

INSPECTION REPORT

OVER ST JOHN'S C E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Winsford, Cheshire

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111263

Headteacher: Mr D S J Ling

Reporting inspector: John Carnaghan
1352

Dates of inspection: 10th - 11th October 2001

Inspection number: 194098

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Delamere Street Winsford Cheshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Harris
Date of previous inspection:	15 th April 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Over St John's school is a Church of England, voluntary controlled infant and junior school for pupils aged 4 to 11. Set in a residential area, it has 141 pupils; this is smaller than average. There are slightly more boys than girls. The home background of pupils is broadly average. All pupils are of white ethnic background and none has English as an additional language; naturally, these figures are low compared with national averages. Almost twenty per cent of pupils have special educational needs; this is below the national average. Of these pupils, nine require the involvement of outside specialists and the majority of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties; the others have emotional and behavioural difficulties or specific learning needs, such as dyslexia. About twelve percent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, below the national average. Pupils' who enter the school at the age of 4 have levels of attainment that are broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Over St. John's school provides a very good standard of education. It has a number of very positive features and few weaknesses. Pupils achieve well and reach high standards of attainment in many areas. They make very good progress throughout the school; they enjoy life at school and develop as confident and mature individuals. Teaching is very good. Teachers plan lessons very well and manage pupils very effectively. Teachers have high expectations of achievement and behaviour. These hopes are usually met. The curriculum is broad and balanced and sensibly adapted to meet pupils' needs. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good; work is carefully planned to meet the specific requirements of these pupils. The strong and effective leadership of the head teacher, ably supported by senior managers, promotes high standards and improvements in teaching and does much to encourage the positive attitudes and values shown by both teachers and pupils. All teachers work closely together to raise standards and to ensure that the school is constantly improving. Members of the governing body show a good awareness of the school and work hard to support and encourage it. The school is an open and welcoming community, greatly valued by parents. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school successfully promotes high standards of attainment.
- Teaching and learning for pupils aged 5 to 11 are very good.
- Very good and strongly focused leadership, close teamwork and very good self-evaluation by all staff ensure that there is continuing improvement.
- It assesses what pupils can do very thoroughly; it uses these results sensibly to help pupils improve.
- The school promotes the growing maturity, positive attitudes and very good behaviour of the pupils. The school cares for pupils very well. Relationships are good throughout the whole school community.
- The school has developed strong links with parents and the local community, involving them in the work of the school.

What could be improved

- While standards in English in both key stages are above national average, they are lower than those of mathematics and science.
- The teaching of some elements of the Foundation Stage requires further challenge to help promote learning.
- The school should develop a more effective multi-cultural education programme.
- Some classrooms are too small.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since that time, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen at the same rate as national improvements. At the end of Key Stage 2, there have been more rapid improvements in standards in

English and mathematics and good gains in science. The school has addressed all of the key issues raised in the last report, although it is still the case that not all subjects have portfolios of marked work. Schemes of work that are used in the school have been considerably improved. Teaching standards are now generally very good, thanks to very good planning, evaluation and assessment in lessons. The school now has good child protection procedures. The use of the curriculum co-ordinators' non-teaching time is carefully planned and used to bring about improvements. The school has an ethos of continuing development and shows a good capacity to improve further. Overall, since the last inspection, the school has made good improvements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	D	A	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	B	B	B	
Science	E	C	C	C	

The results of National Curriculum assessments were above national averages by the age of eleven in 2001 in English and mathematics; in science they were in line with them. The youngest pupils meet the standards of the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. At the age of seven, in 2001, results were in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Results of tests for pupils at the age of seven, over the last four years, show improvements in reading, writing and mathematics. In National Curriculum tests at the age of eleven, over the last four years, standards have climbed to reach above average standards in English and mathematics. In science, they rose a little from a lower base and are now broadly in line with the national average. However, despite improvements, fewer pupils reached higher grades in English than in other subjects at the end of each key stage. During the inspection, standards were above national expectations in English, mathematics and science across the school. In religious education, standards are better than expectations throughout the school. In information and communication technology (ICT), standards are broadly in line with what is expected. The school sets challenging, but informed, targets and usually meets or exceeds them. Pupils make considerable improvements as they move through the school; consequently, pupils' overall achievement throughout the school is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and show enjoyment and enthusiasm in every aspect of school life. They join in activities with gusto.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well and are mature, positive and trustworthy. They play together sensibly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are thoughtful and help one another across the age range. They work with considerable independence.
Attendance	Good. Authorised absence is below the national average although unauthorised absence is slightly above.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1-2	Years 3-6
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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.

