

INSPECTION REPORT

TITHE BARN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Heaton Mersey, Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106080

Headteacher: Mr T Buckley

Reporting inspector: Mr J P Latham
1817

Dates of inspection: 14th – 15th November 2000

Inspection number: 225371

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mauldeth Road Heaton Mersey Stockport
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Cook
Date of previous inspection:	October 1995

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Tithe Barn Primary School is an average size community school of 234 boys and girls aged between 4–11 years old. The school is organised into single age classes. There are ten per cent more boys than girls overall with twice as many boys than girls in Year 6. There is no nursery and pupils enter the reception class from a range of pre-school providers. There are currently 63 pupils under six years of age. The school is located in a generally affluent area about 1.5 miles north of Stockport town centre. Sixteen per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is higher than in most schools. The school's intake has not changed significantly since the last inspection and draws pupils from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, 5.5 per cent, is less than in most schools nationally. There are 10.2 per cent of pupils on the special educational needs register, which is below the national average. Ten pupils are at Stages 3–5 on this register with a range of difficulties including some with learning and communication difficulties. The school is a popular one with initial applications that are double the school's admission number. About a quarter of the pupils are from outside the school's designated area. Attainment of intake upon entry is above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school that has improved since the last inspection. It provides a high quality education for its pupils, very good teaching and a wide range of curriculum opportunities. The school achieves high standards that are continuing to improve and is very active in promoting the care and welfare of its pupils. Pupils' attitudes are very good. The leadership provided by the headteacher and governors inspires effective teamwork, loyalty and commitment from a hard working staff. The headteacher offers a clear vision for the educational direction of the school. Staff have high expectations of what pupils achieve both academically and socially. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is very well led and managed by a thoughtful headteacher who has established a clear philosophy and climate for learning. He is ably supported by a conscientious deputy and staff. Governors are highly committed and take their role in managing the strategic direction of the school seriously.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that offers a full and exciting range of learning opportunities.
- High standards are achieved, particularly in English and mathematics, by the age of eleven (end of Key Stage 2); these standards are supported by consistently good teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Pupils' personal development is a priority and the school encourages pupils to develop very good attitudes to learning, enquiring minds and very good behaviour. Relationships between pupils and staff are of a high order.
- The provision for specific groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, the gifted and talented and those with English as an additional language, is very good. All pupils are well supported by teachers' assistants.

What could be improved

- Meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.
- Opportunities for information and communication technology (ICT) to be more fully embedded into the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has been very successful in building upon the achievements described in the last inspection report. During 1999-2000 the school has worked hard to improve standards amongst the higher attaining pupils. In 2000 there was a significant improvement by the age of eleven in the attainments of all pupils in English and mathematics when compared with similar schools. In addition, the school has improved in a significant way in a large number of areas, including:

- fully developing the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for all subjects;
- setting curriculum targets for each year group;
- improving arrangements for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress;
- revising annual reports to parents so that they are jargon free, and report clearly on what pupils have achieved;
- bringing the music curriculum in line with national requirements and improving standards in this area across the school;
- providing staff training in the use of ICT and to increasing the provision of computers and software;
- establishing good management practice so that the governing body is fully in touch with the work of the school and able to evaluate outcomes of spending decisions on standards and provision;
- improving the co-ordination and management of science teaching;
- securing a broad and balanced curriculum in geography;
- allocating additional time to the teaching of religious education;
- liaising more effectively with parents where pupils have special educational needs.

The school's leadership has responded well to the improvements indicated in the previous report and has excellent capacity for further improvement and the maintenance of high standards.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	A	A	A	Very high A* Well above average A above average B
Mathematics	A*	A	A*	A*	Average C Below average D
Science	A	A	B	C	Well below average E

The table shows that standards in mathematics are very high compared to all schools and similar schools. Performance in mathematics is within the highest five per cent of schools nationally. Standards in English are well above average when compared with all schools and similar schools. Standards in science, although above average when compared with all

schools nationally, are average when compared with similar schools.

Trends between 1997 and 2000 have shown year on year improvements in English and mathematics with significant improvements in 2000. All pupils leaving the school in July 2000 at the age of eleven achieved the national expectation of Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. The slight improvement in science has been less than the rise nationally. Standards in science have remained stable since 1997 but as in the other two subjects are higher than the average for all schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 or above is above the average for similar schools in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Standards of work seen in class confirm these levels of achievements in English and mathematics although the work seen in science in the current Year 6 would suggest even higher standards for 2001. Statutory targets set by governors are challenging and the school is well placed to meet them again this year.

