

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC COMBINED  
SCHOOL**

Chalfont St Peter

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110477

Headteacher: Mr M J Degnan

Reporting inspector: David Westall  
2414

Dates of inspection: 5 – 6 June 2001

Inspection number: 193607

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Priory Road Chalfont St Peter Gerrards Cross Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	SL9 8SB
Telephone number:	01753 887743
Fax number:	01753 892971
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Bull
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
2414	David Westall	Registered inspector
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector
3349	Jacqueline Ikin	Team inspector
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

OASIS  
Waterstone Cottages  
Naunton  
Nr Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL54 3AS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>21</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

There are 374 pupils on roll, including 11 who attend the reception class on a part-time basis. Pupils are aged from four to 11 years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the percentage identified as having special educational needs. Eight pupils speak English as an additional language; and there are 13 traveller pupils on the school's roll. On entry to reception, children's standards are generally above average and sometimes well above average.

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

This is a school with significant strengths but some important areas for development. There is some very effective teaching, particularly for the oldest pupils, and academic standards are high. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and the school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. However, the teaching of the youngest children is unsatisfactory; procedures for checking the quality of the school's work are underdeveloped; and there is a need to improve the partnership between the school and the parents and governors. Overall, the school's strengths outweigh its weaknesses and it provides sound value for money.

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

- Standards are well above the national average in English and mathematics in Year 6 due to particularly effective teaching in the older classes.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are generally very good.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well which enables them to make good progress.

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

- The headteacher and co-ordinators do not have a range of sufficiently rigorous and systematic procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
- Children generally underachieve in the reception class, due to weaknesses in the teaching.
- The partnership between the headteacher and governors needs to be strengthened.
- Communication with parents, including about their children's progress, needs to improve.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made sound progress in addressing most of the weaknesses identified in the last OFSTED inspection, in 1997, but some important deficiencies still exist.

The planning for pupils aged five to 11 has been improved by introducing schemes of work which promote the continuous development of their learning; and nearly all teachers now assess the needs of their pupils accurately. More opportunities are now provided for pupils to use their initiative in lessons and to carry out investigations; and evidence suggests that the school has made at least sound progress in improving standards in art and design, physical education and music. In 1997, pupils aged five to seven made insufficient progress in mathematics due to unsatisfactory teaching, but this is no longer the case. The

school improvement plan now includes clear targets, and the vast majority of initiatives are planned in sufficient detail.

The last inspection found a considerable variation in the quality of teaching, which ranged from excellent to poor, and the situation is still the same. While the quality of the best teaching has been maintained, the school has made insufficient progress in eliminating unsatisfactory teaching. In particular, although the school has undertaken development work since the last inspection, weaknesses in the teaching of children in the reception class still exist. The last inspection also found the school needed more effective procedures for monitoring the quality of education it provided, and the current inspection shows that little has changed.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	B	A	A	in the top 5% nationally A*
Mathematics	A*	A	A	A	well above average A
Science	A	A	A	A	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The table shows that Year 6 pupils achieved results in English and mathematics, in 2000, which were well above the national average and were also well above the average results of similar schools. The table also shows that high standards have been maintained over a period of years.

Inspection findings confirm that the majority of Year 6 pupils achieve standards in English and mathematics that exceed the expected level for their age. In English, for example, most Year 6 pupils have well advanced reading and writing skills and are very articulate. In mathematics, the majority have very good mental calculation skills and achieve well in number, space, shape and measures, as well as when handling data and using and applying their mathematical skills.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally very good. However, the behaviour of children in the reception class and in one of the Year 1 classes is unsatisfactory due to weaknesses in the teaching.

