



**OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION**

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Barking

LEA area: Barking & Dagenham

Unique reference number: 131246

Headteacher: Mr J Sims

Reporting inspector: Mr S H Ward
9271

Dates of inspection: 8-11 May 2001

Inspection number: 192561

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Broadway Barking Essex
Postcode:	IG11 7AR
Telephone number:	020 8 270 6474
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs T Baumann

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
9271	Selwyn Ward	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? Pupils' attitudes and personal development What should the school do to improve further?
9053	Vivienne Phillips	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? Partnership with parents
23288	Marianne Harris	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Geography History	Equal opportunities
28069	David Mylroie	Team inspector	English Design and technology Information and communications technology	How well is the school led and managed? Special educational needs English as an additional language
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Music Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

With 202 full-time pupils, St Joseph's is of average size compared with schools nationally, although it is smaller than most other primary schools in its locality. The school is popular and oversubscribed. The school's nursery has the capacity for 52 part-time places, but currently only offers 26 places as the school has been unable to recruit staff for the afternoons. Although all full-time pupils are Catholic, the school has a diverse ethnic mix, with around a third of the pupils coming from a minority ethnic background. There are broadly similar numbers of girls and boys. Although a high number of pupils speak English as an additional language, few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs is below average, although there is an above average number with statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Overall, pupils are of broadly average attainment when they join the school. The inspection covered all subjects with the exception of religious education and the school's provision for collective worship which instead formed part of the separate religious education inspection commissioned by the governors.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Joseph's makes effective provision for its ethnically diverse pupils as part of a caring Catholic Christian community. The headteacher, governors and staff work together well to maintain the ethos of the school and to encourage children to become mature and responsible. Teaching is sound, so that in most subjects, most pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, although in English in the infants and in mathematics throughout the school, more able children are not achieving in line with their ability. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is good and they have a positive attitude to learning.
- Children of all ages get on well with one another and are able to take on responsibility within the school.
- Older pupils have well developed investigation skills in science.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and they make good progress.
- The school has very good facilities, including a very good computer suite, which is used effectively for teaching information and communications technology.
- The school provides a caring and supportive environment for its pupils.
- Parents are kept well informed and are supportive of the school and of their children's learning.

What could be improved

- Children are not doing well enough in English at age seven, or in mathematics and design technology throughout the school.
- More able pupils are not doing as well as they should be.
- All teachers do not always follow policies and practices consistently.
- Not enough use is made of assessment information to raise pupils' achievement.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. The issues raised in that inspection have been satisfactorily addressed. Standards in most subjects are broadly similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection. They have improved in music and physical education, but standards in mathematics and art are lower than were reported last time. Teaching has improved, with a higher proportion of satisfactory teaching than was previously seen. The curriculum has improved, particularly in the school's provision for teaching geography, design technology and information and communications technology (ICT). Facilities are much improved, particularly those for ICT. The last inspection referred to problems in recruiting staff. These have continued, although currently the school is adequately staffed to meet legal requirements.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key very high (top 5%) A* well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low (bottom 5%) E*
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A*	B	C	C	
mathematics	A	A	E	E	
science	A	B	D	E	

Schools are categorised as similar according to the number of children known to be eligible for free school meals.

Results last year in English, mathematics and science were below those attained in previous years and instead of the steady improvement in test results seen nationally, results have sharply declined. Some of the fluctuation in results is due to variation from year to year in different pupils' abilities and prior attainment. When compared with results achieved by the same children in the tests they took at the age of seven, last year's results in English were well above average, although they were below average in mathematics because few children achieved the higher levels. This actually represents good progress in English across the juniors, but unsatisfactory progress in mathematics. The school has set challenging targets for raising standards in mathematics, but targets set in English are unambitious, being below the levels achieved in 2000. Pupils' work seen in English and science was judged to be in line with national expectations for pupils aged eleven, with above average investigation skills in science, but overall work was below national expectations in mathematics. In other subjects, standards of work seen were in line with expectations for pupils' age, with the exception of design technology, which was below. Children make satisfactory progress in the *Foundation Stage*, so that by the time they leave the reception class, almost all attain the nationally expected standard. In the infants, they make satisfactory progress in most subjects, with the exception of design technology, where standards are below average, and English and mathematics where more able children are not doing as well as they could. This is reflected in the work seen and in the results of the 2000 national tests for 7-year-olds. In these tests, results were in line with the national average in reading but below the national average in writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, reading and mathematics were below average and writing was well below average. Although in the infants there has been a variation over the past 3 years in the performance of girls and boys which is greater than seen nationally, this is not the case in the juniors. Children from different ethnic backgrounds make similar progress, but children of different abilities do not all do as well as one another. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. Children of average and below average ability make satisfactory progress, other than in mathematics, but more able children are not doing as well as they could. It is this that is depressing the school's test results, particularly at age seven.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. There have been no exclusions over the past year. Around the school and in most lessons behaviour is good, but in a small minority of lessons, the unsatisfactory behaviour of a few disrupts the learning of others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are good. They are considerate, help each other and work well together. Boys and girls, and children from different ethnic backgrounds, are all included and get along well with one another and with most adults in the school.
Attendance	Attendance is good and most children arrive at school on time. Unauthorised absence is below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of the lessons seen. It was good in 31 per cent of lessons, and very good in 6 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in 8 per cent of the lessons seen. The teaching of English and mathematics which was observed was satisfactory overall. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good.

In the most effective lessons, pupils know what it is they are expected to learn, and teachers' clear instructions help to ensure that pupils settle quickly to the tasks set them and got a lot done. Teachers know and manage pupils well, and organise lessons so that all are fully involved. Pupils learn best when questioning is used to check understanding and teachers encourage them to extend their answers. Support assistants are mostly used well, although there are occasions when they are passive observers. Where teaching is less effective, time is not well used so that some pupils become bored. In a few lessons, the teacher's management of the class is a weakness, so that children fidget or misbehave. In planning lessons, most teachers do not make enough use of information on how well individuals are doing to ensure that activities in lessons fully meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able. Marking is generally not used well to help children to identify what they need to do to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	National Curriculum requirements are met. The curriculum for the <i>Foundation Stage</i> broadly meets legal requirements. The school has adopted and follows its local education authority's English and mathematics teaching schemes rather than the <i>National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies</i> , but these have not had an effect in raising standards.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils are well taught and make good progress.
Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language	The school has many children who speak English as an additional language although few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. They are well taught and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibility within the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school gives careful attention to children's welfare. Comprehensive assessment information is collected but this is not used to raise attainment.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress and involves them well in their children's education and in the life of the school. Parents have raised considerable sums of money for the school and are supportive of its work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior management team provide satisfactory leadership within a strong Catholic Christian ethos. Staff with subject management and other responsibilities fulfil their roles effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities appropriately. They are committed to and very supportive of the school and are part of the school community.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are good systems in place for monitoring teaching and learning but not enough use has been made of this information to raise standards. The school is beginning to adopt the principles of " <i>best value</i> " to evaluate for itself what it does well and what it might do to improve but some of its performance targets are unchallenging.
The strategic use of resources	Budgets are well linked to the school's development plan, although the school development plan is not focused clearly on raising standards.
The school's buildings and facilities	Very good. There are sufficient classrooms and additional teaching areas and these are spacious and well equipped. The new computer suite offers very good facilities for teaching.
Staffing	There are currently enough teaching and support staff for the main school, but the school has historically had difficulties in recruiting permanent teaching staff and has been unable to recruit a teacher for the afternoon nursery.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and behave well • The teaching is good and children make good progress • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best • Children are helped to become mature and responsible • The school is approachable • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are not enough extracurricular activities

