

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Trinity Square, South Woodham Ferrers

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115201

Headteacher: Mrs Mairead Farrell

Reporting inspector: R Peter J McGregor
3525

Dates of inspection: 10-12 September 2001

Inspection number: 194156

Short 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:	Trinity Square South Woodham Ferrers Nr Chelmsford Essex
Postcode:	CM3 5JX
Telephone number:	01245 321828
Fax number:	01245 321795
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Elaine Mills
Date of previous inspection:	6 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's RC is a voluntary aided infant and junior school with 180 pupils aged four to eleven, of a similar size to most primary schools. The school has increased in size over the past four years to have one class for each year group. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs, 13 per cent, is below the national average of 23 per cent. A small proportion is at the higher stages of need, including Statements. Special educational needs are mainly learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals, 4 per cent, is below the national figure of about 20 per cent. Judgements made in this report may refer to similar schools: these are schools with up to and including 8 per cent of the pupils taking free school meals. Few pupils join or leave the school except for the usual transfers at the start and end of the school year. Pupils of a full range of ability attend the school. Assessments carried out shortly after children join the Reception class indicate that their attainment is above expectations overall, with strengths in writing and personal development. This varies quite a lot from year to year. Pupils come from the parishes of Holy Trinity South Woodham Ferrers and English Martyrs Danbury and the area around the school, which is generally socially and economically advantaged. Preference for admission is given to Roman Catholics but the school is pleased to receive applications from pupils of other faiths.

St Joseph's shares the same building as a Church of England primary school. Both schools use the church that adjoins the school, have the same playground, break and lunchtimes, and have a common uniform. Each school, however, has its own governing body, headteacher and staff.

The inspection was carried out in just the second week of term, when pupils were settling into their new classes and children in the Reception class were in school for mornings only.

Religious education and the quality of collective worship were not inspected, and are recorded separately in a diocesan inspection report.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Joseph's is a good school. Standards in English, maths and science are much higher than in most schools and pupils are doing well considering their abilities. Standards in some other subjects are average or below because they are not taught for sufficient time. Teaching is good overall and particularly effective in classes where national tests are prepared for and taken. The headteacher, with very good support from staff and governors, has made great improvements in the school since the last inspection. Leadership and management are very good. Pupils are extremely well cared for. Strong emphasis is put on developing their understanding of right and wrong, and on encouraging them to think before acting. Pupils enjoy school and behave very well. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in the tests taken at the end of Years 2 and 6 in English, maths and science are much higher than those attained in most other schools. Pupils across the full range of ability do well in these subjects.
- A welcoming and spiritual environment is provided where all pupils receive very good care, and are valued for their talents. This results in a very happy school, where pupils try hard and behave very well.

- Good teaching, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6, is one of the main reasons for the pupils' enjoyment and success.
- Pupils are set targets and set their own, and this helps them to make very good progress in much of their work.
- The staff team is very ably led and managed by the headteacher, supported by the governors.

What could be improved

- Pupils are taught for less time each week than is usually the case. The substantial time allocated to teaching English, maths and religious education means there is insufficient available for several foundation subjects, so standards in these subjects are not high enough.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection in 1997. Standards are much higher in Year 2 and Year 6 in English, maths and science. Four years ago, standards were broadly average, but now they are well above national averages in all three subjects. The quality of teaching is good, much improved on the unsatisfactory picture of 1997. In all lessons, learning objectives are now set for the pupils and they have targets to aim for; this was not the case four years ago. The very good attitudes of the pupils reported in the last inspection are equally good today. The way the school helps pupils to develop personally and to reflect on what they are doing is much improved and is now very good. It was said to be satisfactory in the last report. Weaknesses in management, particularly the poor relationships between some governors and managers, have been resolved and now governors and senior managers are all very effective. Good planning for the increase in pupil numbers has resulted in seven classes, one for each year group, a situation parents appreciate greatly.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	A	A*	A
Mathematics	B	A	A	B
Science	B	A	A	B

Key

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

An A* indicates that results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally

In this report, the term ‘attainment’ refers to clear benchmarks, such as National Curriculum levels attained at the end of Years 2 and 6. ‘Achievement’ on the other hand, reflects the accomplishments of pupils in relation to what you would expect of these particular pupils. The pupils’ ‘prior attainment’, what they can already do, is the reference point for pupils’ achievement.

