

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Harrogate

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121643

Head teacher: Mr J Fullen

Reporting inspector: Miss K Manning
20267

Dates of inspection: 19th – 21st March 2001

Inspection number: 193230

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Coppice Rise Harrogate
Postcode:	HG1 2DP
Telephone number:	01423 562650
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Clemerson
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

OIN	Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20267	K Manning	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
			English as an additional language	The school's results and achievements.
			Children in the foundation Stage	How well are the pupils taught?
				How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
19741	T Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal achievements.
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27545	A Scott	Team inspector	Science	How well does the school care for its pupils?
			Information and communication technology	
			Music	
19120	D Pattinson	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			History	
			Geography	
			Special educational needs	
30835	A Black	Team inspector	Art and design	
			Design and technology	
			Physical education	
			Equal opportunities	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a small, voluntary aided primary school, serving the local and wider community. Most of the pupils come from Catholic families. Pupils come from predominantly English backgrounds and all but three speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals (12 per cent) is lower than in most schools. The number of pupils who start or leave the school part way through their education is low. There are 94 boys and 88 girls in classes from reception to Year 6. The children who start in the reception class have a wide range of experiences and abilities but most are typical of four-year-olds. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is lower than in most other schools. Twenty-two pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs because they have learning, physical or emotional difficulties. Of these, one pupil has a statement of special needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, which gives sound value for money. As a result of teaching that has many good features, by the time they leave the school most pupils have achieved as well as they can. Standards are high in English and mathematics but not high enough in information and communication technology and music. The leadership of the school is good and has ensured that the results of national tests are improving each year. All of this is managed on an average sized income.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve high standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Eleven-year-olds achieve good standards in art and physical education.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given all the help they need to make good progress and achieve as well as they can.
- Good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps pupils grow in maturity and confidence.
- The school's aims are reflected in all of its work and as a result pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and one another.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology are lower than they should be.
- Work in mathematics is not challenging enough for higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Throughout the school, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged by their work in science.
- Eleven-year-olds do not reach a high enough standard in music.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved at a steady rate since it was last inspected in April 1997. The governors and head teacher have tackled most issues successfully, though others still need more work before they are completed. As a result of training, teachers now have a better knowledge of how to teach most subjects. There are still gaps in their knowledge of how to teach information and communication technology, which prevents them from teaching the full curriculum. This aspect of the previous key issue continues to be a priority for further work. The leadership and management of the school are stronger than they were previously, with governors, deputy head teacher and co-ordinators are all playing a greater part in managing the school. This puts the school in a good position to be able to

continue to improve. The school now has a clear plan of how it intends to improve and this includes revised aims. Teachers have good systems for assessing what pupils can do, especially in English, mathematics and science. However, they are not using them to pitch work in mathematics and science at the right level for higher attaining pupils. There is more good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection and standards are rising faster than the national trend. The school is on course to meet the targets it has set for raising standards in English and mathematics in 2001.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A	A*
science	C	E	C	C

Key	
Top 5% of Schools	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

When they start in reception class, children's attainments are typical for their age. During the year they make good progress and gain in personal, social and emotional development. They widen their knowledge and understanding of the world and learn new skills in creative and physical development. Most achieve good standards in communication, language and literacy and do well in mathematical development. By the time they leave the reception class, children have achieved as well as they can. Most are ready for their work in the National Curriculum and some are already working towards the first levels of attainment.

The results of national tests for seven-year-olds showed that most pupils achieved as well as they could and there were no differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils excelled at writing and achieved standards that were well above the national average and far higher than those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Although most pupils achieved a personal best in reading and mathematics, higher attaining pupils did not do well enough in either subject. Standards were average in science, with pupils doing as well as expected for their age and ability.

By the end of Year 6, all pupils achieved the level expected for their age. This was a real success for the school and puts it in the top five per cent of all schools. In addition, far more pupils than in most other schools achieved a higher level in mathematics, again putting the school in the top five per cent when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils who achieved a higher level in English and science was about the same as in most other schools. Over the last three years, the school has maintained standards in English, mathematics and science.

Inspection findings show that standards in information and communication technology are below what is expected of seven-year-olds and well below what is expected of 11-year-olds. This is one of the areas the school has identified as a target for improvement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They enjoy all activities and work hard to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Pupils listen to what teachers say and concentrate on their work. Lunchtimes and breaks are happy, social occasions.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are mature and sensible. They form good relationships with other children and adults.
Attendance	Pupils enjoy going to school and attendance is well above 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.

Forty nine per cent of teaching in lessons during the inspection was satisfactory, 43 per cent was good and a further eight per cent was very good.

Strengths in teaching and learning: teaching of basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good and ensures that standards are above average in English and mathematics ~ teachers make good provision for pupils with special educational needs and for the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language and as a result they make good progress ~ teachers use a wide range of methods to teach the curriculum and this motivates pupils to do their best ~ teachers manage pupils well and try hard to provide work that meets the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes.

Weaknesses in teaching and learning: information and communication technology is not taught in sufficient depth and this prevents pupils from achieving as well as they could ~ not enough time is given to teaching music to pupils in Years 3 to 6 and consequently, standards are lower than they should be ~ in Years 1 and 2, higher attaining pupils are sometimes asked to do the same work as average attaining pupils and this prevents them from doing as well as they could in mathematics and science.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of after-school activities and strong links with the local community. Information and communication technology is not taught in sufficient depth and not enough time is given to music in junior classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers pay close attention to pupils with special educational needs and the school provides them with extra support for their difficulties.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. They are given the support they need to achieve as well as they can.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school places a lot of emphasis on developing pupils' personal growth and individuality. It is good at promoting their spiritual, social and cultural development and very good at promoting their moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are looked after well and care is taken with regard to their health and safety. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' behaviour and attendance are good. Though the procedures for assessing pupils' academic performance are good, teachers do not always use them well enough.

The school has maintained the good relationship it has with parents. They are encouraged to help their children at home and a number help out in the school. Their involvement has a significant impact on the standards achieved by most pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The school is led and managed well. The head teacher is a strong and enthusiastic leader who is supported very ably by a team of highly-motivated staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities and keep a close eye on teaching, spending and the curriculum. Through their commitment, they help give direction to the work of school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Through regular observation and checking test results, the head teacher and governors have a good understanding of the school's performance and its position in relation to other schools.
The strategic use of	Satisfactory. Most of the resources available to the school are used effectively. Computers are not used well enough to raise standards in

resources	information technology.
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There are sufficient teachers and support staff to teach the curriculum. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory and are used effectively to improve teaching and learning. Shortages exist in suitable outdoor play equipment for children in the Foundation Stage. Though this does not inhibit their physical development it means that the time they spend playing outside is not as enjoyable as it could be.

The school compares its results with other schools. Teachers consult with parents about decisions that effect their children's education, such as uniform and home-school agreements. Governors try hard to ensure they get value for money from their spending and that what the school provides is done at a reasonable cost.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• That their children are making good progress.• They think that behaviour in the school is good.• They are glad that their children are expected to work hard and do their best.• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They would like more information about how their children are getting on.• Some parents feel that their children are not getting the right amount of homework.

Inspectors agree with parents' very positive views of the school. Some parents feel that their children get too much homework; others disagree and feel that they do not get enough. Inspection findings are that teachers generally set homework in English and mathematics, although some do this more regularly than others. Parents' views that they do not get enough information from the school are unfounded. Letters giving details of events in school are sent home regularly and pupils' written reports provide parents with useful and clear information about their children's achievements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 When children start in the reception class, their achievements vary widely but are generally typical for their age. During the year they make good progress and gain in personal, social and emotional development. They widen their knowledge and understanding of the world and learn new skills in creative and physical development. Most achieve good standards in communication, language and literacy and do well in mathematical development. By the time they leave the reception class, children have achieved as well as they can. Most are ready for their work in the National Curriculum and some are already working towards the first levels of attainment.

The results of national tests

2 In reading, seven-year-olds achieved standards that were average in national terms and compared with similar schools. The proportion who reached the expected level was about the same as in most other schools but fewer achieved a higher level. This brought the school's results down for the first time in four years. In writing, standards continued to improve and were well above average when compared with all schools and similar schools.

3 In mathematics, standards were average in national terms and compared with similar schools. Standards have been maintained at this level for the last two years. Pupils did well in all aspects of mathematics and were good at solving problems.

