

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Middlesbrough

LEA area: Middlesbrough

Unique reference number: 111702

Headteacher: Mr M Moran

Reporting inspector: Mr D Clegg
4341

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 24th May 2000

Inspection number: 188281

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Marton Road
Middlesbrough

Postcode: TS4 2NT

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Father P Keogh

Date of previous inspection: 16th June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Mr D Clegg	Registered inspector
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Ms S Billington	Team inspector

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School is a larger than average primary school with 252 pupils aged between four and eleven. There are also 52 children aged between three and four who attend the nursery part time. Almost all the children who attend the nursery eventually transfer to the main school. There are three pupils with special needs in the nursery and in the main school there are 41 pupils with special educational needs, about 17 per cent, which is below average. One child has a statement. Almost all pupils are white and speak English as their first language

Slightly above 35 per cent of pupils receive free school meals, an above average figure. The school serves a stable community with very few children moving at times other than at transfer.

The school aims to reach national targets for attainment in English and mathematics in the Year 2002.

Attainment on entry to nursery is varied but overall is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Joseph's is a good school that is very well led and managed. Resources are efficiently and effectively used. Good teaching results in standards in basic skills that are well up to, and occasionally better, than the national average and which compare very favourably with similar schools. Taking account of the good standards, good teaching and good leadership, together with lower than average costs, the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaches pupils a good level of basic skills
- Encourages pupils to work hard, have positive attitudes to school and behave in a sensible and responsible manner
- Good leadership ensures that the school has a clear sense of priority and uses the resources at its disposal very effectively and efficiently
- Children get a very good start in the nursery and reception classes

What could be improved

- The higher attaining pupils could learn faster and achieve more.

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 made steady and sustained improvement since the last inspection in June 1996. The good standards have been maintained and in some cases improved. The written work of seven-year-olds is much better and standards have improved in science. Those pupils who find learning difficult are making better progress and the under-fives now make very good progress. The procedures for assessment are much better and the curriculum is well planned and schemes of work are in place. The quality of teaching has remained broadly the same, and standards in the basic skills are now above those of similar schools. The school's ethos remains very strong.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	A	C	B
mathematics	C	D	B	A
science	D	D	C	B

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

The under-fives make good progress so that by the time they begin the National Curriculum the majority have achieved the level of skills usually expected for children of their age. Standards attained by seven-year-olds are above those of similar schools in reading and in writing - where they are particularly high - and in line with the average in mathematics. Children also attain above average standards in science.

Overall, during the past three years standards have improved and have been consistently above those of similar schools. The standards achieved by lower attaining pupils are particularly strong and they often achieve average levels in National Curriculum tests for seven and eleven-year-olds. Standards in mathematics are particularly good for eleven-year-olds. The school has set realistic targets and is confident about meeting the national targets for attainment for eleven-year-olds in 2002.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, they work hard and show a determination to succeed
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons is very good, but in the playground it is occasionally too boisterous
Personal development and relationships	Standards of personal development and the quality of relationships throughout the school are very good
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory

This aspect is a strength of the school. By the time pupils leave the school they are well prepared for the next stage of education. The oldest pupils are mature and self-assured and they form constructive relationships with friends and adults.

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 teaching overall is good, 60 per cent of teaching is good or better with 13 per cent being very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The school is particularly effective in teaching English and mathematics and teachers are taking full advantage of the strategies for literacy and numeracy. Lessons are well prepared and teachers are very knowledgeable about what pupils should be learning. Teaching is well organised and the support given to lower attaining pupils is particularly effective and enables them to make good progress. Overall the school meets the needs of the pupils well, although occasionally in lessons the higher attaining pupils do not learn as fast as they could.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and well planned. It generally meets the needs of all pupils. The curriculum for the under-fives is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very well organised. The support given to pupils with special educational needs is very effective and helps many to reach average levels of attainment.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils to develop a clear understanding of right and wrong and to reflect upon the spiritual elements of life. Provision for social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for child protection are fully in place. Teachers know pupils very well and show a good level of care and attention to their welfare.

The school offers a rich curriculum that fully meets statutory requirements. The curriculum for the under-fives is well planned and fully meets the learning needs of young children. The school's ethos is particularly strong and is underpinned by the high expectations the school communicates to the pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, working closely with the senior managers, gives the school a very strong sense of direction and purpose.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body effectively fulfils its responsibilities
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is getting better at judging its own success. It identifies weaknesses and takes effective action to address them.
The strategic use of resources	The excellent use of resources and deployment of staff make a considerable impact on the standards attained.

The headteacher is very good at managing resources so that they are brought to bear on the school's priorities. For instance, resources are very efficiently channelled into helping lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The school spends funds carefully and makes sure that it achieves good value.