Personal development and relationships	Pupils form constructive relationships with teachers and with each other. They work together amicably on shared tasks, and respect each other's opinions.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years (in the reception class)	aged 5-7 years (in Years 1 & 2)	aged 7-11 years (in Years 3-6)
Lessons seen overall	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory, or better, in 86 per cent of all lessons observed. The teaching of reception children is unsatisfactory and these children make insufficient progress in their learning, as a consequence. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory in English and mathematics and enables pupils to make sound progress overall. However, while good, and occasionally very good, teaching is evident, so is poor teaching in one Year 1 class. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from mainly good teaching in English and mathematics and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed in their classes. The most effective teaching is in Years 5 and 6, where its quality ranges from good to excellent. Overall, pupils make good progress in their learning in their final four years at the school, in both English and mathematics.

The best teaching is characterised by very good planning based on teachers' secure subject knowledge; skilful questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to take their learning forward; and high expectations for pupils' academic standards and behaviour. The weakest lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for the pupils, lack clear purpose and demonstrate low expectations from teachers. At present, the school's procedures for identifying unsatisfactory teaching and rectifying weaknesses are inadequate.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides most pupils with a wide range of learning opportunities. Enough time is allocated for literacy and numeracy, and effective use is usually made of this time. However, the curriculum for reception children provides them with insufficiently challenging tasks, and they need more opportunities to learn through well-planned practical experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for these pupils, and they progress well as a result.



Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has sound arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a strong presence in the school. He has very positive relationships with staff, and they hold him in high regard. He monitors pupils' test results carefully, and his high expectations for pupils' academic performance are reflected in the standards achieved by pupils in Year 6. However, his procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning, across the school, are underdeveloped; and the monitoring roles of subject co-ordinators and senior staff also need to be more rigorous and extensive. The partnership between the headteacher and the governing body requires further development and there are also weaknesses in the school's partnership with parents.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Overall, the work of the governing body is satisfactory, but they recognise there is scope to develop their roles as critical friends to the school. They would welcome more open discussion with the headteacher to explore the school's strengths and areas for improvement. A particularly positive aspect of the governing body's role is the work of those governors responsible for developing an overview of literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. These governors meet co-ordinators to discuss provision, and those responsible for literacy and numeracy have observed teaching in a number of classes.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Overall, this is a weakness in the school. While the results of statutory and non-statutory testing are analysed rigorously, the school has a limited range of other strategies to evaluate its performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is analysed carefully and, overall, the school makes sound use of its resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They believe pupils' behaviour is good.</li> <li>• They believe the school expects children to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• They believe the school is helping children become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They believe children are happy at school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They believe the school should keep them better informed about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• They believe the school should work in closer partnership with parents, and take more account of their views.</li> <li>• They believe that pupils do not get the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings support parents' positive views about the school; and also confirm that the school needs to develop a stronger partnership with parents, and to take more account of their views. The current arrangements for parents to talk to individual teachers about their children's progress is unpopular with some parents since it is difficult for those who are unavailable during working hours. In addition, the current arrangements rely too heavily on parents making contact with the school to arrange meetings, and there is no system to ensure that every parent is specifically invited to meet staff to discuss their children's progress. It should be of particular concern to the school that such a high percentage of questionnaire returns expressed dissatisfaction with the information they receive about their children's progress, and demonstrated that parents were not comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. Inspection findings do not support parents' concerns about homework, and show that good use is made of homework to extend what is learned in school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Pupils aged 11 achieve high standards in English due to particularly effective teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6.**