Teaching in the school is very good, overall. In English and mathematics, as well as literacy and numeracy, teaching is very good. Teachers manage pupils very well and question them perceptively. Pupils' learning needs are met; this is because teachers plan carefully to address pupils' individual learning requirements. Lessons have a strong pace and all activities reflect the teachers' determination to achieve their learning objectives. Teachers know their pupils well and relate warmly to them. Pupils' learning is very good; they have a strong work ethic and consistently concentrate very well in lessons. Pupils make considerable efforts, show an appetite for learning and usually work with great independence. Teaching in the reception class – where there is a temporary teacher- is satisfactory; relationships with children are good, but the activities children undertake can lack sufficient focus to encourage learning. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is as good as that of all other pupils; this is because teachers know pupils well and provide appropriate tasks and support.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum, which allows them to take full opportunity of what is on offer. However, the curriculum for the Foundation Stage has shortcomings; some areas of learning are not effectively taught.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The curriculum is adapted to provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. Individual educational plans are used well and promote pupils' learning appropriately.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral and social education is very good. For spiritual and cultural education, the provision is satisfactory. The school should do more to promote multi-cultural education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Support and guidance for pupils in areas of academic and personal development are very good, overall. The school's attendance procedures are satisfactory.

The school makes efforts to involve parents in the life of the school and these are successful. The quality of information for parents is good. Assessment procedures for pupils are well developed and help provide useful information to assist the school in planning for the future.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides clear leadership and a strong sense of direction for the school. He is fully and ably supported by the staff, with whom he works closely.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is a committed, valuable and supportive friend to the school. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The close collaboration amongst all who work at the school ensures that there is an ongoing, effective self-evaluation process. The quality of assessment means that the school has a good range of information to assist with its future planning.
The strategic use of resources	Financial decisions are very carefully linked to the schools' needs and expenditure is closely monitored. The school prioritises and spends its money wisely.

The head teacher and staff have developed a successful and caring school. All who work at the school are constantly seeking to improve on what the school provides for its pupils. The governing body has an enthusiastic and committed membership, who share the head teacher's vision for the school and support him strongly. Accommodation has been improved considerably since the last inspection, but some rooms are still too small. Resources are satisfactory and help to raise attainment. The school provides good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is good. • Children like school. • The school has high expectations of the children. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps to develop children's maturity and responsibility. • Children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • The school works closely with parents. • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • They are well informed about how their children are getting on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small minority think that the school does not set the right amount of homework.

Parents are strongly supportive of the school; their views are almost entirely favourable. Inspection findings support the positive views of the school. Of the area that a few parents would like to see improved, the inspection finds that the amount of homework set is appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school successfully promotes high standards of attainment.

