

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hartlepool

LEA area: Hartlepool

Unique reference number: 111693

Head teacher: Mr T J Stace

Reporting inspector: Miss W L R Hunter
3277

Dates of inspection: 7 – 9 February 2000

Inspection number: 190747

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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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Musgrave Street Hartlepool
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Tindall
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School serves a wide area spanning several parishes. Many pupils come from the local estate in the centre of Hartlepool but the school also attracts pupils from outlying areas because of its reputation for strong pastoral care. Just under twenty per cent of the pupils at the school are non-Catholic.

There are 162 pupils in the school (84 boys and 78 girls) plus a further 24 children (12 boys and 12 girls) attending the nursery. The school's numbers fluctuate from year to year with the result that the current Years 2 and 4 are very small year groups – this has led to mixed age classes from Year 2 upwards. Thirty five pupils are eligible for free school meals - this is above the national average. A similar number of pupils have been identified with special educational needs, including one pupil with a statement of special educational need. One pupil speaks Spanish as their first language and there are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The school takes children into the reception class twice a year, in September and January. The high numbers this year have led to a re-organisation creating two small teaching groups in reception. When children start in reception their attainment is broadly average although there are a number of children working at levels beyond what is expected for four year olds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Teaching is effective and standards are high when compared to similar schools. The head teacher and key staff monitor the school's work well. They have good knowledge of its strengths and also the areas where it needs to improve. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and careful targeting of higher attaining pupils means that the school is achieving well in the tests for seven and 11 year olds, when compared to similar schools.
- The art work and quality of display is high.
- The standard of presentation and handwriting is high.
- The teaching is good.
- This is a very caring school with the result that pupils have good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour, relationships and personal development are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology are well below average by the age of 11.
- There is an unequal entitlement for the children in the two reception groups.
- The planning for children under five is too loose and does not focus sufficiently on the learning experiences expected for children of this age.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection was in November 1996. Since then the school has successfully tackled all the issues identified. The quality of teaching has improved to the stage where it is at least satisfactory (and often better) in all classes. The school now plans carefully to match the curriculum to pupils in mixed age classes. The objectives for each lesson are clearly stated and shared with pupils, and assessment systems are now used effectively to target pupils' learning. The appointment of the current deputy head teacher has

created a strong and effective senior management team. The training needs of staff are now analysed regularly and appropriate training has taken place in literacy and numeracy, with training in information technology planned for the near future.

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	C	C	A
mathematics	A	B	C	B
science	B	E	C	A

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

The school performed well in the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999. The results in all subjects were similar to the national averages but, when compared to similar schools, the results were much better. The school supported lower attaining pupils well so that they managed to achieve close to the level expected for their age, while higher attaining pupils were targeted effectively and extended into the higher levels in the tests. As a result, the school's performance in mathematics was above average while English and science were well above average. Pupils' writing was identified as the weakest area of English and this has been a big focus for the school since these tests.

The school's results change from year to year because the number of pupils sitting the tests varies along with its intake. The trend for the past three years has been slightly downward overall, but the school has set challenging yet achievable targets for future years.

Children under five achieve satisfactory levels of work. They are often working at levels slightly higher than expected for their age and this reflects some high attainment on entry to the reception class. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above the levels expected for seven year olds in English, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above the levels expected for 11 year olds in English and matches expectations in mathematics and science. However, standards in information technology are well below average by the age of 11 because the school does not have enough suitable equipment and teachers lack knowledge and expertise in this subject.

The standard of pupils' handwriting is good and this shows in the presentation of their work during lessons, the displays around the school and in their homework. Similarly, standards in art are high – pupils produce good quality work in the style of a broad range of famous artists.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are proud of their school and feel a sense of belonging to a 'family'. They are keen to learn and take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very sensible and mature. They work and play well together and look after each other.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respond very well to the care and attention they receive from their teachers. They have very good relationships with each other and with adults. Pupils develop a very good sense of their own worth and their place in the school's community.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Despite all the efforts made by the school and support agencies, there is a high incidence of lateness and unauthorised absence among a very small number of pupils.

Pupils' very good behaviour, relationships and personal development are strengths of the school. They result from the strong pastoral support and caring family atmosphere, and contribute well to pupils' learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory (sometimes good)	Good (sometimes very good)	Good (sometimes very good)

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

Nineteen lessons were seen. All teaching was at least satisfactory, with good teaching in 53 per cent of lessons and very good teaching in a further 11 per cent of lessons. Teaching was particularly good in the Year 1 and Year 4/5 classes.