By the age of seven (at the end of Year 2), test results for 2000 show that pupils achieve above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. By comparison with similar schools, standards are above average in writing and average in reading and mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 is above the national average in both reading and mathematics. Evidence from lessons observed confirm this picture and also indicates that pupils attain well in speaking and listening.

Standards in ICT meet the expected standard throughout the school, but more could be required from the higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2. There has been improvement since the last inspection in music, which now meets expectations across the school. Standards in geography are good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good and a strength of the school. The pupils enjoy the challenge that the school provides. They show high levels of interest in their work and contribute enthusiastically in lessons. Pupils take pride in their work and in their school in general.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good – both in lessons and around the school. The school treats pupils with respect and they respond in a mature and sensible way. Pupils show high levels of respect for their teachers and for each other. Staff training on behaviour management has been effective.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. They show maturity for their age and a capacity to take initiative and accept responsibility. Pupils value each other's contributions in class and are willing to share ideas in discussion sessions.
Attendance	Excellent. Both authorised and unauthorised absence is below the national average. Pupils are punctual in arriving at school.

These are all areas of considerable strength in the school. The supportive climate enables pupils to approach all aspects of school life with ease and confidence. Personal relationships in the school, at all levels, enable pupils to develop high levels of self-esteem, self-discipline and confidence and these are demonstrated in their approach to work, their

consideration of others and in the quality of the work they do in class.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
23 lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Very good

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

The teaching is either good or better in all lessons. Teaching is very good or excellent in 44 per cent of lessons. Teachers know their pupils well, and this enables all pupils to be challenged. Teachers explain new ideas very well especially in literacy and numeracy lessons where pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and to think out solutions to carefully posed questions. Teachers' knowledge and expertise is very good. Class management of pupils is excellent particularly in the reception class and in classes of junior aged pupils. Lessons are invariably challenging to pupils with good pace especially in junior classes. The needs of specific groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are addressed well. The needs of the higher attaining pupils are also well catered for. All staff manage the behaviour of pupils well and develop a good rapport using warmth and humour at all times. Teachers build on, value and make very good use of the contributions made by the pupils. Teachers' planning and record keeping are invariably good. Whilst lessons include the use of simple information technology programmes to aid learning, there are opportunities missed to develop, extend and apply pupils' skills in this area of the curriculum. Homework set supports and enhances pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent, overall. The school provides a full and varied curriculum for all ages. There is a wide range of interesting activities both in school time and beyond the school day.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Provision is well organised, with good learning plans and supporting records for identified pupils. In lessons, pupils are given additional time and special tasks to enable them to learn at their own pace.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils quickly adjust to the demands of the classroom and become confident learners. They are very well supported by staff in lessons who help them to overcome difficulties in communication.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall. The school makes excellent provision to promote pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There are procedures for child protection and health and safety matters. Risk assessment training has been undertaken by both the headteacher and caretaker and good procedures have been implemented. Results of tests and assessments are used well to target areas of learning

with particular pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher offers strong and reflective leadership ably supported by a conscientious deputy. The headteacher inspires effective teamwork and promotes a clear vision and philosophy of education, which is understood and supported by teachers and their assistants. Teaching is monitored well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors are fully involved in the work of the school; they are highly committed and work in partnership with the headteacher to provide clear direction for the work of the school and are mindful of their responsibilities to maintain standards in the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good, particularly in junior aged classes. The school has good systems to assess its own performance in relation to other similar schools including reporting to governors. Action is taken in the classroom to improve its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Very good, in particular the way the school deploys teachers' assistants in the classroom. The school employs high calibre staff and supports their professional development in a way that adds value to pupils' learning. The governing body understands the principles of best value and applies them when arranging services by external agencies.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour of pupils in school. • Expectations made by the school that their children work hard and achieve their best. • The school helps their child to become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. • The teaching is good. • Children make good progress. • Children like coming to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A closer working relationship between school and parents. • Information about the progress of pupils. • The activities for pupils outside lessons. • The arrangements for homework.

