

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST JAMES' C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Coldwaltham, Pulborough, West Sussex

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125978

Headteacher: Mrs Michelle Clifford

Reporting inspector: Cherry R Jackson  
5358

Dates of inspection: 11 - 12 June 2001

Inspection number: 191908

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant & Junior School

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 5 to 10

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Lane  
Coldwaltham  
Pulborough  
West Sussex

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Roberts

Date of previous inspection: 13 January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St James is a small voluntary controlled school for pupils aged 5-10 years. There are currently 89 pupils on the roll, most of whom live in the village of Coldwaltham, a rural community on the fringe of South Downs. The children work in three classes so that each class contains two year groups. In the youngest class the reception children follow their own Foundation Stage curriculum and the Year 1 children are in their first year of the National Curriculum. In the second class the oldest infants, Year 2, are working in National Curriculum Key Stage 1 alongside the youngest juniors, Year 3, who are in their first year of Key Stage 2. The third class contains juniors in Year 4 and 5, who are all in the same key stage. There are equal numbers of boys and girls in the school and in each class. There are no Year 6 children and therefore no national test results available for that group. The results shown in this report are for the oldest infants, that is, the youngest group in the middle class.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most of the pupils have had pre-school education and their attainment on entry to school is above average, although the small size of the year groups means that the ability profile of each class can vary. Some years have groups who start school with low attainment, some do not. The proportion of children with special needs is below average and the needs range from medical to learning needs. All the pupils are white although a tiny number are from outside the UK. There is one pupil for whom English is a second language.

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

This very good school has many strengths. Good achievement and high standards are ensured by good quality education, particularly very good teaching, a very well planned curriculum, and very good partnership between the school and the parents. The head teacher and senior staff are leading the school very effectively towards further improvement. As it is a small school, costs are high but it provides sound value for money.

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

- The pupils achieve well throughout the school and consistently reach good standards in English, mathematics, science, art and music. They are particularly good at speaking and listening, writing, and art, where their achievement is very good.
- The children are very positive and confident learners who behave very well.
- The very good teaching leads to very good learning and to very good progress for slower learning children and those with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is very well planned to be relevant, interesting and creative.
- Opportunities for reflection and learning to work together are well integrated into the subjects.
- There are good systems for checking the pupils' progress and ensuring their well being.
- The school works very successfully in partnership with the parents, whose contribution to its work is excellent.
- The head and key staff provide very clear thinking leadership which stresses self evaluation.

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

- Governors and senior staff are aware that they are making insufficient use of attainment data and analysis to guide their improvement planning and are beginning to address this need.

*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 good progress since the last inspection of January 1997. The schemes of work have been developed very well, and they now offer good continuity and progression in all the

subjects. As subject co-ordinators, the teachers are taking responsibility well for checking the quality of the school's provision and how well the pupils work. The school development plan now shows sound allocations of money and time to various tasks. High standards have been maintained in mathematics tests and in teachers' assessments of science. There has been a good improvement in test results for writing. Reading results are still well above the average although they are not quite as consistent as for the other two tests.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	B	A*	A	B	Well above average      A above average      B average      C Below average      D Well below average      E
Writing	A	A*	A*	A*	
Mathematics	A	A*	A	B	

The under sixes, the infants and the juniors achieve well for their abilities and attain very high standards in English and mathematics. They are particularly good at speaking and listening, where they are confident and sensitive, and writing. Whilst they are competent readers, they could use their initiative more to get all the meaning out of the text. They are good at number calculation and can discuss method sensibly. The pupils are also good at science and music and very good at art. Able pupils make good progress and the pupils with SEN and the less able make very good progress, especially the less competent in the youngest class. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The results on the table above are for the seven year olds. In 2000 they scored well above the national average in reading and mathematics and above average compared with the group of schools with similar intakes. They were particularly strong in writing where St James' pupils scored in the top 5% nationally and within the group of schools with similar intakes to this one. The school has internal test results for the juniors which suggest that their attainment is also very good, and they too write very well. Though not required by statute to do so, the school is setting itself challenging targets for test results. It often happens that 100% of Year 2 attain level 2, the nationally expected level for the age group, so St James' has to set targets for the higher level 3, as is appropriate for above average pupils. High standards are being maintained over time and, in writing, improved.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. The children appreciate the care and concern school offers them and they work with good, interested effort.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils are very considerate and always do as they are asked.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils are poised and confident; they help and support each other in their work and play.
Attendance	This is no better than average because of family holidays taken in term

	time.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The teaching during the inspection was consistently good, and one third of the lessons were very well taught.