Inspectors generally agree with the parents' favourable views of the school. Inspectors were satisfied with the range of extracurricular activities currently on offer. The range of extracurricular sports is better than seen in most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children are of broadly average attainment when they join the school. They make satisfactory progress in the *Foundation Stage*, which covers the nursery and reception classes, so that by the time they leave the reception class most have attained the *early learning goals*, which are the nationally expected levels for the age of 5. Children make good progress in the nursery in developing their independence through choosing activities and in beginning to take responsibility for their own learning. However, this progress is not developed well as children move into full-time education, where activities become more closely defined and pupils are less encouraged to take the initiative in lessons.
2. In the national tests taken at the end of the infants in 2000, results were in line with the national average in reading but below the national average in writing and mathematics. When compared with schools considered to be similar because they cater for a similar proportion of children eligible for free school meals, results in reading and mathematics were below average and writing was well below average. Test results in the infants have fluctuated widely over the past 3 years. They improved in 1998, then fell in English but not in mathematics in 1999 and then improved in English but not in mathematics in 2000. There has been a variation over the past 3 years in the performance of girls and boys that is greater than seen nationally. Children of different abilities do not all make as much progress as one another. Children with special educational needs make good progress in the infants. Children of average and below average ability make satisfactory progress over time in all subjects except mathematics, but more able children are not doing as well as they could be. It is this that is depressing the school's test results in the infants. For example, in mathematics in 2000 every child attained the nationally expected level, which would have put St Joseph's among the top 5% of schools on this measure. However, relatively few achieved the higher level, so that results overall in mathematics were below average.
3. In the tests in 2000 for pupils aged seven, the school's results were below those attained in previous years in English, mathematics and science. There has not been the steady improvement in test results seen nationally. Some but not all of the fluctuation in results is due to variation from year to year in different pupils' abilities and prior attainment. When compared with results achieved by the same children in the tests they took at the age of 7, last year's results in English indicated good progress and above average achievement. However, their achievement was below average in mathematics because, as in the infants, few children achieved the higher levels. In the juniors, the difference in the performance of girls and boys is less marked than seen nationally. As in the infants, children with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils with average and below average ability make satisfactory progress over time in all subjects except mathematics, but more able children are not doing as well as they could be. The school has set challenging targets for raising standards in mathematics, but the targets set in English are unambitious, being below the levels actually achieved in 2000.
4. The school is socially and academically inclusive and gives the fullest encouragement to children from different backgrounds, but it does not specifically monitor children's academic performance by ethnic origin. From work observed by inspectors, however, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to one another. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve standards in line with their abilities by the time they leave the juniors. Those who remain at the school for all of their schooling make good progress and no longer need support by the time they reach Year 6. They also make good progress in subjects other than English where they carry out the same activities as the rest of the class.
5. Pupils' work seen in the inspection was judged to be in line with expectations for their ages in most subjects. However, the exceptions are mathematics and design technology, where standards are below average in both the infants and juniors, and English where they are below average at the end of the infants. Older pupils have investigation skills in science that are well developed and overall above the standard found in most schools. These are not necessarily reflected in pupils' tests scores in science, however, as the national tests do not explicitly examine this aspect of the science curriculum.

6. The school has adopted the Barking & Dagenham schemes for English and mathematics rather than following the *National Literacy* and *Numeracy Strategies*. These have not had an effect in raising standards, particularly in relation to more able pupils. Satisfactory use is made however of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. In particular, there is a strong emphasis on accuracy in spelling, so that even children in Year 1 are careful in copying words down correctly. Standards of handwriting and presentation are good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils' positive attitudes, behaviour and good attendance were identified as strengths in the last inspection, and these strengths have been successfully maintained. In their questionnaire responses, 97 per cent of parents expressed the view that their children enjoyed school, and 95 per cent expressed the view that behaviour in school was good. Inspectors agree with these positive views of the school. Pupils work hard and enjoy coming to school. They are keen to learn, and the majority of pupils in each class listen carefully to the teacher and volunteer to answer questions and take part in activities. Almost all pupils show positive attitudes to school. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and most adults are good. Girls and boys, and children from different ethnic backgrounds mix, work and get on well together. In lessons, when teachers set collaborative activities where pupils are asked to work together in pairs or small groups, pupils co-operate well with each other, share tasks and work purposefully.
8. Pupils' behaviour is good both around the school and in the majority of lessons. In some lessons, behaviour is very good and this, coupled with pupils' keen enthusiasm, makes a strong contribution to their learning. In a small minority of lessons, the unsatisfactory behaviour of a few pupils distracts other children and disrupts their learning. Where this occurs, it is usually related to weaknesses in the teacher's management of the class and to an abrasive or confrontational approach to discipline. This is inconsistent with the more positive approach to promoting good behaviour that the school seeks to encourage in its policies and which is seen in most classes. Pupils understand and appreciate the rewards for good work and good behaviour, and there is much enthusiasm and friendly competition to win the weekly house points and best class awards. Self-discipline is not consistently well developed across the school, so that the behaviour of some children is more dependent on their desire to reap rewards or avoid sanctions than on a moral choice. Both pupils and parents report that bullying is rare. They are confident that when it is reported it is dealt with effectively. There have been no exclusions over the past year.
9. Pupils of all ages have the opportunity to take on responsibility within their class, and, in the case of older pupils, across the whole school. Pupils in Year 6 are able to become house captains and prefects, and they fulfil their duties with care and efficiency. Older pupils look after younger children in the school, which results in some genuine friendships reaching across a relatively wide age range. Even children in the infant classes are able to take on responsible tasks as monitors, and they respond very well to the trust they are given. The responsibility which pupils are able to take on contributes well to their personal development. In their questionnaire responses, 97 per cent of parents expressed the view that the school is effective in helping their children to become mature and responsible.
10. Pupils with special educational needs behave well in class as a result of being well supported and their needs being met through appropriate planning by their teachers. They concentrate very well, both in whole class lessons and when withdrawn to work in small groups. Pupils with special educational needs are able to discuss their work sensibly with each other and with adults and are proud of their achievements.
11. Attendance is good and has been maintained well at a level similar to that reported in the last inspection. It is above average, with less unauthorised absence than found nationally. Children come to school regularly and on time because there is a shared understanding of the importance of good attendance for learning and achievement.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Part of the focus of the inspection was on literacy and numeracy, and so priority was given to observing the teaching of English and mathematics. All classes were seen being taught these subjects. In most cases, inspectors were able to observe full lessons. In judging teaching, inspectors sought evidence that pupils were learning and making progress.
13. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of the lessons seen. It was good in 31 per cent of lessons, and very good in 6 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in 8 per cent of the lessons seen. There was no significant difference between the quality of teaching overall in the *Foundation Stage*, infants and juniors. The school has adopted and follows its local education authority's English and mathematics teaching schemes rather than the *National Literacy* and *Numeracy Strategies*. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory, although the local education authority schemes as used by the school have not had an impact in raising standards. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good.
14. Overall, teaching has improved since the last inspection when there was a higher proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. However, some of the continuing variation in the quality of teaching is due to inconsistent practices between different teachers. This was noticeable, for example, in different teachers' strategies for ensuring good behaviour in lessons. Although there are whole school policies for positively encouraging good behaviour, some teachers depart from this and punctuate their own lessons with frequent scolding and threatened punishments that are less effective in securing pupils' enthusiastic co-operation in learning.
15. Where teaching is most effective, teachers set out clear learning objectives and share them with pupils so that the children know what it is they are expected to learn. Often these are set out on the board or on an overhead projector slide, and in some cases they are briefly discussed with the class at the start of the lesson. Teachers' clear instructions help to ensure that children settle to their assigned tasks quickly and without fuss, so that good use is made of lesson time and the pupils get a lot done. Most teachers know and get on well with their pupils and manage their class well, and effective lessons are organised so that children are fully involved. Pupils learn best when questioning is used to check their understanding and teachers encourage them to extend their answers, as, for example, in an infant physical education lesson where children who had been involved in twisting and swirling movements were asked if they felt dizzy and if they understood what was meant by the term. In this example, lively questioning helped to extend children's vocabulary while encouraging them to evaluate what they were doing.
16. In planning lessons, even those that are otherwise very effective, not enough use is made of information on how well individual pupils are doing to ensure that activities in lessons fully meet the needs of all children, especially the more able. The Barking & Dagenham mathematics scheme, for example, is used by the school as an alternative to the *National Numeracy Strategy*, and it includes detailed daily individual lesson plans. Most teachers use these plans exactly as printed, without adaptation to take account of the differing ability levels and different prior attainment of the individual children in the class. These prescriptive plans help most teachers to deliver satisfactory lessons in which the majority of pupils made satisfactory progress. However, the lack of adaptation to reflect the learning needs of individual children mean that relatively few such lessons are better than satisfactory. A few teachers use the mathematics scheme planning more flexibly, by incorporating some of their assessment information so as to tailor activities more closely to pupils' prior attainment. These lessons are often more effective. Overall, although teachers have high expectations of average and less able children, they do not generally have high enough expectations of more able children. As a result, these children are generally set work that is not challenging enough, and the progress they make in their learning is too slow. This contrasts with the planning for pupils with special educational needs, which is rather better as these children generally receive additional support linked to their individual education plans.
17. Where teaching is less effective, time is not well used and lessons lack pace so that some pupils become bored and fidgety. In a few lessons, the teachers' management of the pupils is a weakness, so that some children misbehave and occasionally distract others from their work. Although there are some examples in the school of teachers using marking effectively, marking is generally not used well by