1. Children enter the school with levels of attainment which are generally in line with expectations. As a result of what is usually good teaching in the Foundation Stage, they achieve well, entering Year 1 with levels of attainment that are better than those expected nationally. The achievement of pupils under five during the inspection, who had a temporary teacher, was satisfactory. By the age of seven, both National Curriculum test results and work seen during the inspection indicate that pupils reach standards that are, generally above national averages. The very good teaching is the most significant factor here, enabling pupils to achieve very well in Years 1 and 2. Very good teaching and very good achievement by pupils mean that these standards are built on and improve through Key Stage 2. Test results and inspection show that standards are above national averages in English and science at the age of eleven; in mathematics, results in 2001 are very high in comparison with the national average.
2. Because teaching seen in the Foundation Stage is less strongly focused on developing skills and understanding, the achievement of these children was satisfactory whereas, in the rest of the school pupils' achievement is very good. However, pupils are on target to achieve their Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. They have good knowledge and understanding in their mathematical development; for example, they all knew that squares have four angles and four sides and some could identify and correctly name rectangles and triangles. Children recognise numbers from one to ten; they can use the first five numbers reliably. Children have a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They can identify various animals and say where they live. In talking about families and growing up, they share common experiences and draw simple pictures to explain how growth changes people. They can compare how many small building bricks a baby, a child and an adult could hold in their hand, drawing the correct conclusions about the physical development of humans. Teachers work hard to ensure that children develop good social skills by - for example - being firm about unacceptable behaviour, so children develop in confidence and maturity by the end of the Foundation Stage.
3. Pupils achieve very well in English and mathematics. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, have achieved as well as they can by the time that they leave school. Since 1998, standards for pupils at the age of seven in English and mathematics have improved. In 2000, they were above national averages in writing and mathematics and in line with them in reading. The small numbers of pupils taking the tests make identification of trends complex. However, in 2001, reading improved at the same rate as the national improvement; writing and mathematics declined a little. The proportion of pupils gaining higher levels of attainment in reading and writing, although improving, was lower than expected. Over the same four-year period, standards for pupils at the age of eleven have fluctuated a little, as is to be expected with the small numbers involved, but have seen steady improvements and were above national averages in 2001. Again, fewer pupils reach higher levels of attainment in English than in mathematics.
4. By the age of eleven, pupils have satisfactory speaking and listening skills; most talk with assurance and speak, using a growing vocabulary, listening attentively to others. The development of these skills is of considerable benefit to their learning. Pupils read widely, showing a good understanding of different types of text; many read aloud with fluency and good expression. In their writing, pupils use interesting and varied techniques, choosing words with imagination and flair. For example, they can put stories that they have read into the format of play scripts. They successfully redraft and produce 'best copies' of their work. Pupils' written work has a clear structure and, typically, is neatly presented with accurate spelling and punctuation.
5. In mathematics, pupils aged 11 have good skills, adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing numbers. They are skilled at mental arithmetic and many can explain a range of appropriate strategies for different mental calculations. They strive to meet the teachers' high expectations for them. A group of Year 5 pupils showed very quick mental calculation skills, using eight and nine times tables. Pupils use correct terminology with the confidence born of practice. For example, they were able to say that four sixths was the equivalent of two thirds and used other terms such as

'denominator' and 'numerator' with ease. As well as showing good problem-solving skills, pupils aged 11 can measure accurately, converting from imperial to metric measurements when required.

6. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well implemented across the school. Subject co-ordinators and teachers consistently support the initiatives in these areas. The co-ordinators are well informed and attend regular training in their areas. The subjects are thoroughly monitored. Co-ordinators are working hard to eliminate perceived areas of concern. For example, the school is developing new policies for writing and reading to promote higher attainment in these areas.
7. Pupils reach above average levels of attainment in science by the age of eleven. Most pupils in Year 6 can make predictions of the results of investigations based on their scientific knowledge and understanding. They show an increasing understanding of aspects of different materials, such as air, and their properties. Pupils write well, and at length, to explain their findings. However, they are less successful in displaying their findings in other forms, such as mathematically or using ICT.
8. In other subjects, standards are also above expectations. In religious education, for example, Year 6 pupils write with empathy, displaying good knowledge and understanding of different faiths. For example they write well of the importance of families in Islam. They write fluently, making convincing arguments for the advantages of various faiths.

Teaching and learning for pupils aged 5 to 11 are very good.