1. In the statutory assessment tests in English for pupils aged 11 in 2000, the school's results were well above the national average and were also well above those reached by similar schools. These good results in English are consistent with those of the last four years. Against the national trend, the school is particularly successful at achieving high standards in writing, and more than half the pupils exceeded the expected standard for their age in this aspect of the subject.
2. Inspection findings confirm these high standards. Pupils do particularly well in one Year 1 class, one Year 3 class and in Years 4 and 5, and they make exceptionally good progress in Year 6 where teaching is of a very high standard indeed. Overall, teachers are very effective at ensuring not only that the more able pupils achieve the very high standards of which they are capable, but also that pupils with special educational needs, pupils for whom English is an additional language and traveller children also make the best possible progress. As a result, whatever their starting-points, most pupils achieve at least the expected standard for their age at 11.
3. The effective teaching that results in such high standards is characterised by teachers' own love of the subject, by their knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, and by their high expectations of what each pupil should achieve. All these teachers are able to meet the specific needs of their pupils by setting appropriately challenging work for them and by responding spontaneously, at any point in a lesson and to any pupil, in order to push the boundaries of their understanding even further. For example, they might detect some uncertainty in a pupil's answer and ask further questions to make sure they have really understood; or they might recognise an answer, spoken or written, as particularly successful or relevant, and immediately share that with the class so that all pupils benefit from it. During the last part of a literacy lesson, teachers in Years 4, 5 and 6 are particularly skilled at making sure the pupils know, and can explain, what they have learned that day – and also that they use the relevant technical language to define or describe what they have learned. The best teaching seen makes pupils fully aware of the links between reading, writing and knowledge about language. Pupils learn explicitly about the craft of writing as well as about the meaning of what has been read when they study texts with their teachers. As a result, their own analysis of texts is well informed, they acquire the precise technical language to describe the effects a writer has achieved, and their own writing skills are enhanced. This empowerment of pupils is nowhere more evident than in Year 6. For example, pupils in one Year 6 class recognise an attempt by an author to replicate, in the rhythm of a complex sentence and in his choice of onomatopoeic words, the very sound and rhythm of skiers on snow, the topic he has so effectively described. Using their knowledge of form and rhyme, and applying their reasoning power and higher order reading skills to identify thematic links and to make meaning, pupils in the parallel class quickly reassemble the jumbled verses of a challenging poem. They can select a favourite amongst four very dissimilar poems and can write their own critical commentaries, justifying their choices. They do so, for the most part, in an informed and assured way, commenting, for example on the use of repetition, the imagery, the vocabulary,

the play on words, the rhythm and the use of rhyme for effect. Most significantly, and unusually for pupils of this age, pupils in both Year 6 classes have been taught not only to appreciate the close links between a writer's ideas and his or her use of language, form and punctuation, but also how to describe and explain these links. In essence, they have been taught to read as if they were writers and to write as if they were readers. Their handwriting, spelling and punctuation are of a very high standard overall. In their personal reading preferences, most pupils demonstrate a love of literature and of reading. They read aloud fluently and expressively, alert to the cues presented by punctuation, interpreting mood and character by their tone, and interpreting ideas in their heads as they read. They speak knowledgeably about favourite authors and genres, and they enjoy reading to find things out. Pupils of all abilities know how to use the library and how to use information books. They locate and select relevant information very competently, and are skilled at presenting their findings in appropriate formats and in their own words, whether in speech or writing. During discussions, they listen attentively to teachers, to other adults, and to one another. Most pupils are very articulate. Their powers of expression are well developed, and they choose their words carefully, conscious of the need for precision and recognising the need to match what they say to specific purposes and audiences.

4. Evidence from lesson observations and from the scrutiny of pupils' written work shows that the very high standards achieved in Year 6 also owe much to those teachers in earlier years, particularly, though not exclusively to those in Years 4 and 5. In their respective roles, the special educational needs co-ordinator, support staff and parent volunteers also make a significant contribution to pupils' progress and attainment. Whatever their starting points or stages of development in English, pupils clearly feel at ease with staff and with one another. Their enthusiasm for language, their growing confidence and independence as language users, and their investment in terms of intellectual and creative effort are as much a tribute to the skills of staff as are the standards attained.

**Pupils aged 11 achieve high standards in mathematics due to particularly effective teaching in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.**