teachers to help children to identify what they need to do to improve. This is another example where the consistent sharing of best practice within the school could help to further improve teaching and better support children's learning.

18. Support assistants are mostly used well. Even during the time that the class teacher is addressing the whole class, they often sit with and assist specific individual children or groups of children in focusing their concentration, or monitoring those children to help the teacher assess their understanding and learning. On just a few occasions, however, support assistants and other adult helpers are less well used, spending too long as merely passive observers.
19. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, particularly when they are given effective and appropriate support. This is true in all classes because teachers make good use of the targets set on the pupil's individual education plan as the basis for the work set for them. In the case of older pupils, these targets are shared so that the children are able to share responsibility for their own learning. In all classes, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are enthusiastic about their work.
20. Teachers plan well for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. These pupils are well supported by a specialist teacher provided by the local education authority and the school's special needs co-ordinator, who ensures that they receive the necessary support from the learning support assistants in the school. The work set for the children is challenging and supports them in making good progress in their learning, both when withdrawn to be taught in small groups and when taking part in class lessons.
21. In their questionnaire responses, 96 per cent of parents expressed positive views about the quality of teaching. Most were broadly satisfied with homework, although at their meeting with inspectors, a number of parents raised concerns about the balance of homework. Many of the concerns expressed by parents were historic, with several of those critical of teachers' use of homework acknowledging that homework had recently improved. Homework seen during the inspection was satisfactory across the school and made a sound contribution to pupils' learning. Dissatisfaction from pupils about homework mostly related to their being set bulk packages of homework over the school holidays.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

22. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which meets all statutory requirements. Although the nursery is currently only open in the morning, the curriculum for children at the *Foundation Stage* meets legal requirements. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, when shortcomings were identified in information and communications technology, geography and design technology.
23. The school has adopted and follows its local education authority's English and mathematics teaching schemes rather than the *National Literacy* and *Numeracy Strategies*, but these have not had an effect in raising standards overall in these subjects. Planning for other subjects, which also mostly follow the local education authority's guidelines, is sound. However, there is not enough flexibility in teachers' planning to meet the needs of all pupils as not enough use is made of information on how well individual pupils are doing to ensure that activities in lessons fully meet the needs of all children, especially the more able. Skills in English and mathematics are developed satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, skills learnt in mathematics are used in science for recording and comparing temperatures. There is appropriate provision for sex education and other aspects of personal and health education, including the dangers of drug misuse.
24. Pupils with special educational needs join in all of the activities that take place in their classes. Unlike those for more able pupils, activities are sometimes modified to take account of their individual needs, particularly in English and mathematics lessons, and this contributes to the good progress that these pupils make. There is adequate breadth and balance in the curriculum offered to pupils with special educational needs as they take part in all school activities. Their individual education plans identify what they need to learn to overcome their difficulties and how this is to be achieved. The plans are followed well and pupils are able to make good use of the opportunities offered to them to learn. There

are good resources available for teaching pupils with special educational needs and these are used effectively. The school carefully tracks the progress being made by pupils for whom English is an additional language and there is good provision for these pupils, supplemented by some external support from the local authority, which contributes to the good progress that they make.

25. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to learn outside lesson times, and the range of sports activities in particular is good. These include a sports club for the infants, and football, netball and athletics for the juniors. The school takes part in sporting competitions and has been particularly successful this year in netball. Visits to local places of interest enrich subjects such as geography and religious education. Visitors to the school add a further dimension, and include theatre groups and art workshops. In their questionnaire responses, almost a third of the parents expressed dissatisfaction with the range of activities available outside lessons, but inspectors do not share their concern.
26. The school has developed good links with the community, particularly the parish and the church. Pupils visit other places of worship, including a Sikh Gurdwara. The school has recently won a competition for plans to improve the local environment. There are satisfactory links with the secondary schools, especially the one to which the majority of the pupils transfer.
27. The school makes sound provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Religious education lessons and assemblies show that pupils have the opportunity to reflect on their own lives and those of other people. There are good opportunities for pupils to think about what is important in their lives. In music and dance lessons, pupils have the chance to enjoy experiences such as moving to music and working creatively. The opportunity to appreciate the work of other children is inhibited, however, due to the lack of stimulating displays around the school.
28. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is firmly based on its Catholic Christian ethos. Pupils are given firm guidance on the difference between right and wrong, and this is constantly reinforced. Opportunities to think about issues affecting the lives of other people are given in lessons and assemblies. Rules are prominently displayed in classrooms, and good work and behaviour are praised and acknowledged through house points announced at weekly assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to show concern for others by raising money for several local and national charities, including Comic Relief, the Mr Men Leukaemia Appeal and the Richard House Hospice.
29. Pupils' cultural development is supported satisfactorily through geography and history, with children also studying music from different cultures. A range of visitors such as artists and theatre groups enrich pupils' education. Some use is made of stories from abroad in which other cultures are represented, so that, for example, infant children looked at the story "*Handa's Surprise*", but overall the school offers too few opportunities to learn about other cultures or to celebrate the diverse ethnic mix found within the school.
30. Provision for social development is good. Older pupils are encouraged to contribute to the school community by taking on various responsibilities. For example, the school has made imaginative provision to include a "bus stop" in the playground, where pupils can go if they have no-one to play with. This helps pupils who are feeling lonely or excluded and have difficulty coping with lunchtimes to make friends and develop their social skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 look after younger children. This link is beneficial to the social development of both age groups. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and team spirit in the range of extracurricular activities, including clubs, team sports and Year 5 and 6 residential visits. Children with special educational needs are accepted in class and have access to the same curriculum as the rest of the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. At the time of the previous inspection, the personal support and guidance offered to pupils were identified as strengths of the school because of their positive contribution to educational standards.

The quality of personal support is still good, but is not directed at raising academic standards. The school takes care to respond to children's social, personal and emotional needs in a supportive way. Staff know pupils well, which helps them to recognise patterns of behaviour and attendance that might be a cause for concern. As a result, informal monitoring of pupils' personal development is good. However, monitoring is not used systematically to identify whether or not individuals are making appropriate rates of progress in their academic work. The school has good arrangements for ensuring that pupils are safe, healthy and protected from harm.