The inspectors endorse all the positive views of parents. The school is aware of the need to maintain good working relationships with parents. The majority of parents at the Parents' Meeting confirmed the positive relationships they have with the school. At a subsequent meeting with a small group of parents it was not possible to identify any further reasons for this concern. Inspectors are satisfied that the information available to parents about the progress of their children is sufficient. The school offers a good range of activities beyond the curriculum compared with most schools. Arrangements for homework, although under continuous review by the school, are satisfactory. The amount of work set and its frequency is appropriate and it contributes to pupils' learning. Some parents expressed concerns about

the practice of not allowing reading books to be taken home daily by pupils. The school has agreed to clarify its arrangements in this area.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school is very well led and managed by a thoughtful headteacher who has established a clear philosophy and climate for learning. He is ably supported by a conscientious deputy and staff. Governors are highly committed and take their role in managing the strategic direction of the school seriously.

1. A major strength in the school is the shared commitment shown by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the teaching staff, their assistants and the governing body to continuous improvement and to providing a quality education. The headteacher provides strong and reflective leadership in the school that over time has inspired effective teamwork to maintain and raise standards. The clear educational direction given by the headteacher and clearly articulated values of the school are present and reflected in the day-to-day practice and the extensive range of opportunities available to pupils. The climate for learning amongst pupils is challenging; as a result pupils learn with maturity, confidence and respect for others. It is these features which are commended by the majority of parents and which contribute to the school's identity and popularity within the community.
2. The deputy headteacher is responsible for a number of initiatives which have made a significant impact on the quality of the school's provision, including:
 - a pilot scheme for setting curriculum targets for individual pupils;
 - the successful School's Council - to enable the pupils themselves to voice opinions to bring about improvements;
 - co-ordinating and improving standards in science;
 - the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress.
3. The work of the co-ordinator for special educational needs is thorough and contributes significantly to the specific arrangements made and consequent improvement of standards of these pupils. Although the staffing structure tends not to be hierarchical the contribution made by individual subject co-ordinators is significant towards the highly effective teaching of the curriculum.
4. In a similar way, staff at the school are also encouraged to develop themselves professionally. Knowledge and expertise amongst teachers is high, but there is ongoing debate about the effectiveness of varying teaching strategies. For example, this year the school has been considering the benefits of 'accelerated learning' which include ways of helping pupils learn more quickly, combined with techniques to enhance memory and thinking. The school also makes excellent use of teachers' assistants in the classroom who are included in planning and teaching of specific groups of pupils, especially those who need additional support in the classroom.
5. Governors have an excellent understanding of the work of the school. Some governors, especially the chair, make regular visits to the classroom, often associated with delegated responsibilities. Governors are now involved in monitoring spending decisions more rigorously than reported at the time of the last inspection. They are aware of the need to maintain high standards and are aware of the areas targeted for further improvement. Statutory responsibilities are debated and taken seriously although the requirements for collective worship are not met. Governors are

currently considering the need to make adjustments to staffing and organisational arrangements that will be required to implement the Key Stage 1 Class Size regulations from September 2001.

6. The school has very good systems to monitor and evaluate the performance of all pupils. Excellent use is made of available data to identify strengths and weaknesses and action is taken to remedy perceived gaps in curriculum planning and to target the needs of both individual year groups and particular pupils. The school also has systems to keep the progress of pupils under review as well as detailed reporting arrangements to parents to keep them informed of their children's achievements.
7. The governors of the school are also committed to ensuring that the school provides value for money. Spending decisions are taken seriously on all matters. For example, the school has taken a policy decision to spend a much higher than average amount on high quality teachers' assistants in order to reduce overall the pupil:adult ratios to 14 pupils per adult deployed in the classroom. This has proved popular with parents as testified at the meeting for parents. The effects of this decision are kept under review by governors. The quality of provision for pupils is greatly enhanced by this initiative in that more time can be given to discussion and extending thinking of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language. The school makes excellent use and allocation of its resources to enhance learning, including the additional funding brought in through specific grants. This is particularly the case in literacy and numeracy lessons in all parts of the school. In addition, the school actively seeks other imaginative sources to enhance provision. For example, the school:
 - employs a computer technician through a work experience scheme;
 - provides an opportunity for a Japanese intern to introduce aspects of Far Eastern culture into the curriculum;
 - engages a teacher from the Italian Consulate to introduce a further European language to junior aged pupils;
 - employs graduates looking for a break in their studies to work as teachers' assistants.
8. The school also benefits from a highly effective school secretary and administrative staff, a conscientious caretaker and catering staff, all of whom are valued by the school community and collectively make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that offers a full and exciting range of learning opportunities.