9. Teaching in the school is very good; it has a number of strengths. In Key Stages 1 and 2 it is consistent. It has a strongly positive impact on pupils' learning. Most lessons have a number of strengths in common, indicating the quality of the monitoring of teaching and its impact in developing a shared standard. Lessons are characterised by high expectations of behaviour and attainment; pupils respond to these from the earliest age with an impressive degree of concentration and commitment. Good classroom routines pervade the school. For example, in a Year 1 history lesson, pupils moved into groups to undertake their tasks with alacrity and no fuss, such was their appetite for work. Teachers do much to encourage pupils' independence from the earliest age. Throughout the school, teaching is carefully planned to include all pupils in all aspects of lessons, so that pupils of all levels of ability are kept fully stretched.
10. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The temporary teacher was relatively new to the school at the time of the inspection. She relates warmly to the children and runs whole class sessions well so that they are interested in their work. Concluding sessions are also effective in consolidating learning and giving praise for hard work. However, the elements of lessons where pupils work in groups are less effective. Tasks sometimes lack challenge for children and activities can be too vague; for example, children trying to play 'snakes and ladders' could not because they had not been given enough advice as to what to do at the outset. Others were left to play in the sand area and were happy enough, but their activities did nothing to advance their learning. This weakness is largely because these elements of the lesson were not fully planned to ensure they met the learning objectives.
11. Teachers throughout the rest of the school know their pupils very well. There are positive relationships throughout the school. Incisive questioning and strongly focused closing sessions in lessons mean that teachers are aware of how pupils' learning is developing. They use this evidence skilfully in planning future lessons and setting targets for individuals. Pupils are effectively managed and teachers show good knowledge of the subjects of the curriculum. Resources are well prepared and successfully used to support pupils' learning. Work is very well marked; teachers make detailed, sympathetic and helpful comments to which pupils respond well, often adding their own replies to the teachers' suggestions. In a mathematics lesson to pupils in Years 2 and 3 the teacher had a very weak voice due to an infection; such were the qualities of the planning, the well established classroom routines and the qualities of the few interventions made by the teacher that all made very good progress in developing their understanding of three-dimensional shapes. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is of a similar quality to that of all other pupils due to teachers' good knowledge of pupils and the way they provide the correct tasks and degree of support.

Very good and strongly focused leadership, close teamwork and very good self-evaluation by all staff ensure that there is continuing improvement.

12. The headteacher has successfully built a strong team spirit and established a clear educational direction for the school. He has promoted high standards and effective teaching and learning. He has good relationships with the staff and does much to build their confidence and develop their skills. He manages the school very effectively and is ably supported by the governing body. He ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the school and is very knowledgeable about the school and its pupils. The headteacher has a caring disposition towards all individuals under his care and this is balanced by a rigorous commitment to improving the performance of the school. He is self-critical in what he does and has mentors from outside education, who assist him in self-evaluation. This rigour communicates itself to staff, who constantly seek improvement in what they do.
13. Because all teachers are involved in regular consultations about developments in the school, they work closely together as a team. This means that innovations are readily accepted by all; there is a shared commitment to high standards and improving opportunities for all pupils in the school. The shared values and agreement on methods, encourages a commonality of style in teaching. This, in turn, gives a strong consistency to daily life at the school for pupils and encourages their growing confidence and independence. The management of curriculum areas, which was an issue at the time of the last inspection, is now thorough and effective.
14. The headteacher and key staff monitor and evaluate the school's performance effectively, they correctly identify the school's strengths and weaknesses and take action to secure improvements. There is a clear structure to enable subject co-ordinators to monitor their subject areas. In mathematics, the self-evaluation process recently undertaken was very carefully planned. In the time allocated, the co-ordinator conducted an audit of teachers' weekly planning, sampled pupils' work, interviewed pupils and drew up an action plan, as well as updating the mathematics policy. The findings from such evaluation activities are formally reported to staff and governors and form a sound basis for future planning. The monitoring of the school makes significant contributions to the identification of the priorities in the school improvement plan. This document provides a useful template for the school's future development. It is clearly set out, with well defined indications of responsibilities, resource implications and success criteria. All staff and governors are involved in developing and implementing the plan. The school is careful to link its financial dispositions to the priorities identified in this plan. For example, the money from an unexpected under spend last year has been carefully allocated to meet the school's priorities of maintaining small teaching groups and providing support staff where needed.
15. Governors share the philosophy of the headteacher and staff and strive for high standards; they work closely with the school. Consultation between staff and governors is very good. They are well informed about all aspects of school life. For example, a number of governors are well briefed about the principles of best value and closely analyse all the comparative documentation which is available. The financial management of the school is competent and effective. A recent audit of procedures raised only minor issues for attention; these were swiftly addressed.
16. Governors are keen to keep up-to-date with what happens at the school, frequently seeing for themselves through their visits. Some governors give tangible support; one governor has expertise in ICT and advises the school on issues arising from this area. Their monitoring ensures good coverage of all of the school's activities. The governing body has an effective committee structure, which is constantly being reviewed, to ensure the most efficient working practices.