32. The school promotes good attendance through high expectations and clear procedures that are implemented well. Measures to promote good behaviour and eliminate bullying are satisfactory, but there are inconsistencies in practice that lessen the impact of the school's well-considered policies. For example, in a dance lesson, the teacher took care to notice and praise the way in which children tried to listen and follow instructions. In contrast, a teacher singled out particular children for criticism in a mathematics lesson although their responses were much the same as everyone else's. Negative comments about the way they sat or listened led to loss of interest in the lesson, and then they began to show lack of concentration by fidgeting. This was unhelpful as a strategy for pupils with and without particular emotional and behavioural difficulties. It did not encourage children to follow a positive example and try to behave well. In most instances, however, warm relationships with children and a positive example from adults help to encourage good behaviour in other lessons and around the school.
33. Planning for pupils who have special educational needs is good. An individual education plan (IEP) is drawn up for each child who has been assessed as being at the appropriate stage on the special needs Code of Practice. These IEPs are updated at least termly, and more frequently if necessary. Their contents are discussed regularly by the special needs co-ordinator, class teacher and learning support assistants. This is good practice. The targets set for each child are specific, attainable and objectively measurable: for example, "*extend sight vocabulary by five words*". There is an adequate number of targets for each pupil, covering both literacy and numeracy. IEPs are also drawn up for pupils with behavioural problems to support them in improving their behaviour. The school tracks the progress made by pupils with special educational needs effectively, and monitors movement through the stages identified in the Code of Practice.
34. The school has comprehensive assessment systems in place. Baseline assessments are used at the beginning of the Reception year and follow the good system in place in the Nursery. Parents are involved in the assessment process and are able to comment on what their child has learnt at home. These assessments give a clear indication of the knowledge and skills that each individual child has. Teachers assess pupils regularly throughout the school. Pupil profiles contain dated and annotated pieces of work for each child, showing the progress they have made in English, mathematics and science. The school makes use of optional test papers for pupils in the junior school, and from these have identified pupils who need extra help in mathematics and English in Year 6. Class targets have just been introduced in Years 2 and 6, but there is currently no consistent whole-school policy for individual or class targets throughout the school. National tests are analysed by the senior management team in the school, but this analysis and the considerable bank of assessment data which the school has built up is not used to inform planning or identify general strengths and weaknesses in provision. This means that teachers do not plan adequately to meet the needs of individual pupils, particularly the more able, for whom too much of the work across the curriculum lacks challenge.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. The last inspection reported that the school had developed a good partnership with parents. This effective partnership has been maintained. Parents are supportive, and a large majority express very positive views on almost all aspects of the school. 92 per cent indicated on their questionnaires that they viewed the school as working closely with parents, and 96 per cent indicated that they felt the school was approachable if they had any problems or concerns. Links with parents and carers are constructive and used well to involve them in the school's life and work. For example, there is an active parents' and teachers' association that raises significant amounts of money, used for instance to make a substantial contribution to the new computer suite. Parents support their children's work at home by

checking on the quality of homework produced and the amount of reading done. They help out in school and on trips, including the regular visits to the pool for swimming lessons.

36. In their questionnaire responses, 90 per cent of parents indicated that they were satisfied with the reports they receive on their children's progress. Reports to parents are usually of good quality and give helpful information about progress made, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The best reports are very clear about what a child knows, understands and can do. They give one or two specific suggestions for further improvement. Other, less well-focused, reports describe the work children have done, but without clear examples of what they have learned from it. In one or two cases, a focus on what the child is like, rather than what he or she can do, is unhelpful for effective assessment of academic performance and personal development. Other information such as newsletters and notices, are used well to maintain good contact with parents.
37. Wherever possible, the school involves parents of children with special educational needs in identifying the specific needs of their children. Parents are appropriately involved in setting targets for improvement in each child's individual education plan.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The headteacher and senior management team have established a strong Catholic Christian ethos at St Joseph's Primary School. This has been achieved through the development of a sense of community based firmly on the school's mission statement. The headteacher gives an effective lead to other members of staff by taking on the role of co-ordinator in areas of the curriculum that are being focussed upon. An example of this is the development of information and communications technology in the school. Together with the deputy head, he has been effective in working with other subject co-ordinators in order to help them fulfil their responsibilities and roles well. Parents clearly appreciate the leadership provided by the headteacher and senior management team. In their questionnaires, 97 per cent of parents indicated that they considered that the school was well led and managed.
39. The school has clear aims and objectives, and these are evident in its daily life. These aims are encouraged through the support given by the governing body and the Church. Good relationships exist between all members of staff, and there is an understanding of the need to raise standards, particularly in mathematics and science where results have declined. The school development plan appropriately identifies areas for future development, but it has some weaknesses as a management tool. The school's priorities for improvement are well linked to the budget, but some of the criteria against which success is to be judged are too vague. The plan also lacks detail on how developments are to be evaluated and who is to monitor their implementation.
40. The governing body is committed to the school, is supportive of its aims and objectives and feels part of the school community. It has an appropriate committee structure through which it ensures that the school fully meets its statutory requirements. Relationships between the headteacher, the school staff and governing body are strong. The governing body has set performance targets for the headteacher which have been verified by the government agency set up to carry out this task. Governors take part, together with the headteacher and staff, in drawing up the school development plan. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and are becoming more aware of the areas for development. The headteacher and other key members of staff report regularly to the governing body, but most governors also visit the school on a regular basis to get first-hand information.
41. The school has introduced a good system of appraisal and performance management for staff based on the national framework. This includes setting targets for teachers that are linked to appropriate in-service training and are based on lesson observation and priorities outlined in the school development plan. Lesson observations with feedback to teachers take place twice a year, which is more frequent than the national requirements. Teachers are committed to their own personal development: two are currently studying for Masters degrees. New teachers are helped to settle in by being given a partner teacher within the existing staff to work with them. In the case of newly-qualified teachers, the school has developed good systems for induction that include support from the senior management team and

the local education authority. It also has systems in place for regular monitoring of teaching and learning, but not enough use has been made of the information gained through monitoring in order to raise standards. The school is beginning to adopt the principles of “*best value*” to evaluate for itself what it does well and what it might do to improve, but some of the performance targets it has set for itself are unchallenging. For example, the targets set for test results in 2001 in English are lower than the results attained in 2000. The school has broadly maintained its standards since the last inspection and has tackled the key issues identified in the last report.

42. The arrangements for the financial management of the school are satisfactory. The school has effective financial routines, which are understood and followed by the staff involved. All grants made to the school by outside agencies are appropriately used, and all the recommendations set out in the recent audit report from the local authority’s auditors have been implemented. The headteacher, together with the governing body’s finance committee, oversee the management of the school’s finances effectively. The finance committee monitors expenditure on a monthly basis and approves the annual budget and recommends it to the full governing body for approval. As a result, finances are targeted effectively on the main objectives of the school development plan, although the plan itself does not focus sharply enough on raising standards of pupils’ attainment. The school has clearly set out procedures for ensuring that it achieves good value for money for all items of expenditure from the building of the new computer suite to the re-roofing of the building.
43. St Joseph’s accounts are kept on a recognised commercial accounting system used by other schools. However, the school does not make enough use of modern technology in its administration. For example, governing body minutes are still handwritten and the school does not use information technology to track individual pupils’ performance.
44. The school has had recruitment problems in the recent past, and these continue to the extent that the school has been unable to appoint a suitable teacher for the afternoon nursery. Otherwise, the school currently has an adequate number of teachers to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. As in most primary schools, some teachers take on responsibility for subjects in which they do not have specific expertise. However they take part in appropriate training courses to ensure that they are in a position to be able to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Good use is generally made of learning support assistants. Their support helps to ensure that pupils make progress throughout the school as a whole, and particularly that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. The pupils and teachers value their support. The special educational needs co-ordinator is committed to ensuring that all pupils on the special educational needs register make good progress. She supports other members of staff well, and this contributes to the good progress made by these pupils.
45. The school benefits from very good accommodation. This includes a very good computer suite, good facilities for physical education, a specialist room for special educational needs teaching, spacious, light and airy classrooms, changing rooms for Year 6 and pleasant external grounds, together with a purpose-built nursery block. The school has identified other areas for future development, including additional office space. Overall the school has a good range of resources to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, and there are no subjects where resources are unsatisfactory. The school maintains its resources by updating on an annual basis and in a planned manner, as outlined in the school development plan.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. Inspectors have identified the following interrelated and overlapping key issues for action. In order to improve the standard of education provided to pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (i) raise standards, particularly in English, mathematics and design technology, by
 - ensuring that all aspects of these subjects are fully covered and that children are able to build on what they have previously learnt
 - ensuring that all lessons include activities which offer appropriate challenge to all pupils, particularly the more able
 - providing opportunities for pupils to identify alternative methods of calculation and explain their mathematical thinking
 - setting achievable but challenging targets for year-on-year improvement in national test results
 - making sure that information from monitoring teaching and learning is used to secure further improvement
 - making more consistent use of marking and target-setting to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve
 - giving pupils the opportunity to evaluate and refine their work in design technology
(paras 2, 3, 5, 16, 17, 34, 39, 41, 69, 70, 72, 80)
- (ii) raise the attainment of more able pupils by making better use of information from assessment in planning lessons and ensuring that all lessons include activities which build on what pupils have previously learnt and which offer appropriate challenge to all pupils
(paras 2, 3, 16, 23, 34, 60, 65, 66, 69, 70, 72, 73, 76, 83, 85)
- (iii) ensure that school policies are more consistently followed by all staff so that the best practices found within the school are shared among all teachers, particularly in
 - marking
 - reports to parents
 - the use of drafting books
 - encouraging good behaviour
 - making the best use of support assistants
(paras 8, 14, 16, 17, 18, 32, 34, 36, 63, 65, 68, 72)
- (iv) make more effective use of the information from assessment to raise standards by setting measurable targets for pupils to achieve and to ensure that lessons are planned so as to include activities which offer appropriate challenge to all pupils, including the more able.
(paras 16, 23, 31, 34, 49, 72)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan. (Paragraph references are in brackets)