The teachers provide very good teaching, particularly in English and mathematics, ensuring good use of skilled teaching assistants. Science teaching is supported by a specialist. ICT teaching is well resourced and the children are taught to use their skills across the curriculum. Homework is very well used to practise and extend classwork. The teachers have a hard demand to deal with two year-groups and, often, two National Curriculum key stages at once but plan very thoroughly for the ability range. Teachers know the children well and usually relate sensitively to them so that the children feel valued. The pace of the lessons is swift and the explanations for the pupils are very clear. The children stay on task and learn well. Many pupils are particularly independent with very good concentration. Just occasionally the pupils need more chance to talk about learning or better matched work for their abilities.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The pupils have plenty of time to follow their curriculum, which is very well planned to relate to their lives and includes a good range of purposeful visits, visitors, practical activity, use of ICT, creative work and work in the grounds. For the under sixes, the day divides rather sharply into more formal mornings and freer afternoons so that continuity is not quite as good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils have very good support in their work and benefit from excellent home/school communications.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good, with support for the identified pupils at an appropriate level.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Moral and cultural education are good. Social and spiritual development are particularly well provided through the school council, circle time, lessons which stress the need for teamwork and reflection. The school teaches the pupils to be brave and evaluate their own work.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The staff ensure the pupils' welfare through good systems and relationships. Playground supervision is not always thorough enough.

Partnership with parents is very good and is one of the many strengths in this school. Parents think very highly of the school and their support not only helps tangibly to provide extra resources and help in class but also models hard work to their children.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good. The head and senior staff provide inspired leadership and example. The management is characterised by clear thinking and very effective communication.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound work is done by a governing body hampered by a recent lack of continuity with membership. Governors know their school and are committed to serving but their ways of improving the school are not yet systematic.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is self evaluative: teachers and pupils evaluate their work thoughtfully and curriculum leaders can provide a good overview of provision. Staff and governors are aware that detailed analysis of attainment data is not yet supporting the evaluations that are made. This is being addressed.
The strategic use of resources	Sound. The organisation of teachers' time and the use of the learning support assistants are strengths. The principles of best value are applied when services are bought. Whilst the budget supports improvement, specific improvements in standards do not, have specific budgets.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the parents who responded think that the children behave well.</li> <li>• They all think the school works closely with parents and is approachable.</li> <li>• Most parents think that their children like school</li> <li>• The parents think that the school is well managed and led.</li> <li>• They think the teaching is good, with high expectations.</li> <li>• The parents feel well informed about their children's progress, which they think is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents would like more non-sporting, or more, extra curricular activity.</li> <li>• One parent would like more adult supervision outside at breaks.</li> <li>• Another parent would like the school to have male as well as female teachers.</li> <li>• A few parents would like more homework.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views of the school. They think that two non-sporting extra curricular activities is sound provision in such a small school. They think that homework is well marked and sufficient. The number of playground supervisors is adequate although they could be better spread and mobile. A male teacher to provide a role model for boys could indeed be helpful, although the school is very well served by the teachers it has.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