4 In science, teachers' assessments of seven-year-olds last year, showed that more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level. The proportion who achieved a higher level was about the same as in most other schools. Pupils had a good understanding of physical processes and were good at experimental and investigative science. Their knowledge about materials and life and living processes was average.

5 By the end of Year 6, all pupils reached the expected level in English, mathematics and science, putting the school in the top five per cent of all schools. One reason for this excellent result is that, last year, there were no pupils with special educational needs in Year 6. Pupils did particularly well in mathematics with far more than in most other schools achieving a higher level. In English and science, the proportion who achieved a higher level was about the same as in most other schools. Comparisons with similar schools showed that pupils in St Joseph's did particularly well in English and were in the top five per cent in mathematics. In science, they did as well as pupils from similar schools.

6 There is no pattern to whether boys or girls perform better in National Curriculum tests. In some years girls do better than boys but this is not always the case. Last year, the school exceeded the targets it had set for raising standards in English and mathematics. Over the last five years the school's results have been rising faster than the national trend.

Inspection findings

7 In Year 2, standards in reading and writing are above average. Last year, disappointment with the results of national tests led senior staff to examine why fewer seven-year-olds achieved a higher level in reading. As a result, more time is now being given to reading in small groups and

individually. This is already beginning to pay dividends and this year, average and higher attaining pupils are achieving good standards in their reading. Standards in mathematics and science are average. This is because higher attaining pupils are not being sufficiently challenged by their work and fail to reach the level they are capable of achieving.

8 By the time they are in Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Last year, senior teachers were quick off the mark to find out why higher attaining pupils did not do as well in national tests in English and science as they did in mathematics. They found that in English, pupils often read fluently but do not understand enough of what they read. In order to remedy the situation, greater attention is being given to the content and plot of books than previously. The good effect this is having was evident in pupils' comments about the books they read in school. In science, teachers decided that the long gap between pupils studying a topic and then revisiting it was the main reason why pupils were not doing so well. The co-ordinator intends to revise the way that science is taught in order to prevent pupils forgetting what they have previously learned.

9 Pupils with special educational needs, make good progress towards the targets of their individual education plans. Throughout the school, they benefit from working in small groups and the extra help they get from adults. Those in Year 3 benefit from additional support in literacy and pupils in Year 6 are given a further push from *booster* classes. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress as a result of the help and support they get with speaking, reading and writing English.

10 Standards in information and communication technology are below what is expected of seven-year-olds and well below what is expected of 11-year-olds. They are lower than they were at the time of the previous inspection because of the advances in technology and because not enough has been done to improve the school's provision. Younger pupils are becoming familiar with many of the programs on the school's computers but their progress is limited by the amount of time they get to work on computers. Older pupils have a lot of catching up to do in their use and understanding of information and communication technology. This is a key area for the school to develop.

11 One of the things the school does well is ensure that pupils gain high standards in art and design, and physical education. From an early age pupils produce paintings, drawings and craftwork of good quality. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have a wide knowledge of artists and their work and are familiar with specialist techniques for printing, making collage pictures and creating models. In physical education, pupils benefit from the additional time given to the subjects and become skilful at games, swimming and athletics and agile in their gymnastics.

12 In history and geography standards match the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds. In geography, pupils have a firm understanding of the local area and the countries they study. In history, pupils know about the ancient Egyptians, the Victorians and the events of the Second World War by the time they leave the school. In both subjects they are beginning to develop skills of researching facts from books and other sources.

13 Standards in music are not high enough. Pupils do not know enough about composing music, their knowledge of famous composers, musical styles and music from other countries is limited and only those who have tuition play instruments well. The main reason for low standards is that it is not taught often enough. This is a key area for improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14 Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attitudes to learning remain very good. They are

well-motivated, ready to work and keen to respond to the challenges offered, pursuing each new task with strong interest and determination. They listen carefully to their teachers, or when others are speaking, answer questions sensibly, and contribute confidently during discussions. The youngest children in the reception class are well settled into school life and already developing good attitudes to work. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work. Most are keen to learn, try hard with their work, and enjoy succeeding. Most behave sensibly. They respond well to the considerable encouragement they are given.

15 Pupils behave well both in and out of class, although behaviour is not quite as good as at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils have good self-discipline and follow the school rules closely. Incidents of bullying are rare and none were observed or reported during the inspection. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils care for their school and show due respect for its fabric and fittings.

16 Pupils' personal development is good overall, although opportunities for them to work independently, or to show initiative through their studies, are somewhat limited. They are generally confident, considerate and fully understand the impact of their actions upon others. Pupils willingly accept responsibility and exercise their duties well. At break-time, for example, older pupils help to look after the younger ones in the yard. The quality of relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and members of staff is also good. This makes a very significant contribution to the education provided. There is a relaxed and harmonious atmosphere within the school. Pupils are friendly, very polite, and always ready to help one another and their teachers. In lessons they work together well in pairs or groups, and share ideas and equipment sensibly. At playtime, and when eating lunch, they are friendly and sociable.

17 Attendance remains very high in comparison with other primary schools. Unauthorised absence is negligible. Punctuality is good. Almost all pupils arrive on time and are settled in class promptly at the start of sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18 There are some real strengths to the teaching and one or two weaknesses that prevent it from being good overall. It has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Just over half of the lessons seen during the inspection were good or better and there were no lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory.

19 One of the strengths of the teaching is that teachers are skilful at teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. In the reception class, the teacher has a thorough knowledge of how to develop the early skills of reading, writing and mathematics and ensures that activities planned for children are practical and interesting. As a result, children are keen to learn and particularly enjoy looking at big books and activities that involve counting and sorting. In other classes, teachers' knowledge of how to teach reading, writing and mathematics has improved as a result of training and because they now use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to plan work. From Year 1 onwards, teachers emphasise the sounds of letters and this helps pupils with both reading and spelling. They provide ample opportunities for pupils to write in all subjects and the close attention they give to handwriting and punctuation is paying dividends in the high standards that pupils achieve by the time they are 11. In mathematics, teachers have increased the amount of time devoted to mental arithmetic, which in turn helps pupils in junior classes make good progress.

20 A second strength of the teaching is the provision made for pupils with special educational needs. They are supported well by teachers, who ensure that work is at an appropriate level.

Teachers also make good use of the skills of classroom assistants to support the work of pupils with special educational needs. The close attention classroom assistants give to individuals and groups of pupils allows pupils with special educational needs to gain increased understanding of the work and leads to good progress. During lessons, pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to take a more effective part in discussions by answering questions targeted specifically at them and they receive close attention during individual and group work.

21 Teachers worked hard to put new nationally recommended programmes of work in place before September 2000. They have successfully tackled an issue to develop existing curriculum outlines into carefully thought out programmes of work for all subjects and for children in the Foundation Stage. The success of these initiatives can be seen in the continued satisfactory standards for most subjects and improved standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, and physical education. In information and communication technology and music, though programmes exist they are not being followed sufficiently well or with enough rigor and this is one of the reasons why standards are low in these subject.

22 Teachers use a good range of methods to raise standards in different subjects. In history and geography the subjects are often brought to life by visits to local museums or by visitors who speak to pupils. In mathematics and science, pupils are encouraged to investigate and find things out for themselves. Teachers use the guidelines from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to good effect to raise standards in English and mathematics. The three-part lesson works well and pupils enjoy the challenges faced by each section. They are particularly keen on mental mathematics sessions when the pace is fast and they have to think quickly to keep up. This was evident in a very good lesson in Years 4 and 5, when pupils had to work out a second angle on a straight line when given the size of one angle. With practice the number of pupils who got each sum right increased, as did the speed with which they worked out the answer.

23 A further strength of the teaching is the way that teachers manage pupils. Their success is built on the good relationships that all staff have with pupils. Because teachers treat pupils with respect pupils respond by trying hard to please their teachers. Lessons are only occasionally disrupted by too much noise or when pupils are not listening attentively enough. Very often in these situations it is pupils' enthusiasm for learning that makes lessons bubble along at a fast pace.