- A. Ensure that the independent learning skills which children develop in the nursery are built on when children begin full-time education (para 48, 52, 54)
- B. Ensure that documentation and planning in the *Foundation Stage* fully reflects national requirements (para 50)
- C. Review lesson planning to ensure that pupils are fully involved, and passive listening activities do not go on too long (paras 52, 72)
- D. Identify further opportunities to develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of the society in which they live (para 29)
- E. Improve the use and quality of displays to better celebrate pupils' work and achievement, and to create a more stimulating environment for learning (paras 27, 79)
- F. Consider monitoring pupils' performance by ethnic origin so that the school can satisfy itself that no group of children is underachieving (para 4)
- G. Improve the effectiveness of the school development plan as a helpful management tool by making more explicit the criteria and arrangements for evaluating developments (para 39)
- H. Make more effective use of information and communications technology in school administration (para 43)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	31	55	8	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	228
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	16
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	56
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12
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	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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 the infants

Number of registered pupils in final year of the infants for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	15
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	27	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (62)	90 (66)	100 (90)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	28	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (66)	97 (90)	97 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of the juniors

Number of registered pupils in final year of the juniors for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	19	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	5	9
	Girls	16	10	15
	Total	26	15	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (79)	50 (82)	80 (93)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	6	10
	Girls	17	11	19
	Total	27	17	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (79)	57 (82)	97 (93)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	15
Black – African heritage	22
Black – other	14
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	113
Any other minority ethnic group	9

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– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	28.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	48

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999-00
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	£
Total income	463,521
Total expenditure	495,401
Expenditure per pupil	2,064
Balance brought forward from previous year	37,624
Balance carried forward to next year	6,431

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

516

Number of questionnaires returned

206

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	21	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	35	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	42	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	39	8	2	2
The teaching is good.	57	39	4	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	40	8	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	28	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	52	40	6	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	64	34	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	39	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	32	27	5	6

(figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding)

Other issues raised by parents

Although this did not feature as a significant parental concern in the questionnaire responses, a number of parents at the pre-inspection parents' meeting expressed criticisms and concerns about homework.

**PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM,
SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47. Children enter the nursery at St Joseph's in the September of the academic year in which they reach the age of 4. They remain in the nursery for three terms, transferring into the reception class in the September of the academic year in which they reach the age of 5, if they meet the religious admission criteria. The nursery offers part-time provision for 52 children, although there is currently no afternoon session as the school has been unable to recruit a teacher for this class. On entry into the nursery, the children have skills and knowledge that are broadly average. Baseline assessment, carried out when the children enter the reception class, shows that the children's skills are developed appropriately and that they attain standards that are in line with those found nationally. Both the nursery and reception classes have children with special educational needs, and the staff work hard to fully include these children in all areas of learning.
48. The quality of teaching in the *Foundation Stage* is sound overall and it is likely that the majority of the children will achieve the early learning goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. The staff in both classes plan together effectively to ensure that the children receive a balance of activities that covers all areas of learning. The system of planning focussed activities that cover each area of learning in rotation works well, ensuring that all curriculum areas are covered and given sufficient emphasis. However the activities are not always appropriately balanced between those that the children choose for themselves and those that the teacher directs. At the beginning of the *Foundation Stage*, the children are able to choose their own activities and are encouraged to plan their own work. These skills are not sufficiently developed towards the end of the *Foundation Stage*, as much of the work is directed by the teacher with few opportunities for the children to be actively involved in planning their activities. Consequently, the children become too dependent on the adults in the class to guide their learning and some become bored and restless when sat on the carpet for too long.
49. Assessment throughout the whole stage is comprehensive and detailed. Assessment information gives an accurate picture of what the children are able to do, and reports also have space for parents to add their own comment on progress. However little use is made of these assessments to guide planning at the end of the *Foundation Stage* and the children tend to experience the same work and activities, regardless of their previous learning.
50. All of the staff in the *Foundation Stage* have good relationships with the children and are good role models, encouraging the children to care for each other and share appropriately. The staff use the local education authority's guidance on the *Foundation Stage*, but this has apparently not yet been reviewed to take account of the recent official changes. As a consequence, some of the information that is displayed for parents is out-of-date and does not reflect the full curriculum provision under the headings of the new *Foundation Stage*.
51. Good use is made of the available accommodation, and the nursery has a very good outside play area. This enables the children to make good progress in their physical skills and gives them confidence. There are plans for the reception class to have access to this area in order to form an Early Years Unit, and funding is currently being sought. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has had opportunities to monitor the provision in the *Foundation Stage*. She supports her colleagues well and has ensured that the transition from home to nursery to reception is smooth. There is a well-developed system of home visits, and parents are involved well in the children's learning. The standards in provision identified at the last inspection have been maintained.

Personal, social and emotional development

52. The children make satisfactory progress towards achieving the goals for personal, social and emotional development. In the nursery, children are encouraged to plan their own work, and they learn the importance of playing together and sharing equipment and resources. In the reception class, children continue to learn appropriate behaviour and how to form good relationships so that overall the children behave well. However the skills of planning their own learning and choosing their own activities, learnt

in the nursery, are not sufficiently developed later in the *Foundation Stage*. Pupils become restless when they are sitting on the carpet for sessions that are too long. Sometimes the children are too dependent on the adult in the class to tell them when to start work and exactly what activity to do. The children are very confident and approach adults in a mature manner. They are beginning to understand about the needs of others. Children with special educational needs are fully integrated into both classes.

Communication, language and literacy

53. The children in both classes make good progress towards the goals for this area of learning. There are many opportunities for them to speak in the nursery, and staff encourage this through well-planned small group discussions, many role-play activities and individual discussions. In the reception class, these skills are developed well and the children learn to listen to each other and make appropriate responses. Most of the children are confident when speaking to adults and other children, so that, by the end of the *Foundation Stage*, they are able to listen attentively for an appropriate amount of time. Both classes have a suitable range of books for the children to enjoy. Many stories are shared and children learn the purpose of print and how books are used. In the reception class, they learn initial sounds through a structured programme designed to support children who are having difficulties. The children are able to take books home to share with adults, and many are becoming confident when tackling reading books. Activities planned to develop writing skills are effective in helping the children to become writers. In the nursery, the children have access to a writing area and staff encourage the children to use a wide variety of writing tools. In the reception class, these skills are developed and children learn to write, forming their letters correctly and writing their names.