English and mathematics are taught well throughout the school and this contributes to pupils' good learning and the high standards in these subjects. The school's focus on teaching handwriting shows in the presentation of pupils' work. The introduction of a writing hour each week is also supporting the improvement of pupils' skills in this area of English. Teachers teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well, but they do not have sufficient knowledge or expertise to teach information technology effectively. This is one of the reasons why standards in information technology are low.

The planning of lessons in the nursery and reception classes is not effective. It does not focus children's experiences on the areas of learning they require, but this is compensated for in most cases by the expertise of the staff and the small group sizes. Consequently, children still reach high standards but their learning is sometimes slower than it could be.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets requirements. Art activities are linked well into the topics being studied in each class and this contributes to pupils' high achievements in this subject.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and supported very well. Clear targets are set for each pupil and teachers pay good attention to these. Parents are heavily involved in working with the school to support their children.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this underpins the very good relationships in the school. The school has a good reputation for its pastoral care – this supports pupils' strong personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a strong family and community feel about the school. Teachers know the pupils very well and care for their personal and academic needs as individuals. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' development are good.

This is a very caring school. It is because of the strong pastoral care that pupils develop such good attitudes and very good relationships with each other. The school uses extra teaching for pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils to extend their learning and maximise their achievements. This is one of the reasons why the school is performing well in tests when compared to similar schools. Homework is a strong feature of the school's curriculum and this is used well to support pupils' learning, especially in English and mathematics.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher and deputy head teacher are an effective management team. They know where the school is doing well but also recognise the areas for improvement and have put steps in place to tackle these. Key staff are involved in a systematic programme of monitoring by visiting classes and observing lessons.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Most of the governors have been on the governing body less than six months. Governors are very loyal and supportive but are too new to their roles to be effective in monitoring or leading the school's development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The head teacher and key staff have carefully analysed performance data and used this to set targets for improvement and to focus on specific areas for development, such as writing.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school capitalises on any available sources of funding and makes good use of external agencies to support its work.

The head teacher and deputy head teacher form a strong and effective management partnership. They are leading the school well. Governors are not sufficiently involved yet but are learning at a fast pace and are fully committed to developing their roles. The school makes good use of the resources and money available – it provides good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress in the school. • Behaviour is good. • The teaching is good. • They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • Their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work their children are expected to do at home. • The way the school works with parents. • The leadership and management of the school. • The range of activities outside lessons. • The organisation of the accommodation and the effectiveness of the teaching for some children in the reception year.

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views about the school. A small number of parents were extremely unhappy about the school's decision to split the reception year into two teaching groups and to house one group in an adapted area outside the staff room. Parents are justified in some of their concerns since these children do not receive an equal entitlement to practical experiences, but inspectors cannot agree with parents who feel that teaching is less effective. Concern about this issue appears to have clouded parents' views about the leadership and management of the school and the way the school works with them. The school has good links and relationships with the majority of parents. The school offers a suitable range of activities outside lessons and pupils are given an appropriate amount of homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and careful targeting of higher attaining pupils means that the school is achieving well in the tests for seven and 11 year olds, when compared to similar schools.

1 The school's results in the national tests for seven year olds in 1999 were in the top 5 per cent of similar schools in reading and mathematics, and were above average in writing. The reason the school performed so well in these tests was simply that more pupils reached the minimum level expected for seven year olds and a high proportion achieved the next level in the tests. This was due to careful targeting of each individual pupil to maximise their performance.

2 From these tests, the school identified writing as a potential weakness because fewer pupils reached the higher levels. As a result, writing became a focus for improvement by the introduction of a "writing hour" in all classes and an emphasis on writing across different subjects. This is proving effective and the current work in pupils' books and displays suggests that it is raising standards in writing.

3 The school's results in the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999 were well above average in English and science, and above average in mathematics, when compared to similar schools. Again, the school focused on making sure that any pupils who were struggling (and those with special educational needs) were identified and supported by extra teaching and by suitable homework. This meant that these pupils achieved well in the tests by reaching a level just below what is expected for their age. At the same time, the school carefully identified and targeted the pupils capable of higher attainment to make sure that they also maximised their potential and performed well by reaching the higher level in the tests.