24 There are some gaps in the teaching that prevent it from being good overall. The teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to use computers and are not yet teaching all aspects of the subject in sufficient depth. For example, there is not enough work on control technology or using databases and spreadsheets. Similarly, computers are often left idle for large parts of the day and are rarely used in literacy or numeracy lessons. Some of this is because teachers lack the knowledge and confidence to teach these skills. Although some good and very good music lessons were seen during the inspection, not enough emphasis is given to teaching music, particularly in junior classes. Once again this is because some teachers lack the knowledge and enthusiasm to teach the subject well enough; despite the fact that two teachers learned to play clarinet as a response to criticisms in the previous report.

25 One important gap in teaching is that although teachers have good systems for assessing what pupils know in English, mathematics and science they are not always using the information from these assessments to help them plan work for higher attaining pupils. While this was less evident in the lessons seen during the inspection it was evident from the work in pupils' books. Too often in mathematics and science, higher attaining pupils were doing the same work as average attaining pupils. This was most noticeable in mathematics in classes in Years 1 and 2. In science, it was evident throughout the school.

26 All teachers set homework that is relevant to what pupils are learning in school, although some do this more regularly than others. From reception class onwards, pupils are encouraged to take books home to read with parents or carers. In addition, pupils are given spellings and multiplication tables to learn at home. Parents have mixed views about homework though reading records show that those pupils who read frequently at home do better than those who do not.

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

27 The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is appropriate and reflects the spirit of new national guidelines. Children in the reception class are provided with stimulating activities and experiences that cover all recommended areas of learning, and enable them to move easily to work in the National Curriculum. A great deal of emphasis is given to physical development, which means that time spent on other areas of learning is reduced.

28 The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 does not meet statutory requirements to teach information and communication technology and not enough time is spent on either information and communication technology or music. These omissions prevent the curriculum from being broad enough or from providing equality of opportunity for all pupils. Another factor preventing pupils from having an equal chance to make progress is that higher attaining pupils are not always challenged by their work in mathematics and science.

29 The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator seeks specialist support to establish targets for these pupils' learning and behaviour. Teachers pay careful attention to their needs in lessons and plan a suitable curriculum based on objectives agreed with their parents. In addition to this good support, the school extends the opportunities available to pupils who speak English as an additional language by making good use of the skills of classroom assistants to support their development and to ensure their inclusion in all activities.

30 The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy effectively. Teachers highlighted writing as an area for development and this has led to a significant improvement in standards. To ensure that all pupils are included and benefit from its curriculum, the school is focusing on improving the reading of the higher attaining pupils. The National Numeracy Strategy is also in place and the format of having mental arithmetic, whole-class work and time for practice and consolidation is working well.

31 Teachers provide pupils with a helpful programme of personal, social and health education that has a good effect on their personal growth. The programme permeates the whole curriculum. Healthy eating, for example, is promoted through science, while the benefits of regular exercise are emphasised during physical education. Visits by the school nurse and a dentist help pupils to become more aware of personal hygiene and raise their awareness of the use and misuse of drugs. A clear policy for sex education is in place and is explained to parents in the school's prospectus.

32 The school still offers pupils a good range of extra-curricular activities, as it did at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in the juniors have the opportunity to go on a residential trip, and this is a particular strength of the provision. Pupils say they look forward to their turn to go on this trip. As well as this and other, shorter, trips, pupils have access to sporting, chess, music and performing arts clubs, which give them the chance to develop their skills and their confidence.

33 Since the last inspection, the school has maintained good links with the community. Pupils go

out into the local area as part of their studies, the school is sponsored by a national bank and volunteers from the community come into school to talk to pupils and work with them. For example, the school recently held a *grandparents day*, which was well-attended and great fun for everyone involved. There are effective transfer arrangements with the local secondary schools to enable pupils to move on smoothly to the next stage of their education.

34 Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is maintained at the same good level as at the last inspection. Spiritual development is supported by teachers' Christian principles and is very apparent in collective worship. The lighting of candles in assemblies reminds pupils of the special nature of prayer. Teachers encourage pupils to think about Jesus and how his teaching reflects on their daily lives. The theme of the Lenten assembly was based on the teachings of Jesus, which were reinforced by the message from the parish priest. The good relationships that teachers establish with pupils encourage them to be open and frank about their feelings and receptive to the feelings and beliefs of others. Parents appreciate that the school's spiritual values are apparent in its dealings with pupils.

35 Pupils' moral development is promoted very well. In lessons and assemblies, teachers emphasise the difference between right and wrong and the need to consider others. The way they treat one another and pupils makes them good role models. The same is true in the playground, where supervisors deal quickly and fairly with silly behaviour or squabbles and help pupils settle their differences to the satisfaction of all parties. The school is a caring community, in which pupils are taught self-respect and respect for others.

36 The school is particularly strong in its development of pupils' personal confidence and self-esteem; for example, through class assemblies. Teachers' organisation of lessons supports social development by encouraging pupils to work together amicably and to share opinions and ideas. Staff invite pupils to take on responsibilities that range from returning registers to the office, to organising the music for assembly. By giving pupils opportunities to take initiatives for tasks that need attention around the school, teachers ensure that they learn to respond in a sensible way. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility or use their initiative for the benefit of the school community. Pupils have the chance to raise money for charities and they enjoy taking part in national events.

37 Provision for cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to encounter and understand the traditions and values from different cultural backgrounds in subjects such as art and design, history and geography. Pupils learn of the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society when they study faiths such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Islam. The school promotes interest in good quality literature written for children and invites authors to visit and talk to pupils about their work. Studies of past societies in Greece and Egypt and of contemporary ones in India and the West Indies help pupils to broaden their knowledge and to compare other cultures with their own. Teachers use the influence of other cultures in their subjects. They introduce African stories in English lessons and acquaint pupils with Australian aboriginal techniques in painting.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38 Procedures for ensuring pupils' general welfare are satisfactory. The school has maintained appropriate arrangements for child protection. The head teacher has responsibility for this, and the school follows the local area guidelines. The school's policy provides suitable guidance for staff, and pupils are taught about keeping safe through their planned programme of personal, social and health education. The health and safety policy has not been reviewed for several years although working

practices in the school are generally good.

39 Attendance is monitored thoroughly and there are suitable arrangements in place to investigate any absences that are not properly explained. Pupils enjoy coming to school and do not need further encouragement.

40 Arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development are good. Teachers know their pupils well, have good relationships with them and respond to their needs. High standards of behaviour and discipline are promoted implicitly through the Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils are expected to behave well and exercise good self-discipline at all times, taking full responsibility for their own actions. For example, one pupil in a Year 2 English lesson was asked to apologise to another for interrupting when they were speaking. Bullying is rare, but effective measures are in place to deal with any incidents that occasionally arise.

41 The level of support for pupils with special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language is good. Teachers ensure that they are given the help they need in lessons and they are given additional support from classroom assistants. Their progress is monitored closely and pupils with special educational needs are given help from specialists when this is necessary.

42 Teachers have worked hard to improve the school's procedures for assessment. These are now good in English, mathematics and science and in the reception class. The attainments of children are assessed shortly after they start school and staff use the results of these to set a starting point for planning work. After this, pupils are tested in English and mathematics each year, using standardised tests. In science, pupils are tested at the end of each topic. In addition to testing pupils, senior teachers analyse the results of national tests in order to identify gaps in teaching and learning and see where improvements are needed. All of this means that teachers have a wealth of information about pupils' academic progress in these subjects. They use this well in English but are not using it to pitch work in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and science throughout the school at the right level for higher attaining pupils. This is a key area for development. In other subjects, procedures for assessing and recording what pupils can do are informal with each teacher having their own system.

43 Teachers are increasingly using their knowledge of pupils' attainment to set targets in English and mathematics. Pupils are aware of these targets and are keen to achieve them. This system is quite new but it is already beginning to focus pupils' minds and motivate them to try harder. In some classes the system has already been extended to subjects such as art and design, where pupils have agreed or set their own targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44 The school continues to enjoy strong support from its parents, who have good involvement in their children's learning. Class assemblies are well supported, and many parents take an interest in school topics by providing teachers with various objects or photographs from home. Several parents, along with occasional grandparents, also help regularly in class or with after-school clubs, such as art and chess. One parent has designed the school's web site. The Friends Association remains active and continues to give generous support to the school through fund-raising and social events. A few parents raised concerns about homework, and inspection findings are that it is not set consistently. Homework is set throughout the school but lacks structure. Furthermore, the homework policy is very new and rather general. Arrangements for receiving new pupils into the reception class are well structured and ensure they settle quickly into school life.

