

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Chad's CE (Controlled) Primary School

Newcastle-under-Lyme

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124265

Headteacher: Mrs L Hill

Reporting inspector: Mrs Mary Speakman
21581

Dates of inspection: 31st October – 2nd November 2000

Inspection number: 224112
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary with nursery unit
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gateway Redstreet Newcastle-under-Lyme Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST5 7AB
Telephone number:	01782 562507
Fax number:	01782 565094
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Rhead
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Mrs Mary Speakman	Registered inspector
Mr Alan Dobson	Lay inspector
Mrs Megan Spark	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

School Inspections Unit
School of Education
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10 - 14
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	14 - 16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18 - 21

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Chad's Primary School is a Church of England voluntary controlled school in Redstreet, about four miles north of Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire. The school serves the local village and the surrounding area that is partly rural and partly new housing development. Most pupils come from a white British background. Currently, there are no pupils attending the school who speak English as an additional language. There are 303 pupils on roll in the main school and 20 children attend the nursery unit on a part time basis. At just below 8%, the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is below average. There are 37 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and three pupils have Statements of special educational need. The attainment of the children on entry to the school is broadly similar to that found nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Chad's Primary School provides a sound education for its pupils and many aspects of its provision are good. Standards are, overall, in line with the national picture. The overall quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is good and satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and for children who are under five. The leadership and management of the head and deputy headteacher are satisfactory and they are well supported by a committed governing body. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils achieve well in science and reach high standards.
- Teachers in Key Stage 2 have high expectations of what their pupils may achieve and most lessons are taught at a brisk pace. Much of the teaching at Key Stage 2 is good and sometimes it is very good or excellent.
- The provision for social and moral development for all the pupils is very good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards school and there are very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults.
- The governors are knowledgeable, hardworking and fulfil their role with increasing effectiveness.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough.
- The school's arrangements for the monitoring and improvement of standards do not make sufficient use of the skills and expertise of the English and mathematics co-ordinators.
- The school does not ensure that parents have an accurate perception of the work of the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are not always identified at the earliest opportunity.
- There are inconsistencies in planning and provision between nursery and reception.

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 June 1997. There has been satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues from that inspection and in maintaining or improving standards. Standards in information technology were low at both key stages at the time of the last inspection and this remains the case. Much effort has been put into improving teachers' expertise and most teachers are confident in this subject. However, the school does not have sufficient resources to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has made considerable strides in improving its arrangements for assessment of pupils' academic achievements and these are now secure. Annual reports have been improved and contain a good level of detail. The arrangements for risk assessment and annual testing of electrical appliances are in place. The part played by the governors in overseeing and shaping the work of the school has been further developed since the last inspection. The content and structure of the curriculum has been redesigned to take account of recent developments in education. The headteacher has established a system of professional development interviews for teaching staff linked to the direct monitoring of teaching and this has been effective in promoting further improvements in the quality of teaching.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	C	B	B
Mathematics	E	B	A	A
Science	B	A	B	B

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E

The overall trend is one of improvement in results in the national tests at a similar rate to that seen nationally. In 2000, the number of pupils achieving higher levels in English and science was above the national average and in mathematics was well above the national average. Over four years, taking the three subjects together, girls achieved slightly better than boys overall, although boys do better than girls in mathematics. During the inspection, standards observed in the school were lower than those seen in the tests. Standards in English and mathematics were judged to be in line with national averages at the end of both key stages and science was judged to be in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above at the end of Key Stage 2. The current cohort of Year 6 pupils has a wider spread of ability than that of the 1999 cohort and higher numbers of pupils identified as having special educational needs. The progress of some of the current Year 6 was slowed in Year 5 because of disruptions to staffing. The school sets very precise individual targets for pupils and these reflect accurately the standards inspectors saw in the school. Targets for attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 were achieved in mathematics, although in English pupils fell short of the target by 4%. Overall, pupils are making good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school. They are very keen to learn and respond very well to the challenges they are set.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They work and play together with a high level of consideration for each other's views and needs.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good. Relationships within the school are very good. Pupils grow in confidence and fulfil responsibilities and roles within the school community effectively.
Attendance	Attendance has improved over the last twelve months and is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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.