- 1. The pupils achieve well throughout the school and consistently reach good standards in English, mathematics, science, art and music. They are particularly good at speaking and listening, writing, and art, where achievement is very good.**
2. The pupils' standards are at least good in all the subjects which were seen during the inspection and are very good in mathematics and art, very good and sometimes excellent in English. The children's achievement is always good, including for gifted and talented pupils, and is very good for the less able pupils, those with special educational needs and for everyone, in writing.
3. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress due to careful monitoring of their progress, planning for their learning needs and very good liaison with their parents. During the inspection a pupil with a statement of special educational needs who might have been expected to be restless and lack concentration was able to participate in collaborative group work with classmates, working competently, like the others, to find information and record it.
4. The under sixes in the reception year are capable and self-possessed. They have good self control for their ages. They can recognise and use letter sounds and numbers to ten or twenty and can read simple texts. One pupil showed his sensitivity to text and his understanding of the purpose of speech marks when he said of a printed statement attributed to a bear: "You could say that in a growly voice." Another clearly and confidently explained to her class her strategy for counting in tens.
5. Standards for the infants and juniors in English are consistently very good with attainment in writing which can be excellent, when the pupils work at a sustained piece of work and bring to bear on it all the skills that they have been taught. There is very good achievement here.
6. In reading the oldest infants can tackle a range of material including letters in print and handwriting. They use a variety of phonic skills and context clues as a matter of course to work out words like "enquire," "congratulate". They can use books for research and are learning to make a statement about the summary meaning of a text. Whilst their test results are well above the national average and above average compared with similar schools, this is not quite as good as their writing results which are very high compared with similar schools. Through analysis of their test work; their teacher identifies that they are not as good at comprehending and drawing inferences from their reading as they are at decoding the text. The school has sensibly started additional focussed reading sessions to address that need. Year 5, the oldest juniors, have internal test results which show that many are achieving levels of reading expected for pupils a year older.
7. Standards of speaking and listening are very good. The children listen well in their lessons, are thoughtful, expect to understand and confidently ask if they have a difficulty. Year 2 can speak clearly, usually in Standard English, and have a sense of occasion; for example, they offer appropriate language in the classroom, aware of the listener's needs. Year 5 could use technical vocabulary in the mathematics lesson to describe triangles and angles; they can hypothesise and hold ordered discussions with each other.

8. In writing, the oldest infants can write complete, vivid sentences and show an uncommon awareness of the needs of the reader. One child wrote of the plague "If you catch it you would die and be carried away in a cart." They can express simple emotion in their writing. In their history they write informatively, using their research, choosing adjectives thoughtfully, and expressing themselves sometimes in complex sentences. Year 5 have good support in their lessons to plan and draft and can do this very competently. They know how to look for unusual or powerful verbs and adjectives, vary the length and structure of sentences and produce individual and interesting work. One girl wrote of an innkeeper: "patiently stacking the coins with his sixty year old hands". They are, by this age, able to express complex emotion for an imaginary character: "I feel like a beast because I have to fight". The handwriting is well formed throughout the school, although, in spite of that, work from one or two pupils can be difficult to read.
9. In mathematics, standards are very good, with good achievement for the children. The oldest infants can add and subtract two digit numbers and the more able can multiply and divide, halve and double, use standard units of weight. Most can calculate money, even some of the less able can work to 100. Mental work with two digit numbers is very good for this year group. They are also good at trying out approaches to problems and discussing methods and thinking. Year 5 pupils, including the slower learners, can calculate percentages, perimeters, identify square numbers and the more able can solve questions about train timetables. Data handling is competent throughout. Older infants and juniors have a joint database about themselves and all four year groups can interrogate it to produce and interpret pie charts and block graphs about, for example, eye colour or holiday destinations. A feature of the attainment in mathematics is that the less able groups are achieving very well and reaching the standards of the average groups.
10. Although no science lessons were seen during the inspection, there were good cross-curricular links evident in the mathematics work. Pupils were able to use their data handling to see, for example, what the most and least common pulse rates were from their database. Science assessments for the oldest infants indicate that the less able meet the standards expected for the average children and that St James' results were in 2000 very high compared with national scores. At the inspection of 1997 science standards for juniors were high. Since then the very competent curriculum leader for the subject has been monitoring standards; she notes that older pupils are good at scientific enquiry.
11. Music standards were also good at the last inspection and are sustained. The pupils sing tunefully and sweetly, they concentrate whilst they sing and take this work seriously. They all have tuition to play at least two instruments and the music teacher has taped each individual performing. Those who have additional instrumental tuition play as a brass or woodwind group with some of their teachers, to a high standard.
12. Standards in art are very good, partly because of the good continuity in the curriculum planning and the teaching. The under sixes can concentrate and apply themselves to pencil drawing from observation and produced sustained studies of snail shells. Year 2 use colour and mix it well and can express shape and texture sensitively through their use of line. Paintings of the night sky showed their ability to mix colour and control their brushes to achieve an expressive picture. Year 5 have looked in detail at different colours and one girl brought together her technical skill at mixing, her acuteness at finding colour in surroundings and her personal response to colours to produce an individual study. All the year groups can use a variety of techniques, like printing and

collage, which they have practised in depth, and all can refer to the work of other artists to inform their own. They make competent use of information and communications technology in their art, using drawing and painting software purposefully and recording visual information with a digital camera for later use.