4 This careful targeting by the school is based on a very good system of tracking and predicting pupils' performance. Teachers regularly carry out formal assessments of pupils' work and retain examples of such work in individual portfolios. They then use this information to set the level they expect each pupil to achieve in their reading, writing and mathematics by the end of each year. Pupils with special educational needs are identified quickly and the school keeps meticulous records of their progress. Their individual education plans are detailed and set clear targets for the pupils to achieve. Parents are kept fully informed of their children's needs and progress, and are actively involved in supporting the school's efforts.

5 The school makes good use of the support available from outside sources, such as input from the visually impaired service, but also supplements this from its own resources. For instance, the head teacher takes regular writing and handwriting classes, teaches small groups of pupils to support their special educational needs and runs a homework club to extend the pupils capable of higher attainment. Booster classes are carefully targeted at pupils who need additional support and a good selection of non-fiction books have been bought specifically to capture the interest and improve the motivation of older boys.

6 As a result of the school's efforts, pupils are supported well in preparation for the national tests, and this shows in the results they achieve.

The art work and quality of display is high.

7 The displays in classrooms and public areas of the school are very good. They celebrate pupils' achievements and contribute well to their learning. For example, in the Year 1 classroom, pupils were encouraged to touch a scarecrow and feel the different materials used to create the display – this supported their work on materials in science. In the mixed Year 2 and 3 class, pupils have made "multiple monsters" to help them learn their multiplication tables.

8 Pupils work with a broad range of materials and their art activities are often linked effectively into the topic they are studying at the time. For instance, children in the nursery have made simple pictures of themselves using paint and wool to form a display that shows “we are all friends of God”. In other classes, pupils have used straws to create skeletons of the human body and silhouettes of Greek temples linked to their work in science and history.

9 Pupils often use their artistic skills to support their writing about the books and stories they have read and enjoyed. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have produced effective charcoal illustrations of scenes from the plot of “Poor Tom and the smugglers of Mourn”, while a large display in the hall links pupils’ art work to simple poems from the legend of “George and the Dragon”.

10 Pupils are given opportunities to look at work from a wide range of famous artists and to produce their own work in these styles. Year 1 pupils have used pastels to produce colourful and emotive representations of Van Gogh’s “The Starry Night” while older pupils have used pastels, chalk and paint to illustrate “buildings” in the different styles of artists such as Lowry, Klee, O’Keefe, Vermeer, Chagall and Hockney. Pupils have also painted “waves” in the style of Hokusai, and “Goldfish” in the style of Matisse. Experience of such a broad range of artists and artistic styles contributes well to pupils’ cultural development. The school’s art club gives pupils additional opportunities to demonstrate their skills, such as producing line drawings of local features and still life paintings.

The standard of presentation and handwriting is high.

11 The head teacher has set a personal standard and excellent example in this area by teaching handwriting classes every week. He has encouraged pupils and teachers alike to take pride in their written work and this shows through the displays in the classrooms and the work in pupils’ books.

12 Pupils learn to form their letters correctly from an early age. They keep their letters a consistent size and print neatly before beginning to use a joined up script in Year 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils’ writing is mature and very well formed. They write very neatly in a clear joined script, even in their homework books.

13 Pupils are encouraged to think about the presentation of their work for different purposes. For example, when looking at different ways of writing to present instructions, pupils learnt about the use of bullet points, sub-headings and labels to draw attention to their work. Pupils use punctuation and layout well to structure their writing. For instance, when writing fictional letters of apology to a next door neighbour for breaking a window, they put a lot of effort into the presentation and layout of their work. When writing up their investigations in science, they structured their writing effectively to illustrate their ideas, methods and observations.

14 Pupils regularly write about the books they have read explaining what they liked about them and why. In this work, they pay good attention to the structure of their descriptions and use correct punctuation and grammar. In their creative writing, pupils develop their own ideas well when drafting their work, but not at the expense of their presentation. For instance, in a lesson where they were writing descriptive passages about themselves, pupils in the Year 2 and 3 class took great pains to check their spellings and present their work carefully.

15 Pupils’ pride in their work is celebrated in the range of displays around the school. This work is chosen carefully across the full range of achievements, and gives a genuine picture of pupils’ experiences. For example, when writing about a blustery day, one pupil used imaginative language by stating that “when the wind blows I hear the trees groan”. In their display of “Thank You” prayers, other pupils expressed their personal feelings about their family and friends as well as giving thanks for the food and water they

realised were necessary to keep them alive.