9. The curriculum taught in the school is full and exciting. It offers breadth and balance of subjects and is relevant to pupils' needs and experiences. The provision for religious education is well planned and resourced, drawing positively on the pupils' own cultural and religious backgrounds. The varied range of opportunities, through which pupils thrive and gain confidence, include learning other languages, field trips, visitors to the school from around the world and a range of extra-curricular activities. Parents appreciate the diversity of the learning experiences and testify to their children's enthusiasm for learning.
10. The curriculum is organised within a philosophy of active learning experiences to instil every pupil with a sense of purpose and success. Its delivery effectively meets the

needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs, the able and talented pupils and those for whom English is an additional language.

11. The curriculum for the under-fives is specifically tailored to meet their needs. Activities for the children are planned in detail so that they build on what they have so far learned through pre-school experiences. Activities are also designed to make best use of the teachers' assistants available. There are opportunities for talk, enquiry and play, both indoors and outdoors; for example, taking a walk to see what type of houses are around school, or playing purposefully with Lego to build homes for big and small toys.
12. The school has recognised the importance of establishing the highest academic standards possible as well as personal targets for each pupil. All aspects of the National Curriculum are given sufficient time and consideration. In addition other exciting opportunities for learning are offered such as French and Italian. Considerable emphasis is also placed on developing pupils' appreciation of the cultural diversity and richness within their own and other cultural traditions. At the time of the inspection, a visitor from Japan made a tremendous impression on pupils of all ages with her meticulously planned and prepared activities; for example pupils were introduced to elements of Japanese culture and language including the art of origami. The results of this work contributed to an attractive and interesting display.
13. Subjects are brought alive by imaginative teaching, such as the enthusiastic and stimulating introduction to report writing to support work in subjects like history, geography and science as well as introducing journalistic writing styles in Year 6. Pupils were able to call on their experiences of a geography field trip to Northwich and make good linkage with information technology using 'Publisher' so that their report, and at a later date the class newspaper, could be produced in this format. All teachers are careful to explain the connections between subjects and to reinforce the teaching of basic skills, especially literacy and numeracy. In a music lesson, Year 2 children composed new verses to a favourite song. They also illustrated these verses so that the very young could be helped to remember the words.
14. Older children are given many opportunities to investigate in all subjects so that they learn how to learn. This was particularly evident in science when Year 5 pupils very sensibly conducted a range of experiments to identify that sounds are made when objects vibrate. Younger pupils in Year 1 talked with enthusiasm about their reading, describing how to read with expression. They carefully explained that when reading a comma, 'you take a little breath, but if you read a full stop you need to take a longer breath'.
15. Sport plays an important part in the extra-curricular activities of the school. Children have taken part successfully in football, netball and rounders. Country dancing is a popular activity choice and the team is proud of their performances at the locally organised Country-Dance Festival. The school also provides lacrosse coaching for Year 5 pupils using the expertise of a visiting American player.
16. Visits into the local community and further afield are many and varied. Evidence of pupils' learning and enjoyment are obvious from displays, their recorded work and from their conversations. As part of a three-year project the school has developed good links with schools in Portugal and Sweden and is currently seeking to extend this experience by linking with a school in Italy. The international dimension to the curriculum is further enhanced by lessons in Italian and French. Pupils from Year 3 onwards can experience short residential visits to enliven the curriculum. For

example, history and geography have been brought to life with the experience of pupils simulating life in a Viking village and as Romans in a fort in York. Year 5 pupils spent time studying the contrasting environment in the Lake District around Hawkshead. Pupils in the previous Year 6 have also made brief trips to France and Portugal. Almost one third of the pupils learn to play a musical instrument and pupils throughout the school are involved in many local projects such as the successful flower festival, the craft of flower arranging and road safety competitions.

17. Visitors are given a warm welcome in the school and bring with them a wealth of cultural, social and spiritual experiences from which the children benefit during assemblies, in personal, health and social education lessons and in religious education. The first-hand experience pupils received from working with their Japanese visitor was a compelling example of developing mutual respect for other cultures.
18. Whilst assemblies are meaningful to pupils, they do not always contain a collective act of worship. As a result the school is falling short of meeting statutory requirements to provide a daily act of worship. However, time for personal reflection is given and combined with the moral issues which are taught well; spiritual development of pupils is catered for.
19. As a result of providing such a full and varied curriculum pupils talk with enthusiasm about their work. They debate and discuss their investigations with intelligence and a highly developed vocabulary. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and respond by demonstrating initiative and responsibility in their lessons and around the school. They are lively and active contributors to the rich life of this school community.