Mathematics

54. The children make good progress in mathematics. They are able to count to ten and beyond, and those in the reception class are able to correctly match numbers to objects. All of the children explore a variety of mathematical ideas and learn associated language. These skills are developed well, and by the end of the reception class, the children are able to discuss relative measurements such as heavier and lighter. Early problem-solving activities involve children discussing how many more bricks they need to balance the scales and how many spaces they will need to fit the children into a circle. In reception, the children are able to create simple patterns, although this work is very adult directed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

55. Children make satisfactory progress towards developing their understanding of their growing world. They are able to grow various seeds and begin to understand how a plant grows. Magnifying glasses are provided in the nursery for the children to look carefully and discuss what they can see. Children all have access to a wide variety of construction equipment and make models of everyday items with confidence. Both classes have a computer and the children are beginning to use the mouse skilfully to control programs. The children are becoming familiar with their local area and are able to talk about their experiences at home. Their developing religious education is linked effectively to the school's Catholic Christian ethos.

Physical development

56. The children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. All have access to a wide variety of tools to help them develop small muscle control skills. They use these tools safely and with increasing skill. The nursery uses the outside area effectively to encourage the children to move confidently and become aware of the available space. These skills are built on and developed in the reception class, where lessons such as dance help the children to move to music and respond appropriately.

Creative development

57. There are appropriate activities provided to develop the children's creative skills and they make sound progress. In the nursery, the children are able to explore a variety of textures, paint and model using a variety of equipment. There are good role-play areas to encourage the children to use language and work well together. In the reception class, the children experience creative activities, although these are less accessible to the children on a regular basis, and areas like the florist shop, for example, are not fully utilised to encourage the use of language for acting out experiences and making up stories. Music is used well to encourage the children to respond appropriately and express themselves freely.

ENGLISH

58. Results in the national tests in 2000 for 7-year-olds were in line with the national average in reading but below the national average in writing. When compared with similar schools, the number of pupils attaining the expected level was below average in reading and well below in writing. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was below the national average in writing but in line with the national average in reading. Between 1997 and 2000, results have fluctuated considerably in both reading and writing.
59. In the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2000, results in English were in line with national averages and with those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was also in line with the national average. Between 1997 and 2000, test results have fluctuated between being in line with national averages and being very much above them in 1998. Although the results in the 2000 tests were lower than in previous years, they nevertheless represent good achievement when compared with the same children's test results when they were assessed at the end of the infants.
60. From work seen, and despite a good emphasis on accuracy in spelling, attainment in writing at the end of the infants is currently below national expectations. Evidence gathered during the inspection would suggest that results at the end of Year 2 this year are likely to be similar to those achieved last year. Achievement in English in the infants is below what might be expected because more able pupils are not doing as well as they should be. Taking into account pupils' overall knowledge and ability in English when they enter the school, which is in line with that found nationally, they make unsatisfactory progress in the infants. However, progress is generally good in the juniors, so that from the beginning to the end of the school progress is satisfactory overall.
61. When pupils start work on the National Curriculum in the infants, their ability in speaking and listening is in line with that found nationally. By the end of Year 2 they are beginning to speak clearly and listen to their teachers, support assistants and each other. Satisfactory progress in speaking and listening is maintained throughout the school. Older pupils are able to discuss and respond to the opinions of others; they answer questions articulately and enjoy expressing their points of view. They are encouraged to frame their own questions and justify their opinions. In a lesson in Year 5, for example, they were able to identify the main attributes of characters in stories and to justify these by relating their answers to the text they had been reading. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills throughout the curriculum and through activities such as school masses and theatre workshops.
62. Attainment in reading is in line with national expectations at the end of both the infants and juniors. The school teaches reading through the use of a nationally recognised scheme, which encourages pupils to read at home and at school. Parents are encouraged to hear their children read at home. Records are kept in which both parents and teachers make comments. By the end of the infants, most pupils are reading fluently. They are able to discuss what they have read and to correct themselves when they make mistakes. They are also able to answer questions about what they have been reading. By the end of the juniors, they read with expression and are able to discuss their favourite authors and the types of book they like best. They read a range of literature of different types and from different cultures. For example, pupils in Year 6 were asked to comment on a piece of writing by the author Salman Rushdie when working on different ways of beginning a story. They are also able to predict what might happen next in a story and to give alternative endings. They are able to infer meaning and to discuss the use of reference books in their research. Pupils are encouraged to use the school's library on a regular basis, and the majority belong to a library outside the school. There are satisfactory resources for the teaching of English, with a variety of good quality books which are added to on a planned basis.
63. The standard of handwriting seen throughout the school is good. Pupils develop a clear cursive style in which letters are joined and are of a consistent height, making them very easy to read. Presentation is also good overall. Pupils are encouraged to write for themselves. They produce interesting pieces of free writing and are able to re-tell stories told to them by their teachers. They are able to look critically at the structure of stories and are able to draw out the main features of other peoples' writing. Pupils are

also encouraged to punctuate their stories correctly and expand their vocabulary. In some classes, pupils have a drafting book and complete written assignments in draft form before writing them up neatly. This supports pupils' learning, but this good practice is not followed consistently throughout the school. The school places a strong emphasis on spelling in both the infants and juniors. As a result, pupils learn the importance of accurate spelling and this is a notable strength of their learning in English.

64. Lower achieving pupils, those learning English as an additional language, and pupils with special educational needs, are all supported well. They are given clear instructions to understand the tasks given them by the class teacher and they make good progress. There is a shared expectation throughout the school that these pupils are able to succeed, as a result of which they do. They generally complete the same activities expected of the rest of the class.
65. The quality of teaching observed throughout the inspection ranged from satisfactory to very good. It was satisfactory overall. In the most effective lessons, good use was made of learning objectives to focus the pupils' attention on what they were learning. Teachers had a good knowledge of the subject, demonstrated good questioning skills to draw out pupils' knowledge and understanding and ensured lessons had a brisk pace. In most lessons however, more able pupils were insufficiently challenged and their needs were not adequately met, and in only two classes are individual learning targets set for pupils in English.
66. The Barking and Dagenham literacy scheme is used by the school as an alternative to the *National Literacy Strategy*. This local education authority scheme has a focus on writing and is most effective at raising the achievement of lower attaining pupils and ensuring that all pupils achieve in line with national expectations. The school does not adapt the scheme enough however to meet the needs of more able pupils who are capable of achieving higher levels.
67. Pupils are given opportunities to use their English skills in other subjects. For example, in Year 2 pupils were writing accounts of the life cycle of a seed during a science lesson, using an extended vocabulary and accurate spelling. In Year 1, pupils were encouraged to discuss their dislikes of features of the local environment in geography. Pupils also carry out their own research by using books and, increasingly, the Internet.
68. English is satisfactorily managed and the co-ordinator has an understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the subject. He has plans for further development and monitors the quality of teaching and learning on a regular basis, giving feedback to members of staff. However, the school does not ensure that the examples of good teaching evident in some classes are shared throughout the school on a systematic basis. Standards in English are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

69. In the 2000 national tests for 7-year-olds, all children attained the nationally expected level. This places the school well above the national average on this measure. However, the proportion achieving the higher level was well below the national average, so that the results overall were below average both nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Lessons seen during the inspection mirrored this position. Because less able pupils and those with special educational needs were well supported, they made good progress, but more able pupils underachieved. The majority of pupils have a good understanding of what is being taught, but pupils in Year 2 cannot always build on and apply what they had learnt in Year 1. As a result, for example, while Year 1 pupils show good understanding of addition and subtraction of numbers to eight, pupils in Year 2 are not able to apply the same concepts to higher numbers. Over the past three years, test results indicate that boys have performed better than girls and by a larger margin than seen nationally.
70. National test results for 11-year-olds showed a rising trend, with standards well above the national average for the years up to 1999. However, in the 2000 national tests, results dropped sharply so that they were below the national average and well below average when compared with similar schools.