During the week of the inspection teaching was satisfactory or better in 96% of lessons. 31% of teaching was very good or better, whilst 23% was good. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching was

consistently high for the older pupils at Key Stage 2. Particular features of the more successful teaching are the teachers' high expectations of pupils' ability to understand quite complex language and ideas and to achieve well. The best lessons are very well organised, teaching proceeds at a brisk pace, pupils enjoy this and they respond with animation to the demands of the lesson. The planning of the better lessons ensure that brighter pupils have work that challenges them and that less able receive the help, time and work to enable them to make progress and to promote their confidence. Pupils who have special educational receive appropriate support from their teachers and support staff. This enables them to make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, although in numeracy some teachers do not make the best use of the mental maths element of the lesson. Literacy is well used across the curriculum.

Overall, the pace of pupils' learning is good, although more consistently so at Key Stage 2. When teaching is effective, pupils give of their best, take considerable pride in their achievements and achieve good standards. Pupils make good use of the opportunities they are given to discuss and work in small groups. The short-term targets they are set enable them to focus on the areas they need to improve and older pupils particularly have a good sense of how they are progressing. Where teaching is less successful, although pupils co-operate well, they do not concentrate so intently for such long periods of time and occasionally they are not quite sure what they are supposed to be achieving.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The broad curriculum offers a wide range of worthwhile opportunities. However, provision for information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements because the school lacks the necessary resources.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)	Pupils who require additional support for their educational needs are not identified at the earliest opportunity. Once identified, pupils receive satisfactory support from their class teachers and additional support staff make a good contribution to their progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is strong commitment to promoting pupils' personal development. The School Council is most effective in developing pupils' initiative and awareness of their place in the school community. Links with the church are once again becoming evident in the life of the school after a period of unavoidable standstill.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are effective procedures for child protection in place. The monitoring of pupils' progress in the key subjects is thorough.

From Year 2 pupils are set individual targets both personal and academic, that are discussed with teachers and reviewed regularly. Pupils value the opportunities they have to discuss matters of concern in circle time or personal, social and health education sessions.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has had some difficult and unforeseeable situations to deal with since her appointment. She has managed these capably with the support of an effective acting deputy headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors' role has been further developed since the previous inspection and they provide effective support to the school. They use their professional skills well to benefit the school.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The use of assessment data and the headteacher's monitoring of teaching have provided a good basis for further improvement. The English and mathematics co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in the direct monitoring of their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes appropriate use of its funds. Spending decisions are closely linked to school development priorities. The school takes good account of longer-term needs when planning its expenditure.

The headteacher has a realistic view of what needs to be done to enable the school to improve further. However, key senior teachers are not sufficiently involved in implementing and monitoring these initiatives. This has led to some inconsistency in the teaching of mathematics and not enough sharing of the good practice that is evident in the school. There are some deficiencies in the provision for outdoor play for children who are under five in reception. The school applies the principles of best value appropriately when undertaking major decisions involving expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school and are making good progress. The teaching is good. Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information they receive about their children's progress. The school does not work closely enough with parents. The leadership and management of the school. The range of activities provided outside lessons. A few parents expressed concerns over aspects of provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Overall, the parents are reasonably happy with the school. The inspection team agrees with the positive comments made by the parents and investigated all their concerns fully. The range of out-of-lesson activities is good and well supported by the pupils. Reports to parents are informative. They could be further improved by noting what targets children are being set to achieve further. The school arranges three formal parents' evenings a year and parents have access to class teachers and the headteacher at reasonable times during the school day. Parents would like more information about what their children are going to learn each term and the inspectors agree that this would further improve the level of information given. The inspectors consider that the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There were some comments of dissatisfaction about the management of staffing difficulties experienced by one class at Key Stage 2. The inspectors consider the school has done its best to resolve the matter. Parents were kept as well informed as possible, given the nature of the problem. Some parents raised concerns about the current organisation of mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2. The inspectors found that this arrangement is proving effective in enabling pupils to make good progress, particularly in English, and to make up the ground that was lost last year. The inspectors agree with the concerns that a few parents have about the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. During the inspection the team had many informal conversations with a wide range of parents who expressed positive comments about the school's provision and the standards achieved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils achieve well in science and reach high standards towards the end of the key stage.

