

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St Joseph's RC Primary School**

Ramsbottom

LEA area: Bury

Unique reference number: 105343

Headteacher: Mrs P Leatherbarrow

Reporting inspector: Jeff White  
17242

Dates of inspection: 12 – 13 June 2000

Inspection number: 187878

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Queen Street Ramsbottom Bury
Postcode:	BL0 9JJ
Telephone number:	01706 82 3645
Fax number:	01706 82 3964
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W McSorley
Date of previous inspection:	20 <sup>th</sup> May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is below average size and serves mainly the parish of St Joseph's. The number on roll has risen since the last inspection and is currently 174 (93 boys, 81 girls). In addition there are 14 part-time and 17 full time children in the nursery. Very few pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Twenty-nine pupils are on the school's special needs register including one with a statement. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly above average. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and most of the teachers have changed since the last inspection.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

By the ages of seven and eleven pupils achieve good overall standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in numeracy are high at age eleven. The quality of teaching is good and often very good in literacy and numeracy. Pupils have very positive attitudes and behave well. The headteacher provides effective leadership and is well supported by governors and staff. The school has a strong community spirit and provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Literacy and numeracy are taught thoroughly and by the end of the infant and junior years standards are good overall; they are high in numeracy at age eleven.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and they work hard.
- The headteacher has managed change well and is well supported by governors and staff.

#### **What could be improved**

- Pupils often do not take sufficient care with their handwriting and presentation of work.
- Marking does not consistently help pupils to improve their work.
- Monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning do not have enough influence on planning.

*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 May 1996 and was judged to be a successful school. Since then there have been major changes in the senior management and staff. Given these circumstances the school has done well to continue to improve and has responded effectively to the key issues in the last report. The performance of pupils in the National Curriculum test for eleven-year-olds has improved broadly in line with the national trend and the school met its targets for 1999. A very positive ethos has been maintained and the proportion of very good teaching is higher. Channels of communication between the school and the governors have also improved. Subject co-ordinators' roles are being suitably developed and they are beginning to be more involved in monitoring teaching and learning. The provision of a new classroom and the reduction in infant class sizes have helped the school to manage increasing numbers.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	A	A	A	Well above average A
mathematics	B	A	A	A	above average B
science	B	A	B	B	Average C
					Below average D
					Well below average E

The school met its 1999 targets for pupils aged eleven and compared with all schools has sustained high standards over the period 1996-9. Overall standards are high compared with similar schools. The current pupils aged seven and eleven achieve good standards in English, mathematics and science. However, standards in numeracy are high by the end of the juniors.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very positive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils value the views of others and they co-operate well.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is well above average.

The school's strong Christian ethos provides a clear framework for the development of pupils' attitudes and values. They respond very well.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and in forty per cent of lessons it is very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Literacy and numeracy are taught thoroughly and this helps pupils to make good overall progress. There are several strengths in the teaching but brisk pace, high expectations and good management of pupils are significant features. The range of pupils' needs is met well. Also, the support staff make a considerable contribution. Teachers' expectations of handwriting and presentation of work are too variable. Marking is satisfactory but does not consistently suggest how pupils could improve their work. Pupils respond very well to the effective

teaching and support.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good and pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The headteacher and staff provide a high level of care.

The headteacher, teachers and non-teaching staff know the pupils well and regularly give them personal help and guidance.

### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership is effective and the school is well managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors give good support to the school and fulfil their responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation are developing soundly and now need to influence strategic planning more systematically.
The strategic use of resources	Expenditure is well planned and controlled efficiently.

The headteacher has managed change effectively and with the good support of governors has developed a strong team approach. The school applies the principle of best value well.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and they are making good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well led and the headteacher and staff are approachable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minority of parents would like more homework.</li> <li>• Some would like to be better informed about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• Some parents think pupils should have a wider range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

The inspection team strongly endorses parents' positive views. Most parents are satisfied with the



amount of homework. The school's policy for homework is very clear and published in the brochure for parents. Its recommended daily time to be spent on homework is suitable for the age of the pupils. The school is keen to keep parents well informed about their children's progress. Parents are pleased to receive the information on what their children will be studying and annual reports on pupils' progress are informative. Many parents also comment that they frequently talk informally to teachers about children's progress. Most parents consider that the range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Music and sport are significant features of the provision.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Literacy and numeracy are taught thoroughly and by the end of the infant and junior years standards are good overall**