High standards are achieved, particularly in English and mathematics, by the age of eleven (end of Key Stage 2); these standards are supported by consistently good teaching and learning throughout the school.

20. Standards, compared with the national average and also with schools with a similar percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals, are well above average in English and very high in mathematics by the time pupils reach the age of eleven (the end of Key Stage 2). Apart from a slight dip in mathematics in 1999, these high standards have been maintained between 1997 and 2000 and are an improvement on standards at the time of the last inspection. The trend of improvement follows a similar pattern to that found nationally and the school showed very good improvements in both subjects between 1999 and 2000.
21. The success of the school in these two subjects is due to the measures taken by teachers in Key Stage 2 to build on and consolidate the achievements of pupils in the infants. In particular, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher than expected Level 3 in reading and writing by the time they reach the age of seven in Year 2, which is above average for similar schools, secures high standards by the age of eleven. Likewise, the performance of pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs when in Key Stage 1 is accelerated in Key Stage 2 due to the solid foundations provided by effective teaching by infant teachers. This enables many of these pupils to make very good progress in Years 3 to 6 and achieve good outcomes in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2.
22. Standards in the present Year 6 as they approach the end of Key Stage 2 remain high, with most pupils expected to attain the standard expected nationally and with a

good proportion likely to exceed this standard. In the 2000 tests this proportion was above the national average in English and well above the national average in mathematics. The school continues to set itself very challenging targets for the number of pupils expected to attain the expected Level 4 or above for the current Year 6 pupils.

23. In English, the great majority of pupils at all levels of ability make very good progress. Their excellent skills in speaking and listening are demonstrated in the whole class introductory element of the literacy sessions and in other lessons taught. Teachers help to maintain progress by creating opportunities for pupils to express their opinions and by posing challenging questions, which encourages pupils to think about what they have to say.
24. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has a particularly positive effect on pupils' progress in reading and writing. Infant children responded very well to a dramatic and inspiring reading of *The Great Lorenzo*. Children readily understand how to respond and they read aloud with gusto and fluency. Opportunities for older junior aged pupils to apply their developing writing skills for particular purposes are a very good feature of teaching. This was particularly evident in Year 6 during a literacy lesson, when pupils were introduced to the way journalists construct an effective report by studying and looking for the key features in a report structure. They then produced their own draft of the opening paragraph. Pupils respond well to their teachers specific questioning by giving detailed and well-constructed answers. Draft writing is very graphic and conveys the drama of a situation well. Through such activities pupils extend their knowledge of the use of language, increased their vocabulary and begin to consider both the varying viewpoints of the reader and the question of the public interest. Opportunities to extend activities through the use of ICT are sometimes missed.
25. In mathematics, pupils responded well and with confidence during introductory sessions. Contributions from pupils were valued and used as a basis for further thinking and understanding. The majority of pupils are able to mentally calculate numbers in a manner appropriate to their age and ability. They can explain orally how they have arrived at their answers and share their methods confidently with others. Pupils' mental agility is a marked area of improvement since the last inspection report.
26. As children start in the reception class, they are taught well and quickly learn the names of the more commonly known shapes and solids and they are confident in sorting and classifying objects into comparative size. In Year 1 pupils are developing a good understanding of number pattern and by the time pupils are aged seven, at the end of Key Stage 1, they are confident in using simple calculations up to 100. They have a very good understanding of the size and value of numbers and where they can be located in a sequence between zero and a hundred.
27. In junior aged classes, due to very good teaching, the majority of pupils are very confident in their use of larger numbers, including decimals from Year 5 onwards, and they demonstrate very good knowledge of the number system. Both in lessons and in their recorded work pupils show high levels of understanding in a range of mathematical concepts. For example, in Year 3 pupils have a sound initial understanding of fractions and by Year 4 they have a grasp of tables and are beginning to understand, through number problems, the principles of multiplication and division. Year 5 pupils are proficient in the use of the protractor, measuring angles with accuracy and have a good understanding of how to construct regular

shapes. Year 6 pupils showed good understanding of co-ordinates using quadrants and the majority grasped the use of negative numbers in this process. Pupils are also confident when it comes to applying their mathematical knowledge, either through solving problems such as when tackling mathematical investigations. Mathematical vocabulary is taught well and this manifests itself in the way pupils use it when in conversation with their peers. Teachers make every effort to introduce information technology into their mathematics teaching as seen in the work on databases and software to promote pupils' understanding of shape. However, the use of ICT to enrich and extend pupils' learning even further is still a developing aspect of the school's work.