1 Pupils enter Key Stage 2 with a secure understanding of the work they have covered in science so far. Teachers' assessments and observations made towards the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that pupils' attainments overall are in line with the national average. This secure start is built on well as pupils move through Key Stage 2. Pupils receive a curriculum that ensures they cover all the required areas of knowledge and understanding whilst developing good skills in observing, experimenting and reaching reasoned conclusions. The curriculum has recently been revised to ensure that it is in line with the requirements of the new National Curriculum and sensible use is made of national guidelines in science. The needs of mixed age classes are well catered for by a rolling programme of topics that ensures that pupils do not cover the same ground unnecessarily.

2 Younger pupils use the understanding they have already and apply it well to new knowledge and ideas. Year 3 pupils were observed getting to grips with categorising living organisms into increasingly more closely defined categories. During the initial class discussion the teacher expected them to give clear reasons for the categories they were suggesting and his astute questioning and demands that their suggestions should be "interesting" extended their thinking well. The question "is a whale a fish?" resulted in some interesting suggestions and was revisited towards the end of the lesson when features of mammals were identified. By the end of the lesson the majority of pupils were identifying and grouping living things by a range of significant features. They also appreciated that this task was not as easy as it first appeared! As pupils move through Key Stage 2 they continue to make good progress. Scientific understanding is linked well to work in health education and in Year 4 pupils who, previously, have studied key features of the human body, discuss the importance of energetic exercise. Because of their studies in science, they can talk knowledgeably about the impact of different types of exercise on their heart and pulse rates and understand the importance of exercise for a healthy life style.

3 Older pupils at Key Stage 2 have good recall of topics covered in previous years. A scrutiny of a sample of science workbooks confirms that literacy is well used to support science. Pupils record their findings in a variety of ways. Younger and less able pupils are sometimes provided with frameworks within which to write, but as they progress they are able to write independently with clarity, using grids and diagrams to illustrate their findings. Work is usually neat and well presented. Older pupils have a good grasp of the principles behind their scientific enquiries. Teachers promote an atmosphere of enquiry in lessons and their interventions throughout practical lessons create a questioning climate. In a very effective lesson for older pupils, pupils were investigating properties of certain solutions and considering the concept of reversibility and irreversibility of changes. They showed a good understanding of the importance of making the test fair and of the effect that varying one element in the experiment might have. They were able to carry out careful observations of each of the solutions and record their findings systematically as the work progressed. The lesson concluded with a very confident presentation by two pupils of how they could separate Parmesan cheese from a solution that also contained washing-up liquid.

4 The good level of attention given to teaching scientific knowledge through practical investigative work is having a positive impact on achievements and attitudes towards science and standards have risen in this subject since the previous inspection. In addition, the organisation of the curriculum to cater effectively for the needs of classes containing two year groups and the high quality of the teaching, indicate that this improvement is well placed to continue.

5 Achievement in science is further enhanced for pupils from Year 4 onwards by the very popular science club, which meets regularly after school and has the benefit of help from a visiting subject specialist.

Teachers in Key Stage 2 have high expectations of what their pupils may achieve and most lessons are taught at a brisk pace. Much of the teaching at Key Stage 2 is good and sometimes it is very good or excellent.

6 As at the time of the last inspection teaching overall was judged to be of a good quality. Good and very good lessons were observed at both key stages but high quality teaching is a more constant feature at Key Stage 2 Those lessons judged satisfactory were securely so. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed at Key Stage 2 and was not typical of the teaching seen.

7 A few parents expressed concern about the arrangements of some classes into mixed year groups. Particularly high quality teaching was seen in the three classes that have more than one year group. Teachers skilfully ensure that older and higher attaining pupils are challenged and make the most of the fact that younger pupils are keen to do as well as their older classmates. Of course, older pupils are challenged by the success of the younger. Pupils in the two Year 5 and 6 classes, whose educational experience was disrupted in the last school year, are benefiting from these arrangements. A scrutiny of their work shows that many have achieved a good rate of progress in English since September and a satisfactory rate of progress in mathematics.

8 Teachers plan and organise their lessons efficiently. They plan together in year groups and this ensures a consistency of provision throughout the key stage. Teachers make very good use of time, in most lessons never a moment is wasted. They have a wide range of strategies for ensuring pupils are engaged and interested. For example, a teacher used a soft toy to toss backwards and forwards in order to maintain a brisk pace in a mental maths session. In another class, groups of pupils were required to take it in turns to lead part of the plenary sessions of a literacy strategy. Teachers make expressive use of language and provide interesting and well-focused practical activities for the pupils. High expectations are demonstrated in many lessons by the challenging work that is planned, by the teachers' use of quite complex language and ideas and by the pace of teaching. Because lessons are interesting and motivate pupils, they learn at a good rate. They usually concentrate and work hard. At Key Stage 2, their awareness of their targets for improvement enables them to focus on what needs their extra effort.