It assesses what pupils can do very thoroughly; it uses these results sensibly to help pupils improve.

17. The school has clear and effective systems in place to analyse the results of national assessments. The analysis highlights the strengths and weaknesses of each subject; it identifies trends. The issues that are drawn out feed into action planning for individual subjects and into the evolution of the school development plan. National tests at the end of each key stage are carefully analysed. Subject co-ordinators maintain good records of assessment for their subject areas. Pupils are regularly assessed by a variety of methods. The school is moving towards one style of assessment as pupils move through the school. This good practice is enabling teachers to start to track

individuals more clearly. It enables teachers to identify where the school is adding value and where improvements need to be made.

18. As an example of the practical use of assessment information, the school reports for parents contain well-focused comments with good guidance on pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The comments are particularly pertinent to each individual and targets are set which give clear guidance towards raising standards. The way in which work is marked also sets targets for pupils, ones which – as their own comments in reply attest – they are keen to reach.

The school promotes the growing maturity, positive attitudes and very good behaviour of the pupils. The school cares for pupils very well. Relationships are good throughout the whole school community.

19. The school is a warm and orderly community; there is a courteous and considerate ethos. Teachers care for their pupils and go out of their way to help them in every aspect of their growing up. Minor scrapes from the playground are kindly patched up. Child protection procedures have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Pupils enjoy school and there is a climate of mutual trust and close collaboration in the classrooms. Because pupils are confident in asking for help when they need it, this has a positive effect on the standards that pupils achieve. Even the youngest children at the school work and play very well together and are attentive to one another's needs. All teachers, including the headteacher, provide very good role models for pupils. They are kind and courteous to their charges; the pupils largely reciprocate these positive attitudes. In a very good design and technology lesson, Years 1 and 2 pupils worked very well helping one another in making homes for cats. In the closing session they all listened closely to each other, interested to see what everyone else had made. Their maturity encouraged evaluation by both the teacher and one another, to the benefit of their learning.
20. The school does much to foster pupils' independence. From the reception class onwards, it is striking how well pupils work alone, in pairs and in small groups. They reflect or seek assistance from their peers in their groups, before going to the teacher for help. Pupils show considerable maturity when working with others. They are confident learners. They listen closely to adults before launching themselves into activities with great energy. In a very good mathematics lesson to Year 4 and 5 pupils, there was full participation from the whole class in the mental mathematics element of the lesson, improving pupils' quick multiplication skills. Encouraged by the very good management of the lesson by the teacher, pupils showed exceptionally high levels of concentration and application when doing their group tasks and made substantial gains in their learning.
21. Behaviour is very good. Very little inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection. Pupils are confident and polite in their relationships with adults. They are also immediately obedient to their teachers and other adults. Pupils move around the building in a calm and orderly way and are sensible while eating lunch in the hall. Their play – like so much else that they do - is energetic, but generally sensible. In assembly, with the headteacher the only member of staff present, pupils were enthused by the songs they sang at the end; they showed real enjoyment in what they were doing, avidly joining the correct hand movements, but fell silent, alert for the next instruction, when told so to do.
22. There was one exclusion of a pupil from the school last year.

The school has developed strong links with parents and the local community, involving them in the work of the school.

23. Parents' views of the school are extremely positive. They find the school approachable and feel well informed about how their children are getting on. They believe that teaching is good. The parents' questionnaires revealed no significant areas of concern and only one minor issue; a few parents - less than ten percent of those returning questionnaires - did not think that the school sets the correct amount of homework. The inspection finds that this range of homework set is appropriate to the curriculum and learning requirements of pupils. The work that Year 6 pupils were doing on 'the Wizard of Oz', for example, was considerably helped, because pupils had read much of the book at home.

24. The end of the day arrangements are effective and secure. They afford plentiful opportunities for informal interactions between parents and teacher; good relationships are evident. A number of parents help in the school on a regular basis. The three parents' evenings held each year are a valuable source of information on pupils' progress; there are also evenings to provide information about curriculum developments in the school. In addition, the school also publishes useful curriculum information for parents, so that they know which areas their children will study in the near future.
25. Pupils benefit from visits to local places of interest. The local church is a useful resource. They also visit museums, theatres, galleries and places of historical significance, such as Chester. Visitors enhance the curriculum, teaching music and accompanying school trips. The school has good links with the local secondary schools, to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 6.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

While standards in English in both key stages are above national average, they are lower than those of mathematics and science.

