford
ST16 3TW

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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Michael's is an average sized, voluntary aided Church of England primary school for boys and girls between the ages of four and eleven years. It is situated just outside the town of Heywood on a small site at the junction of two busy roads between Bury and Rochdale. Currently, two hundred and forty-two pupils attend the school. Pupils' average attainment as they enter the Reception Year is generally above that found nationally. The number of pupils on the school's register for special educational needs is well below the national average, and the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is below that found nationally. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Almost all pupils come from a white British background and speak English as their first language. The school draws pupils from a wide area reflecting a favourable socio-economic background.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very popular school, which is heavily over-subscribed. Its good reputation is well deserved. The school's very strong ethos for learning, high expectations of pupils and commitment to improvement reflect its very good leadership and management, particularly that of the headteacher. Teachers and pupils are happy and enjoy the work they do. Overall, the teaching observed during the inspection was very good. This, together with pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to learning, ensures that pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school. As a result, levels of attainment are well above those found nationally by the time pupils leave at eleven years of age. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school. Over the past four years, the average levels of attainment of pupils aged eleven have remained well above those found nationally in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning, behaviour and relationships with each other and the staff, reflecting the school's strong Christian ethos, make a significant contribution to their learning and achievement.
- Teaching of a consistently high quality ensures that throughout the school effective learning takes place.
- The headteacher, supported by the governing body and highly effective key staff, provides outstanding leadership and management.
- The school has a very clear awareness of its strengths and weaknesses, based on evidence gained through evaluation of its performance. This leads to very effective action taken to secure improvement.
- Co-ordinators fulfil their roles very effectively.

What could be improved

- Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their skills in information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- The school's plans for its long-term development are not sufficiently backed up by detailed financial planning.
- The extent to which the school seeks pupils' opinions and involves them in personal research and decision-making is limited.

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

The school has many strengths which far outweigh the few areas where improvement is needed.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in January 1997 the school has made very significant improvement in a number of areas. During a period of staffing instability, very high standards have been maintained in both the infant and junior years. Standards in design and technology are now in line with national expectations. Opportunities for pupils to acquire skills in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved, although pupils still have too few opportunities to use these skills in other subjects. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and is now of a very good standard overall. The school has made good use of the nationally produced guidance for the curriculum to improve its schemes of work. Pupils aged five and under now experience a rich curriculum planned to reflect their needs, abilities and early stage of development. The introduction of mixed-age classes for pupils aged five to seven years has been achieved efficiently, ensuring that the quality of provision has been maintained. Whole-school assessment systems are very effective in providing information on which the planning of future learning is based. Redefined responsibilities at all levels have increased co-ordinators' management roles and allowed senior staff to concentrate on getting an accurate picture of the school's performance. This is done very effectively and leads to clearly identified action to bring about improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A*	A*	A	B
Mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A
Science	A*	A*	A	A

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

The overall attainment of pupils entering the Reception Year is generally above that found nationally. Pupils make good progress and achieve standards above those expected for their age by the time they begin Year 1.

Over the past four years, the standards achieved overall in national assessments by pupils aged seven and eleven have remained well above the national average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Targets set for the achievement of Year 6 pupils have been met consistently. Compared with the performance of similar schools, pupils' achievement is very strong in mathematics and science, and above average in English. The results of the latest national tests (Year 2000) show pupils performed particularly well in mathematics. The work of pupils in the current Year 6 indicates that they are achieving at a level well above the national standards for their age in mathematics and science, and above the level achieved nationally in English. The presentation and organisation of the work of older pupils is of a consistently high standard. The skills of literacy and numeracy are developed well as pupils move through the school. Standards in design and technology have improved and now reflect national expectations. During this short inspection, the pupils' work in the other subjects of the curriculum was not examined in detail. Consequently, no judgements about standards of attainment in these subjects are made.

The good progress made by pupils of all abilities as they move through the school reflects not only their very good behaviour and attitudes to learning, but also the very good teaching they enjoy. The rate of progress is particularly good in the upper junior years. As a result, pupils achieve very well by the time they are old enough to transfer to secondary school.