When compared with how the same children had done in the tests they had taken at the end of the infants, these results showed underachievement, with pupils not having made as much progress in the juniors as they should have. An examination of pupils' work shows that very few areas other than computation were fully covered. Their work shows that they were unfamiliar with interpreting questions and solving problems. The position has improved this year, with older pupils showing good understanding of the work covered, but, as in the infants, more able pupils are not being given the opportunity to cover more challenging work.

71. The quality of teaching observed throughout the inspection ranged from unsatisfactory to good. It was satisfactory overall. Basic skills are taught thoroughly and the oral mental work at the beginning of each lesson is good. It builds on mental skills pupils have learned in earlier lessons, and time is well used to practise these skills. In the best lessons, this is brisk, challenging and fun. All pupils are involved in questioning, the majority make good progress, and in most classes pupils answer confidently.
72. Rather than following the *National Numeracy Strategy*, the school uses Barking & Dagenham's *Improving Primary Mathematics* scheme. This is very systematic in its approach. Lessons are carefully planned to provide for clear progression as pupils move through the school. However, the teachers use these ready-made plans as a script, which leads to lack of spontaneity. In most classes, teachers do not use information from their assessment of individual children's attainment to adapt the lesson plans to ensure appropriate challenge for all pupils, especially the more able. In many lessons, the recommended time of twenty minutes for whole class oral work was exceeded. In one class, pupils sat and listened to the teacher's explanation for nearly forty minutes. Where this part of the lesson is too long, pupils lose interest and have to be constantly reminded to pay attention. This slows the pace of the lesson still further. Where teachers adapt their planning to suit the needs of the pupils, learning is good. Teachers' explanations are clear. Pupils show good understanding of the principle being taught, but a weakness is that they are not encouraged to use other methods of calculation. For example, when multiplying, pupils were not asked if they could think of quicker methods, such as estimating by rounding. In the most effective lessons, pupils are asked to explain their working, but in other lessons opportunities for this are missed. Teachers explain precisely what the pupils have to do so they are able to complete the written task correctly. Learning support assistants and support teachers are not always actively involved during the teachers' whole class input, and better use could be made of their time. Where they do support pupils, they do so effectively. Much of the younger pupils' work is marked with the children so that teachers can check their understanding. Teachers mark older pupils' work, but corrections are not done. Although the most able pupils complete a lot of work, which is all correct, less able pupils only attempt a little, which is not always accurate or understood.
73. This is the first year in which the *Improving Primary Mathematics* scheme has been fully implemented throughout the school and it has not yet had a full impact on standards at the end of the juniors. Standards in mathematics are not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection. Mathematics is used in other subjects across the curriculum, such as using measuring skills to record temperature and recording results on line graphs in science. Assessment shows pupils' progress as they move through the school to be satisfactory except for the more able pupils, who are not doing as well as they could. Assessment is used to identify pupils with special educational needs who then receive additional support. The subject co-ordinator gives satisfactory supports to her colleagues. She has monitored lessons and fed back to teachers. Teachers have received training in the *National Numeracy Strategy* as well as the implementation of the *Improving Primary Mathematics* scheme. At the beginning of each year, parents of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are introduced to the scheme and given ideas of how to help their children at home.

SCIENCE

74. Pupils aged 11 attained standards in the 2000 national tests that were below those expected nationally and well below those of similar schools. When compared to schools whose pupils attained similar results in teachers' assessments at age 7, then standards are broadly average, indicating satisfactory progress in the subject through the juniors but from a low starting point at the end of the infants. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level in science in the 2000 tests was below average. Over the last few years, standards in science have fluctuated. There are no national tests for science when

pupils are aged 7, but teacher assessments indicate that pupils attained standards last year that were below those expected nationally.

75. Work seen throughout the school demonstrates standards similar to those expected for pupils' ages. Standards have improved since last year's tests because the school has increased the use of investigations to reinforce pupils' understanding of science. During the infant years, pupils learn about the human body and the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. They are able to sort materials, classifying them according to their use and texture. They explore electricity, make simple circuits, and know how sound is made. During their time in the juniors, pupils learn about looking after their teeth and the functions of various parts of the body. During lessons, they look carefully and record their findings systematically. Pupils are able to use their numeracy skills to draw graphs, for example to record how quickly an ice cube melts. They are also able to explain clearly what they think will happen and why. In a lesson to test the soundproofing qualities of various materials, pupils were able to state their predictions, including what could be varied and what should not, and carry out the investigation in a mature manner. Pupils make satisfactory learning gains as they progress through the school. A notable strength is that the skills needed to carry out investigations are well emphasised and teachers expect a high standard of recording. As a result, pupils in the juniors have above average investigative skills in science. Nevertheless, pupils are not given enough opportunities to work together to come up with their own ideas and formats for recording their work, which might further improve this aspect of the subject.
76. Four science lessons were seen during the inspection. Of these, three were satisfactory but in one the teaching was unsatisfactory because time was not well used and pupils became restless and uninvolved. The lessons seen and examination of pupils' work indicate that teaching of science is satisfactory overall. Teachers have sufficient knowledge to teach effectively, but much of the work is not at a sufficiently high level to challenge those pupils who are more able. The school has adopted the local education authority scheme, which is designed to ensure that all pupils achieve the nationally expected standard, but there is too little adaptation of the scheme to challenge those pupils who are capable of more. Planning does not ensure that work is based on prior knowledge, and most of the pupils carry out the same work regardless of prior attainment or ability. Most work is marked effectively, with pupils given encouraging comments and some targets or reminders. Teachers encourage the literacy and numeracy skills learnt in other lessons well, so work is well presented. It is especially noticeable that spellings are generally correct. Pupils enjoy learning science, and behaviour in lessons is good. They are keen to carry out investigations and, when permitted, work well together. They listen attentively in lessons and respond positively to their teacher.
77. The science co-ordinator has only been in post for one year. She has identified weaknesses in the school's system for recording investigations and has worked hard to implement a whole school policy on recording that shows the progress pupils make as they move from one year to another. This has been effective and the school now has a well-established policy that has had a positive effect on raising standards in investigative work. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues well. Resources are satisfactory and well stored so that they are accessible. Although standards in science have fluctuated over the last few years, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, with clear plans identified for further improvement.

ART

78. Attainment at the end of both the infants and juniors is in line with national expectations for pupils' ages. In the last inspection, attainment and progress were reported to be higher than this, but these above average standards have not been maintained. The school has recently introduced a new nationally recommended scheme, and teachers' emphasis has been to develop work through specific themes. Too few lessons were seen, however, to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Good use is made of sketchbooks which show how pupils develop ideas and techniques. Drawing skills are taught in a systematic way, and pupils have produced some thoughtful pictures as a result. For example, pupils experimenting with designs which communicate movement studied the photography of Eadweard Muybridge and produced illustrations depicting figures in action. Evidence from this and other previously completed work shows that pupils use a variety of media effectively, including pastel, oil crayon, paint and clay. Pupils evaluate their work at the end of each unit of study and teachers keep

a record of the work they have done. Displays around the school do not generally do justice to the work pupils produce in lessons.