45 Parents receive good quality information about their children's progress. Annual reports have improved since the last inspection and now provide clear details about what pupils can do as well as identifying areas where they could do better. Parents are also kept fully informed about life generally in school and, each term, teachers give them an outline of what is being taught in class. The prospectus and governors' annual report, however, are not so good. The prospectus lacks information about attendance and fails to inform parents of their right to withdraw their children from religious education and collective worship. The governors' annual report does not contain details of the election of parent governors, any resolutions from the previous meeting, security, arrangements for disabled pupils and authorised absence. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved from the time the teacher has an initial concern and kept fully up to date about all subsequent developments.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46 The school is led and managed well by head teacher, senior teachers, co-ordinators and governors. Everyone plays their part and they work as an effective team. As a response to criticisms in the previous report the head teacher has strengthened the role of the deputy head teacher, who now has responsibility for the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs. Through training and greater delegation of responsibility, co-ordinators have a clear understanding of their role and have set about planning for the new curriculum with enthusiasm. All of this means that the leadership and management of the school are stronger than they were at the time of the previous inspection.

47 The only gap in leadership and management is that governors have not ensured that the school meets requirements to teach all aspects of information and communication technology. This has led to a fall in standards when compared with what pupils in other schools achieve.

48 There is a shared sense of purpose and a strong commitment to the success of the school, which shows in the way that teachers are prepared to share the heavy workload of responsibilities that comes from working in a small school. Subject co-ordinators support their colleagues in the classroom and whenever possible, monitor standards of attainment and progress in the curriculum areas. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when the process had just begun and reflects the willingness of all staff to work hard to raise standards.

49 The head teacher provides good leadership, which sets clear educational direction for the school and contributes to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by pupils. This is done by keeping a close check on the quality of teaching and learning and through meeting with staff to appraise their work. The success of these procedures is evident in that there is more good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection.

50 The school's plan for development is much improved since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be a key area for improvement. The current plan is sharp and focused on appropriate targets, one of which is to improve the school's provision for information and communication technology. It sets out clearly who is to be involved in each target and what it is likely to cost the school. Co-ordinators review their subjects each year and in this way evaluate how successful the school has been in achieving the previous years targets.

51 Governors support the life and work of the school well. Members of the governing body have increased their involvement with the school since the previous inspection. They are now far more involved in determining policy and have looked carefully at how well the school has met the goals of the action plan drawn up after the last inspection. There are trained governors for literacy and numeracy and the chair of governors works in close partnership with the head teacher.

52 The school meets statutory requirements for special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very dedicated. This is evident in the time given to pupils, who are encouraged to stay after school for additional one-to-one support. This gives the co-ordinator the chance to speak informally to parents about their children's progress and also ensures that pupils' personal development is monitored and that they are happy in school. The way that pupils' statements and individual educational plans are integrated within teachers' planning ensures that pupils receive the attention they are entitled to. Because close checks are kept on the needs of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties, the school ensures that skilled support staff are available to guide pupils' development. As a result of good management and provision, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

53 The school makes good use of most available resources. The exception is that teachers do not make good enough use of computers and they are often left idle for large parts of the day. This is one of the main reasons why standards are not high enough. Teachers make good use of visits and visitors to widen pupils' knowledge. The school uses special grants, such as those for pupils with special educational needs, to provide additional support for their learning.

54 The day-to-day running of the school is managed efficiently. The school secretary is responsible for maintaining and monitoring spending and for providing current details of all expenditure, for regular checks by the governors. The head teacher and governors are aware of the need to get best value from their spending.

55 A strength of leadership lies in the school's success in meeting its aims and in securing its values. This is evident in the ethos of the school and in a commitment to equality of opportunity, good relationships and pupils' very positive attitudes and interest in learning.

56 There are sufficient teachers and support staff to teach the curriculum and provide help for pupils who need it. Appropriate procedures are in place to introduce new and supply teachers to the school so that pupils' learning is not disturbed. A staff handbook provides them with valuable information about the school's routines and procedures and a newly qualified teacher has settled quickly into the team. A good record of staff training has been maintained to make sure that teachers are competent to teach the curriculum, though more training is needed if teachers are to raise standards in information and communication technology.

57 Accommodation is satisfactory to meet the needs of the curriculum. There is a central hall, and separate dining room. One room is used for an out of hours club. The school is well cared for and standards of cleaning are high. Classrooms are spacious, allowing specialist areas to be developed within them. Each room has a storage cupboard. There are large grounds, hard laid out play areas, a wildlife area and playing fields. An orienteering course has been laid out around the school.

58 Resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum in all subjects except information and communication technology. Most resources are stored in classrooms with some kept in a central locked cupboard. The library has a reasonable stock of reference books and is readily accessible to older pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59 Governors, head teacher and staff should:

Raise standards in information and communication technology by

- ensuring that the curriculum meets statutory requirements,
- allocating more time and emphasis to teaching information and communication technology skills,
- planning more opportunities for pupils to use computers,
- using computers to teach other subjects and particularly English and mathematics,
- providing training for teachers so that they have sufficient knowledge and confidence in teaching all aspects of information and communication technology.

(paragraphs 117 - 122)

Make it possible for more of the brightest pupils in Years 1 and 2 to reach the higher level in mathematics and for the brightest pupils throughout the school to reach higher levels in science by

- using information from assessments to plan work that challenges the brightest pupils and includes tasks at the higher level,
- tracking pupils' progress in order to determine when they need to be moved on in their work,
- monitoring teachers' planning and checking pupils' work to ensure that they are achieving as well as they should.

(paragraphs 82 – 88 and 90 - 97)

Raise standards in music by

- allocating more time and emphasis to teaching music,
- planning sufficient opportunities for pupils to appraise, compose and perform music,
- monitoring teachers planning to ensure that skills are taught sequentially.

(paragraphs 123 - 130)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	43	49	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	183
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	22

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	8	10	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	1		
	Girls			
	Total	16	16	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89% (96%)	89% (96%)	94% (100%)
	National	83% (82%)	84% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	16	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89% (96%)	94% (96%)	94% (100%)
	National	84% (82%)	88% (86%)	88% (87%)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	9	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls			
	Total	22	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100% (93%)	100% (85%)	100% (74%)
	National	75% (70%)	72% (69%)	85% (78%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls			
	Total	22	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100% (92%)	100% (85%)	100% (81%)
	National	70% (68%)	72% (69%)	79% (75%)

¹ Numbers are omitted where there are fewer than ten pupils.

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	140
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	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)	7.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4
Average class size	30.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
	£
Total income	301,939
Total expenditure	301,545
Expenditure per pupil	1,714
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,751
Balance carried forward to next year	13,145

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	183
Number of questionnaires returned	77

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	31	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	30	1	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	39	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	42	13	1	1
The teaching is good.	68	26	5	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	51	9	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	30	4	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	22	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	48	38	9	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	60	30	8	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	29	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	41	9	0	3

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

60 Children start in the reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection only thirteen of the children were aged five and the rest were four-year-olds. Most have been to nurseries or playgroups before they start school. Consequently, although attainment varies widely, the school's assessments show that most children have the skills and knowledge that are typical of four-year-olds. During the year they make good progress and gain in personal, social and emotional development. They widen their knowledge and understanding of the world and learn new skills in creative and physical development. Most achieve good standards in communication, language and literacy and do well in mathematical development. By the time they leave the reception class, children have achieved as well as they can.

61 The school's provision for children in the foundation stage continues to be good. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching seen during the inspection. It helps prepare children well for the move to the next stage of their education and their work in the National Curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

62 A good feature of teaching lies in the development of children's personal and social skills. Children are encouraged to be independent and quickly learn to get ready for physical education without help and to tidy equipment away after they have completed their work. Class teachers and support staff are patient and understanding. They explain instructions clearly so that children know exactly what is expected of them and as a result, there is usually a calm working atmosphere in the reception classes. Children are encouraged to work together and soon make friends. They are helpful to others and share resources and games good-naturedly. As a result of all this children are confident and outgoing by the time they leave the reception class.