- 13. The children are very positive and confident learners who behave very well.**
14. The children are unusually appreciative of the high levels of care and concern they meet in school and they try to return them. The School Council, a representative group of junior pupils, gives good evidence of that in their thoughtful attitude towards their peers and teachers. Year 5 pupils explained that everyone knows everyone in school, the teachers are lovely, the facilities, including the playground, the climbing frame, the lunchtime pond dipping, are all good. They were secure in the knowledge that their homework would be valued and evaluated carefully by their teacher. The children know that they have target cards and can recognise and talk about their targets. At the parents' meeting the adults were equally unanimous that children of all ages know and care for each other, feel happy to take their place in the learning community and to pull their weight there.
15. Behaviour is consistently very good, which helps everyone to concentrate. Even the young children in the reception group who had managed to find chairs when everyone else was sitting on the floor, obediently climbed down from their seats and sat on the carpet when requested. One or two of these younger pupils did get restless at the end of a long morning of formal lessons, but they still remained in their places and caused no disruption to anyone. Pupils are quiet, attentive and thoughtful in their lessons when that is required, and when engaged in practical activity they stay on task and always behave responsibly with equipment. At the ends of lessons or playtimes everyone moves in a controlled way to the next activity and hardly anyone runs. Pupils in Year 2 and 3 were asked by their teacher to make notes on sticky squares of paper and keep them for tomorrow; this was done efficiently and with no fuss.
16. Pupils of all ages help each other. In lessons they respond well to others' polite requests for equipment to be passed. One infant girl on the playground was heard telling a classmate what to do with his crisp packet: "Put it in the bin over there". The older pupils talk about their work as they do it and help each other work things out, as they did when drawing angles and trying to add the angles of triangles.
17. The pupils are self-confident. Their good self-image helps them to reach out and help others. The school band performs in assembly with pleasure and not much nervousness, safe in the knowledge that their friends will listen considerately. One pupil has recently won a national prize for writing and was encouraged to tell the others about it, which she did competently and calmly. Self-confidence helps the children to be evaluative about their work and to admit when they are having difficulty. It also helps them not to give up but to try again. A pair of Year 3 pupils who were working with a programmable toy were able to say without embarrassment "We have done this all wrong." and calmly start again. Self-confidence also helps the children express their emotions in their art work and their writing, so that it is very meaningful. One of the older children, writing a story, was able to say: "I felt a hero." He conveyed maturely that he enjoyed that moment, didn't always expect to feel like that, and felt fine about it.
- 18. The very good teaching leads to very good learning and to very good progress for slower learning children and those with special educational needs.**

19. The teachers are knowledgeable, skilled and committed. Their expertise is well used. Two specialists teach music across the school and art is taught by the art co-ordinator, who has specialist knowledge and understanding, and the head teacher, to all the classes. The curriculum leaders for science and mathematics, who have degrees in their subjects, support other staff with a degree of specialist knowledge not always available in primary schools. The teachers have had recent training in teaching the literacy hour and the numeracy lesson and are working with high levels of skill in these subjects. They are also recently trained in information and communication technology.
20. The last inspection suggested that the teaching would be better if the teachers set clearer objectives for the lessons so that they knew exactly what they wanted to communicate to the children. The lesson planning is very thoughtful now, objectives are very clear. Plans for literacy and numeracy are particularly detailed and show the different sections of the lessons with all the tasks that the children will do. Since the classes contain two year groups each, the planning is particularly complex and the range of tasks can be quite wide. The teachers are very well organised and prepare resources carefully for different ability groups. For example, they set out writing tasks with more or less help provided on the paper before the pupils begin. The teachers also spend time writing lesson notes for the learning support assistants so that these staff know what their groups of children are to do and how much help to give them.
21. Clear demonstrations and explanations for the children help them to understand their own tasks in their lessons. Just occasionally the beginnings of lessons take a little too long so that the end has to be rushed. Then the pupils do not have enough time for developing ideas in discussion. These final parts of lessons are often used for the pupils to tell the others what they have done and not to actually talk about what has been learned. As the school has recently identified that the ability to infer and deduce is a learning need for the children this could be an opportunity to teach it.
22. Everyone stays work focussed in the lessons. The teachers move the pupils on swiftly, keeping them concentrating and setting them demanding tasks. The pace of the lessons is consistently good and the teachers helpfully use time targets to let the pupils know how long they have to complete work and to keep them trying. The teachers think of activities which demand a high level of concentration and understanding from the children, who work consistently to meet the expectation. Pupils are often challenged in more than one way at once. For example, Year 2 and 3 were asked to read quite hard letters and sort them into different categories by content, or to compose two-digit numbers from random pairings of cards and then manipulate them.
23. As they are accustomed to high expectations, the junior aged pupils are particularly autonomous. They listen carefully to instructions, sort themselves out with what they need to use and get on with their work sensibly, evaluating and adjusting according to their own judgement. Even when left alone to work in a group measuring floor distances or controlling a programmable toy, Year 3 children stayed on task, discussing and recording findings sensibly.
24. The learning support assistants make a very valuable contribution to the teaching and learning. Even during whole class sessions when they cannot work with groups they make helpful contributions by using initiative to add to what the teacher is saying, support an individual who needs a quiet reminder or explanation, or model to the class what the teacher wants them to do. The assistants are well involved in the work of the classrooms and know what the teachers want for individual children. They work with