The school is making good progress towards meeting the realistic and appropriately challenging targets it has set for pupils' academic achievement this year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. Pupils are clear about why they come to school and are keen to learn and succeed. Older pupils bring a particularly mature approach to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good, reflecting the consistently high expectations of all the staff. Pupils are courteous, friendly and helpful. Their behaviour contributes significantly to their rate of learning.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils happily accept responsibility for their learning, and make a good, if often unconscious, contribution to school life. They work well together, are self-assured, and display a confidence that equips them well for the next stage in their learning.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are very good. There are no recorded unauthorised absences.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development, relationships and attendance are major strengths of the school and make an important contribution to the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The inspectors visited the school over two days and observed nineteen lessons. All class teachers were seen teaching at least twice. The teaching of English was observed in all but one class, and the teaching of mathematics in all but two. Although teaching was observed in only some of the other subjects of the curriculum, this sample does provide a clear picture of the overall quality of teaching in the school.

Teaching seen was of very good quality overall, and never less than good. Thirty-eight per cent was very good or excellent. No teaching seen was judged to be unsatisfactory. Examples of good, very good and excellent teaching were seen throughout the school. Teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils will achieve. Most of the very good or excellent teaching of junior age pupils occurred in the later years. This high quality teaching promotes very effective learning and, as a result, pupils achieve levels of performance well above the national average.

The teaching of English and literacy skills was very good overall. The teaching of mathematics, and especially of numeracy skills, was of similarly very good quality. During the teaching of other subjects of the school's curriculum, teachers effectively develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Particularly effective attention is given to speaking and listening skills in the infant years. Teachers show enjoyment in and enthusiasm for their work, and are rightly confident in their subject knowledge and ability to offer pupils a range of strategies for learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good, and ensures they achieve nationally expected levels of performance. The challenges offered to pupils of average and higher ability, particularly at the end of the junior years, enable many of them to attain standards that are well above average. The school is effective in meeting the needs of all pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The broad and appropriately balanced curriculum meets statutory requirements. Recently planned learning opportunities for pupils under five, and for infant pupils in mixed-age classes, are well matched to their needs and interests. The school makes good use of specialist help to overcome difficulties in providing the full range of experiences in sport. Pupils have too few opportunities to apply and practise their ICT skills in other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The systems and provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Activities provided for them are challenging, but they are well supported both during their work in class and when they are withdrawn to work in small groups. They have full access to the rich curriculum provided for all pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Reflecting its strong Christian ethos and values, the school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Pupils' opportunities to engage in personal research, make decisions and express their views are more limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school gives high priority to pupils' welfare and maintains good procedures and practices in relation to child protection and health and safety issues. It is a safe and secure environment. Teachers know their pupils very well and, as a result, provide individual and appropriate support and challenge. All adults are consistent in their approach and care of pupils.

Overall, the range of learning opportunities the school provides contributes effectively to the good rate of progress achieved by pupils of all abilities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Her vision for the school's continuing success is based on a thorough knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses, and how these can be built on. She is particularly effective in managing the staff, developing a strong sense of team and a commitment to improvement. She is well supported by all members of staff, and senior colleagues in particular.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors provide good support for the school, and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. Established systems of communication ensure that they are kept well informed about the school's work and achievements. As a result, they are effective in helping improve provision and maintain high standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is a school that knows its strengths and weaknesses well. It analyses very effectively the detailed and accurate picture it has of its performance. Challenging but realistic targets for individual pupils and for the whole school, based on this evaluation, are supported by well-designed plans for action to ensure these targets are met.
The strategic use of resources	The school has a clear view of how it needs to improve. Plans indicating how this will be achieved are precise and well structured. In determining how to use funding currently available to the school, the governing body applies the principles of best value effectively. Financial planning is, however, limited to one year, and reduces the usefulness of longer-term plans for improvement.

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 and are happy there; • The standards the school achieves; • The very good quality of teaching available; • The high standards of behaviour the school achieves and maintains; • The very strong leadership and management; • The high expectations the school has of pupils; • The strongly Christian ethos of care and support; • The school's willingness to listen to and act on their concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More consistent use of homework; • More information about what their children are doing in lessons; • More activities outside lessons.