5. The results of the statutory assessment tests for pupils in their final year in school in 2000 were well above the national average and well above the average results of similar schools. These high standards have been maintained over the last four years. In 2000, a very high percentage of pupils reached Level 4, which is the standard expected nationally for Year 6 pupils, and just over half demonstrated high standards by reaching Level 5. Inspection findings reflect these results and show that current standards, overall, are well above average in mathematics in Year 6.
6. Mathematics teaching ranges from poor to good for pupils aged up to seven years, but is consistently good or better in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. The most effective teaching is in Year 6, where both classes benefit from very good mathematics teaching. The teaching enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good overall progress in the subject and to achieve well in their final four years at the school. For example, Year 5 pupils can use protractors to measure acute, obtuse and reflex angles accurately, and can quickly calculate the unknown angle if given a single angle, using their knowledge that there are 180° in a straight line and 360° in a circle. They know the properties of a good range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional mathematical shapes, and can explain clearly, for example, that a right-angled triangle could be a scalene triangle but not all

scalene triangles are right-angled triangles. The vast majority have rapid recall of their tables, up to the 12 times table, and can use their knowledge of number bonds effectively in mental calculations. Pupils can respond instantly to questions from their teacher, for example to answer that the square root of 81 is nine. The advanced learners in Year 5 can quickly solve mathematical problems, for example, to discover how many pencils are in 72 boxes, given that there are 58 pencils in each box. In Year 6, pupils also carry out mental calculations quickly and accurately. For example, in a lesson observed, each pupil tried hard to beat their previous time for answering 70 numeracy questions. The quickest finished in two and a half minutes and the vast majority of the class completed the task in under four and a half minutes, with a high degree of accuracy. Year 6 pupils can carry out long division calculations, for example to divide 7864 by 22; and can add and subtract with up to three places of decimals. They also make good progress when solving problems by extracting and interpreting information presented in tables, graphs and charts.

7. The teachers clearly enjoy teaching mathematics, and they are able to motivate pupils strongly. Pupils' attitudes and concentration were impressive features of all the lessons seen in the junior department. Teachers also enable pupils to enjoy their work, and there is humour and a sense of fun in many lessons. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils enjoyed reading and plotting co-ordinates, and using scale measurements, to find treasure on a map of an imaginary island, for example using a bearing of  $212^\circ$  and a distance of seven kilometres from a specified position. They also enjoyed predicting and testing the accuracy of their bearings when attempting to hole golf balls in a well chosen worksheet game. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan their work well and appropriately share the learning intentions of their lessons with the pupils. The beginnings of lessons include a range of mental and oral activities that are well matched to pupils' learning needs, and move at a brisk pace. Teachers' explanations are clear, their expectations are high and they use questions well, throughout their lessons, to check pupils' understanding. Learning support assistants are particularly well briefed by teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The National Numeracy Strategy is used well and the teaching of mathematics for pupils aged seven to 11 is a key strength of the school.

**Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are generally very good.**

8. Pupils generally behave very well, whether in lessons, in the playground, in assemblies or around the school. Almost all bring with them from their homes a strong sense of right and wrong, good manners and caring attitudes. These qualities are also strongly promoted in the school and are reflected in the common courtesies pupils extend to one another, to staff and to visitors. Pupils are generally polite and respectful. They open doors, give way gracefully to others, and take turns patiently, whether during discussions or when queuing for lunch. In lessons, they are very keen to answer questions, and it is only the youngest children in the school who respond noisily and inappropriately to their teacher's questions. Pupils work constructively together when directly asked to do so, and support one another quietly at other times when working independently of the teacher. They settle quickly to tasks, concentrate well, try hard to draw on previous learning, and make effective use of the resources available, including dictionaries. They make every effort to present their work neatly and to live up to their teachers' expectations in terms of effort and achievement.

9. It is clear that pupils value learning. Whatever their starting points, pupils strive to do their best. They know that they are valued as individuals and, because they are taught on a day-to-day basis to recognise their own achievements, they show developing confidence and independence in themselves as learners. They have positive attitudes to reading, and they complete their homework conscientiously. They also enjoy the many extra-curricular and enrichment activities the school offers them.