26. At the end of Key Stage 1, national tests indicate that pupils' standards in English are lower than those of mathematics. In 2000, standards in reading were below national averages and below those of similar schools. In writing standards were in line with both national and similar schools' averages. In 2001, test results for reading were similar to 2000; in writing they fell. In comparison, in mathematics in 2001, standards were broadly similar to those in 2000. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000, English results were above the national average and they remained at this level in 2001. However, in 2001 fewer pupils reached higher levels of attainment in English than in mathematics and science, both of which saw clear improvements.
27. Analysis of pupils' English work at the age of eleven shows that pupils reach high standards in a number of areas. Most pupils of this age can produce lively and thoughtful writing. Work is frequently written first in draft form. The quality of teachers' marking means that final copies of work are accurate with correct spelling and consistent punctuation. Work is neatly presented. Most pupils at the age of eleven use a varied and interesting vocabulary, assisted by the use of personal 'spelling journals'. Pupils attempt to write in different genres. For example, most of them are able to rewrite a part of a story that they had all read into a play script format. The developing confidence of pupils as writers is demonstrated by the increasing number of pieces of extended writing attempted in Year 6. For example, there are examples of thoughtful, extended writing in pupils' science notebooks. The area of writing where pupils do not reach higher standards is in writing for different audiences and conveying meaning in diverse forms. Pupils show less confidence in this area.
28. The school has identified historical weaknesses in teaching of lower Key Stage 2 pupils as a significant factor in the differences between standards in English and those in mathematics and science at the end of the key stage. It has found it easier to help pupils recover from previously lower standards in what are seen as more factually based subjects like mathematics and science. What pupils most need is to practise higher-level skills in writing, for example, writing to convey meaning in various forms, adapting language and style for the reader and using convincing language in persuasive writing. In reading, very strong parental involvement has meant that standards have recovered well from the earlier decline. Pupils at the age of eleven read keenly, many like reading aloud and show good levels of fluency when they do so. Most demonstrate good understanding of the nuances of texts, such as the 'Wizard of Oz', which they all enjoy reading.
29. The school's response to this issue has been both analytical and thoughtful. The new co-ordinator for English, who had been in post for five weeks at the time of the inspection, has plans to monitor English provision over the next half term. In-service training for teachers to help them further develop writing skills is planned with funding from the school's regeneration budget. Subsequently, the school plans to develop reading and writing policies; in particular, there is a realisation that the consistent application and development of writing skills across all of the curriculum subjects would help to raise attainment.

The teaching of some elements of the Foundation Stage requires further challenge to help promote learning.

30. Standards in the Foundation Stage are in line with national expectations and children make satisfactory progress. Children are likely to achieve their Early Learning Goals by the time that they leave the reception class. However, in comparison with the rest of the school, teaching and learning for these children is less effective.
31. Lessons are planned to incorporate activities appropriate to the Foundation Stage and children experience a range of tasks. However, when the children are in groups, activities can be aimless and contribute too little to appropriate learning. Play can lack structure; for example one group were given a 'snakes and ladders' board and counters, but not told how to play the game and, although they were initially enthusiastic, rapidly lost interest. At the same time, children were left to get on in the sand area. Again they were given no structure to their activity, which consequently had too little challenge or purpose. The philosophy that children are allowed to get on with what they like, as a reward for earlier good behaviour is too often employed.
32. Fortunately, when the teacher and learning assistant are actively involved in activities, children receive good guidance towards undertaking structured and worthwhile activities. This means that about half of the children in the class are likely to be gainfully employed in the elements of lessons where there are independent activities. Introductory sessions with the whole class are also purposeful. In a session with a focus on knowledge and understanding of the world, the teacher developed an interesting conversation with children about the characteristics of different places and all happily agreed that crabs live in the sea and camels inhabit the desert. Pupils turned keenly to their activities when told; they behaved well and concentrated on what they were doing. However, there was little challenge for many children and, with little intervention from the teacher, the pace of learning for many of them diminished as the session continued.