16 Pupils use information technology effectively to support their writing and the presentation of their work, although they still lack the skills to be able to take this to a stage where they combine text and graphics using the technology. Despite this, pupils in Years 4 and 5 have produced effective newspaper front pages in Tudor style showing a good sense of layout and presentation. Similarly, pupils in Year 1 have used a word processor to write about “My Dragon” and put simple borders around their work to improve its presentation.

The teaching is good.

17 Teaching was good in over half of the lessons seen. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

18 Teachers plan clear objectives for their lessons and they make these known to the pupils by writing them on the blackboard or flipchart at the start of each lesson. As a result, pupils understand what they are trying to do and know what they are expected to learn during the lesson. This helps to hold their interest and motivation and keeps them working productively. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher constantly referred to the objectives displayed on the board to remind pupils what they were trying to do as they worked with percentages and decimal fractions. Similarly, in an English lesson in the Year 2/3 class, the teacher used clear objectives to explain how pupils had to think about using descriptive phrases in their writing, rather than starting sentences with “I have” or “I am”. Teachers tie their lessons together well by using their initial objectives to question pupils about what they have learnt and to evaluate whether the lessons have been successful. For instance, at the end of a mathematics lesson in the Year 3/4 class, the teacher went back to the initial objectives for the lesson, which were to introduce compass direction and to be able to follow simple directions to turn, and then explained how this work would feed in to the next lesson where pupils would start looking at right angled turns.

19 Teachers in all classes organise and manage their lessons well. They expect pupils to behave and to want to learn. As a result, pupils pay good attention and settle quickly to their work. Teachers hold pupils’ interest and challenge them well by using good questioning techniques. For example, in a mental mathematics session in the Year 3/4 class, the teacher used probing questions to encourage pupils to explain how they had reached their answers when using multiples of 9 to solve problems. In a lesson in the nursery, the teacher used carefully phrased questions to encourage children to describe the differences between a brightly coloured woolly jumper, a swimsuit and a T-shirt. In this lesson, her careful use of language, such as “stretchy” and “woolly” helped the children to talk about the materials and to explain why the garments were suited to different purposes. Teachers’ effective questioning skills help pupils to develop confidence during lessons and contribute well to the very good relationships in the school.

20 Teachers use resources well to support and brighten up their lessons. For example, in a reception lesson, the teacher used pictures of objects to get children to start talking about different materials, then followed this up with a wide selection of real objects made from wood, glass, plastic, fabric and metal. Once the children had correctly identified the different materials, the teacher made effective use of a soft toy “Larry the Lamb” to get the children to identify the best materials to keep him warm and to build his house. By using the toy in this way the teacher not only amused the children but held their attention and kept them fully involved in their work. In the nursery, the nursery assistant used a good range of posters, large books and models of dragons to explain the Chinese culture and the “Year of the Dragon” before giving children samples of genuine Chinese food to taste. The children were fascinated by the different things presented to them and thoroughly enjoyed this lesson, as well as learning about different foods and cultures.

21 Teaching is particularly good in the Year 1 and Year 4/5 classes. In these classes, lessons have a spark about them. The teachers exude confidence and their enthusiasm rubs off on the pupils. For

example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher livened up a recap of two and three-dimensional shapes by using pictures of the different shapes and challenging pupils with quick-fire questions. The class responded very well – they cheered excitedly as each question was answered correctly and individual pupils tried very hard to remember the names of complex shapes, such as pentagons and triangular prisms. In an English lesson in Year 4/5, the teacher’s enthusiasm shone through as he read about volcanoes and this inspired and challenged the pupils to tackle some of the difficult words they encountered. High levels of challenge are particular features of the teaching in these two classes and this is why the teaching is often very good. For example, as the Year 1 mathematics lesson progressed, pupils were introduced to repeating patterns for the first time and were then expected to produce patterns of their own using two, three and four different shapes plus a range of colours. In a science lesson in the Year 4/5 class, pupils were set the problem to shine a torch through a hole in a cardboard box then use mirrors to reflect the light beam around obstacles inside the box. The teacher fully expected them to make mistakes but encouraged them to learn from this.

22 The good quality of teaching in the school underpins pupils’ good attitudes to learning and contributes well to the high standards pupils achieve.