9 The teaching of literacy is effective. Teachers have a good understanding of the literacy strategy. Lessons are planned in outline for the half term and then more detailed weekly plans are devised that are adjusted if necessary to take account of the findings of day-to-day assessment and evaluation of the success of previous lessons. Good use is made of interesting children's literature as a basis for word work and spelling, as well as providing a starting point for their independent writing. Pupils endorse the choice of literature for this work, and are positive about the range of books they tackle. The reading that takes place during the literacy hour is supplemented well by pupils' private reading. Discussion with pupils indicates that they read across a good range of children's literature and are able to identify key themes and characters in their reading. Written work is well presented and teachers generally mark work carefully, giving suggestions for improvement and reminders about targets to be achieved.

10 Pupils' confidence in speaking in formal situations is well developed. For example, a group led the class in a discussion about how to go about planning a piece of descriptive writing. They spoke confidently and were prepared to share their ideas to the benefit of all. Speaking and listening is well promoted across the whole curriculum. Pupils report back their findings from group work to the whole class in science, whilst in numeracy, pupils explain how they have arrived at a particular answer. Purposeful discussion is encouraged during group activities, and teachers' interventions, often questioning their conclusions, make pupils think even harder about what they are learning. In a very effective lesson, lower attaining pupils gained confidence in writing through a group activity that required them to share their ideas for writing, setting them out clearly on large paper, then discussing them with the teacher and the group. The teacher's use of questioning enabled them to use language more confidently and accurately. An interesting discussion ensued about how the language they used was effective in describing a volcano and how it could be further improved.

11 The teaching of numeracy is at least satisfactory and some outstanding teaching for the younger pupils at Key Stage 2 was observed. One feature of the organisation of numeracy is the opportunity given to two very capable Year 2 pupils to join Year 3 for their numeracy sessions. Benefits for all are considerable, extending those pupils' mathematical capabilities and providing a challenge for the older pupils. Some teachers conduct the mental mathematics element of the numeracy session very briskly whilst other are uncertain about how to promote pupils' mental agility. Recent attendance by some teachers' at local authority course has given them valuable training and with increased expertise this should be remedied.

12 Some pupils with special educational needs benefit considerably from additional support which enables them to participate fully in lessons and to make satisfactory progress toward the targets in their individual education plans. Teachers take full account of their needs during literacy and numeracy sessions adjusting their questioning to suit pupils' particular needs, and ensuring that written task are suitably moderated or supported.

The provision for social and moral development is very good.

13 The very high quality of provision for social and moral development makes a considerable contribution towards promoting pupils' very good attitudes to school and to their learning, and underpins high standards of behaviour and relationships.

14 Attention to social and moral development starts from the earliest age. Children in nursery are encouraged to be independent, for example taking their turns at helping to give out snacks and pour fruit juice at drinks time. In reception, children have opportunities to choose some of their activities and were observed doing this confidently. The regular scheduling of 'circle time' and the inclusion of personal and social education on the timetable make an effective contribution to pupils' social and moral development. Pupils are set personal targets. For the youngest children in nursery and reception these may be as simple as learning to tie their own shoelaces; by Year 6 personal targets are quite complex and the areas of development that older pupils identify show a good level of self-knowledge for their age. After discussion and agreement with the class teacher these are recorded in pupils' personal files and (with the pupils' permission) displayed in their classroom. Pupils were very positive about the targets they were set, both personal and academic, and thought they helped them focus on reasonable areas for improvement.