groups sensitively, helping, but not too much, so that the pupils are as independent as possible. The assistants direct children confidently and clearly within the frameworks the teachers set.

25. Very careful attention is given by the teachers to setting relevant homework and marking it. The care with which this is done supports the schools partnership with parents and is described under that heading, later in this report. The children have reading, mathematics and writing practice which relates very closely to what they have learned in their lessons.
26. The teachers and assistants know their pupils' learning strengths and weaknesses very well. In fact, because of the small size of the school every teacher and the head teacher know every child. In lessons the adults make an effort to identify what children can do and what they need to learn. Both boys and girls are very well taught and gifted and talented pupils are well provided for. Just occasionally work for a group is too easy, as some counting tasks were for some very young pupils, or too hard, as one reading task was for infant children. The match of task to pupil is demanding in a class with two year groups in it and at St James' it is usually managed well.
27. Children who are having difficulty or those with special needs have watchful attention and tasks structured specially for them, although they are also given enough space to get on independently. The pupils respond well to the responsibility given them; they know their learning is a serious business and they try hard.
28. The children have target cards in their classrooms where their teachers write objectives for them for mathematics and English. This helps the children to be clear about what they have to achieve and how well they are getting on.
29. All of the structure of the teaching, the planning, target setting, whole class sessions, group work, individual tasks and homework are well supported by the adults' relationships with the children. The adults are sympathetic and very caring, while maintaining a clear focus on school purposes. The teachers manage the children tactfully and skilfully so that they do as they are asked and learn to be considerate in return. "I would rather see you on the floor" was the way one teacher asked a pupil to move from the chair he was sitting in. She had given him a positive reason to move and he did so without fuss.
30. **The curriculum is very well planned to be relevant, interesting and creative.**
31. The school provides an unusually generous amount of time to the curriculum. Both the infants and the juniors work for longer each week than the nationally suggested minimum. The amount of extra time varies because they take an afternoon break if they need one, but they are working a substantial amount of time more than many schools. The Year 2 pupils who work with Year 3 are infants working more than the recommended hours for juniors.
32. All the children enjoy their days because their time is well planned and none is wasted. They have a well organised early morning session where they work at specially planned tasks whilst their teachers mark the registers and then catch up on points from the day before, set practice work, or talk to individuals about targets. This makes a crisp start to the day because it is well prepared. There is still time in the day for all the subjects to be taught without rush. The teachers know that they can explore a focus of interest for the children and still fit everything in. There is sufficient time across the school year for

visits and for practical work. The large proportion of time allocated to English supports the high standards in writing. The day is further extended by a range of extra curricular sport, ICT activity and environmental work in the grounds, which allows staff, parents and pupils to enjoy collaborating with each other. The male parents at sporting activities are a particularly valuable presence as the school has no male staff to provide role models for boys.