Pupils' personal development is a priority and the school encourages pupils to develop very good attitudes to learning, enquiring minds and very good behaviour. Relationships between pupils and staff are of a high order.

28. All pupils are happy and keen to come to school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. The pupils enjoy the rich variety and challenge, which the school provides. They show high levels of interest and contribute enthusiastically in lessons by drawing on a range of experiences. For example, in Year 6 pupils add interest and detail to their writing by drawing on the experiences of a geography field trip. Children are eager to seek information from various sources to improve their knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 5 investigated, through a range of experiments, the scientific principles of sound. Children in Year 1 discussed with their teacher and the teacher's assistant the contents of their lunch boxes in the light of recent lessons exploring the importance of a healthy diet.
29. Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons, at play and at lunchtime. The staff deal with the occasional disagreements appropriately. Pupils show good levels of respect for each other such as in mathematics lessons when listening to others explaining their strategies for using the four rules of number. They are particularly sensitive to their classmates who are learning to speak English and eagerly celebrate when these pupils do well in their work. Very young children in the reception class are comfortable with the adults in their room. They move promptly onto their allotted activities and tidy away their equipment when asked. In all classes the pace of lessons moves along briskly because pupils settle down quickly to group and individual tasks. They sustain their concentration and do not interrupt others.
30. A particular strength is the way that pupils are encouraged to take initiative and accept responsibility. Year 6 pupils for example assume duties at break times to help with the infant children. Members of the School's Council wear their badges of office with pride and are eager to explain their duties and responsibilities. Some members explained how they tackled the problem of untidy waste paper by asking for larger waste bins, which they now report are helping to keep the school tidy. Pupils take pride in their work and in their school in general. They enjoy the displays around the school, willingly discuss the part they played in providing work for them and are quick to acknowledge the contributions made by their friends and classmates.
31. Both authorised and unauthorised absence is below the national average. Pupils are punctual in arriving at school and sessions get off to a brisk start. The supportive ethos of the school enables pupils to approach all aspects of school life with ease and confidence.

The provision for specific groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, the gifted and talented and those with English as an additional language, is very good. All pupils are well supported by teachers' assistants.

32. The well-being of every child matters at Tithe Barn Primary School. A very strong and easily identified feature of the school is the empathy shown by staff to the individual needs of all pupils. This is further strengthened by the detailed knowledge staff have about each child. This knowledge helps staff to appreciate and overcome any barriers to children's learning and to take the appropriate steps to make sure that no one is disadvantaged by their particular learning difficulty. The atmosphere for learning and teaching is relaxed, harmonious and balanced.
33. The school constantly monitors and evaluates learning. Activities provided for pupils are carefully matched to pupils' abilities in order to build on what they already know. Consequently, pupils with a learning difficulty or who are academically talented make very good progress. The staff give all pupils wide and varied opportunities to experience success in their learning and challenge them appropriately in lessons by planning activities well suited to their needs. They use additional teaching and support staff to good effect by supporting small groups or individual pupils who have individual education programmes. The school is prepared to use its staff and arrangements for pupil groupings flexibly so those children receive appropriate teaching, as in the case of a young but gifted mathematician in the juniors who receives additional tuition with Year 6. The school is currently at the forefront of developments with the gifted and talented pupils with good identification procedures and clear focus on their development. Academically the numbers of pupils achieving the high National Curriculum levels in both key stages are higher than the national average.
34. The increase in the number of teachers' assistants has been very effective. Teachers plan meticulously to make sure that assistants are used to provide direct support to individual groups whose learning is at a different stage to others in the class and to those children whose home language is not English. Teachers are fully aware that the ability of these pupils is often ahead of their communication skills in English. Therefore, specific action is taken to help these children develop their spoken and written English. The school works closely with support agencies and with parents of the small number of children who need more specialist help. The school feels confident with the advice and support they receive to help them plan and involve these children in the everyday activities of the class.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met.

35. Pupils meet daily for assemblies. Content is good and enhances social and moral development through stories sometimes involving the pupils themselves. Occasionally assemblies provide opportunities for the practising of popular and enjoyable songs. The daily assemblies observed did not contain an act of collective worship which is a breach of statutory requirements. Other aspects of spirituality are covered satisfactorily as part of the curriculum.