The inspectors fully support the parents' positive comments, and their wish for more information to enable them to support their children's learning. The school is already planning to address this issue. Homework arrangements are well established and clearly detailed in school documents. The amount of homework given is appropriate to pupils' ages. In addition to lessons, pupils enjoy a range of activities that is extensive for a school of this size.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school. Over the past four years, the average level of attainment of pupils aged eleven has remained well above that found nationally in English, mathematics and science.

1. The inspection took place at the beginning of the spring term. A considerable amount of pupils' work, from both the current and previous school year, was available for the inspectors to examine. This, together with the observation of lessons, talking to pupils and reviewing teachers' records, provided clear evidence of pupils' progress and attainment on which secure judgements could be based.
2. The attainment of pupils as they begin the Reception Year is generally above that found nationally for pupils of their age. Most have attended one of the local nurseries and are well prepared for school life. From their first day, they become aware that they are expected to behave well and work hard. They are confident and responsive, settling quickly and making a good start. Although most pupils are taught in a Reception class, a small number of the oldest pupils are taught alongside Year 1 pupils. In either case, due to the quality of the teaching they receive, they make good progress, and by the time they begin compulsory schooling, they are achieving standards generally above those expected for pupils of their age in all areas of the curriculum. Many, for example, can already form letters correctly and are beginning to write simple sentences independently.
3. This good rate of progress continues throughout the next two years as pupils move through the infant classes, either as single year groups or classes of mixed-age. Particularly effective attention paid by teachers to literacy, numeracy and science skills ensures that pupils gain a secure understanding in these areas. Year 2 pupils understand, through their work in science, that objects can be sorted according to the material they are made of, and they can give examples of items made of metal, glass, wood, textile and plastic. Over the past three years, pupils aged seven have consistently attained standards in national assessments well above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. In the Year 2000, all pupils gained the level expected nationally (Level 2), and around half gained the higher level in reading and mathematics (Level 3). Pupils currently aged seven are confident when exploring number patterns, giving multiples of three such as sixty-nine and seventy-five, and explaining how the pattern is made and continues. The school's performance was well above that of similar schools in reading and writing, and very high in mathematics. Contrary to the national trend, boys do equally well as girls in literacy and attain similar standards. This is the direct result of action taken by the school to strengthen an identified area of weakness. The current Year 2 pupils are producing work at a standard above that expected nationally in English, mathematics and science.
4. Pupils beginning the junior phase in Year 3 are attaining levels well above those expected for their age. The good progress seen earlier is maintained during the next four years, and is of a particularly good rate in the final years, due to the very high standard of teaching pupils experience. This has a significant impact on the

standards pupils attain. Over the last four years, standards in English, mathematics and science in national assessments of pupils aged eleven have remained typically very high compared with the national average. In the Year 2000, results in English and science were well above the national average, and very high in mathematics. All pupils gained the level expected nationally (Level 4) in each subject. At least four pupils out of ten achieved the higher levels (Levels 5 and 6). Compared with the performance of similar schools, the school's standards were well above average in mathematics and science, and above in English. The work of the current Year 6 pupils indicates that these high standards are being maintained and are likely to be reflected in the results of national assessments later in the year. The school's attention to the needs of boys in literacy is successful in that boys attain standards similar to girls in English, as in other subjects. Pupils now in their final year can write in a variety of styles and have a good understanding of strategies designed to achieve particular effects. For example, they use vivid images - "her blood-red cloak" - and personification - "the trees sighed and moaned as she crept through the forest" - to create character vulnerability and an atmosphere of suspense.

5. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards the targets set for them, achieving standards similar to pupils of average ability.
6. The previous report identified standards in design and technology as in need of improvement. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work in this subject and concluded that standards throughout the school now reflect those expected for pupils of this age. The action taken by the school to improve provision has been effective.
7. During this short inspection, the pupils' work in other subjects of the curriculum was not examined in detail. Consequently, no judgements about standards of attainment in these subjects were made.
8. The school sets individual and year group targets each year for the results it expects pupils to achieve in national assessments. These targets are challenging, but based on the school's detailed analysis of pupils' progress and longer-term performance. The indications are that, as in previous years, the targets will be achieved this year.

Pupils' very good attitudes to learning, behaviour and relationships with each other and the staff, reflecting the school's strong Christian ethos, make a significant contribution to their learning and achievement.