Pupils in Year 6 did particularly well in English in the national tests taken in 2000, with very high results. Maths and science results were well above average. The trend of improvement over the last five years has been similar to the national trend. Year 2 tests and teacher assessments in reading, writing, maths and science were also well above average. When compared with similar schools, results were above average.

A high proportion of pupils do well in the more difficult work, reaching level 3 in the Year 2 tests and level 5 in the Year 6 tests. Boys’ results in Year 6 in 2000 were much higher than those of girls, but school information shows that there was a larger proportion of more able boys in that year.

In 2001, results in Year 6 in English and maths, although not as high as in the previous year, were above those attained in many schools. Science results were just as high as in the previous year. In Year 2, tests and teacher assessments in English, maths and science were not quite as high as in 2000 but they were above those attained by many schools.

The school’s results in Year 6 were higher than their target for maths in 2000 and almost met the target for English. In 2001 the picture was reversed. The English results were higher than the target, but maths results a little below what the school had expected the pupils to achieve.

Children enter the Reception class at a level above expectations and do well. At this very early stage in the year they are working quickly towards the early learning goals. Pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6, are reaching standards above or well above that expected and doing well in English, maths and science. Their achievements, as they move through the school, are good in these subjects. Standards in some other subjects, including history, geography and design and technology, are not as high as they should be. Although pupils achieve well when taught these subjects, some aspects are not covered and not learnt, because time is too short. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are below average, but improving as the new computer network is brought into use and staff knowledge on how to use it improves.

PUPILS’ ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils care and show respect for one another. Almost all like coming to school. Year 6 pupils’ approach to learning is excellent. They settle down to work quickly and complete independent work of a very high standard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils know school expectations and work to these. Very few instances of bullying; dealt with well when they occur. Very good behaviour and quiet in most lessons, enabling pupils to learn easily.
Personal development	Very good. Pupils show increasing maturity and confidence as

and relationships	they move through the school. Obedient and very co-operative. Pupils and staff relate very well to each other. Pupils given many responsibilities, particularly in Year 6, and respond very well.
Attendance	Average. School given reasons for every pupil absence that occurs. Attendance not higher because many parents take their children away on holiday during term time. Good punctuality.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	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 overall quality of teaching observed was good. In the Reception class, teaching of all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum is effective, particularly in children's personal development. The focused, demanding teaching of Years 2, 5 and 6 results in pupils working very hard and achieving well in all their lessons. They show a great will to do as well as possible in English, maths and science. Teachers encourage accuracy in oral and written work in all subjects, make good use of technical vocabulary, and give a strong emphasis to number in maths lessons, ensuring that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed well.

The few pupils who have special educational needs are known well by their teachers and support staff, who teach them effectively. Able pupils are equally well known, and challenged by what is taught in most lessons.

The most important strengths in the teaching seen were: teachers' good subject knowledge; their high expectations of pupils' conduct and work rate; very good organisation resulting in helpful learning routines for the pupils; and a focus on National Curriculum requirements in English, maths and science. The learning objectives shown to the pupils in each lesson mean that they know exactly what has to be learnt. Teachers know what is expected for the national assessments in Years 2 and 6 and prepare for them very effectively. Pupils respond very well to the good quality teaching, working confidently and concentrating hard. Overall, pupils' learning is good. In a few lessons, teaching weaknesses resulted in unsatisfactory learning, restricting what was achieved. In these lessons, teachers spoke for too long, pupils' skills in subjects were not developed well enough and they were allowed to be too silly and noisy at times. Some teachers lack confidence and knowledge in using the computer network in subject lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Effective planning and a good amount of time to teach English and maths. Good breadth to the curriculum, with Foundation Stage, all National Curriculum subjects and religious education planned for and taught. Balance of the curriculum unsatisfactory because of a lack of