This is a very caring school with the result that pupils have good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour, relationships and personal development are very good.

23 The school’s ethos of care shows from the moment you walk through the door. The head teacher leads by example and has very good relationships with the pupils – their faces light up when he speaks to them. Teachers and other staff all know the pupils very well and value each of them as individuals.

24 Pupils learn to think about and care for each other. For example, during a Key Stage 1 assembly the early years’ co-ordinator told a story about a girl who had not been invited to a party and asked the pupils to think about how it must feel to be “left out”. She then linked this story well to a situation where a group of boys had refused to let another boy play football with them in the playground. This made pupils think and reflect on their own feelings and actions. Similarly, in a Key Stage 2 assembly the head teacher encouraged pupils to think about how often we say “thank you” and whether we begin to take things for granted. In this assembly, pupils were willing and confident enough to share examples of their own thank you prayers that were very personal to themselves.

25 Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They settle quickly during lessons and are keen to learn. For example, a group of children in the nursery were fascinated when they were told about the “Year of the Dragon” and given a selection of Chinese food to sample, such as noodles, vegetable rice and soup. They were keen to taste the different foods and concentrated really hard, especially when trying to eat the noodles with chopsticks! In a science lesson in Years 4 and 5, pupils rose to the challenge to use mirrors to reflect a torch beam around obstacles in a box. They collaborated well as they worked together to try different ways to solve the problem.

26 Pupils have very good relationships with each other and with the staff in the school. Older pupils take responsibility for looking after young children, and they take this role seriously. For instance, when the weather is bad during break or lunchtime, Year 6 pupils help to look after children in the reception and Year 1 classes. Pupils of all ages work well together - they play well in the school yard and on the outdoor adventure equipment.

27 Pupils are proud of their school and feel a sense of belonging to a family community. Parents recognise this as a strong feature of the school, and the parents and visitors that work in school are welcomed and valued. For example, “The Boogie Woogie Lady” (a local ex-jazz pianist) regularly plays the piano for the nursery children, and is highly thought of by the staff and children. The school effectively promotes pupils’ own self worth and self-esteem. They are encouraged to value their own ideas and to

contribute to discussions. For example in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils came up with their own ideas for remembering the names of the points of the compass, including “never eat shredded wheat” and “naughty elephants squirt water”.

28 Pupils’ good attitudes and their very good behaviour have a strong influence on the quality of relationships in the school and the high standards they achieve.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in information technology are well below average by the age of 11.

29 By the end of Year 6, pupils are not reaching the levels expected for 11 year olds in information technology. This is mainly due to the fact that the school has insufficient equipment available and teachers have gaps in their own knowledge and skills in this subject. As a result, pupils have not been taught enough and have not experienced the full range of activities they should have by the time they leave the school.

30 The school tries to provide pupils with a broad range of information technology experiences but this has been hampered by a lack of suitable resources and technical problems with the existing computers. Many of the computers are quite old and do not support activities, such as using CD-ROMs for information retrieval. The range of software is limited by the type of computers available and the school has no suitable resources to show pupils how computers can be used to monitor, measure and control physical events.

31 Teachers include information technology activities in their planning but tend to link them into the topic or theme being studied, such as producing Tudor-style newspaper front pages linked to their history work. This means that pupils use their basic word processing skills in a number of ways, such as using different font sizes and colours when writing poems, and using different styles and layouts to present their views on the books they have read in literacy lessons. This use of word processors supports the presentation of pupils’ work but does not go far enough to systematically develop or improve their skills. For instance, older pupils are not capable of combining text and graphics and few understand how to use a spell-checker. The school does not have a programme of teaching in place to provide pupils with the basic skills they need to be able to use information technology effectively. For example, pupils have very little experience of spreadsheets and do not have a clear understanding of how data can be stored, interrogated and retrieved using databases and other methods, such as CD-ROMs. They rarely use computers to handle and present data in different forms, including graphs and tables. Pupils struggle to understand or explain how computers can be used to simulate or control real-life processes.

32 The school has already recognised the shortfalls in information technology that are affecting pupils’ standards. As a result, information technology is identified as a high priority in the school development plan and a long-term strategic plan has been produced to map out how funding will be used to develop this subject. With the help of national grants, the school is investing in an appropriate range of new equipment and has a clearly planned programme of training and development for staff to improve their knowledge and information technology skills to a level where they can begin to teach the subject effectively.