33. The school has a long history of using and improving its grounds to teach the curriculum: Green Club after school, the use of grounds for science, art, mathematics, geography and English helps make the curriculum real for the pupils. There is also a developing focus on the arts: the art and music curricula are well planned, with good continuity and rigorous expectation provided through specialist teachers. Instrumental music is successful with woodwind and brass groups. Work with a local beacon school is intended to improve drama at St James'. The pupils can practise many skills, particularly of music, drama and teamwork, through ambitious productions.
34. The teachers make especially careful curriculum plans. Each term they review what content is to be taught that term and work out which visits and events will help the pupils learn that content. They determine how much time will be needed for everything so that although time is generously allocated none is wasted. This degree of planning ensures that the lessons are interesting and relevant for the children and that they can make good links between them. The schemes of work are thorough and very conscientiously taught.
35. Curriculum planning is also particularly demanding for the teacher who has Year 2 and 3 together. The plans for the class are meticulous and show very careful forethought about the different ability levels in the class. Some subjects are easier than others to teach to a wide ability range but in the literacy lesson during the inspection it was hard to cater for all abilities in one session. The lesson was based on the Year 3 curriculum which did not adapt well for Year 2.
36. The curriculum for the under sixes is the most difficult for the school to provide as these young children are in class with Year 1. The under sixes are intended to have a more active curriculum with a good deal of personal autonomy and literacy and numeracy sessions of increasing length. The school varies its timetabling over the year and its class room organisation over the day to give the experience the younger children should have but during the inspection they were having rather an unbalanced day with a formal morning and more autonomous afternoon.
37. **Opportunities for reflection and learning to work together are well integrated into the subjects.**
38. The well-planned and rigorous work in the arts provides very developed opportunities for the pupils to reflect on their experiences. The oldest class have recently thought about their emotions and produced individual, expressive paintings and prose. Younger pupils have looked carefully at natural objects before drawing them. Throughout the school the pupils have learned to make sensitive study of the work of other artists. Music provides an opportunity for adults and children to play collaboratively. Instrumental music is popular and qualitative so that that and the children's experience of singing provide depth of experience for those playing and listening.
39. The school's well resourced grounds include a garden with seats for people to sit quietly and enjoy a peaceful or a social time; there is also a willow shelter which makes



a withdrawal space for a child to be alone but near others. This has recently been used as a starting point for the children to write their own poems. The pond, currently being used for lunchtime pond dipping as well as science learning, is a very good place for pupils to experience and enjoy a natural environment.

40. The school gives the pupils very good opportunities to learn to interact and operate as social beings. In the classrooms, "circle time" discussion helps the children learn how to deal with disputes and other personal problems. The School Council helps the older children to take responsibility and define an expectation for their peers. Very unusually, the teachers in their lesson planning for science, history, design technology, physical education, and religious education show the social skills that they want the children to learn in the lessons alongside the subject content. Teamwork, consideration for others and independence are all identified to be taught and are transmitted well.
41. The head teacher, teachers and learning support assistants offer the children a good model of caring interaction and particularly of evaluative attitudes. The staff take opportunities after lessons to discuss how well they went, and the teachers write careful evaluative comments on their lesson plans after the event. They offer evaluation to the pupils during lessons and in the careful marking they do. They also encourage the pupils to make their own evaluations, both orally in lessons and in writing in their books. The pupils see their teachers evaluating and changing their actions accordingly, and they follow this courageous example.
42. **There are good systems for checking the pupils' progress and ensuring their well being.**
43. The teachers carry out well organised and regular assessments of the children's attainment so that they know where they are and what they need to learn next. This allows the teachers to target a National Curriculum level for each child. This is done in mathematics, music, science and writing. In mathematics and writing a clear statement is made of what the child needs to learn next, which becomes the child's target. This detail is a major factor in the school's success in writing standards. The assessments and targets are not as detailed or rigorous in reading.
44. The school's Early Years' Intervention Programme ensures that any reception age child who needs extra support in literacy is identified and supported. The pupils are screened with the baseline test on entry to school and those who need it have a structured programme of support taught by a very experienced learning support assistant. This care in their first year helps to pull less capable or confident pupils up to the average before a big gap develops.
45. The school tracks the pupils' attendance very well so that all the reasons for the pupils' absences are clear. Authorisation for prolonged family holidays has been refused, where this was appropriate. Clear child protection procedures are in place and although no staff member has had recent updating about this issue, training is planned now.
46. All the staff in the school have very supportive relationships with the pupils. Adults promote good behaviour among the children by offering a clear expectation and also by using tact and sensitivity to feelings when they deal with the pupils. For example, the reception class teacher warned a group of young children that in a moment she was going to ask them to do something unpopular, and when she later did so, they all obeyed at once.