Communication, language and literacy

63 Children make good progress with their reading and writing and by the time they start in Year 1 most have achieved many of the early learning goals expected for their age. This is a result of effective teaching of the basic skills of literacy. Teachers promote the development of language in everything children do. Children are keen to talk about their work and use well-constructed sentences and a growing vocabulary when doing so. In most lessons, they listen attentively to what adults say, particularly to stories. Teachers ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for children to read and write each day. As a result, children recognise a growing number of words and higher attaining pupils read simple stories. Lower attaining children happily join in the telling of stories they know well and re-tell a story by referring to the pictures. Most pupils write independently by the time they start in Year 1. They form letters correctly and use capital letters to start their names.

Mathematical development

64 Carefully planned activities and daily opportunities to count and use mathematical language help children make good progress in understanding number so that by the time they start in Year 1 most are already working at the first level of the National Curriculum. The teacher makes learning mathematics fun and children are keen to have a go. For example, most managed to count to twenty in twos using the rhyme *One, Two, Buckle my Shoe* as a starting point. The methods used to teach mathematics are appropriate. Most of the activities are practical and help children understand about

adding and taking away. They learn to use mathematical language when they explore with sand, water and as they played in the shop during the inspection. Many of them used the words *pence* and *pounds* as they charged their friends for goods.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65 Teachers place great emphasis on widening children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The strength of teaching lies in the way topics are used to bring together and extend early learning in geography, history, science and information and communication technology. For example, a topic about fruit and vegetables involved children using their senses to explore taste, smell and feel of the fruits. They looked carefully at their shape and colour as they drew pictures of the fruit and vegetables and made models from dough. The teacher ensures that children get to use the computer regularly. They are keen to have a go at drawing pictures and use a mouse competently to make things move on the screen. The teachers also emphasise the importance of asking questions, such as *what makes the plants grow?* In this way children's natural inquisitiveness is encouraged and they take delight in predicting and exploring why things happen as they do. By the time they start in Year 1, most children have a good knowledge and understanding of the world.

Creative development

66 The teacher plans a wide range of interesting creative activities through which children can explore colour, texture shape and music. As a result of many opportunities to paint, make models, sing and play musical instruments, children make steady progress and by the time they start in Year 1 they have achieved many of the skills expected for their age. Children enjoy being creative and are proud of their efforts. This was evident in the way they talked excitedly about the model vehicles they had made from household objects. Children have opportunities to listen to music from different countries. They enjoy singing simple songs, recognise high and low notes and play a range of percussion instruments. For example, one girl played Chinese bells to lead the clapping in a short music lesson. She did this well and most children clapped in time to the teacher's example. Children's work is valued and is displayed effectively in the reception class.

Physical development

67 A great amount of time is given to physical development each day; an hour and a half. Much of this time is spent playing outside so consequently, children are agile and robust by the time they start in Year 1. However, one of the gaps in the school's resources is that there are no wheeled toys to help children get the most out of these sessions. The teacher makes sure that children are taught the skills of throwing and catching that they need to play team games. As a result, children throw balls high, low and to the side of partners, who mostly catch their passes. Regular opportunities to use scissors, pens and pencils help children gain accuracy when drawing and cutting. The teacher also plans plenty of opportunities for children to work with coloured plasticine or dough, which they roll, squeeze, push and kneed into shape when making figures or models.

ENGLISH

Test results

68 The results of national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, showed that standards in reading were average in national terms and in comparison with those reached by pupils with similar backgrounds. This picture is much the same as at the time of the previous inspection. However, although most pupils achieved a personal best, the proportion of pupils who achieved a higher level was

lower than in most other schools. In contrast, pupils did really well in writing tests. Standards were far higher than in most other schools and considerably higher than those reached by pupils in similar schools.

69 Last year, all pupils in Year 6 achieved the level expected for their age and the proportion who achieved a higher level was about the same as in most other schools. This was a real success and put St Joseph's in the top five per cent of all schools. In addition, pupils outperformed those in similar schools by a long way. Boys and girls did equally well in tests and the school exceeded the target it had set for raising standards.

Inspection findings

70 Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve high standards in all aspects of English by the time they leave the school. The groups of pupils who make up Years 2 and 6 are quite different from last year. They include more pupils with special educational needs and fewer high attaining pupils. Last year there were no pupils with special educational needs in Year 6, which is one of the reasons why all pupils reached the expected level in national tests. Despite this, average and higher attaining pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are working at levels that are above those expected for their age. Other groups also achieve as well as they should. Pupils with special educational needs and the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are given the help and support they need to achieve their own personal best.

71 Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to take part in discussions and speak to small and large groups. This starts in the reception class, when staff constantly encourage children to talk about their work. As a result, children learn to take their turn in conversations and widen their vocabulary by copying the words used by adults. For example, after listening to the story of the *Shoemaker and the Elves*, they insisted that the character was referred to as the *shoemaker* rather than the *man*. In a good lesson in the Year 4 and 5 class two pupils acted the part of characters from a book and other pupils asked questions. Everyone enjoyed the activity; pupils asked pertinent questions and those who were playing the characters answered in great detail and with a real feel for the people they were meant to be. These types of activities help pupils gain confidence. Consequently, older pupils performed extremely well in an assembly for the school, parents and visitors. They spoke clearly and expressively as they recited poetry, said prayers and shared their Lenten promises. A good feature of the teaching is the way that teachers ensure that pupils who speak English as an additional language understand the words being used. This ensures that their English vocabulary increases at a fast rate and means that they do not feel unsure about their work.

72 A strong feature of teaching, that also ensures pupils learn to enjoy reading and talking about books, is the way that pupils are encouraged to read in many subjects. Because they learn to use books as a means of finding things out, children in the reception class know the difference between fact and fiction and higher attaining children use those terms. In Years 1 and 2, teachers show pupils how to use a glossary, index and contents page to find the information they need. Consequently, when they are in the school library, pupils are quick to find books about subjects that interest them. For example, pupils in Year 1 located information about the planet Neptune by looking first at the shelf of science books and then by looking through contents and index pages. Older pupils have begun to use CD-ROMs to research in history and geography but do not have enough opportunities to read from the Internet or computers.

73 Pupils are given daily opportunities to read. At these times the only sound is the rustling of pages or a quiet whisper when something needs to be shared. Pupils say that they look forward to this time, especially as they get older and choose their own books. In addition to this, teachers in all

classes spend time reading with small groups of pupils. In the reception class pupils learn to use the pictures to help them read unfamiliar words. In Years 1 and 2 they learn to sound out words and it was only when average attaining pupils in Year 2 came across difficult words, like *excited*, that they stumbled and were unable to make a good guess. Older pupils learn a lot from reading in small groups. With sensitive direction from the teacher they begin to consider the plot and characters in detail and learn to recognise the techniques used by the author to sustain the readers attention. Pupils of all ages are keen to talk about their favourite stories, books and authors. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils are fluent, expressive readers and standards are above those expected for their age. Pupils of all abilities and those who speak English as an additional language have read widely and have views on poetry, different genres such as science fiction and horror stories, plays and Shakespeare.

74 Teachers are particularly good at teaching writing, which is why standards are above expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Once again, it starts in the reception class when children are encouraged to form their letters correctly. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 practise their skills in handwriting lessons and at home. Those in Years 3 to 6 are expected to produce writing of a good standard and generally do so. In Years 1 and 2, the attention given to letters and their sounds helps pupils with their spelling. In addition, pupils are expected to learn spellings each week and this ensures that by the end of Year 2, average and higher attaining pupils spell many difficult words correctly. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs often spell words as they sound but often stumble over combinations such as *ea* and *ee* or *ou* and *ow*.

75 A strength of the teaching throughout the school, is that pupils are given ample opportunities to write for a wide range of reasons and to apply their literacy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 5 wrote newspaper reports about the Olympic Games as part of their work in geography. Alongside this, teachers encourage pupils to write creatively. This leads to some good quality imaginative work, such as the nonsense poems created by pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class when they used word such as *tipsy* and *rumbled* to good effect to describe an imaginary creature.

76 Finally, standards in writing are high because teachers emphasise the need for accurate punctuation and grammar. Average and higher attaining pupils in Year 2 classes, punctuate their work with capital letters and full stops and though they do not always use them in their writing they know about question, explanation and speech marks. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils use paragraphs, commas and apostrophes correctly.

