

INSPECTION REPORT

BACKWELL C of E JUNIOR SCHOOL

Backwell, Bristol

LEA area: North Somerset

Unique reference number: 109183

Headteacher: Mr P Turner

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Curtis
20893

Dates of inspection: April 5th - 6th 2000

Inspection number: 189563

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Lane Backwell North Somerset
Postcode:	BS48 3JJ
Telephone number:	01275 462362
Fax number:	01275 462669
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Lloyd
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Mr D J Curtis	Registered inspector
Mr M Whitaker	Lay inspector
Mr H Galley	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

MSB Education Ltd
Broomhill
Wimborne
Dorset
BH21 7AR

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Backwell Junior School is situated in the village of Backwell on the main road from Bristol to Weston-super-Mare in North Somerset and takes pupils from the ages of seven to eleven. There are 228 pupils on roll in eight classes, with 133 boys and 95 girls. Most of the pupils are white (UK heritage), with eight coming from other ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils from homes where English is not the first language. There are 39 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs which is broadly average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs under the DfEE Code of Practice. Seventeen pupils are entitled to free school meals. At 7.5 per cent this is below average. Pupils enter school with levels of attainment which are above the national average.

Acts of collective worship were inspected by a representative of the diocese. Her report, under Section 23 of the Education Act, appears under a separate cover.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Taking into consideration above average levels of attainment on entry, and that pupils make good progress in attaining well above average standards by the time they leave the school, Backwell Junior School is a very good school. A significant strength of the school is pupils' personal development and relationships. The good quality of teaching and the high quality of relationships between staff and pupils contribute to this particular strength. In addition, good quality teaching enables pupils to be very positive in their learning and allows them to make good progress as they move up through the school. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are very good as the result of good teaching and a well planned curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is good with particular strengths in teachers' subject knowledge.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good because of effective monitoring of the school's performance.
- Pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour are very good as the result of being motivated by effective teaching.
- The school's relationship with parents and its community links are very good.

What could be improved

- The school is not maximising the use of its information technology resources, with the result that pupils miss opportunities to use the subject to support their learning.

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

¹ The DfEE Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in June 1996. It has made excellent progress in addressing the key issues arising from the previous report. Standards in art and design and technology have improved as a result of the successful implementation of schemes of work. These give teachers clear guidance in the knowledge, skills and understanding pupils need to acquire as they move up through the school. The school now uses effectively a wide range of teaching methods which meet the differing learning needs of pupils within each class. Planning by teachers in the same year group is now a strength which ensures pupils are being taught the same curriculum. Results of national and school based assessments are now analysed in depth and are used effectively to support pupils' learning. The roles of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators are now clearly defined and there is a very strong emphasis on monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The school is successful in providing a curriculum which includes good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures.

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
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	A*	A
Mathematics	A	B	A	A
Science	B	B	A*	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

This table shows the average points score achieved by pupils and includes those who reached the expected Level 4 or above in the National Curriculum assessments and takes into account those attaining the higher Level 5. In addition, it includes those who achieved Level 3 or below. Similar schools are those with up to 8 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

The school's results in 1999 in English and science place it within the top 5 per cent of schools in the country. The results confirm the continued trends in improvement in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection.

Inspection findings are that for the current group of Year 6 pupils, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills successfully across the curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, pupils enjoy coming to school. They are polite, friendly and welcoming. In lessons, they work hard showing good, sustained concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. Behaviour in the playground at break and lunchtimes is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good, pupils relate well to each other and to all adults with whom they come into contact. They enjoy taking responsibility, including being members of the school council.
Attendance	Good; there is little unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual and lessons begin on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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 quality of teaching is good, with many very good features. It makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved and to pupils' positive attitudes to school. During the inspection the quality of teaching was excellent in 6 per cent of lessons observed, very good in 38 per cent, good in 44 per cent, satisfactory in 6 per cent and unsatisfactory in 6 per cent.

Excellent teaching was seen in numeracy in Year 6. Very good teaching was seen in Year 4 literacy; in Year 5 numeracy, science and geography; and in Year 6 literacy.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good overall. Teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies which they implement to good effect. Teaching of key skills in literacy and numeracy is very good and contributes significantly to pupils' progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good; the curriculum provides pupils with a very good range of learning opportunities, including art, music and sport.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; pupils receive effective support from the special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and learning support assistants. However, targets within individual education plans are not always sufficiently precise and detailed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good; collective worship makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness and to their knowledge of Christianity and of other major world religions. Provision makes a strong contribution to pupils' very good behaviour and obvious enjoyment of school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; the school has an effective range of systems in place to monitor pupils' personal and academic development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good; the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning are excellent.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is hard working and dedicated to providing the school with effective support. It carries out all of its statutory duties exceptionally well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good; strong management systems ensure that subject co-ordinators have a very clear knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Very good; the school uses its staff, including learning support assistants well in supporting pupils' learning. Resources are used effectively, although the school is not fully maximising the use of information technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.• The school is well led and managed.• Their children like school.• Behaviour in the school is good.• They feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems concerning their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children do not get the right amount of homework.