9. Pupils enjoy school and are happy there. They are eager to talk about their work and what is going on. They are clear about why they come to school and what they must do if they are to learn effectively. They settle quickly at the start of lessons, showing interest in their work and enthusiasm for what they are asked to do. Classrooms typically demonstrate an atmosphere where purposeful activity and effective learning are taking place. Pupils' attitudes to school and their willingness to learn and succeed are important factors contributing to this. Parents

state that their children are happy in school and want to come. They complete homework tasks conscientiously and voluntarily as a matter of course.

10. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations all staff have of their behaviour and work. This is evident in the way they arrive in good time, and move around the school in an orderly fashion throughout the day. In the confined spaces they sometimes use, for example the cloakroom areas, they behave sensibly and with consideration for one another. They take responsibility for their actions, for example, acknowledging their involvement in playground accidents when these occur, and showing initiative in trying to put matters right. High standards of behaviour are part of normal school life from the first day pupils attend, and the standard set by older pupils is accepted as the model for those who are younger. These very high standards are the result of a consistent approach by all members of staff, who take responsibility for all pupils rather than those in their immediate care. The outcome is that teachers are able to concentrate on making teaching and learning an exciting process that pupils value and enjoy. Parents too appreciate the school's emphasis on good behaviour and the high expectations of the headteacher and staff.
11. Pupils' personal development and all relationships within the school are very effective and reflect the strong Christian ethos of care. Within the supportive atmosphere, where learning is the priority and where all staff know the pupils very well as individuals, pupils thrive and move forward at a good rate towards attaining the high standards the school maintains. There is a climate of mutual respect; pupils collaborate well together on tasks, for example in discussing the words they might use in order to improve the quality of a short passage they are drafting together. On such occasions, they listen carefully to each other and are sensitive in the way they suggest improvements. They work hard for teachers they know are working equally hard for them. Pupils grasp readily the opportunities given them to take on additional responsibilities within the school, such as preparing the hall for assemblies and providing a musical accompaniment should this be needed. They fulfil their roles well and with maturity, although not always aware of the contribution they are making. Older pupils show initiative in the projects they undertake to support charities, involving all pupils in the school. An example of this is their management of the appeal to send boxes of emergency items to Bosnia. They not only introduced the initiative to pupils in school, but also spoke to the local press in order to publicise the appeal and widen support beyond the school. They respond with enthusiasm to opportunities to express their views and opinions in lessons. In general, however, pupils have fewer opportunities to say what they think about issues concerning school life. Similarly, although they have the ability to engage in personal research and develop skills as independent learners, these elements of their development are less strong because they do not have sufficient opportunities to practise them.
12. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they are confident, articulate, self-assured young people, well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Teaching of a consistently high quality ensures that throughout the school effective learning takes place.

13. The inspectors visited the school over two days and observed nineteen lessons. All class teachers were seen teaching at least twice. In the limited time available, inspectors focused on the teaching of English and mathematics, and the skills of literacy and numeracy in particular. English lessons were observed in all but one class, and mathematics lessons in all but two. Although teaching was observed in only some of the other subjects of the curriculum, this sample does provide a clear picture of the overall quality of teaching in the school. The examination of pupils' work and teachers' records provided evidence of the longer-term impact of teaching on pupils' learning and achievements.
14. Teaching was of very good quality overall, and never less than good. Thirty-eight per cent was very good or excellent. No teaching seen was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school has given priority to improving the quality of teaching by providing training for staff on what represents effective teaching and learning. Senior staff, together with appropriate subject co-ordinators, have then monitored teaching throughout the school to ensure that teachers' practice reflects the guidance and support made available. This process has been very effective in developing a common understanding of teaching effectiveness. Examples of good, very good and excellent teaching were seen in equal measure in each key stage. Teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils will achieve. Most of the very good or excellent teaching of junior age pupils occurred in the later years. This high quality teaching promotes very effective learning and, as a result, pupils achieve levels of performance well above the national average.
15. The teaching seen of English and literacy skills was very good overall. The teaching of mathematics, and especially of numeracy skills, was of similarly very good quality. During the teaching of other subjects of the school's curriculum, teachers effectively develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Particularly effective attention is given to speaking and listening skills in the infant years. Teachers show enjoyment in and enthusiasm for their work, and are rightly confident in their subject knowledge and ability to offer pupils a range of strategies for learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good, and ensures they achieve nationally expected levels of performance. The challenges offered to pupils of average and higher ability, particularly at the end of the junior years, enables many of them to attain standards that are well above average. The school is effective in meeting the needs of all pupils.
16. Teachers plan their teaching to a common format that includes very precise lesson objectives and activities well chosen to achieve the lesson's purpose. Thanks to teachers' very clear explanations, pupils are equally clear about not only what they have to do but also why they are doing it. For example, very effective use was made of the final ten minutes in a Year 2 English lesson, when pupils explained to each other what they had been doing and what they had learned as a result. The group making a register list of characters from stories said that they had been learning about alphabetical order. Constant repetition and review of learning objectives, especially with younger pupils, ensure that effective learning takes place. Through their skilled use of questions, teachers challenge pupils' thinking,