**The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.**

10. Pupils' spiritual development is underpinned by the Catholic ethos which permeates all aspects of school life. In assemblies and at other times during the school day, pupils are encouraged to reflect, to join in prayers and to develop their own relationship with God. Assemblies are occasions where the school community unites, and this unity has a spiritual quality which is almost as evident in the very harmonious singing as it is when the whole school unites in prayer. Pupils are encouraged to consider religious events and ideas and to make their own understanding of these explicit. For example, during the inspection, pupils spoke about the meaning of Pentecost, about its significance and about its relevance to our lives today. Many classrooms have special corners set aside for pupils to display prayers relevant to events in their own lives, and the school prayer is also displayed prominently - and known by heart by the pupils. Pupils are frequently invited to consider, and respond to, the feelings of others. For example, English lessons frequently focus on human experience and human feelings, as is evident in lessons seen, in much of the work on display around the school, and in pupils' own exercise books. For example, pupils in Year 5 write with empathy and insight for the author after reading Beverley Naidoo's account of her childhood in South Africa in her book 'The Other Side of Truth'. Meanwhile, pupils in Year 6 are asked to identify with the feelings of the homeless in Britain and with the intense feelings of an aboriginal writer for her homeland. Pupils of all ages are taught to revere and respect the beauty of the natural world, to recognise the hand of God the Creator and of 'Mother Nature' in its design, and to be in tune with their own feelings of awe and wonder. For example, pupils in Year 2 write sensitively about the beauty of a special time of day such as the dawn and see, from photographs of the natural world, how nature often inspires art.
11. The school provides strong moral guidance for its pupils. Staff set a good example by understanding and valuing pupils as individuals, while the Christian values establish high expectations for moral behaviour and attitudes. The Programmes of Study for religious education and many assembly themes present pupils with the moral lessons implicit in Christ's teachings and illustrate the relevance of these to pupils' own lives. Moral and social responsibility are intrinsic to the school ethos and are strongly promoted through the school rules and through rules devised by the pupils themselves. Pupils are taught right from wrong both explicitly and in more subtle ways, through their daily interactions with staff. Caring attitudes and social concerns are the norm. Pupils are strongly encouraged to demonstrate concern for those less fortunate than themselves. For example, they send pencils to children in Africa, 'shoe-box' parcels to children in Poland, and they contribute to collections for lifeboats, for the Marie Curie cancer appeal and for the St Francis Children's Society. In ways such as these, the school is conveying to its pupils the importance of individual and collective responsibility as well as mankind's moral responsibility for those who are ill, suffering or in need of help.

12. The school also actively promotes pupils' social development. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for various duties in their own classes and, as they get older, within the school as a whole. For example, pupils in Year 2 organise their own mathematics investigations; pupils in Year 4 organise science investigations; pupils in Year 5 organise themselves to distribute books, collect votes and judge the results in connection with the 'Smarties' book prize. Pupils in Year 6 meet visitors and escort them round the school, for example during Open Week, regularly set up the hall ready for assemblies, organise team games, manage the house-points system, and look after new children when they come into school. Many extra-curricular activities give pupils opportunities to work and play together, and a strong sense of team spirit and collective responsibility is developed through competitive team events, for example in sports such as football.
  
13. Pupils' cultural development is fostered well. Pupils are taught to regard reading as a pleasure and books as valuable sources of creativity, ideas, aspirations and information. They are introduced to the work of authors and poets from a wide range of countries and cultures, and they are taught to recognise the similarities and differences in ways of life and in human experience. In geography, history, religious education and assemblies, pupils learn about their own cultural heritage and about the beliefs and traditions of many other cultures, both past and present. They celebrate the Christian festivals and holidays that occur throughout the year, and they learn about the traditions and significance of special events celebrated by followers of other world faiths. For example, children in the reception class learn about the Chinese New Year, while the whole school learns about Hinduism during a 'Hindu week'. Visitors to the school talk to pupils about their work in other countries. For example, pupils hear a first-hand account of the lives of street children in South America from an adult who works with these children. Teachers talk to pupils about their own lives in other countries, and pupils learn from some of their classmates about the cultural traditions of traveller families. In art and music, pupils are taught to understand and appreciate the work of significant artists and composers. Music and drama feature strongly in the life of the school. There are regular choirs, an orchestra and a recorder/percussion after-school club, and there are also whole-school events, for example at Christmas, when all pupils participate in a carol-singing event round the village Christmas tree. At the time of the inspection, after-school rehearsals are taking place for what promises to be a very fine production of 'Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat'

**Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress as a result.**

14. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and receive good support from that point. The special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and learning support assistants form an effective, well-informed team that works in the best interests of the pupils. Class teachers are fully aware of the special educational needs of pupils in their charge. They plan work that matches pupils' individual or group needs, for example during the literacy and numeracy hours. In some instances, tailored programmes are devised for specific pupils. As a result, they may be withdrawn from classes for short periods of time to work on tasks related to the targets in their individual education plans, either with the special educational needs co-ordinator or with a support assistant. Through careful planning, the school ensures that no pupil has a restricted curriculum as a result of this practice. Indeed, all staff make every effort to ensure that pupils with special educational needs play a full part in all activities: they are involved in discussions,

frequently contribute to lessons by talking about what they have learned, and are strongly encouraged to take pride in their achievements. The very good relationship that staff form with these pupils are a strength. All staff know the pupils well: they know their strengths as well as their learning needs and their responses are well matched to individual pupils. As a result, the pupils develop confidence in their own abilities as learners and acquire the self-esteem so necessary to succeed. Most pupils with special educational needs are fortunate in that they are supported in their endeavours not only by those who teach them, but also by their classmates and by their parents. Parents clearly value the efforts made by the school on their children's behalf, and most willingly reinforce the school's work by providing additional, complementary support at home, whether with reading or homework. Where necessary, the school is also able to draw on specialist advice and help from outside agencies. For example, staff from the local education authority's Traveller Support Service provide valuable support for any travellers' children who have special educational needs. Other pupils benefit from ongoing support provided by the educational psychologists' service, by speech and language therapists, and by staff from the service which supports pupils with impaired hearing.

15. Pupils with special educational needs benefit greatly from the breadth and quality of the support they are given. Year on year they build steadily on their prior attainment, making good progress overall, and sometimes very good progress indeed. By the time they are 11, few pupils fall below the standards expected in the national tests. The quality of teaching and of support for pupils with special educational needs, for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for the travellers' children is a significant strength in the school.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The headteacher and co-ordinators do not have a range of sufficiently rigorous and systematic procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning in the school.**

16. The headteacher and the subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science monitor the results of statutory and optional testing carefully, and have a sound overview of the quality of teachers' planning. However, their procedures for checking the school's performance are otherwise underdeveloped. The headteacher does sometimes observe lessons, but there is no systematic monitoring programme for this and the only records kept are the very limited number that have been made very recently to reflect the national requirement for performance management.
17. The subject co-ordinators for English and mathematics have observed too few lessons to develop a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses in provision in their subjects, across the school, and, due to long-term absence, the science co-ordinator has yet to observe science teaching. In addition, there is no common expectation that subject co-ordinators should collect examples of pupils' work in their subjects in order to evaluate the standards or progress of pupils in different classes, and this also reflects a lack of rigour in the school's monitoring procedures.
18. The senior management staff who are responsible for the infant department (reception to Year 2) and the junior department (Years 3 to 6) have no systematic procedures to enable them to analyse provision in their departments with enough precision, and to target areas for improvement. Both the last inspection and the



current inspection found a wide variety in the quality of teaching across the school, including a significant proportion of unsatisfactory as well as good practice. The lack of effective monitoring procedures to check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in individual classes is a key reason why weaknesses in teaching have not been properly identified and addressed. At present, the school is relying too heavily on the results of testing pupils as the key means for monitoring its success.

19. Evidence suggests that the school benefits from able teachers who are conscientious and keen to develop their co-ordination roles. The headteacher now needs to provide training opportunities for all co-ordinators to develop the strategies and confidence to monitor their subjects with increased rigour, and to address areas for improvement. In particular, he needs to identify and agree, in consultation with key staff and governors, clear criteria for observing teaching and learning and analysing pupils' work from across the school; and sound formats for recording and evaluating findings. Evidence can then be used to focus support and raise the quality of teaching and learning in areas of weakness.