Opportunities for information and communication technology (ICT) are not sufficiently embedded into the curriculum.

36. Since the last inspection, the school has provided training so that staff are familiar with software available and the requirements of the National Curriculum. Despite financial difficulties, the school has now acquired a substantial range of equipment including 14 computers with Internet capability. Six of these are located in a newly established computer suite with a further computer in the library. Other computers are located in classrooms or adjacent learning bays and there is now one computer to every fourteen pupils, close to the national average. Training for staff, paid for from the New Opportunities Fund, is due to start in April 2001 as part of a national training programme for all teachers.
37. The school has acquired a good range of suitable software to help provide experiences in the use of ICT within the curriculum. Teachers make considerable effort in most lessons to ensure there is supporting software for individual pupils to explore and this leads to pupils acquiring skills that enable them to control the mouse and use icons on the monitor from reception onwards. Infant pupils are confident in using software to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills already acquired in lessons and can use the keyboard to compose text. In Key Stage 2 word processing skills are progressed further with some use of databases in Year 6.
38. Despite these developments, the school has included the need to improve standard in ICT as a key issue in its current School Improvement Plan. Pupils' standards in ICT, although meeting the expected Level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2, could be much higher. The focus of the ICT curriculum is seldom on progression and achievements in the specific Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum. For example, the use of computer devices purchased by the school such as a scanner or digital camera were not observed being used by pupils to provide an ICT application to their work in researching and presenting work in history and geography. Although good use is made of software to enable desktop publishing to take place in Year 6, other applications such as the use of sensors to enhance science, control technology to support work in design and technology or software to enable musical compositions to take place, is not evident. Many of the pupils acquire skills and knowledge associated with ICT outside the school day but there is little evidence that this is being built upon in lessons.
39. The newly created computer suite opened prior to the inspection, although small in size and without adequate ventilation, enables groups to be taught advanced skills and use of the Internet. The room has initially been designated for the use of pupils in Years 5 and 6. At the time of the inspection this was a relatively new venture and a lesson observed, aimed at enabling pupils to access information on the Victorian era, via the Local Authority's Learning Grid, was plagued with technical problems preventing the lesson from being successful. For the majority of the pupils the lesson was a relatively new experience illustrating that development in this area has some way to go. The school's technical support assistant carefully explained the processes needed to gain access to the learning grid to which the pupils responded very well indeed with good learning taking place. Although many of the pupils are aware of the benefits and purposes of using e-mail for exchanging information, practical application of this form of communication to enhance lessons is still in its infancy.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further and improve the quality of education the school should:

40. Ensure that the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is met.
(see paragraph 35)
41. Develop further the recent initiatives in ICT by:
 - Developing a strategy for making full use of the Internet and e-mail facility to enhance learning, particularly in junior aged classes.
 - Making fuller use of software to promote control technology, spreadsheets, databases, desktop publishing within the curriculum, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
 - Promoting the use of the digital camera, the scanners and sensors to enliven and deepen further pupils' understanding in science and the humanities.
 - Complementing the newly established computer suite with smaller banks of computers in learning bays adjacent to classrooms.
 - Rectifying the ventilation problems in the newly established computer suite.

(see paragraphs 24, 27, 36-39)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	23
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
9%	35%	57%	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	234
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	13

FTE means full-time equivalent

Special educational needs	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	24

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	16	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	15
	Girls	14	14	15
	Total	27	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (97)	82 (94)	88 (97)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	13
	Girls	14	15	14
	Total	27	29	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (94)	85 (97)	79 (97)
	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	12	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	27	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (89)	100 (82)	100 (92)
	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	12	12	12
	Total	27	27	27

Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (84)	100 (84)	100 (87)
	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	1
Black – other	2
Indian	6
Pakistani	12
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	176
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26:1
Average class size	33.4

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	194

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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	414,103
Total expenditure	413,484
Expenditure per pupil	1,737.33
Balance brought forward from previous year	-2,651
Balance carried forward to next year	-2,032

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	234
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	38	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	49	40	6	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	45	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	44	16	1	8
The teaching is good.	51	35	4	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	41	23	4	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	36	4	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	40	1	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	34	37	22	6	1
The school is well led and managed.	53	39	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	38	1	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	30	14	10	16