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 enjoy coming to school ▪ Children make good progress ▪ Behaviour in school is good ▪ The teaching is good ▪ The school expects children to work hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The range of activities outside of lessons

The parents are justified in having the confidence that they do in the school. They are correct in thinking that the children make good progress, that behaviour is good and that teaching is good. A very small number of parents commented that higher attaining pupils could make better progress and there is some indication that this is correct. Parents are right in identifying a lack of interesting activities offered outside normal lessons. Extra-curricular activities are currently confined to sports, but there are plans to increase the range of after-school activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Teaches pupils a good level of basic skills

1. Throughout the school the basic skills are well taught. Teachers make very good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to plan carefully what children will learn. As a result, by the time they leave the school most pupils have a good grasp of the basic skills. Younger children are given a good grounding in reading skills, including a good phonics programme that helps them to tackle new words. Their early success in reading is built upon so that by the time they leave the school they enjoy reading a good range of books and talk very sensibly about why they like certain authors and types of stories. Their tastes in reading range from the very latest in children's fiction to poetry and non-fiction and they happily discuss the pros and cons of particular books. Regular book reviews clearly encourage them to think about and evaluate what they have read.
2. Pupils throughout the school write very well. By the age of seven most produce sensible pieces of writing that make sense and use capital letters and full stops accurately although in some work there are a few persistent spelling mistakes. By the time they are eleven, pupils write in different ways producing for instance, stories, poems, letters and accounts. Using the literacy strategy, teachers introduce many different aspects of how language is used, for instance in posters and poetry, to give pupils a real sense of enjoyment about how words are used in different situations. Alongside this pupils are also taught how to organise and present their writing and to successfully use speech marks and paragraphs, They also use words cleverly to create mood and atmosphere in their writing. As a result of the good teaching many pupils use similes, metaphors and alliteration for instance, to give their poems greater impact.
3. Lessons are well organised, pupils are managed very effectively and the good working atmosphere encourages a strong sense of purpose. Any pupils who appear to be having difficulties in learning are quickly identified and given extra help and support. The extra help is very well planned and carefully targeted on any weaknesses and successfully helps pupils to overcome their difficulties.
4. When they leave school most pupils have a good grounding in basic numeracy. They know their tables and recall them rapidly. They use the four operations and are fully aware of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Most pupils have good fast ways of working out problems, for instance when working out 35 per cent of a number they know that working out ten per cent is easier and will help them. A combination of good direct teaching, where teachers explain very clearly how to do something, plenty of practice and some challenging questioning makes sure that all pupils understand how numbers work. Pupils are generally comfortable working with very high numbers, recognising for instance, the value of specific digits within a six-figure number. Regular assessments are made of how children are doing and this helps teachers to identify any pupils who need more practice or who require more explanation. Marking is particularly helpful in showing pupils what they need to do to improve.

Encourages pupils to work hard, have positive attitudes to school and behave in a sensible and responsible manner

5. Throughout the school, the manner in which children approach their work is impressive. In lessons they work hard and behave very well. High expectations and clear rules, administered in a positive and supportive atmosphere, provide all pupils with a sense of well being and worth.
6. Pupils respond positively to the implicit high standards evident throughout the school. For instance, the school is very well maintained and classrooms are clean and tidy with some very eye catching displays that celebrate what pupils have done. Pupils consequently are concerned about how they treat the school. They use resources with care, move around the building sensibly and take pride in how they present their work.
7. Relationships are very strong at all levels. Some of the older pupils spoke about how they regarded the teachers as their 'friends' and appreciated how approachable they are. Pupils respond to the good role models that adults offer and successfully form helpful relationships with each other. When given the opportunity, they work together effectively, discussing their work and helping each other. The older pupils are mature, self-assured and ambitious with a sense of purpose and direction. They understand the importance of working hard and show a refreshing determination to succeed.
8. The school ethos is very strong and this makes a significant impression on many pupils. The school actively supports a number of charities and this is taken seriously by pupils. The younger children spoke about the importance of helping others less fortunate than themselves and older pupils were very aware of the school's involvement in Catholic Aid for Overseas Development. This is one aspect of how the school successfully provides a strong moral framework for children in which they begin to learn the difference between right and wrong. It is also a demonstration of how the school takes care to give children a sense of place in a wider world that includes many different cultures and backgrounds. Many of the displays take care to present the multicultural nature of the community in which pupils live and a range of backgrounds and cultures from different countries.