77 The only weakness to the teaching of literacy is that teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology. In most literacy lessons, computers are not used at all. Consequently, pupils rarely draft or publish their work using computers and their understanding of word processing is fairly rudimentary. For example, they know how to type and make changes to their work but are unsure about how to use desktop publishing programs.

78 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, receive good support for their reading and writing. Working closely with teachers, qualified support staff provide programmes of work that help pupils to break down words in reading and to build them up in spelling. This support enables these and lower attaining pupils to read a range of texts and produce written work that is often short but usually completed.

79 Taking their lead from the co-ordinator, who manages the subject well, teachers have done a lot of work on assessing pupils' learning since the last inspection and have collected large amounts of information about pupils' achievements. They have improved their own understanding of the levels of pupils' attainments and as a result, know what it is that pupils need to learn next. This puts the school in a good position to be able to meet the targets it has set for raising standards.

MATHEMATICS

Test results

80 The results of national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, showed that standards in mathematics were average in national terms and in comparison with those reached by pupils with similar backgrounds. This picture is much the same as at the time of the previous inspection. However, although most pupils achieved a personal best, the proportion of pupils who achieved a higher level was far lower than in most other schools.

81 Last year, all pupils in Year 6 achieved the level expected for their age and the proportion who achieved a higher level was higher than in most other schools. This was a real success and put St Joseph's in the top five per cent of all schools. In addition, pupils outperformed those in similar schools by a long way. Boys and girls did equally well in tests and the school exceeded the target it had set for raising standards.

Inspection findings

82 Inspection evidence indicates that standards in mathematics are close to national levels by the end of Year 2. All pupils are working at levels expected for their age but higher attaining pupils are not doing as well as they could because their work is not challenging enough. By the time they are in Year 6, average and higher attaining pupils achieve standards that are beyond the level expected for their age. This year, several pupils in the year group have special educational needs, they achieve as well as they can though they are unlikely to reach the level expected for their age in national tests.

83 There are several strengths to the teaching of mathematics and one or two gaps that prevent it from being good overall. Throughout the school, teachers are good at teaching the basic skills of mathematics. Beginning in the reception class, children are encouraged to work out mathematical problems through a range of practical activities. In Years 1 and 2, teachers ensure that pupils learn the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. A good feature of the teaching at this stage is that teachers help pupils devise their own methods of calculating. This ensures that by the end of Year 2, pupils use a range of strategies to solve problems. For example, they count on and subtract to find the difference between two numbers and use their knowledge of rounding to ten to help them add and subtract tens and units. In Years 3 to 6 teachers help pupils to see that addition can be carried out in any order and that addition and subtraction as well as multiplication and division are inverse operations. Consequently, by the time they are in Year 6 pupils use this knowledge to check their work.

84 A good feature of the teaching is that all teachers are confident in using the more structured curriculum of the National Numeracy Strategy. As a result there is a good balance between whole class teaching, practical activities and discussion. Pupils particularly enjoy the mental mathematics sessions because they are fast and need all their concentration if they are to keep up. During these sessions teachers are good at asking questions which make pupils think, and then expect them to explain their methods. This was evident in a good lesson in the Year 5 and 6 class, when the questions involved factors of numbers. With gentle prompting from the teacher higher attaining pupils were able to work out a definition for prime numbers. In other mental mathematics sessions, teachers ask pupils to explain their reasoning, which helps pupils understand that problems can be solved in more than one way. Average and higher attaining pupils do this easily and this is one of the reasons why standards are above average.

85 A further strength of teaching is the good support given to pupils with special educational

needs. Pupils' individual educational plans contain practical and achievable targets which teachers use effectively to enable these pupils to make good progress. They are given additional help from support assistants who ensure that they concentrate and understand their work. In addition, those pupils who speak English as an additional language are given extra help to understand technical terms and when the teacher feels that they would benefit from working in a small group. As a result they progress at the same rate as other pupils in the class and do as well as they can.

86 One of the weaknesses to teaching is that teachers do not always make best use of the information they gain from assessments and tests. So, while the work for pupils with special educational needs is planned carefully the same attention is not given to planning the work of higher attaining pupils. This is most noticeable in classes with pupils from Years 1 and 2. Workbooks show that they often do the same work as average attaining pupils. Sometimes they do more, but there is not enough challenge to the work they are set and this prevents them from achieving their own personal best. While the co-ordinator monitors the quality of teaching carefully this had not been highlighted because there has not been a focus on checking pupils' books. This is a key area for improvement.

87 Another gap in teaching is that teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to teach mathematics. Computers are rarely used in mathematics lessons and pupils are unfamiliar with programs such as spreadsheets and databases, though they understand how these work when using cards and charts.

88 The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator gave effective support to teachers as they implemented the National Numeracy Strategy, and ensured that there were sufficient resources to teach mathematics. Efficient procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching have made all teachers aware that there is a need for work to be pitched at the right level if higher attaining pupils are to achieve as well as they can. All of this puts the school in a good position to be able to continue to raise standards.

SCIENCE

Test results

89 The results of national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, showed that more pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level. The proportion of pupils who achieved a higher level was about the same as in most other schools. This picture is much the same as at the time of the previous inspection. Last year, all pupils in Year 6 achieved the level expected for their age. This was a real success and put St Joseph's in the top five per cent of all schools. The proportion of pupils who achieved a higher level was about the same as in most other schools. Pupils in St Joseph's performed as well as those in similar schools.

Inspection findings

90 Inspection findings show that standards in science are average by the end of Year 2. Average attaining pupils are working at levels expected for their age but higher attaining pupils are not doing as well as they could because their work is not challenging enough. Standards in Year 6 are higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection and are now average. The picture is much the same as it is in Year 2. Average attaining pupils are doing as well as they can but higher attaining pupils are not achieving the levels of which they are capable. This year several pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs, and although they achieve as well as they can, they are unlikely to reach the level expected for their age in national tests.

91 There are several strengths to the teaching of science. Higher standards in Year 6 are largely due to improvements to teachers' knowledge of how to teach the subject. This has happened because teachers have had training and are now using a good quality programme of work to plan activities. Consequently, work is interesting to pupils and they are highly motivated to learn. This was demonstrated when a teacher made dramatic use of cymbals and grains of rice to illustrate vibration to pupils in Year 3 and 4. Pupils' fascination with the subject was evident in the pertinent questions they asked about sound travelling and vibrations being visible or invisible.

92 Teachers are good at teaching the basic skills of observation and recording of findings. This starts in Year 1 when pupils draw pictures and write about which ingredients taste salty, bitter or sweet and when they label the major parts of the body accurately. By the end of Year 2, written comments such as *wellingtons are made of plastic so the water doesn't come in* show that they have a firm understanding of materials and their properties. In Years 3 to 6, teachers expect pupils to present their work neatly as charts and tables. Pupils are encouraged to write clear explanations and their work is generally accurate and well presented. Consequently, diagrams of how light is blocked to form shadows, of a cup for example, were particularly neat and accurate. A weakness to teaching is that teachers are not making enough use of computers for pupils to record the findings of investigations as text or graphs.

93 Throughout the school, teachers give sufficient emphasis to investigational and experimental science. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 thoroughly enjoyed setting up an experiment to find out what plants need to grow. Following suggestions from the teacher they worked out that they would need to deprive some plants of water and others of light if they were to test their theory that plants needed both to survive. Pupils in junior classes learn to set up tests that are fair by changing one factor at a time. This was evident when pupils in Years 4 and 5 conducted tests to find out how quickly water evaporated from different solutions. This means by the time they are in Year 6, average and higher attaining pupils have good investigative skills and consider what might happen in their experiments before they set up tests.

94 As a result of good relationships between teachers and pupils, a relaxed atmosphere exists in lessons. Most pupils display obvious enjoyment of the subject. For example, pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class were delighted and amused at the efforts of classmates who plucked violins and whistled to demonstrate sound travelling. Teachers also share the aims of the lesson clearly with the pupils so that they easily understand what they should be learning. This was evident when pupils in Year 2 explained that they needed to highlight the seeds in their drawings of fruit because they were learning about how plants grow.

95 Pupils with special educational needs are generally given the support they need to help them achieve a personal best. They are given help to record their findings, often as simpler charts or tallies and teachers question them specifically to check that they understand the topics they study. The same is true for the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers ensure that they understand scientific terms and that they do not fall behind because of their lack of understanding of English.