1. High priority is given to literacy and numeracy and the teaching is well planned. In two out of five lessons the teaching is very good. Lessons are well structured and usually the learning objectives are shared with the pupils. Often at the end of lessons the teachers reinforce and check on pupils' progress in their knowledge and understanding of the objectives. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 4 the teacher encouraged pupils to evaluate each others attempts at persuasive writing by focusing on stylistic features and choice of words. This ensured that key skills were reinforced. In a very effective literacy lesson in Year 6 the teacher and pupils appraised the lesson together and then focused on what was planned for the next day. The pace of introductions to lessons and the pace in plenary sessions is often brisk and keeps pupils on their toes. When the good pace is coupled with high expectations the resulting attainment is high and learning is very good. In a very good numeracy lesson in Year 6 pupils were very well challenged by the teachers' encouragement of rapid mental calculations. As a result pupils' speed of multiplying decimal numbers and converting them into percentages improved significantly. Good pace in the learning is maintained by the frequent use of timed tasks. For example, Year 2 pupils, knowing they only had 15 minutes, worked quickly to devise alliterative words to make tongue twisters.
2. Teachers' knowledge of literacy and numeracy is good and helps them to confidently set high expectations and meet the range of pupils' needs. In the best teaching the level of challenge is maintained throughout the course of the lesson and is often aided by careful questioning. "What is different about this speech?" and "why is it different from a book?" helped Year 1 pupils to achieve higher than average standards in their knowledge and understanding of the language of comic strips. Teachers make good use of subject terminology and this influences pupils' own use of language. Year 6 pupils, helped by the teacher's appropriate use of "allegory", "alliteration" and "personification", began to use the words correctly when they discussed poems written by Ted Hughes. Good use is made of support staff. They are well prepared, have very good relationships with pupils and contribute well to their learning. A good example was observed in Year 2 when the classroom assistant quietly helped the low attaining pupils to join in the question and answer session.
3. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests pupils aged eleven achieved well above average standards in English and mathematics. Overall standards for seven-year-olds were good. Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching. The current pupils at the end of the infant and junior years achieve good standards overall but the oldest junior pupils achieve high standards in numeracy. Pupils' progress in lessons is consistently good irrespective of their prior attainment. The inspections' scrutiny of their work indicates that they also make good progress over time. Infant pupils are developing a good range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and by Year 2 they read confidently. In the reception class pupils identified final letter sounds when looking at different objects. In Year 2 pupils successfully rearranged letter sounds to create different words. Pupils are interested in books and talk well about their reading. Pupils in Year 2 write in a good range of forms including stories

and their writing shows a good variety of language use. Infant teachers give good attention to spelling and pupils learn to spell a range of words appropriate to their needs. Standards in number and shape are good and basic computation skills are developing well. The high attaining pupils in Year 2 are developing good multiplication skills and understand simple fractions. They accurately identify features of some two and three-dimensional shapes including pentagons and hexagons. Year 6 pupils read from a good range of fiction and non-fiction books, discuss their reading well and express their preferences for authors. They discuss the poems of Ted Hughes with maturity and enthusiasm. They write for a good range of purposes and achieve good standards in punctuation, spelling and the development of ideas. Their work includes regular reviews of books and they write different forms of poetry including Haiku. Good progress has been made in knowledge and understanding of literary style and structure. Year 6 pupils attain high standards in numeracy. Many have very good understanding of place value. They accurately multiply and divide decimals to two or more places and convert fractions to decimals and percentages. They understand negative numbers well and accurately add and subtract them. Pupils identify properties of three-dimensional shapes and accurately calculate the radius and circumference of a circle. The rigorous teaching of mental calculation is improving their progress rapidly. Pupils calculate very quickly and explain their thinking well. In a very good lesson many of them calculated accurately  $4.8 \times 4.8$  and then explained clearly how they tackled the problem. In the same lesson most pupils quickly grasped how to use a formula for finding the volume of compound shapes.

#### **Pupils are very keen to learn and they work hard**

4. Teachers manage pupils very well and expect them to work hard. Pupils respond very positively and have keen attitudes to learning. These important learning habits begin early in the nursery where children were observed eagerly talking about a book with the teacher and also co-operating well in their work in mathematics. Usually, pupils sustain their interest and concentration throughout the lessons and work quietly and productively. In Year 2 pupils worked purposefully together in their work on doubling and approximating numbers and in Year 3 pupils strived hard to improve their knowledge of apostrophes. In both lessons pupils responded equally well when continuing to be challenged in the plenaries. In Year 5, pupils' diligence and concentration helped them to make good progress in their recognition of reflective symmetry in regular polygons. Pupils enjoy contributing their own ideas and like "hard work". Year 6 pupils talked about how much they like the challenge of speedy mental work in mathematics. Pupils respond eagerly in discussions. In an effective literacy lesson Year 6 they suggested good ideas on how to construct a poem using an allegorical theme.