15 Throughout the school pupils' initiative is effectively promoted; for the younger pupils within the classroom, with badges for duties such as 'cushion monitor' and for the older pupils membership of school council, and duties around the school. The school council is well established, with elected representatives from all classes from Year 2 onwards. Pupils are very proud to be members of the council. They have regular meetings with the head and acting deputy headteacher and the co-ordinator of PSHE¹ to discuss school matters in a formal setting and make proposals for improvement that are being acted upon, for example, the addition of drinking fountains in the wash rooms. The school council initiated and organised a bring and buy sale to raise money for a Blue Peter Appeal. The use of a 'concerns box' which allows pupils to post concerns for discussion is very much appreciated and issues raised by this route are discussed in circle time. The maintenance of strategies such as 'the manners tree' as part of achievements assembly recognises considerate and caring behaviour. The school's behaviour policy, the expectations and example of staff and the positive atmosphere of the school all make a notable contribution to the moral development of pupils.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and there are very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults in the school.

¹ PSHE – personal, social and health education

16 St Chad's CE Primary School provides a caring and stimulating environment and pupils come into school with enthusiasm, ready to work hard. The aims of the school provide a clear framework within which pupils' positive attitudes are engendered.

17 When younger pupils in Key Stage 1 share their word prompts and spelling books and help members of their group find a correct spelling, they are not only improving the accuracy of their spelling but also developing positive attitudes towards each other and acquiring a confidence in their own abilities to manage these resources. Throughout the school pupils work well in small groups and pairs. Relationships are positive, and decisions about what is to be done next are negotiated amicably. For example, in a practical science lesson in Year 5, pupils very quickly organised their different roles within the group and all contributed their view and ideas on the progress of the experiment.

18 The school's expectations of behaviour are well understood and supported by the pupils. Observation and discussions with both older and younger pupils show that they play amicably together and that bullying is a very rare event. They are confident that the systems for dealing with anti-social behaviour will support them if they are needed.

19 Relationships between pupils and adults were observed to be most positive. Teachers know their pupils very well and use a wide variety of strategies to maintain their interest and enthusiasm. High expectations of behaviour in class are well rewarded. Pupils know and follow the class rules, for example the convention of 'hands up' during class discussion, although sometimes in their enthusiasm to answer, some find it difficult to contain themselves. Teachers stick firmly to the rules and pupils are reminded by their classmates of the class's expectations. The very few pupils who have acute behavioural difficulties are sensitively and sensibly managed by their teachers and, where appropriate, support staff.

The governing body is knowledgeable, hardworking and fulfilling its role with increasing effectiveness.

20 At the time of the last inspection the governing body was judged to be giving effective support to the school although there was a need to monitor matters of health and safety more closely. After the inspection this key issue was attended to and risk assessment now takes place at suitable intervals. Currently, there are committees in place for personnel, finance, curriculum, premises and health and safety, and performance management. These meet at least termly. Individual governors have oversight of key areas of the curriculum such as information and communication technology, literacy, numeracy and special educational needs.

21 Governors have a good grasp of financial matters and have been very involved in management of personnel over the last two years including being fully involved in the appointment of key staff. Governors' awareness of the school's budgetary needs has informed decisions on short-term expenditure and enabled a carry-over figure to accrue, with the intention that it will fund the development of information and communication technology. The curriculum committee has recently been re-established and has a clear view of its role. Generally, good use is made of members' professional expertise. For example, a governor who is very involved in staff selection in his professional life, is a key member of the personnel committee. The chair of finance committee is an accountant, who brings to bear a wide experience of financial matters to the role.

22 The whole governing body is involved in agreeing school development priorities and the headteacher shares information on standards and test data with the governors. This is enabling them to develop a good appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance. Governors have tackled the relevant training for performance management in a very positive frame of mind and take the view that it will increase their effectiveness in oversight of the school's work.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough.

23 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. This was the case at the time of the last inspection and improvements in standards were identified as a key issue for the school.

24 Since the last inspection teachers have undertaken in-service training in the subject and this is to continue. Discussions with staff and observation of teaching at both key stages indicate that there is at least a reasonable level of expertise in the subject and staff are frustrated by the parlous state of resources at the current time. There are insufficient up-to-date computers to serve the number of pupils in the school, pupils do not have access to the Internet, there are shortages of printers and CD-Roms and only a limited range of software. The school has funds earmarked for the updating of ICT provision and is waiting for this to be taken forward as part of the national project, probably in the spring term 2001.