never accepting less than a thoughtful and considered response. The subject knowledge of the teachers of older pupils is good. They are able to help pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding at a level normally expected in the early years of secondary school. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson on ratio and proportion, the teacher was adept at finding an example to illustrate each aspect of the concept. This promoted pupils' understanding very successfully. Teachers regularly refer to work done in other subjects and link pupils' learning experiences in a way that gives extra meaning to what pupils do. For example, in an art lesson the teacher used patterns that pupils had studied in their work on the Tudor period to illustrate the use of repeat printing. Assessment of what pupils have learned is used very skilfully to plan pupils' future learning opportunities, and enables teachers to provide suitable challenge for pupils of all abilities.

17. In lessons where teaching was judged to be good rather than very good or excellent, teachers at times demonstrated insecure management of pupils' enthusiastic responses. On one or two occasions, the pace of the lesson slowed because pupils, eager to share their comments, called out and prevented others from being heard. Although teachers dealt with such situations effectively when they occurred, they did not manage the class in such a way as to prevent it happening. In a minority of lessons, teachers' enthusiasm led them to raise their voices above the level necessary. This sometimes resulted in pupils doing the same, which tended to create a noise level audible in adjacent classrooms.
18. From the limited evidence available, the teaching of ICT skills appears to be satisfactory. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply and practise their skills in other subjects of the curriculum. Teachers do not regularly build such opportunities into the planning of lessons. As a result, the use of ICT as a tool to help pupils in their learning is limited.

The headteacher, supported by the governing body and highly effective key staff, provides outstanding leadership and management.

19. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Her vision for the school's continuing success is based on a thorough knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses, and how these can be built on. She is a source of ideas and initiatives intended to promote effective learning and maintain high standards. She provides clear educational direction for the development of the school, successfully combining the demands made by national and local initiatives with the school's own identified priorities. The current improvement plan reflects the school's intention to develop science and personal, social and health education provision as well as addressing national projects such as teachers' skills in ICT.
20. The headteacher is particularly effective in managing the staff, developing a strong sense of team and a commitment to improvement. Her thorough knowledge of the particular talents of each member of staff enables her to make best use of the expertise within the school, to the benefit of pupils and the staff as a corporate group. Through her regular canvassing of parents' opinions about the school, she has an informed view of their opinions and concerns. Recognising parents' willingness to play an active part in supporting pupils in their learning

both at school and at home, she has personally provided training for parents that increases their effectiveness in this respect.

21. The headteacher is well supported by all members of staff, and senior colleagues in particular. Since the time of the previous inspection report, which indicated that there was imbalance in the roles and responsibilities of staff, these have been redefined. The delegation of additional management responsibilities to subject co-ordinators now enables senior staff to concentrate on playing an appropriately active part in the school's very efficient systems for evaluating its performance. Good communication ensures that all staff share an awareness of and take responsibility for the school's achievements and the challenges it faces. Such is the strength of this mutual support and shared determination to succeed that, during an extensive period of staffing disruption, the school maintained its high standards in all respects.
22. The governors provide good support for the school, and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. Established systems of communication ensure that they have an appropriately up to date overview of the school's work and achievements. This information, together with their successful employment of the principles of best value, enables them to make informed decisions on the school's behalf. Within the governing body there is a breadth of expertise and experience that places governors in a strong position to support the headteacher and staff in improving provision and maintaining standards. Governors respect the headteacher's professional knowledge and integrity, coupled with her flair for leadership and strong management ability. They recognise that she and the staff are crucial factors in the school's achievements, and rightly concentrate their energies on facilitating developments designed to enhance the school's success.