Thirty-three parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector prior to the inspection and 168 questionnaires were returned. Inspection evidence supports the positive views of parents. In relation to homework, views ranged from there being too much, to there being too little. Inspection evidence indicates that the provision of homework is effective in supporting pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

‘Standards in English, mathematics and science are very good as the result of good teaching and a well planned curriculum.’

1. In English, standards in speaking and listening are very good. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers, particularly in lesson introductions when they are taught key knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils listen to each other well and engage in good discussions when involved in group work. They are confident in speaking in front of an audience: for example in Year 6 when a pupil gave a detailed and accurate explanation of the digestive system to the rest of the class. In an act of collective worship, two Muslim pupils gave a clear talk on how they celebrate the festival of Ramadan.

2. Pupils are confident readers. They read fluently and with good expression. Pupils read a wide range of fiction, including novels. They read successfully for research and have a good understanding of the use of library skills. Reading skills are used well to support their learning across the curriculum, particularly in science and history.

3. Writing skills are very good. Pupils write successfully for a wide range of purposes across the curriculum. Imaginative writing is a strong feature of their work, including stories and poetry. Pupils’ writing captures the attention of the reader well: for example a Year 6 pupil began his story, *I think of my family and home. I yelled and yelled and yelled. Someone will find me....., “It’ll never happen to us,” my dad had assured me. More like he couldn’t be bothered to build an Anderson or Morrison shelter and that’s why I’m here now, under my bed, crouched down (under the bed is the place I always stay when the alarms start sounding.)* Skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation are good, with pupils confident in the use of dictionaries and thesauruses. Handwriting and presentation skills are rather more inconsistent and do not always reflect the high quality of the content of the work. Pupils use word processing skills well.

4. In mathematics, mental arithmetic and multiplication skills are very good. Pupils in Year 4 are very quick in using mental recall to find the answer: for example to 92 minus 18. They are confident in explaining how they find the solution. In Year 6, pupils apply their knowledge of multiplication tables well when calculating the volume of cubes and cuboids. Pupils use and apply their knowledge of mathematics successfully in investigations. For example, in Year 6 pupils investigate from a range of job advertisements which would be the best paid for a student seeking a summer holiday job. Their mental calculations of ‘8 hours at £3.74 per hour’ are rapid and accurate.

5. In science, pupils show a very good knowledge and understanding of the importance of a ‘fair test’, ‘variables’, ‘prediction’ and ‘hypotheses’ when carrying out investigations and experiments. Literacy skills are applied well to recording of results, through charts, diagrams and tables. Numeracy skills are used effectively in accurate measurement and in the use of graphs to show results of experiments. Pupils show a very good knowledge of the importance of a balanced diet in keeping fit and healthy.

‘The quality of teaching is good, with particular strengths in teachers’ subject knowledge.’

6. The quality of teaching is good overall and has a positive impact on the high standards achieved. Teachers show very good subject knowledge which is passed on to pupils with enthusiasm and confidence. Explanations and demonstrations are exciting and

interesting and this holds the attention of pupils particularly well with the result that they make clear gains in knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils' understanding of the reproductive systems of plants was increased through the teacher's secure subject knowledge and the use of well prepared diagrams for pupils to follow. In addition, pupils were given flowers to dissect and there was a real sense of awe and wonder as pupils found the 'stamen', 'stigma', 'ovary' and 'anther'.

7. Pupils clearly benefit from having the purpose of the lesson shared with them. There are good links to previous work: for example in Year 4 in a literacy hour which focussed on 'The Hobbit' by J. R. R. Tolkien, the teacher reminded the class that they had already written their own stories based on fantasy worlds. Pupils' reading skills are developed successfully through effective questions: for example, "Do we know anything about the surroundings? What clever ways does the author tell you about the things outside?" Lesson introductions make a strong contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills, including mental arithmetic where pupils are expected to explain how they find the answers to problems.

8. The main part of lessons is managed very effectively. Pupils are given very clear targets, including the use of time: for example, "You have twenty minutes to do your writing then ten minutes to review each other's stories." Teachers have high expectations that pupils should give maximum effort to their work. As a result, pupils work quietly and with sustained concentration. This enables the teacher to provide effective support to the group he or she is working with. In addition, pupils achieve well in lessons and produce a good amount of work in the time allowed. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 literacy hour where pupils produced high quality writing using the technique of writing in 'flashbacks'.