25 The two lessons observed in this subject were both of a very high standard and pupils made good strides in their learning in both lessons. However, because they are starting from a low point, standards are not high enough for their age. Very little independent use of computers was observed during the inspection although there was a little word processing at Key Stage 2. In one Year 5/6 class, good use was made of a spelling programme which was well matched to the needs of the pupil. Very effective teaching was observed for Year 3 pupils. The ICT lesson was well planned with good links with literacy. There was very clear teaching to show pupils how to use the mouse competently. The support given by the teacher to individuals was very good. However, the effectiveness of the lesson was constrained by low level of resourcing.

26 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have some experience in using word processing programs, but they mainly use these for copying final drafts rather than for drafting and redrafting versions of their work. They have insufficient experience of using computer programs to enter, sort, classify and analyse their findings. There are currently no opportunities for pupils to monitor external events, such as the temperature, and they do not have access to the Internet. There is very limited use of software to support work in subjects across the curriculum.

The school's arrangements for the monitoring and improvement of standards do not make sufficient use of the skills and expertise of the English and mathematics co-ordinators and this results in an inconsistency of approach in some aspects of the school's work.

27 At the time of her appointment the head teacher initiated a 'slimmed down' senior management team taking the view, quite rightly, that this was most appropriate for the needs of the school at that time. Since then she has put into place a range of initiatives that have had a good impact on the school's provision. She has established a system of direct monitoring of teaching and learning. This has enabled her to identify areas in need of improvement and to identify the good practice current in the school. This has been further supported by in-service training for some teachers, visits to other classrooms and schools to observe teaching. All this has gone some way towards maintaining and improving the quality of teaching. Good work has also been accomplished by the introduction of clear and useful assessment procedures throughout both key stages and by the revision of the curriculum to accommodate recent developments and make the best use of national guidelines that are now available. However, there is a need now to involve additional members of staff in the senior management structure so that school development priorities can continue to be achieved effectively.

28 Although in the past the English and mathematics co-ordinators have had opportunities to monitor directly teaching in literacy and numeracy, recently their monitoring has been based mainly on scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. These are useful strategies for maintaining an overview of provision and standards but, given the presence of newly appointed and qualified

teachers in the school, they are not enough and there is a need for these co-ordinators to participate in direct monitoring of their subject areas.

29 During the inspection, it was evident that some teachers lacked confidence and skill in teaching the mental maths aspect of the numeracy strategy. In other classes, some very sharp and pacy mental maths was seen. So there is sufficient good practice in the school, which needs to be recognised and shared to the benefit of all. However, because of a lack of direct monitoring by the co-ordinator in the subject, the school has been slow to recognise this.

The school does not ensure that parents have an accurate perception of the work of the school.

30 A high level of dissatisfaction is indicated on the parents' questionnaire and some accompanying comments on certain areas of school life. Further analysis of those questionnaires registering the highest levels of dissatisfaction indicated that the majority were from parents of older pupils who, in the school year 1999 – 2000, had their education disrupted by frequent changes of staff. The inspectors have investigated these concerns at considerable length. The strategies that had been used to deal with this situation were investigated by the inspectors and it was found that the school has now done all it could in difficult circumstances to resolve the matter. Parents were kept as informed as possible, given the nature of the problem. Some parents raised concerns about the current organisation of mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2. The inspectors found that this arrangement is proving effective in enabling pupils to make good progress, particularly in English, and to make up the ground that was lost last year. During the inspection, the team had many informal conversations with a wide range of parents who expressed positive comments about the school's provision and the standards achieved.

31 The inspectors consider that the staff work hard to ensure that parents are informed about their children's progress. The reports to parents are detailed and give them a clear idea of what their children know and understand. They could be improved by noting what targets children are being set to achieve further. The school arranges three formal parents' evenings a year and parents have access to class teachers and head teacher at reasonable times during the school day. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are invited to attend reviews of their child's progress. Parents would like more information about what their children are going to learn each term and the inspectors agree that this would further improve the level of information given. The inspectors consider that the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.

32 However, there is still a perception on the part of a significant minority of parents that they are not as informed as they ought to be about crucial matters and the school needs to address their concern as a matter of some urgency.

Pupils who have special educational needs are not always identified at the earliest opportunity.

33 Concerns about the slowness of the school to recognise special educational needs were made by three parents in quite lengthy letters and the inspection team agrees with their concerns.