	time available for some subjects. Use of computers not often included in planning for subjects. A good number of after school clubs and activities provided for Years 3 to 6, and all pupils enjoy and learn from a very good range of educational visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Well organised so pupils' needs identified early and appropriate support arranged to help pupils learn. Plans drawn up for each pupil, with precise targets that help teachers and support staff focus on individual needs. Good planning and support for pupils with formal Statements of special educational need.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language well taught and supported. Good progress, comparable with others in the class.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Very effective promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values, through lessons, assemblies and what happens during breaks. Pupils given a substantial range of responsibilities, which they are expected to take seriously. School's mission followed and supported by staff, with a strong emphasis on spiritual values, learning the difference between right and wrong and appreciating cultural diversity in our world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. Pupils valued as individuals, for the talents they have. Staff know and care for them very well. Close and helpful links with outside agencies. Pupils and staff get on very well together. Staff carry out breaktime duties most effectively. Very effective target setting for both behaviour and academic work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Headteacher provides strong and principled leadership with good management. This has led to very good improvement in standards in English, maths and science, and in several other areas of school life. Day-to-day arrangements work well and policies are followed. Senior staff very effective and subject co-ordinators manage their areas well. Staff work as a team, supporting one another, aware of the needs of the school. The vision for the future is clear – as an inclusive and successful school - and is being worked for. Areas where improvement is needed are known.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very effectively. Governors bring considerable expertise to their roles, from a range of professions. Well organised, monitoring what is taking place and providing considerable support. Know the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved. Involved in deciding the future direction and priorities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Lesson observations have led managers to know where improvements in teaching and learning are needed, and to provide

of its performance	effective support. School assessment data used to good effect to identify weaknesses in subjects, so teaching is refocused and improved. School development plan useful and detailed, but what is and is not achieved is not thoroughly evaluated. School tries to achieve 'best value' in all decisions and actions.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Money spent well. Pupils benefit from the new library and are beginning to make use of the new computer network. School well resourced and maintained as a good working environment. Large underspend in budget planned to maintain advantageous staffing ratio and further improve accommodation and computer facilities.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are happy at school • School has high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and of the standard of their work • Good teaching • Good behaviour • Help and guidance provided for pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of activities out of lessons for pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 • Information they receive about their children's progress • How closely the school works with parents

A small proportion of the parents and carers of pupils responded to the questionnaire about the school or attended the meeting for them. The inspection team agrees with these parents' positive views about the school. They found that the pupils were very happy, staff taught well and had high expectations, pupils' behaviour was very good, and excellent help and guidance was provided for pupils. No activities outside lessons are provided for Reception and Year 1 and 2 classes, but a good range is available for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Inspectors also found that the school provides a very good range of newsletters, formal contact with families each term, day-by-day responses to parents' requests for discussions, and a weekly diary which parents, teachers and pupils use to communicate. Although the diary was used inconsistently by families and staff, this represents very good provision. Parents and carers help with school visits and each class has two helpers. No evidence was provided by parents and carers as to what was wrong with existing links between the school and home, and inspectors could find no evidence of a problem.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Results in the tests taken in Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science are much higher than those attained in most other schools. Pupils across the full range of ability do well in these subjects.

1. Pupils enter the Reception class with above average skills in literacy and numeracy, and good personal development. They make good progress across the areas of learning and are well prepared for the start of Year 1 and courses based on National Curriculum requirements. Children achieve well in the Reception class. By the end of the year, they listen effectively and speak audibly with good vocabularies. They are happy to attempt writing and are confident in writing their names. Concentration is high and children relate well to their peers and adults, taking turns and confidently embarking on new activities. Number names are used and, by the start of Year 1, most pupils can recognise numerals to ten and can count to ten. In the areas of 'knowledge and understanding of the world', 'physical development' and 'creative development' outcomes are similarly good.

2. In the reading, writing and mathematics tests, taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2000, results were well above average. These high standards have been maintained for the past three years. Results in 2001, although not quite as high as in 2000, were nevertheless good, showing how well pupils achieved. In the teacher assessments in science, results have been well above average for several years, including 2001. When all these results are compared with similar schools, reading and writing results are well above average and mathematics above average. A high proportion of pupils do well in the more difficult work in reading and writing, two or three times as many pupils gaining the higher level 3 than do so nationally. In mathematics, the proportion gaining level 3 is above average.

3. Current standards in Year 2, at this early stage in the year, are substantially higher than expected nationally in English, mathematics and science, showing good achievement. In a literacy session, pupils answered accurately and enthusiastically questions about a boy's excuses for not returning a library book. They read accurately and well. Pupils have good basic skills of spelling and grammar. A discussion about different shapes in mathematics showed pupils had a good understanding of triangles, rectangles, pentagons and other shapes, as they described them accurately. Almost all were confident with numbers to 100 and understood place value. In science, pupils confidently distinguished between living things, identifying similarities and differences, showing good use of technical language. Lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs work hard and are well supported, achieving well.