The school should develop a more effective multi-cultural education programme.

33. In an area of predominantly white European population there are few local experiences or resources, which would naturally encourage pupils to learn about our multi-cultural society. The school does not do enough to counter-balance this situation and develop pupils' understanding of other cultures in Britain.
34. In religious education, in keeping with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, pupils study other religions of the world such as Islam and Judaism. Occasionally, there are opportunities to study non-Euro centric music, such as when pupils learn African lullabies, but these opportunities are rare. There is a display of aboriginal art. Other subjects which, in many schools, address these issues - such as geography and dance – again contribute too little. Literacy teaching has too few themes which originate from non-European cultures. The range of books currently available for reading includes too few good quality texts which inform pupils about life and beliefs held by other cultures.
35. The school shows limited awareness of the potential for developing multi-cultural education. It does not make organised provision for multi-cultural education. It has done little to identify local resources or places, which could be visited to enhance this area of learning.

Some classrooms are too small.

36. The school buildings date from mid-Victorian times and have been sensitively modernised. Most classrooms are of sufficient size; the hall can accommodate the whole school, comfortably. There is adequate, but not generous, space for pupils to play and do outdoor sports.
37. The classrooms for the two youngest classes are too small. Children under five, in particular, lack sufficient space to work in small groups with independence, when this is required. The two rooms are connected by an open arch, which has a curtain that is drawn during lessons. This has little effect in preventing sound travelling between the classrooms. When the younger class enjoyed a lively music session, pupils had some difficulty concentrating on the teacher's very interesting exposition in the history lesson next door. As reported, there are a number of sessions in which pupils under five are engaged in unfocused play. The noise in these sessions rises and can disturb

the adjoining classroom. A further drawback is that, due largely to the limitations of outdoor space children under five have no covered or separated play area.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

38. Over St John's CE Primary School is a very effective school with considerably more strengths than weaknesses. In order to maintain its progress the school should:

i. Further raise standards in English by:

- continuing to analyse information from assessments and using this to employ appropriate teaching methods;
- introducing school policies for reading and – particularly – writing to encourage teachers to take opportunities offered across the curriculum to practise and develop English skills;
- offering more opportunities for pupils to write in a broad range of styles.

(paragraphs 26 - 29)

ii. Review the teaching of children under five and encourage and support the staff who work with these young children, so that:

- planning identifies more opportunities to extend the learning of all pupils in all the activities in the lesson;
- children are engaged in meaningful and appropriately challenging activities.

(paragraphs 30 – 32)

iii. Develop a school policy to improve the teaching of multi-cultural education, so that it shows the quality and consistency evident throughout the rest of the curriculum, by:

- appointing a member of staff with responsibility for this area;
- clearly identifying opportunities to develop multi-cultural understanding across all subjects of the curriculum;
- analysing and organising appropriate resources both within the school and in the wider community.

(paragraphs 33 - 35)

iv. Improving accommodation in the area of the younger pupils by:

- constructing a door between the two classrooms to stop noise seepage;
- in the longer term, providing larger classrooms for the two classes concerned and providing a covered play area for children under five.

(paragraphs 36 and 37)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	8
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	1	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	63	12	25	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 twelve percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	141
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	27

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	12	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	9	10	11
	Total	22	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (88)	92 (81)	96 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	9	11	8
	Total	22	24	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (88)	96 (94)	84 (75)
	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 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	3	11	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	1	3	2
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	12	14	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (100)	100 (89)	93 (89)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	1	1	1
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (78)	86 (89)	86 (89)
	National	70 (68)	72 (59)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	124
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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.7
Average class size	23.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	54

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	276365
Total expenditure	262549
Expenditure per pupil	1945
Balance brought forward from previous year	14741
Balance carried forward to next year	28557

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.2
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	141
Number of questionnaires returned	56

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	25	5	2	5
My child is making good progress in school.	50	40	0	0	10
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	34	2	2	12
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	50	5	2	9
The teaching is good.	64	30	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	40	3	0	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	11	0	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	18	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	50	40	0	3	7
The school is well led and managed.	73	21	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	34	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	50	2	0	4