96 There are some weaknesses to the way teachers plan work that prevent standards from being higher. The first is that, in an attempt to prevent pupils in classes with more than one age group from repeating work, teachers plan work in a two-year cycle. Depending on whether they stay in a class or move on, there can be long gaps between the time that pupils first learn about a subject and subsequently revisit it. This is a significant factor in why pupils forget much of what they have learned and why pupils do not do as well in national tests. The co-ordinator has identified this as an area that

needs to be reviewed in the coming year. The second weakness to teachers' planning is that, although there are good procedures for assessing what pupils know, teachers are not using the information from end of topic tests to pitch subsequent work at the right level for higher attaining pupils. Work in pupils' books shows that higher attaining pupils are often given the same work as average attaining pupils. This lack of challenge prevents them from achieving their full potential. This had not been spotted because the co-ordinator has not previously had the time to keep a close enough check on teacher's planning or pupils' work.

97 The subject leader provides good guidance for teaching and learning and has strong scientific knowledge. There are clear targets for developing the subject, which put the school in a good position to raise standards.

ART AND DESIGN

98 Standards are typical of seven-year-olds and above average by the time pupils reach the age of 11. The picture is much the same as at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in junior classes do well because of the skills and enthusiasm of co-ordinators.

99 Teachers give pupils plenty of time to experiment, practice and develop their skills. As a result, by the time they are in Year 6, pupils' drawing and sketching is detailed and shows a good eye for perspective and shade. This was evident in their drawings of fruit. Pupils blend pastels and mix paints to produce pictures that are expressive and of good quality. Teachers also ensure that pupils experience three-dimensional work. For example, pupils worked with an artist to make masks of gargoyles they had seen at Fountains Abbey.

100 Pupils are enthusiastic and interested in their work. They evaluate their own work and are not afraid to comment on the work of famous artists and talk about their favourites. They behave well in lessons, are productive, take care of equipment and use resources economically.

101 Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to look at the work of famous artists and of art from other cultures. In Year 1, pupils learn about the weaving techniques used by Michael Brennard-Wood and incorporate these into their own work with textiles and looms. They pick up technical language as they go along and are familiar with terms such as *warp* and *weft*. Pupils in Year 6 learn about the techniques for applying paint used by Van Gogh and about how Monet used pastels to give an impression of water. By copying these techniques and colours, pupils subsequently produced seascapes and pictures of lakes that were of a good quality.

102 Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach art and design. This is evident in the clear demonstrations of techniques that they provide for pupils. For example, pupils produced well rounded clay pots after the teacher showed them how to use their thumbs to mould the clay. They went on to decorate their pots with attractive paper sculptures, which they had copied from their teachers example.

103 Throughout the school, teachers show that they value pupils' work by displaying it attractively. Pupils are keen to stop and talk about displays and are proud to point out their own work. Teachers make good use of art and design to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Displays around the school show the wide range of activities and the development of pupil skills as they progress through the school. They enhance the appearance of the school and give pupils an awareness of the range of art techniques.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104 Standards in design and technology are typical for seven and 11-year-olds. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. A recent focus on developing the scheme of work has broadened the range of experiences offered to pupils. Much of the work seen during the inspection was of a restricted range of materials; for example, recycled boxes and fabrics. The range of resources needs to be improved if pupils are to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding outlined in the scheme of work. There are no construction kits or resistant materials for pupils to learn about mechanisms or make structures.

105 Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers are beginning to concentrate on the design process. Pupils evaluate artefacts and then design and make their own products. However, they still rely on the teacher to make suggestions and generally follow a set format for making each model. They make effective use of a planning book to record their ideas. Pupils in Year 2 studied the main features of a lorry and used the information to plan and make their own model vehicle using a structured worksheet. Pupils in Year 6 evaluated a range of footwear, noting their properties before drawing their own plans and writing a design brief.

106 Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing skills of joining, cutting and sewing. Pupils in Year 2 learn about and practice methods of joining fabrics when making *Joseph's coat of many colours*. Many pupils in Year 6 show good achievement in designing and making slippers. They create card patterns, make prototypes to test their design then practise sewing before making the final product. While attainment in this project was good, older pupils are capable of handling more challenging materials and tackling constructional problems with more emphasis on mechanisms and resistant materials. Pupils approach their work with enthusiasm, are supportive of each other and make thoughtful judgements of each other's work. They are proud of the products they make.

107 In-service training has been undertaken for example in control and monitoring. There is a commitment by all staff to raise standards. The co-ordinators role in providing advice and suggestions for staff in developing the topics and monitoring and evaluation of the design and technology process will be essential to its success. The assessment of standards achieved by pupils needs to be further developed. This would help teachers to be more focussed in identifying the skills pupils need to acquire to make progress.

GEOGRAPHY

108 Standards are typical for seven and 11-year-olds. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of places, of natural and man-made features of the environment and environmental change. Teachers ensure that pupils learn from first-hand experiences whenever possible and make good use of visits to places of local interest. Teachers teach pupils to read and interpret maps as they move through the school, although insufficient attention is given to work on Ordnance Survey maps by older pupils to extend and reinforce their mapping skills. The development of skills, such as, the use of fieldwork techniques, and the collecting, recording and evaluating of evidence gained through investigation is insufficiently represented in the geography curriculum. However, there is a suitable emphasis on the gradual acquisition of a geographical vocabulary.

109 Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, and good progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Year 1 learn about the places visited by Barnaby the toy bear. They recognise and remark upon human and physical features of places, such as Liverpool, York and New York. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 describe the geographical features of places through a study of aerial photographs. In a study of Kenya, they learn to make comparisons between village life and their own daily lives, such as

through the contrasting methods that drinking water is obtained. They learn why tourists visit Harrogate in large numbers. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of how rivers are formed. They know the meaning of associated vocabulary, such as *erosion*, *transportation*, *reservoir*, and *source*. In a good link with mathematics, they compare rainfall, sunshine and temperature statistics of Lyon and Avignon in the Rhone valley with statistics for Harrogate. From their own knowledge and understanding of geography, they consider ideal locations for new shops and factories. They understand the main points of a compass and its purpose.

110 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the topics they teach. This is evident in the detailed introductions they give to pupils at the start of lessons. Teachers are good at finding out what pupils know through asking pointed questions. This makes pupils think more deeply about the places they study. They make good use of praise to raise pupils' self-esteem and pupils respond by being enthusiastic and keen to learn. The relationships between teachers and pupils are friendly, and this helps to ensure that pupils learn. However, some pupils in one class were not always encouraged to listen carefully to important information, leading to deteriorating attitudes to learning, and a slowing of progress.

111 The subject is managed well. The subject is securely represented within the school's curriculum. Work in geography is represented in other subjects. For example, there are good links with literacy in work by older pupils about the Sydney Olympics. Visits, such as the residential visit to Weardale for older pupils, help to bring the subject to life. However, links with information and communication technology require development. There are no consistent approaches to assessing pupils' progress as they move through the school. There are too few maps of different scales to help develop skills in map reading.

HISTORY

112 Standards in history are typical for seven and 11-year-olds. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past are as well developed as that found nationally. Pupils reinforce and communicate their understanding of history in different ways, such as in writing through discussions and from looking at pictures and maps. Teachers provide some opportunities for pupils to undertake historical investigations within the immediate locality, at sites of historical importance, such as Fountains Abbey or by using objects, pictures and texts of historical interest. As a result of these approaches, the development of skills of historical enquiry is satisfactory. Those aspects under-represented in the curriculum are the development of understanding of the passage of time and an understanding that history can be interpreted in different ways. This is because insufficient time is devoted to history to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are appropriately taught.

113 There are good links with some other subjects, such as English and geography. This is evident in work about the Victorians undertaken by pupils in Year 4 when they begin to appreciate the severe hardships of working children at that time. In a Victorian Day held in school, in which pupils and staff dressed in period costume, pupils played Victorian playground games, took part in drill, practised handwriting and learned that a visit from the school inspector was far more terrifying than it is today. In a link with geography, pupils in Year 6 discover the location of villages of Anglo-Saxon origins, such as those ending with *-ham*. Pupils do not have enough opportunities at present to use computers to help them with their history.