4. Pupils' overall results at the end of Year 6 in the national tests improved from above average in 1998 to well above average in 1999, compared with the national picture, and these standards were maintained in 2000. Standards were very high in English in 2000, with most pupils gaining the expected level 4, and almost three-quarters gaining the higher level 5. English results were in the highest 5 per cent of all schools nationally, an excellent achievement. In mathematics, most pupils attained the expected level 4 and about a third the higher level 5. Almost all pupils gained the expected level 4 in science and about half achieved level 5. In both mathematics and science these results are well above average. The trend in results of eleven year olds over the past five years is of improvement, similar to the national trend. Boys' results have been much higher than girls for the past three years, a situation of which the school has been aware for some time. Differences in capabilities of the relatively small cohorts of boys and girls have been identified as the cause of the discrepancies, with more higher-attaining boys than girls in the year groups. During the inspection no discernible differences in the way teachers approached boys and girls were identified, both genders being taught equally well. In 2001, results in Year 6 in English and mathematics, although not as high as in the previous year, were above those attained in many

schools. The proportions attaining level 5 were good, though that in English did not quite match the very good 2000 figure. Science results in 2001 were even higher than in the previous year.

5. In Year 6, standards observed in English were much higher than those expected nationally, reflecting the test results of previous years. Pupils explain points clearly, with great confidence. They listen very well and are very keen to respond to questions. Written work is of a high standard, in terms of accuracy and creativity. In a lesson concerning the conversion of text into a play script, pupils showed excellent independent working skills. Most pupils' standard of spelling was above average. The spirited group reading of 'Superfudge' was very good, and pupils' responses showed very good comprehension of the mood and expressions of the characters. In mathematics, attainment in Year 6 was also much higher than the nationally expected standard. Pupils' commitment to learning and their command of number were very good. For example, in an oral lesson on complements to form 100, pupils worked quickly and accurately. The highest attainers found the answers to numbers such as 31.2, whereas the few lower attainers successfully responded to numbers such as 93. Mathematical language, such as 'axes', 'horizontal' and 'frequency table', was used accurately, and pupils used their own methods to solve problems. In science, discussions with pupils showed a good understanding of scientific terminology, with higher attainers explaining terms such as evaporation and condensation in their own words. Pupils knew the importance of fair testing and the value of predicting outcomes before investigating.

6. Overall, throughout the school, pupils' achievement is good. The progress made in Years 2, 5 and 6 is very good, and at times excellent, because of high quality teaching and the very good attitudes of the pupils. In other years it is sound or better with an encouraging start made in Reception. Teaching caters for pupils of all abilities and for those with special educational needs, so each achieves standards commensurate with her/his capability.

A welcoming and spiritual environment is provided where all pupils receive very good care and are valued for their talents. This results in a very happy school, where pupils try hard and behave very well.

7. The headteacher and all the staff strongly promote the ethos so clearly stated in the school's mission: "The creation of a happy, healthy and safe environment.....support of home, school and parish...We have high expectations.... academic achievement... respecting and valuing individuals... We extend our partnership within the ecumenical and wider community to nurture understanding and respect for each other". This is carried out in a pragmatic manner. For example, staff carry out duties very effectively during the break and lunch times. They teach well, giving pupils increasing responsibility as they progress through the school. They provide a good range of visits and school activities out of lessons, and work together as a team.

8. Pupils are valued and listened to, and they know this. Opportunities are provided for reflection in assemblies, in the prayers said in each class, and during lessons. These times are used very well as moments to think about others and about the implications of one's own actions. 'New beginnings', a theme for one assembly, was commented on by several pupils during the day, indicating the importance of messages given during assemblies. Pupils know that they are expected to think for themselves and to work as part of the school community. Conduct in classes and around the school is very good because the pupils subscribe to the school's policies and rules. In assemblies, attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Parents remarked upon how good pupils' behaviour is on school visits and how other adults point this out.

9. The whole staff team work with pupils to develop their self-esteem and confidence. The Year 6 pupils' attitudes and conduct were excellent, showing great maturity, and an understanding of the importance of their education. From the Reception class through to Year 6, increasing responsibilities are given to the pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils act as 'big brothers and sisters' to younger pupils new to the school. They take this responsibility very seriously and also enjoy the role. The Reception class pupils enjoy the care and look forward in turn to taking a similar role in years to come. Other responsibilities include helping staff maintain tidy classrooms, preparing rooms for lessons, and assisting in assemblies.

10. The consistent approach of staff, following the lead of the headteacher, enables pupils to identify what is right and wrong. The school is an inclusive society where each child is valued for her or his merits. St Joseph's is a Roman Catholic school, but pupils of other faiths are valued and feel valued. High and low attainers and those with special educational needs have equality of opportunity. The staff help pupils to value people of other cultures and to appreciate their own rich and varied backgrounds.