**Children generally underachieve in the reception class, as a result of weaknesses in the teaching.**

20. The overall quality of teaching of reception children is unsatisfactory. The significant weaknesses, which constrained children's learning in the last inspection, are still evident. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the ways in which young children learn are insecure and, as a result, most of the practical learning experiences that are provided do not sufficiently interest the children or extend the knowledge, skills and understanding that they bring with them from home. For example, the 'Noah's kitchen' role-play area is not made sufficiently different to the usual kitchen to be found in the 'home corner' and, as a result, children's imaginative and creative ideas and their vocabulary are not extended because they quickly lose interest. In the lessons observed, there was not enough effective use of questioning, explanation and ongoing discussion with children to build on what they already know and extend their knowledge and skills into new areas.
21. Teachers do not assess children's needs accurately enough in their planning. As a result, the work is too easy for above average and well above average children, and they do not make sufficient progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson involving numbers up to 20, some pupils could count, add and subtract using numbers well beyond that: they completed the activities set for them quickly and were then sent to the role-play area.
22. Teachers' expectations for children's behaviour are too low and, when coupled with poor questioning skills, this results in pupils shouting out in the course of whole-class sessions. For example, when reading a story about Noah, the teacher addressed general questions to the whole class on a number of occasions. Children shouted out a range of different responses at the same time and this was accepted, even though no one could be really heard and it disrupted the story. Expectations about routines and procedures have not been firmly established and, as a result, children do not know what is expected of them and behave inappropriately. This was evident after registration when the children were asked who would like to take the register to the office, the majority of children leapt up and down inappropriately shouting "Me! Me!" The limited nature of some activities, together with the lack of procedures to help children make informed choices and decisions, to track their participation and progress and to ensure sustained learning,

results in children acquiring poor habits of learning. This is particularly evident when they wander aimlessly between activities or engage in silly behaviour within them.

**The partnership between the governors and the headteacher needs to be strengthened.**

23. The partnership between the governing body and the headteacher is unsatisfactory. Recent self-evaluation documents, formulated by the headteacher and staff, provide clear evidence that they have strong reservations about governor involvement in some aspects they feel to be inappropriate. There is a concern that the governing body has a negative view about the leadership and management of the school; and a sense that “there should be more trust in the professionals”. Some elements of the evaluation, for example, the assertion that the responsibility for appointing all but the most senior teaching staff should be given to the headteacher, does not recognise the governing body’s right to decide on the degree of delegation. The headteacher’s recent decision to appoint without consulting governors is indicative of the lack of partnership he feels with them.
24. A separate self-evaluation document, created as a result of a recent meeting between 12 governors shows they perceive their relationship with the headteacher as a key weakness. Discussions with governors indicate that some want to be more involved in agreeing the statutory targets set for pupils in English and mathematics, which is one of their key duties. In addition, some believe their involvement in the school improvement plan is restricted to a ‘rubber stamping’ role since they perceive the headteacher as reluctant to take on board any suggestions they might make for improvements. A further indication of the difficulty between the governing body and the headteacher is that the headteacher’s performance targets have only been recently agreed, despite input from an independent adviser who sought to negotiate targets some months ago.
25. There is evidence to show that the school should adopt a broader and more rigorous approach towards the monitoring of its performance, as explained elsewhere in this report. Some governors are already aware of the need for the school to evaluate its work more effectively and are keen to play their part by developing their roles as ‘critical friends’ to the school. However, it is important for the headteacher and the governors to reach a clear agreement about their respective roles in judging the school’s performance and promoting improvements. Common aims need to be established, and strategies need to be agreed which will forge constructive working relationships between the senior management and governors in order to reach these aims. While there is no evidence to show that the difficulties in the relationship between the governing body and the headteacher are having an impact on pupils’ standards and the quality of teaching, there are indications that it has a negative effect on staff and governor morale.