9. Teachers use the final, or plenary, part of lessons well to consolidate pupils' learning and to assess their knowledge and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to share their work with the class: for example in reading their 'flashback' stories. Teachers intervene to challenge and extend pupils' thinking: for example, "Was it a building where people lived?" In a Year 4 mathematics lesson on data handling the teacher used good questions to assess pupils' ability to interpret the data on their graphs: for example, "How many children took more than twenty minutes to get to school? How many children took seven minutes exactly?"

'The leadership and management of the school are very good because of effective monitoring of the school's performance.'

10. A significant strength of the management of the school is the very effective way in which the school monitors the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Subject co-ordinators have regular opportunities to perform monitoring tasks through lesson observations and/or through the sampling of pupils' work. This enables them to have a very detailed knowledge of the standards being achieved and of the range, amount and quality of work being produced by pupils. Effective feedback is provided to colleagues and any gaps in pupils' learning are questioned and addressed.

11. The headteacher, senior management team and subject co-ordinators are committed to the school achieving and sustaining the highest standards. The investment in time and energy in monitoring the school's performance is having a beneficial impact on pupils' learning. The school receives very effective support from the hard working and dedicated governing body.

‘Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are very good as the result of being motivated by effective teaching.’

12. Pupils clearly enjoy being at school. They are friendly, polite and welcoming and readily engage in conversations in lessons, around the school and at lunchtime. Two pupils who were interested in where members of the inspection team lived took great delight in locating these places in an atlas and seeking out team members to show them. In addition, this demonstrated that pupils have good skills in using an atlas, including locating towns by their grid references. In lessons, pupils work exceptionally hard. They listen particularly well in lesson introductions because teachers are interesting, enthusiastic and confident. Pupils settle well to individual and group tasks. They sustain high levels of concentration and perseverance in completing their tasks. They take great delight in sharing and explaining their work. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, including preparing the hall for collective worship. Those who are members of the school council represent the views of their classmates exceptionally well.

13. Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils know what is expected of them through a shared understanding of the school and class rules. In lessons, pupils are co-operative and well organised. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 who are taught in sets based on their prior attainment for literacy and numeracy, move sensibly to other classrooms and, in the main, manage to take all the equipment they need with them. Behaviour when moving around the school is good: for example when going to and from collective worship. Pupils enjoy break and lunchtimes and through the school council have ensured a fair system for the use of the main playground and the school’s ‘adventure playground’. This contributes well to the good behaviour evident in the school at these times.

‘The school’s relationships with parents and its community links are very good.’

14. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school and this is reflected in the results of the questionnaire sent to parents prior to the inspection. The parent teacher association is hard working and very effective in supporting the school: for example in raising £5,000 in the last year. Funds have been used to provide play equipment, musical instruments, history resources and curriculum material to support pupils’ cultural understanding and awareness.

15. Parents value and appreciate the wide range of extracurricular activities that the school provides. In addition, they recognise the impact on their children’s personal and educational development of the good number of visits made by the school to cultural and sporting events. For example, pupils have the opportunity to perform in musical events at the Colston Hall in Bristol and to take part in five-a-side soccer competitions. In addition there are an impressive range of visits to support pupils’ learning across the curriculum: for example to the Bristol Mosque and to the Roman remains at Caerleon. Pupils in Year 5 enjoy and benefit from an annual residential visit.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

'The school is not maximising the use of its information technology resources, with the result that pupils miss opportunities to use the subject to support their learning.'

16. The school has recently made a considerable financial investment in a new information technology room. At the time of the inspection, ~~w~~as only timetabled to be used for ten out of a maximum of twenty sessions available during the week. This is an inefficient use of a valuable and expensive resource. In addition, during the inspection, there was insufficient use of classroom based computers to support pupils' learning. In particular, there were missed opportunities, especially in Year 4 numeracy where data handling was the focus of the lesson. Pupils had no opportunities to use the data handling facilities of computers to support their learning.

17. However, when information technology is used, pupils achieve good standards, particularly in word processing and desk-top publishing skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

18. To raise standards and improve the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should-

- **Provide** more planned opportunities for the use of the information technology room and classroom based computers to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
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
6	38	44	6	6	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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	228
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	17
Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	39
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	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.9

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 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	30	21	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	24	30
	Girls	20	19	21
	Total	44	43	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (85)	84 (70)	100 (82)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	23	28
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	43	43	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (87)	84 (88)	94 (92)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	220
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	28

Education support staff: Y3– Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	98/99
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	£
Total income	394,706
Total expenditure	370,042
Expenditure per pupil	1,690
Balance brought forward from previous year	26392
Balance carried forward to next year	24,664

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	228
Number of questionnaires returned	168

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	46	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	43	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	54	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	47	17	2	2
The teaching is good.	62	32	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	45	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	28	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	51	38	7	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	69	27	1	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	38	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	47	7	2	5

Figures may not add up to 100 per cent as a result of rounding.