There is an unequal entitlement for the children in the two reception groups.

33 The school has one large reception class that is split into two teaching groups for most of the time. The children who came into the reception class in January are taught by the reception teacher in the reception classroom. The older group, who have been in school since last September, are taught by a temporary teacher in an area outside the staff-room that has been adapted for their use. A number of parents expressed concerns about the suitability of this area and its impact on the effectiveness of the teaching their children received. Some of their concerns are justified although the teaching area has been carefully thought out and the quality of the teaching is not suffering because of the location.

34 The children in the reception classroom have access to the full range of formal experiences and explorative play activities expected for children of this age. For example, they have quiet reading and writing areas, access to sand and water to carry out practical investigations and have suitable construction and practical art areas laid out in the classroom. The children in the other group do not have immediate easy access to such experiences, especially the practically based resources. Consequently, the reception aged children in the school are getting an unequal entitlement to the resources and experiences they require, depending on which group they are in. The school has recognised this and has tried to remedy the situation by giving the older children time in the nursery on four mornings once the nursery children have left. This is a positive step and does give the children opportunities to use a suitable range of equipment, but it does not go far enough to give them sufficient practical experiences to support their learning on a day-to-day basis.

The planning for children under five is too loose and does not focus sufficiently on the learning experiences expected for children of this age.

35 The planning of lessons in the nursery and reception classes is not effective. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good and this, along with small group sizes, compensates for shortfalls in the planning. Consequently, children still reach high standards but their learning is sometimes slower than it could be.

36 The long-term planning for the nursery and reception classes does not provide a clear picture of how the school plans to deliver the areas of learning set down for children of this age. The school's baseline assessment indicates what each individual child can do when they start in the school, but the planning does not build on this sufficiently well to identify how and where children will systematically develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in different areas. The planning tends to focus too much on what children will be expected to know without giving sufficient consideration to the activities they will experience in order to achieve this. Teachers are experienced and often carry this information in their heads, but this does not provide a secure enough planning framework for the early years.

37 The school has recognised the need to look again at the planning for children under five and to consider how the curriculum in nursery and reception will come together to form the new "foundation stage of learning" that all schools are expected to introduce from next September.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

38 The school should now:

- (a) Raise standards in information technology by:
- improving the range and quality of resources available;
 - improving teachers' knowledge, understanding and own skills in using the technology;
 - planning carefully to ensure that pupils are taught the skills they need in a systematic and logical sequence;
 - making greater use of information technology to support pupils' work in other subjects, including data handling in mathematics and science.
- (Paragraphs 29 – 32)
- (b) Provide children in one reception group with greater access to more practical activities to consolidate their learning. (Paragraphs 33 – 34)
- (c) Improve the planning for children under five by:
- making clear reference to the areas of learning expected for children of this age;
 - setting precise objectives to identify what children are expected to learn through each experience;
 - identifying opportunities to assess whether children have learnt what was intended;
 - making use of the results of these assessments to guide the planning of future experiences and to build on the baseline assessments for each individual child.
- (Paragraphs 35 – 37)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	53	36	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)	12	162
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	35

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	1	35

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
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
	1999	13	18	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	17	16	18
	Total	30	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97% (95%)	94% (85%)	100% (95%)
	National	82% (80%)	83% (81%)	87% (85%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	12
	Girls	16	18	17
	Total	29	31	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94% (90%)	100% (95%)	94% (95%)
	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	13	14	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	9	12
	Girls	13	10	12
	Total	24	19	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89% (80%)	70% (64%)	89% (56%)
	National	70% (65%)	69% (59%)	78% (69%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	10
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	21	20	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78% (64%)	74% (64%)	85% (56%)
	National	68% (65%)	69% (65%)	75% (72%)

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	162
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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	3	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: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	23

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	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998 - 1999
	£
Total income	307,250
Total expenditure	328,403
Expenditure per pupil	1,480
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,466
Balance carried forward to next year	20,313

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	174
Number of questionnaires returned	95

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	33	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	34	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	31	2	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	48	11	2	1
The teaching is good.	67	29	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	39	5	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	23	6	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	19	2	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	43	39	13	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	59	27	11	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	34	3	3	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	33	7	12	13

Other issues raised by parents

A small number of parents were extremely unhappy about the school's decision to split the reception year into two teaching groups and to house one group in an adapted area outside the staff room.