34 Twelve per cent of pupils are considered to have special educational needs and are included on the schools' register, in line with the national Code of Practice. This figure is significantly lower than the average, which is about 19%. Scrutiny of the school's register coupled with observations of lessons shows that there are children who demonstrate a need for additional support or a modified curriculum that are not included on the register. Assessments of what children can do are made during their first term in school. However, not enough use is made of this information to identify those who are in need of additional support. Once on the register, individual education plans are provided for all pupils from the earliest stages of the register onwards. These plans have relevant targets for pupils to work towards, and class teachers and support staff provide appropriately for their learning needs.

There are inconsistencies in provision between nursery and reception that come about because the two units plan separately.

35 In both nursery and reception, staff work hard to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, that covers the areas of learning appropriately. Their planning takes appropriate account of the requirements of the Foundation Stage. The early years co-ordinator, who is based in reception, has oversight of the completed plans, but does not share closely in the planning process. The medium and short-term planning is not detailed enough in nursery. Termly planning takes account of the early learning goals but does not identify specifically what aspects of each 'stepping stone' are being addressed. In the short-term planning, although activities are identified, their purpose and how they link with the early learning goals is not shown. Because the planning lacks necessary details it is then difficult for staff to make accurate judgements about how much progress children are making.

36 During the inspection inconsistencies in provision were evident. For example, the independence promoted in nursery through children taking part in organising snack time is not continued in reception where snacks and drinks are provided for the children by a support assistant. The lesson planning of the two reception teachers is clear and specific. Although generally, provision for children at the Foundation Stage is satisfactory it is hampered from further development by the lack of consistency of practice between nursery and reception classes

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

37 In order to raise standards further, the headteacher in partnership with the staff and governors should:

- ◆ Improve standards in information and communication technology at both key stages by ensuring that the necessary resources to implement the required curriculum are put in place as soon as possible. (*Paragraphs 23 - 26*)
- ◆ Further develop the structure and role of the senior management team by:
 - a. including the English and mathematics co-ordinators in its deliberations;
 - b. giving them opportunities to monitor directly the quality of teaching in their subjects in order that they can identify where support is needed and where good practice is evident.

(*Paragraphs 27 - 28*)

- ◆ Improve the partnership between parents and school by:
 - a. surveying parents to find out how they think communications could be improved between school and home;
 - b. broadening opportunities for parents to help in school;
 - c. informing parents of the targets that pupils are set.

(*Paragraphs 30 - 32*)

- ◆ Put procedures in place that ensure that there is the earliest possible identification of children and pupils who have special educational needs. (*Paragraphs 33 - 34*)
- ◆ Further enhance the quality of provision in nursery and reception classes by:
 - a. increasing the level of collaboration between nursery and reception, so that opportunities in the reception classes build more closely on the children's previous work and the progress they have made in nursery;
 - b. improving the quality of planning and assessment in nursery by ensuring that activities have specific objectives that are linked clearly to the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

(*Paragraphs 35 - 36*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	27	23	42	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	323
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR- Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		37

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	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.7%
National comparative data	5.4%

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
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	21	25	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	20	20
	Girls	24	25	25
	Total	42	45	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (90)	98 (92)	98 (98)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	19
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	45	45	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (89)	95 (91)	96 (94)
	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	23	27	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	21	22
	Girls	23	22	25
	Total	43	43	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (79)	86 (77)	94 (96)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	21	23
	Girls	24	24	25
	Total	45	45	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (82)	90 (77)	96 (96)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	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	265
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	145

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N.A.

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	20

Number of pupils per FTE adult	20
--------------------------------	----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99-00
	£
Total income	565031
Total expenditure	541736
Expenditure per pupil	1531
Balance brought forward from previous year	15590
Balance carried forward to next year	38885

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	315
Number of questionnaires returned	138

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53.0	42.0	4.0	1.0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37.0	54.0	7.0	1.0	1.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	25.0	54.0	12.0	6.0	4.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30.0	47.0	14.0	4.0	5.0
The teaching is good.	38.0	53.0	6.0	1.0	3.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20.0	50.0	19.0	10.0	1.0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49.0	34.0	9.0	7.0	1.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40.0	53.0	4.0	2.0	1.0
The school works closely with parents.	22.0	.0	26.0	8.0	1.0
The school is well led and managed.	20.0	54.0	15.0	9.0	3.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34.0	52.0	7.0	5.0	1.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13.0	36.0	30.0	11.0	10.0

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents were concerned that pupils who had special educational needs were not identified early enough.