47. The class teachers use “circle time“ to help their pupils relate to and understand each other. This is a time when individuals can talk about events or feelings and everyone listens. Circle time has been reduced for the oldest class and only planned if the teacher felt there was an important issue to air. Year 5 pupils felt secure when they had it regularly to help them sort out problems. They remember when there was a bullying incident which was resolved at circle time. Although they are not particularly at risk, Year 5 know that circle time helps to deal with it and they would like their circle time to be regular.
48. The good standards of care and the well planned structures to support it make the days at school look relaxed. At lunchtime, the supervisors caringly involve themselves with the children and support their play. Playtimes are happy occasions when the children spread out over the playing field into the trees. Supervision at this point is not quite rigorous enough as sometimes the children are outside before the two adults on duty and because the adults do not circulate over the full extent of the play-space. Whilst the pupils usually are well behaved there are some safety issues that need checking and if bullying were to occur it might not be seen.
- 49. The school works very successfully in partnership with the parents, whose contribution to its work is excellent.**
50. The head teacher and staff are caring and approachable. The parents value this and are grateful for the positive response the school makes if parents raise any issues or concerns. For example, the parents during an earlier inspection said they would like information on children’s progress earlier in the school year and were eager to point out that this has been provided. Individual parents particularly value the head teacher’s expertise in dealing with special educational needs and her support for them and their children.
51. The school staff, in turn, are equally appreciative of the support they receive from the parent community. The parents give plentiful time and effort to their school and support it with positive attitudes. The effect of all that on the children’s education is excellent. The parents’ association raises a good deal of money for facilities and resources, including a new library space with facilities for book storage and television use. Parents’ expertise is willingly offered and willingly used. For example, an expert who is also a parent at the school recently designed and made a large collection of complex costumes and head-dresses for two recent theatrical productions. Regular events are held when staff, pupils and parents work together to raise money or to improve a facility, with pouring rain not enough to prevent people turning out in force. The children’s confidence and sense of self worth are well fostered by the genuine, supportive community which surrounds them.
52. The adults demonstrate to the children how to help and consider each other and also how to work hard. The teachers take care to set appropriate homework; the parents ensure that it is completed. Both sets of adults combine to maintain a written dialogue in the homework books where teachers evaluate and encourage and parents report their children’s responses to their tasks. The homework books are a tangible demonstration of the partnership. The homework books of course also helpfully inform the parents about their children’s progress. The children also have targets set at school and whilst some children can communicate these to their parents, the parents at the inspection meeting were not sure what the targets were. The school is revising its report form and its good practice could be brought up to date here.

**53. The head and key staff provide very clear thinking leadership which stresses self evaluation.**

54. The head and senior staff provide very good leadership and management. The best interests of the pupils are considered in all the decisions which are made. Staff have varied their working conditions, for example, to fit in with school needs. The head teacher values everyone's views and staff consulted are responsible as well as unselfish in their thinking. Clear written and oral communication from the head teacher ensures that everyone knows what they are expected to do and what principles must guide them. The staff are committed to meeting the high expectation placed upon them. For instance, the school's policies about teaching and learning and assessment give demanding guidance to the teachers which asks them to do a great deal inside and outside the classroom to support their pupils. The consistently good quality of the teaching in all the classes is evidence of the quality of the guidance, the management of the consultation about it, and the implementation.

55. As well as their class teaching, the teachers have responsibility for management of more subject areas than they would have in a larger school. They are effective leaders of their subjects who have ensured that the schemes of work are qualitative and well understood. They give their colleagues good help with lesson planning, and keep the head teacher and governors well informed about the curriculum and any problems in the teaching and learning. Curriculum leaders have a number of ways of evaluating the school's success in their subjects. They keep an oversight of the pupils' levels of attainment, they look at work samples and hold discussions with groups of pupils to gauge the depth of their learning. Head teacher and staff have an evaluative attitude which helps them to stay clear sighted and to raise hypotheses about the teaching and learning which further their understanding of their work and the children's.

56. Effective use is made of the budget for staff provision. This allows some flexibility in working time which gives staff time to be reflective about their work. The pupils' interests are protected because the staff who cover the last half day of the week also provide quality teaching and are often the subject specialists who teach music and art. The use of funding also ensures good classroom support from the large team of skilled learning support assistants.