Good leadership ensures that the school has a clear sense of priority and uses the resources at its disposal very effectively and efficiently

9. A key element in the school's success is the clear educational direction and purpose that is provided by the headteacher and senior staff. There is a shared sense of determination amongst all staff to give pupils a firm grounding in the basic skills and a sense of their own self-worth. These shared principles guide the every day work of the school and its long term strategic development. It has led, for instance, to a consistent approach to the planning and teaching of literacy and numeracy. This is proving successful in ensuring that what children have learned earlier is built upon as they move through the school.
10. These principles also guide the excellent management of resources and staff are brought directly to bear on fulfilling the school's aims. The deployment of staff is particularly successful. The use of a support teacher to enable the oldest pupils to be taught literacy and numeracy in relatively small groups on a regular basis is one reason for the school's good results in these areas.
11. The use of teaching assistants is also very effective and efficient. Pupils who are not making the progress they should are identified early and given extra support and help by well-trained, conscientious assistants. The programme of work that they follow is well organised and very carefully planned to meet the needs of individual children. This

has resulted in remarkable progress in reading for some children.

12. The school is responding to new initiatives such as the introduction of increased opportunities in information technology. Parents are being trained in using the new technology so that they will eventually be able to support children within lessons as part of the development of the new information technology suite.
13. The school is getting better at judging its own success. The governing body is fully aware of the results the school achieves and how well these compare with similar schools but the leadership shows no sign of complacency. The senior management team is determined to make steady and consistent improvements in a planned and systematic manner that builds upon the school's success.

Children get off to a very good start in the nursery and reception classes

14. The majority of children get off to a flying start when they attend nursery part time and then move on to full time attendance in the reception class. There is high quality provision for the education of the youngest children with a clear priority given to the thorough learning of early language skills. When children enter the nursery, these skills are often limited with many children speaking in single words or short phrases. However, the good range of activities suited to young children's learning needs helps them to make good, and sometimes very good, progress.
15. Speaking and listening are given a high priority and children rapidly learn to speak in phrases and sentences. They gain confidence in asking questions and responding to what adults are saying. The role play activities which encourage children to play together and talk give them a good foundation on which to build their skills later in school. Along with improved speaking and listening, children learn about letters, words and books and begin to show an interest in reading and writing. Many children recognise their names and some older ones write them. They enjoy books and know how to handle them and how to turn over the pages; some children pretend to read the stories. The teacher carefully plans activities to cover a range of skills and, together with the nursery nurses, uses time very well to make sure that all children get the most out of the activities. So for instance, the teacher will join in the role play or sit with a group of children to teach them sounds and letters and to practise drawing patterns that will later help them to write.
16. Very good teaching in the reception class ensures that this good start is built upon and that skills continue to improve. Children continue to learn letter sounds and start to recognise some of the most commonly used words. They maintain their enthusiasm for books and are well on the way to having good reading habits. Lively, enthusiastic teaching uses good resources to keep children interested and motivated to learn. Plenty of reinforcement and repetition of sounds, words and stories leads to successful learning of early reading skills. As the teacher talks about stories, skilfully using big books so that all the children can see the words and pictures, she draws their attention to small and capital letters and full stops and explains how pictures can help them to read the story.
17. Such is the quality of the provision that by the time children begin to work on the National Curriculum many have attained the skills expected for their age and are very well prepared to benefit from the next part of their learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The higher attaining pupils could learn faster and achieve more

18. The school does not always make the best use of the information it has about what pupils can already do to plan the next steps in their learning. The assessments that teachers make are generally accurate and they recognise those pupils who have good potential to attain higher standards. In some cases, the comments which teachers make clearly indicate that particular pupils are attaining above average levels and need work that is stretching and challenging. However, the work they are then given does not always reflect the comments; it is occasionally too easy and not helping these pupils to learn as fast as they could.
19. In too many lessons, particularly with the older pupils, the higher attaining pupils spend too long doing work that they can already do before they get on to activities that are challenging. This often occurs in the middle parts of lessons, when pupils are working individually or in pairs. The higher attaining pupils are given the same work as all the other pupils and then given more difficult work to do. This results in them not making progress as fast as they could.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

20. In order to improve further, the headteacher, staff and governors should
 - **Make sure that higher attaining pupils learn at a faster rate by:**
 - ensuring that the assessments made of higher attaining pupils are used to plan their work
 - making sure that they are given sufficiently challenging work throughout lessons

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	13	47	40	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	253
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	88

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	41

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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.5
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
	1999	14	23	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	13
	Girls	21	22	22
	Total	33	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89	92	95
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	12
	Girls	21	22	23
	Total	33	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89	95	95
	National	82	86	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
	1999	14	18	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	13
	Girls	13	11	14
	Total	24	23	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75	72	84
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	10	10	9
	Total	20	20	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63	63	59
	National	68	69	75

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	252
Any other minority ethnic group	

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		
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)	9.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	409,359
Total expenditure	397,792
Expenditure per pupil	1,446
Balance brought forward from previous year	-(1496)
Balance carried forward to next year	10,071

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	303
Number of questionnaires returned	124

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	27	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	26	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	44	2	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	38	10	3	2
The teaching is good.	70	26	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	27	11	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	21	6	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	27	5	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	53	31	13	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	34	4	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	33	6	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	23	15	19	10