79. Art is used in other areas of the curriculum. For example, younger pupils have used a computer program to draw pictures of *"The Very Hungry Caterpillar"*. This good link with information and communications technology helps pupils use their computer skills and develop their art work. Visiting artists enrich the curriculum and give pupils the opportunity to experience different techniques.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80. Constructions seen in both the infants and juniors were broadly in line with the standard expected for pupils' ages, but overall standards in the subject are below average because pupils are not given the opportunity to evaluate and refine their designs in the light of the experience of making and carrying out their tasks. By the end of their time in the school, pupils have begun to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in design and technology. The school has recognised that it needs to ensure that these skills are developed more systematically, and it has agreed to introduce the local education authority's scheme of work during the coming year. Currently pupils do not sufficiently develop their understanding of how products have to be designed or that plans frequently need to be modified in order to achieve the best results. However, they do develop the skills necessary to be able to assemble materials, having first considered their properties. Pupils also develop sound understanding of health and safety issues whilst working in design and technology. Pupils in the infants develop their design and technology skills through a variety of activities including cookery and making "*pop up*" cards.
81. During the inspection it was only possible to see two lessons in design and technology, which is not enough to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. The subject is well managed however, and the co-ordinator has already identified the areas that require future development in order to ensure that pupils make further progress in this subject. The subject is adequately resourced with a variety of tools and materials that are centrally located. Although standards are below average, this nevertheless represents some improvement since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

82. Pupils at the ages of 7 and 11 attain standards in geography that are broadly in line with those expected for their ages. By the end of the infants, pupils are able to discuss the local area and talk about their likes and dislikes. They can identify features such as the market and the theatre. They learn effectively about the weather and are able to use symbols that represent the weather. Pupils in Year 2 have constructive links with another school from a different locality and exchange visits are arranged. In the juniors, the theme of weather is developed further, and pupils in Year 4 have learnt relevant technical vocabulary and about weather conditions in other countries. By the time they are 11, children have studied other countries and are able to contrast these localities to that of Barking. For example, pupils in Year 5 have researched St Lucia and looked at the difference in jobs, for example, to those in the local area. Pupils make appropriate learning gains throughout the school.
83. There were few lessons observed during the inspection but analysis of work shows that geography is systematically taught following an appropriate scheme of work. Teachers expect pupils to complete and present their work neatly and use their previously gained literacy skills on spelling and neat handwriting when recording in geography. As a result, pupils take much pride in their work. However, work in books and examination of teachers' planning shows that all pupils carry out the same work and there is little evidence of more able pupils being given more challenging tasks to extend their learning. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues well and ensures that there are adequate resources and that these are readily accessible. Satisfactory standards have been sustained since the last inspection.

HISTORY

84. By the ages of 7 and 11, pupils attain standards in history that are in line with those expected for their ages. All elements of history are taught, and pupils in the infants begin to understand the order and

importance of historical events. For example, pupils have learnt about the Plague of London and can identify old and new toys from pictures. By the time they are 7, they are able to look at a series of bicycles and know which is the oldest. In the juniors, pupils learn about the Romans and Tudors. They also study Ancient Egyptians and Greeks. Throughout the juniors, skills are developed appropriately so that by the time they are 11, pupils can discuss the reasons for war and, for example, what life was like for rich people in Greece. They are able to apply knowledge and skills learned in geography, so that, for example, they know where Greece is on a world map. Pupils are able to use a variety of sources to study history and are beginning to develop investigative skills, especially in Year 6 where pupils write about life in the workhouse.

85. There were few lessons observed during the inspection, but analysis of work demonstrates that the teaching of history is systematic and linked to a clear scheme of work. Pupils are encouraged to use their literacy skills to present neat, well thought-out accounts. For example, pupils in Year 6 are able to record significant events in the life of Queen Victoria. Work in books is usually well presented with neat joined handwriting. Spelling is generally correct and pupils complete the work set them. As in other subjects, planning however shows that all pupils experience the same work regardless of their prior attainment or ability. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to follow their own lines of enquiry. History is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues effectively and ensures that resources are available and accessible. Satisfactory standards have been sustained since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

86. Overall standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are satisfactory. They have improved considerably since the new computer suite was installed earlier in the year. By the end of their time in both the infants and juniors, pupils are now achieving standards in line with those expected for their ages. The school has clear plans as to how this may be further improved in the future. The support given by teachers and learning support assistants ensures that pupils in both the infants and juniors make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress in this subject, so that by the time they leave the school they have satisfactorily developed their skills, knowledge and understanding in ICT.
87. Five ICT lessons were seen during the inspection, with teaching ranging from satisfactory to very good. It is good overall. Activities are well planned in the subject and skills are well taught. This supports the pupils in making progress in their learning. Pupils co-operate well in pairs when working on the computer and are able to discuss and explain their work. Teachers have generally good subject knowledge and have the confidence to cope well when a program or a piece of equipment malfunctions and the lesson does not go according to plan. Good use is made of the computer as a tool for learning by some teachers rather than as an end in itself.
88. The school is very well equipped for the teaching of ICT. An air-conditioned computer suite has recently been built and equipped, thanks to the generous support of parents. This is an excellent resource, and a great deal of care and attention to detail has been taken into consideration in equipping the room even down to the quality of the chairs which encourage good posture when children are seated at the keyboard. All of the computers are of a high specification, and the suite also contains a good number of printers and scanners together with a teaching computer with a large screen. Less effective use is made of the older computers in classrooms, and none were seen in use in any lessons during the inspection. The subject is well managed so that all members of staff are enthusiastic and share a commitment to further develop the role of ICT in the curriculum. They have worked hard to improve their own understanding of the use of computers and are passing on their enthusiasm to the pupils. Overall the school has made good progress in this subject since the last inspection.

MUSIC

89. Standards in music have improved since the last inspection, and pupils throughout the school reach the levels expected for their age. They learn to sing tunefully, both in whole-school singing and in class lessons. They are able to sing in rounds confidently. There is good provision for instrumental lessons, which are free. Children are given the opportunity to learn to play violin, cello or a brass instrument in

small groups. These pupils make good progress, and this is reflected in the results they achieve in their music examinations.

90. Six lessons were seen taught by class teachers, including hymn practices. In half of these, teaching was good and it was satisfactory in the other half. A visiting specialist musician spends some time in lessons to accompany singing and develop good practices. This supports class teachers and, with the adoption of a new scheme of work, has helped to raise teachers' confidence and their own subject knowledge. This allows them to build on the skills that pupils have been taught in these short but effective sessions. Planning is satisfactory and pupils know what they are expected to learn, as lesson objectives are shared at the beginning of each session. There is a good balance between listening and performing, and pupils are given opportunities to practise new skills such as articulating difficult phrases and clapping different rhythms. Pupils join in singing, clapping rhythms and playing instruments enthusiastically. In the majority of classes, they enjoy music lessons and respond well.
91. The co-ordinator has only recently taken on responsibility for the subject but she has been effective in monitoring music throughout the school, ensuring that resources are adequate and supporting colleagues well. Since the last inspection, a scheme of work for music has been put in place and this supports the work of the teachers well so that standards are now higher than those previously reported.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

92. Standards of work seen in both the infants and juniors are in line with expectations for pupils' ages and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils in all year groups show good control of their movement and good awareness of each other's space. Younger pupils move well to the rhythm of music. Year 1 children were seen working creatively with balloons to make up their own dance. As pupils progress through the school, their co-ordination improves as they develop control over their movements. They work with apparatus safely and sensibly and are mindful of the presence of others. Pupils are keen to improve their skills and are always willing to demonstrate to the rest of the class what they can do. Pupils in Year 2 start to learn to swim and each class has swimming lessons at some point in the year. By the time they leave school, the children can all swim 25 metres confidently. A residential visit to Wales provides pupils in Years 5 and 6 with the opportunity to participate in a variety of outdoor adventure activities.
93. Teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. It was good or very good in three of the four physical education lessons seen. Teachers plan work effectively, which ensures that skills are steadily developed. They have high expectations and give clear instructions so pupils know what to do. Where teaching is good or very good, lessons have a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to practise. In a hockey lesson, pupils listened well, improved their skills in passing to each other and worked well in small groups. Pupils work with enthusiasm and try hard to improve their skills.
94. The new co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and has observed lessons, although so far only in two classes. She has good plans to develop the subject in the near future, particularly in athletics and dance. The school offers a good range of extracurricular sports activities, including a sports club for the infants and football, netball and athletics for the juniors. These are well supported and children are keen to attend. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a variety of local sporting competitions.