57. The governors are kept well informed by the head, supported by the curriculum leaders on curriculum developments and by the bursar on budget issues. Most of the governors are largely relatively recently appointed and aware that their strategic role is not fully developed. With the help of the head teacher they have developed a sensible action plan to improve the situation.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**58. Governors and staff are aware of the possibility of using data about the pupils' attainment to help them in their work. The school is beginning to do two things which can improve the effectiveness of the teaching and the ability of the governors to work strategically. Both activities are at early stages and are not yet regular:**

- analysis of children's work and test papers has been used to show strengths and weaknesses in the reading competency of one year group;

- a pupil tracking system is in preparation which will show how much progress individuals and groups have made in comparison with each other.
59. The governors have looked with the head teacher at the data which is provided for them nationally which tells them that they have a successful school. They would be able to find out much more about the strengths and areas for development of the work in different subjects and the work of different groups of pupils if more detailed local analysis were done. For example, the school is slightly more successful at writing than reading when compared to other schools. Sufficient testing and work sampling is done in the school year to suggest areas where reading might be improved but there has previously been little analysis of that kind. This year a very useful summary of the Year 2 test results has been made, which indicates that the pupils are not as good at interpreting what they read as they are at working out what the words say. This can provide information to governors about what support or resources would need to be financed. It would also show the teachers what work to plan for the future to make up any gaps in the children's competencies.
60. The school holds baseline assessment scores for the younger year groups which give an indication of how many children were scoring below average, average and above average, on entry to school. Since the year groups are very small this information can have a big effect on what test results teachers and governors might reasonably expect from different years. Baseline scores are used to identify learning needs but not to check outcome later on. It would be possible to look for each cohort to see how many children have done better than might have been expected. Governors are particularly concerned to know whether the more able pupils achieve well enough, but have little information. Using baseline assessment as a starting point, the head teacher could track individuals' progress and provide governors with analysis which, although it would not tell them everything, would be useful. Similarly, governors need information about the success of the support for pupils with special needs in terms of the progress they have made. Helpfully, because the head teacher is aware of this need, the school is about to introduce a tracking system which will provide this kind of information.
61. The current organisation of the school means that pupils are usually taught in classes which contain two year groups, although for mathematics the children in Years 2 - 5 are set and work in single year groups. Although the year groups are so small that data might not clarify, it could be useful to use any evidence available to see if either organisation is more helpful than the other.
62. As the children go on to the next phase of their education at the end of Year 5 the school is not fully aware of the outcomes of the Year 6 national tests. The teacher who is the science curriculum leader has recently collected those for last year, which was informative, and results should be checked each year for all three subjects tested so that governors and staff can be informed of the outcomes of the school's work. The pupils who leave St James' in Year 5 are then operating at levels more usual for children a year older, so that it is important to know if they maintain that promise and achieve highly in Year 6.
63. The use of data analysis to identify needs and priorities could help the school development plan to be more strategic. At the moment the plan is rather bulky and tends to be diffuse. Whilst it sets some clear priorities the planned actions are not sharply related to gains in standards for the children. Better use of analysis of data and children's work would enable clearer definition of what is to be done and quantifiable success criteria to be determined. At the moment, the teachers write action plans for

their individual subjects and do try to show in them what the effect of the plan will be on standards, but are not very specific about how many pupils are to reach certain standards. The tracking system should help them to be sharper here.

64. Governors currently set their budget on the advice of the head teacher following historic precedent for staffing levels. They may have more flexibility to support the school's development priorities when the priorities are more sharply defined.

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

65. To continue to improve the school governors and senior managers should continue as they intend to make better use of attainment data to:

- identify specific strengths and weaknesses in the learning of individuals, groups and particularly year groups in mixed age grouped classes;
- track the progress of those pupils who are more able including those identified by baseline assessment;
- use their findings to inform the governing body by reporting to them in writing about standards;
- use the information to give strategic guidance to their school development planning; and
- support the improvements they identify through their budgeting.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	8
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	38%	62%	0	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 – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		90
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		13

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	8	7	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	7
	Girls	6	7	6
	Total	14	15	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	8
	Girls	6	7	7
	Total	13	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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	75
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*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	0	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 – Y5**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	30

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y5**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	89

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

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

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	249261
Total expenditure	239059
Expenditure per pupil	2657
Balance brought forward from previous year	11798
Balance carried forward to next year	22000



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	90
Number of questionnaires returned	65

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	22	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	78	18	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	32	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	48	9	3	0
The teaching is good.	89	9	0	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	29	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	11	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	89	9	0	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	75	25	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	94	5	0	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	28	0	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	32	8	0	3