The school has a very clear awareness of its strengths and weaknesses, based on evidence gained through evaluation of its performance. This leads to very effective action taken to secure improvement.

- 23 This is a school that knows its strengths and weaknesses well. It has very effective arrangements for analysing the detailed and accurate picture it has of its performance. Challenging but realistic individual pupil and whole-school targets, based on this evaluation, are supported by well-designed plans for action to ensure these are met.
24. Since the previous inspection, when the absence of a whole school system for assessment was noted, the school has focused on developing whole-school procedures for the analysis of its performance data and the regular examination of pupils' work. The evidence gained is put to good use in evaluating how well the school is performing in relation to the national picture, the performance of similar schools and, most importantly, its own previous achievement. Detailed individual profiles of pupils' achievements are based on class teachers' twice-yearly assessments of pupils' progress towards the targets set for them in English, mathematics and science. The school makes good use of statutory and optional national tests to inform these assessments. The examination of pupils' work in other subjects, carried out effectively on a yearly basis, provides similarly focused evidence of standards across the curriculum.

25. Alongside this process, the school has successfully established a programme for the regular observation of teaching and the examination of teachers' planning and record-keeping procedures. By involving the headteacher, key stage co-ordinators and, in turn, all subject co-ordinators, the school ensures that a corporate view of the strengths and weaknesses in its practice exists. This open climate reflects mutual professional respect and confidence in the school's leadership. All staff feel a keen sense of ownership of what is achieved and a shared commitment to improvement.
26. As a result of these practices, the school is able to set challenging but realistic targets at individual, class and whole school level. Clearly focused and effective action to improve identified weaknesses improves pupils' learning opportunities and maintains standards. The school's action in relation to the teaching of literacy to boys exemplifies this well. Teaching methods were amended to reflect understanding of how boys learn most effectively, and reading materials were selected for their common appeal to both boys and girls. New teaching staff benefit from the effective systems for induction and support, which guarantee that the school's ethos of high expectation will be upheld.

Co-ordinators fulfil their roles very effectively.

27. The previous inspection report stated that the role of co-ordinators was under-developed. The school's redefinition of all staff's management roles and responsibilities has remedied this effectively. Key stage co-ordinators now have a clear awareness of what is taught and what standards are like in the year groups they are responsible for. Their view is based on the first-hand evidence they obtain through implementation of the school's procedures for self-evaluation.
28. Subject co-ordinators are similarly well informed about what is taught and what standards are like in their subject. They look at teachers' plans, examine pupils' work and, on a rolling programme, observe how their subject is taught. The analysis they undertake of what is working well and what needs to be improved is sharply focused and accompanied by a carefully structured and realistic plan to bring about the improvement needed. The plan includes costings linked to budget allocations for the current year. The headteacher's monitoring of these plans ensures they meet the requirements of the school's policy, and are realistic and appropriate.
29. Because of their close involvement in the school's processes of self-evaluation, all staff are able to make effective contributions to the school's overall plan for improvement. The appointment of new staff with expertise in subjects such as design and technology has also strengthened co-ordinators' effectiveness.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their skills in ICT across the curriculum.

30. The school has recently added a computer suite to the facilities available for the development of pupils' skills in ICT. The Parents' Association played a major part in securing funding for this. The suite is timetabled for use by all classes on a weekly basis. Its size does, however, mean that in reality most classes are split into two groups and take turns to work there.
31. The suite has up to date machines and a large screen enabling teachers to demonstrate clearly and effectively the specific skills they are teaching. Teachers are growing in their confidence and knowledge of this subject, thanks to their participation in a programme of training designed to meet specific needs. As a result, pupils acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding of ICT appropriate to their age.
32. However, other school equipment does not reflect this improved central provision. Not all classrooms have appropriate hardware or software to enable pupils to apply and practise the skills they have learned in the suite. During the period of the inspection, very few opportunities for pupils to use ICT were seen. Pupils are learning appropriate skills to a good standard, but are not using and practising their skills sufficiently in their work in other subjects. Teachers' planning does not reflect recognition of the role of this subject in enhancing learning across the curriculum. This is limiting pupils' fluency in the skills they have gained, and their understanding of how ICT can be a powerful and enjoyable help in learning any subject.