**Communication with parents, including about the children’s progress, needs to improve.**

26. The school does not encourage an effective partnership with parents. It needs to seek their views more strongly and to demonstrate that it takes these fully into account. There is too little effort paid to evaluating whether school practices and routines best serve school and parental needs. This results in some parents feeling dissatisfied with their partnership with the school.

27. The results of parent questionnaires for the inspection show that 43 per cent of those who responded do not feel they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on, and this concern was also raised at the parents' meeting before the inspection began. The school's system for face-to-face interviews between parents and class teachers means that the onus is on parents to approach the school. Some parents feel that the school does not take the initiative to pass on important information to them if they do not arrange an appointment. A main concern for some parents is that the timing of the 'surgeries' with teachers is at the end of the school day and that working parents find it difficult to attend. The school is aware of these concerns, but is reluctant to make any changes to its current practice, for example to arrange some consultation sessions during evenings. There is no planned programme for all parents to be made aware of their children's targets early in the academic year, or to review them at the end of the year; and this is a weakness.
28. Overall, the school's links with parents need to be strengthened, and this is recognised by the governors. The school is also right to be concerned that, in a significant minority of questionnaire returns from parents, they expressed the view that they would not feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or a problem.

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

29. In order to raise the quality of teaching and learning, and to improve relationships within the whole-school community, the headteacher and governors should address the following issues in the school's post-inspection action plan.
- Improve the school's monitoring procedures by ensuring that the headteacher:
    - a) establishes a systematic monitoring programme for both himself and the key co-ordinators for English, mathematics, science and the infant and junior departments;
    - b) draws up and uses agreed criteria and formats for observing teaching and learning, analysing pupils' work, recording and evaluating findings;
    - c) uses these evaluations to target support and raise the quality of teaching and learning in areas of weakness;
    - d) enables all co-ordinators to develop their roles and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility through well-focused training on the monitoring techniques described above.
  - Raise the quality of curriculum provision and teaching for reception-aged pupils by:
    - a) increasing teachers' knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and of how to teach them;
    - b) improving the quality of learning through practical experiences;

- c) ensuring that planned tasks are sufficiently challenging and well matched to the different needs and abilities of the pupils;
  - d) improving standards of behaviour;
  - e) establishing clear routines and procedures: to help pupils make informed choices and decisions; and to track their progress and their participation in activities.
- Improve the partnership between the headteacher and governors by:
    - a) exploring successful models of partnership, facilitated by outside agencies eg governor support;
    - b) agreeing a clear framework for governor involvement at key points in the school year eg in the process of school development planning, financial planning, data analysis and target setting, staff appointments, and the evaluation of the headteacher's performance; and
    - c) establishing regular opportunities for key staff to share evaluations and developments in the quality of teaching, learning and provision so that governors are well informed about progress on whole-school initiatives.
- Improve the partnership with parents by:
    - a) positively seeking their views on school initiatives;
    - b) fostering a constructive dialogue to tackle issues of concern; and
    - c) demonstrating that parents' contributions are valued and valuable.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	22	32	27	9	5	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	374
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	59

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	48
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.2
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	26	20	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	26
	Girls	19	20	20
	Total	45	46	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (93)	100 (96)	100 (96)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	26
	Girls	19	20	20
	Total	45	46	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (95)	100 (96)	100 (96)
	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	21	24	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	17	20
	Girls	22	22	23
	Total	41	39	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (85)	87 (93)	96 (91)
	National	75 (71)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	15
	Girls	21	21	20
	Total	35	38	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (89)	86 (95)	80 (93)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	308
Any other minority ethnic group	25

*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)	14.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	26.4

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
--------------------------------	-----

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	548,954
Total expenditure	526,386
Expenditure per pupil	1,500
Balance brought forward from previous year	-9,849
Balance carried forward to next year	12,719

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	368
Number of questionnaires returned	114

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	43	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	45	8	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	55	3	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	53	18	3	1
The teaching is good.	42	48	5	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	40	32	11	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	36	12	4	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	42	4	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	25	42	21	8	4
The school is well led and managed.	38	39	12	4	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	60	5	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	39	6	1	3