114 Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Year 1 pupils compare some of their toys with those of their parents and grandparents. By the end of Year 2, pupils have acquired knowledge and understanding about the great Fire of London. They are starting to learn through eyewitness accounts and the diary of Samuel Pepys how we know about events in the past.

By the end of Year 5 pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Victorians is appropriate for their age.

115 There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards of teaching across the school because only one lesson was seen. Good features of teaching seen in this lesson include secure subject knowledge, a sharing with pupils of the lesson's main purpose, good use of resources, which contribute to learning, and the use of well-chosen questions, which contribute to the development of historical understanding. Most pupils were keen to learn in this lesson, although a small number did not listen carefully enough to their teacher and were unsure about what to do.

116 The co-ordination of the subject by the head teacher, in the absence of the permanent post holder, is sound. Pupils are encouraged to empathise with past lives and appreciate social justice through the teaching of history, and from work studied. This is successful. The school has access to a good range of resources, and visits and visitors help to bring the subject alive for pupils. However, assessment has been highlighted as the next step forward. Because teachers do not use what they know about pupils, work does not always carefully build on pupils' previous learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117 The school has not done enough to maintain standards and they are lower than they were at the time of the previous inspection. There are large gaps in pupils' knowledge because teaching has not kept pace with technological developments in recent years. As a result, standards are below what is expected of seven-year-olds and well below what is expected for 11-year-olds. This is a key area for improvement.

118 The main reason for low standards is that despite having a good quality scheme of work, teachers fail to teach all aspects of information and communication technology in sufficient depth. This means that pupils do not develop their skills in information and communication technology fast enough. Younger pupils have no knowledge of how to program a moveable toy or give the computer instructions to use a similar system. Older pupils, who have computers at home are confident in operating a computer and know how to access the Internet or use electronic mail. Others are far less confident. A considerable number of 11-year-olds are unsure how to type or edit text efficiently and cannot move from program to program easily. They do not know how to save or retrieve their work and very few pupils have any experience of making a multi-media presentation by combining text and graphics.

119 The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall. Computers are rarely used in literacy or numeracy lessons. The only time this was seen during the inspection was when pupils in Year 5 and 6 were taught to gather and record data about shoe sizes. In most classes, computers stand idle for much of the day. This is an inefficient use of an expensive resource. As a result, the time that pupils have to work on computers is not long enough for them to make the gains in familiarity with programs and computer technology to be able to reach the expected standards. The situation is further exacerbated because most classes have only one or two computers. This means that pupils have to wait a long time between turns on computers and cannot make fast enough progress despite their enthusiasm to learn. The recent purchase of several computers gives the school the resources to overcome this gap in teaching and learning. However, until teachers begin to use computers more regularly standards are unlikely to improve.

120 Because they have so few opportunities to use computers, pupils in Year 2 have only limited skills in word-processing. They are unsure how to edit and improve their work or print what they have done. Few have had regular opportunities to practise their mathematics using computers. By the time

they are in junior classes pupils are already a long way behind. Lack of opportunities to use spreadsheets, databases and control technology in Years 3 to 6 adds to the problem.

121 Throughout the school, pupils type laboriously, often with just one or two fingers. This slows them considerably and makes working with computers a lengthy activity. They are much more adept at using a mouse and use the programs they are familiar with well. For example, pupils in Year 2 used paint programs to draw colourful pictures and drawings of lorries and cars.

122 The subject has not been managed well enough. There has been too little sense of urgency about making the changes necessary to prevent standards from slipping to the present low levels. There are no procedures to help teachers assess or record what pupils know. Teachers need further training if they are to keep up-to-date with changes in technology and to ensure that they have the expertise to use the school's computers. All of this means that the school is failing to meet statutory requirements to teach information and communication technology and pupils are not getting a fair deal from the school.

MUSIC

123 Seven-year-olds achieve standards that are broadly average. However, by the end of Year 6, standards are below those expected of 11-year-olds. This is a similar picture to the findings of the last report and means that the school has not acted decisively to improve standards.

124 Teachers ensure that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have sufficient opportunities to sing and play instruments. In a good lesson, the teacher's demonstrations and careful choice of music helped pupils pick out long and short sounds from an orchestral piece of music. By the end of the lesson they had extended their knowledge and could predict the length of notes that tambourines and shakers would make. By the end of Year 2 they know how to hold percussion instruments correctly and are familiar with names such as guiro and maracas. They have a wide repertoire of favourite songs and hymns and enjoy listening to music and performing for others.

125 Although there was some very good teaching during the inspection, music is not taught often enough for pupils in junior classes to gain the skills they need to reach the levels expected for their age. For example, pupils get the chance to sing during assemblies, singing practice and in drama club. However, there are few times when they are taught to sing properly. In addition, without firm direction the singing lacks vibrancy, even though pupils enjoy performing for an audience. This was evident when pupils sang to recorded music in an assembly. Although they sang tunefully and with reasonable diction there was no one to conduct their voices and ensure that they all started at the same time or held notes for long enough.

126 The best lessons were by teachers who have a good knowledge of the subject and the confidence to teach it well. For example, in a very good lesson in Years 4 and 5, the teacher's clear explanations helped pupils understand how to vary the mood of the music by increasing and decreasing volume. By the end of the lesson they were able to demonstrate their understanding in their own performance with percussion instruments.

127 Some teachers do not have this confidence and rely on a programme of work to plan lessons. Despite this, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to listen to and appraise music. This means that 11-year-olds have a limited knowledge of famous composers or types of music, such as opera, jazz or classical. Another weakness to the teaching is that teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to compose music or to research about musicians.

128 As a response to criticisms in the previous report two teachers have learned to play clarinet and use these new talents to teach groups of pupils. A small number of pupils have tuition in playing violin. These pupils make good progress and do well. They also learn to read musical notation. However, the proportion of pupils who take part in these activities is quite small. Most pupils do not benefit in the same way.

129 Throughout the school, pupils enjoy music. Infant pupils respond to music by swaying and moving their bodies and by smiling and nodding their heads. In one lesson pupils made their arms move like snakes in response to some slow, sinuous music. There is a thriving drama club for junior pupils. They are currently rehearsing the musical Jonah which involves pupils singing solo parts and in chorus.

130 The subject has not been managed well enough to cause standards to improve. One important reason for this is that the school does not provide the co-ordinator with opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and to gain a clear view of what training and resources are needed to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. The co-ordinator recognises that this is a crucial target for next year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131 By the end of Years 2 and 6 most pupils achieve standards that are above those expected for their age. This picture was very much the same at the time of the last inspection. A large amount of time is devoted to physical education. There is a broad curriculum covering all aspects of the programmes of study. The scheme of work provides clear guidance and progression for pupils' learning. Pupils have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the effects of physical activity on their bodies demonstrated through warm up and cool down exercises in each lesson. In one lesson in a junior class, a pupil effectively helped to lead this part of the lesson.

132 Teaching in physical education is good. Teachers plan well and the lessons have clear focus. Teachers are confident and enthusiastic and have good organisational skills. They develop pupils' skills systematically through good subject expertise, challenging questions and the effective use of pupil demonstration. Teachers manage the pupils well which ensures good progress in lessons.

133 Pupils do well in developing their games skills. In Year 2 pupils develop dribbling and passing skills and show good ball control as they dodge and weave in and out of cones around the room. In junior classes pupils systematically practice and develop skills to play basketball. For example, they review stopping and turning and making a chest pass before working on dribbling with both hands and shooting at a target.

134 There are good relationships between teachers and pupils. Because they like and trust their teachers, pupils are motivated to work hard and collaborate well with each other to improve their performance. For example, groups of pupils in Year 6 worked hard to choreograph an Aztec Sun dance routine. They discussed and practiced their moves and listened attentively to advice from the teacher. Pupils' positive attitudes ensured they made very good progress. By the end of the lesson most pupils perform their completed dance well, following the beat and keeping in step with one another.

135 All pupils in junior classes go swimming. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve high standards, many receiving advanced awards. Pupils take part in competitive team games, such as football, netball and rugby, both as extra-curricular activities and with other schools. Games are modified from adult regulations to suit the age and ability of pupils. There is a wide range of resources

to meet the needs of the curriculum.

136 The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about physical education. Teaching has been monitored and in-service training provided for staff. Records of pupil achievements are made on end of year reports. The use of a record sheet in the policy to record pupil performance would help teachers focus on skills pupils needed to achieve higher standards.