#### **The headteacher has managed change well and is well supported by governors and staff**

5. The headteacher has coped with significant staff changes since her appointment three years ago. The school had no deputy headteacher for a year and another key member of the senior management team also left. Six of the current staff have been at the school for less than two years. The headteacher has worked hard to develop a united staff with a common purpose and they are well involved in planning the school's direction. For example, subject co-ordinators review and evaluate their subjects and set priorities for development that are then fed into the school's development plan. They are also expected to manage the budget for their own

subject. The headteacher, with the deputy headteacher's help, interviews staff annually to up-date their job descriptions, set targets for future improvement and identify their training needs. Communications systems are good. Staff meetings are regular and decisions are recorded. Non-teaching staff are very much part of the team. For example, regular meetings are held with the lunchtime supervisors to check all is well and provide guidance if needed. The senior management team meets weekly to discuss management issues. The staff, in discussion with inspectors, indicated their support for the headteacher's leadership. The governors are very supportive of the headteacher and consider that consultation with them is constructive and open. For example, they have recently been consulted on what improvements they would to see in the headteacher's report. The headteacher provides the governors with analysis of test results and this enables them to compare the school's performance with local and national trends in order to ensure best value for money. Governors are becoming increasingly better informed and involved. For example, the governor responsible for literacy attended the conference prior to the implementation of the national strategy and the chair of governors attends the induction meeting with parents of reception children. The headteacher has kept parents informed of curricular developments and has consulted them on a number of issues including the home/school agreement and the school's mission statement.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Pupils often do not take enough care with their handwriting and presentation of work**

6. Many pupils form their letters carefully and write legibly in joined up writing. However, the quality of handwriting and presentation of work is inconsistent. There were occasions in the lessons observed when teachers did not take the opportunity to set high standards in handwriting and presentation. Although pupils are used to re-drafting their work they rarely give sufficient attention to improving their handwriting. The range of writing is good but it is often untidily presented with too much crossing out. Work in mathematics is not consistently set out neatly.

### **Marking does not consistently help pupils to improve their work**

7. Pupils' work is marked regularly and much of it is helpful. However, its quality is too variable. Teachers give positive comments that encourage the pupils but often accept too readily work which is untidily presented. The inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work indicated that there are few occasions when clear targets are set to improve pupils' performance. There are signs that very recently the quality of marking has improved and the school is now ready to develop marking much more thoroughly as an assessment tool.

### **Monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning do not have enough influence on planning**

8. The headteacher is strongly committed to improving the monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning. She monitors teachers' weekly plans/forecasts and has been involved in observing lessons. Lesson observations in literacy and numeracy have been well planned with a clear focus. These have included, for example, the teaching of text level work in literacy and the quality of mental work sessions in numeracy. A governor has also observed work in literacy. The full benefit of these

observations has not yet begun to influence strategic planning significantly. The 1999-2000 development plan's evaluation of the previous year's plan makes no reference to the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation. The subsequent targets do not build on any strengths and weaknesses that were identified and it is not clear what are the future priorities for improving the teaching and learning. There are considerable strengths in the teaching and learning which the school needs to identify more clearly to help its future development.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

9. The governors and headteacher should:
  - (1) Set consistently high standards in pupils' handwriting and presentation of work.
  - (2) Ensure pupils' work is marked more thoroughly and, where appropriate, include clear targets to help pupils improve.
  - (3) Monitor teaching and learning systematically and ensure that outcomes help to determine the school's future direction.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	10
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	7

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	40	50	10	-	-	-

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)	24	175
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	10	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	8	10	9
	Total	22	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (72)	92 (76)	92 (90)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	15
	Girls	10	7	10
	Total	23	20	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (72)	80 (72)	100 (79)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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
	1999	7	13	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	9	9	12
	Total	15	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (79)	75 (68)	90 (94)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	6	6
	Girls	11	9	12
	Total	18	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (58)	75 (63)	90 (63)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	78 (71)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	-
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	-
Indian	-
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	1
White	147
Any other minority ethnic group	6

*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	2	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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	25

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	62

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	313,203
Total expenditure	312,579
Expenditure per pupil	1,807
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,000
Balance carried forward to next year	25,624



## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	206
Number of questionnaires returned	76

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	18	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	28	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	38	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	41	14	0	1
The teaching is good.	72	25	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	43	11	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	22	1	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	38	9	7	4
The school is well led and managed.	61	36	1	3	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	36	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	33	22	9	12