The school's plans for its long-term development are not sufficiently backed up by detailed financial planning.

33. The school's improvement plan is a well-designed document that is used effectively in the management of change and development. Individual plans for the current year's initiatives are very detailed. They include precise targets, timescales, who is involved and how the school will measure its success in implementing each plan. Progress towards the completion of each plan is carefully monitored. The overall plan appropriately covers outline proposals for action over the next three years. Staff and governors contribute to the annual review and updating of the plan.
34. These individual plans are accompanied by precise costings indicating not only how much each initiative is likely to cost but where the funding will come from. This is good practice and reflects appropriate strategic planning. However, the costings cover the current year only. Governors therefore have no clear idea of what plans outlined for future years are likely to cost, and whether such plans are realistic and achievable. This weakens the planning of longer-term initiatives and the purchasing of major resource items such as computer hardware in classrooms to support pupils in their learning.

The extent to which the school seeks pupils' opinions and involves them in personal research and decision-making is limited.

35. Good opportunities exist for older pupils to share their views and opinions about issues arising in their work. Formal activities to promote such involvement include class debates and group discussions. However, pupils in general enjoy few opportunities to express their views on the different aspects of school life, or have an effective voice in decisions made on their behalf. It is evident, in conversations with pupils, that they are well equipped to consider such issues and would welcome the opportunity to play an increased role in school life.
36. The school has a well-equipped central library and a dedicated computer suite. During the period of the inspection, the library was used for a variety of activities including the teaching of pupils withdrawn from classrooms to work in small groups. Classes, reflecting the agreed timetable, used the computer suite regularly. At other times, both facilities were available for use. However, individual pupils used neither facility as sources of information or to support individual or group research projects. Examination of pupils' work demonstrated that little activity of this kind appears to take place. This omission in the learning activities available to pupils inhibits the development of their skills as independent learners. It fails to recognise their ability to take a more active part in decisions about the organisation and management of their learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 37 To support the school's aim of meeting pupils' entitlement to quality education, the school should now:
- **Develop opportunities for pupils to apply and practise their skills in ICT across the curriculum.** There should be sufficient and appropriate hardware in all classrooms to support pupils in their work. Curriculum documents should indicate how and when ICT skills can be applied and used in different subjects. Teachers should incorporate such learning opportunities into their daily plans.
Reference to this issue can be found in paragraph 29
 - **Extend the costings of the school's improvement plan beyond the current year.** There should be an indication of the likely financial implications of each initiative outlined for future years, together with the proposed source of funding. The purchase of major items of expenditure, likely to cover more than one year, should be planned for and costed over a period of time.
Reference to this issue can be found in paragraph 31
 - **Increase opportunities for all pupils to express opinions and make a greater contribution to decisions about issues relating to school life.** The school should also seek to develop pupils' skills as independent learners by providing more opportunities for them to engage in personal research.
Reference to this issue can be found in paragraphs 11, 32 and 33

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

6

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
16	32	53	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		242
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		30

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.2
National comparative data	5.2

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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	21	14	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	35	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (95)	100 (92)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	35	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (89)	100(89)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	15	18	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	33	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (97)	100 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	33	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (93)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	201
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.7
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	121

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	381,933
Total expenditure	368,926
Expenditure per pupil	1,557
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,771
Balance carried forward to next year	26,776

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	242
Number of questionnaires returned	212

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	29	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	38	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	37	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	44	11	0	1
The teaching is good.	72	25	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	47	13	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	30	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	16	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	40	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	27	4	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	30	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	47	12	1	0

Other issues raised by parents

A small number of parents felt that there was limited playground space available to pupils and that lack of a field on site made sporting activities difficult. A similar number of parents expressed concern about the way other parents disregard safety issues when delivering and collecting their children. Parents in general feel the school is doing all it can to resolve these issues. The inspectors support this view.