Good teaching, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6, is one of the main reasons for the pupils' enjoyment and success.

11. The overall quality of teaching observed was good. In the Reception class, teaching focused on the development of pupils' understanding and knowledge of literacy and numeracy, and their personal development. Staff used snack time well, through involving the children in providing drinks. Learning skills, such as listening to other children as well as adults, were frequently reinforced in lessons. Most children, at this early stage in the year, had learnt to raise their hands when answering questions, because of these good routines. Staff ensured that pupils had opportunities to speak at length and phonics and number were appropriately emphasised. The outcome of this good teaching was good learning and positive attitudes from the children. They enjoyed lessons.

12. In Years 2, 5 and 6, pupils worked very hard, with a great will to do as well as possible, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Teaching was very demanding in all three classes and the pupils responded very well to the high expectations of both their conduct and the quality of their work. Learning and achievement were very good. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, the teacher was very well organised, and the lesson was planned to meet the needs of all the pupils. The teacher's expert subject knowledge was used to very good effect. A lively review of the book being read, with great involvement of the pupils in a question and answer session, interested and motivated the class. The oral language used was always accurate and demanding. Sensitive and close support was provided for pupils with special educational needs so that they remained as involved as others in the class, knowing that they could succeed.

13. A similarly effective numeracy lesson was observed in Year 5. Quiet and very attentive pupils responded enthusiastically to problems on forming large and small numbers from three digits. Again, the teacher's knowledge was very good and the pupils had great confidence in her. Problems on place value were very challenging, but pupils responded very well, and correctly, to the questions. Two higher attaining pupils from Year 4 joined the class for numeracy for the first time and were quickly accepted and integrated into the group through the skilful work of the teacher.

14. In a short Year 6 history lesson, very good use was made of the available time. A useful 'brainstorm' of examples enabled the pupils to gain a good understanding of primary and secondary sources. The standard of work was below that expected of pupils of their age and capability, but the progress made in the lesson was very good indeed; all were involved and interested. Here too the teacher had

prepared thoroughly, and responded knowledgeably to questions, involving pupils wherever possible in the answers. Pupils worked silently for extended periods during individual work, fully aware of the teacher's expectations and how they would benefit from their own endeavour.

15. Literacy skills in particular, but also numeracy skills, are promoted throughout the curriculum, with a strong emphasis on accuracy in oral as well as written work. Teachers' good subject knowledge results in good use of technical vocabulary, from which all the pupils benefit. The school-wide requirement that teachers will share learning objectives with the pupils is followed closely. Pupils appreciate this and the accuracy with which they can explain what they are learning indicates the success of the strategy. Teachers in Years 2, 5 and 6 are very knowledgeable about the requirements of the assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6, and ensure that pupils are taught important information, such as the technical language involved in each subject.

16. Pupils respond very well to the good quality teaching. They try hard and confidence increases as they progress through the school, because they are successful, feel valued and relate well to their teachers. In a few lessons, however, weaknesses resulted in unsatisfactory learning. For example, in a science lesson, good teacher subject knowledge and a focus on technical language were not as successful as they should have been, because the teacher spoke for too long. A worksheet used was not easy to follow and the plenary session at the end of the lesson was not used to find out what pupils did and did not understand. In a mathematics lesson for a younger class, the worksheets used were insufficiently demanding and pupils became noisy and lost interest in the work. On this occasion, strategies to regain the motivation of some of the pupils in the class were unsuccessful. The teacher's expectations were too low, so the pupils did not learn enough. The plenary was unsuccessful, as the pupils were cramped on the carpet and did not show interest in what was said. Very little use was made of computers in lessons. Some staff lack expertise in ICT and the twelve machines in the computer room make teaching practical computer skills difficult in classes of twenty-eight or thirty.

17. Overall, however, teaching is good and the school's monitoring of teaching and learning is resulting in steady, further improvement.

Pupils are set targets and set their own, and this helps them to make very good progress in their work.

18. Following staff discussion, whole school targets are set each year based on the school's improvement plan. Pupils' assessment results are analysed carefully to identify areas of strength and any aspects where weaknesses are restricting what pupils achieve. This information is then used in the target setting process. Literacy and numeracy are always key elements of the plan. This year, English targets refer to improving spelling, handwriting and library skills, and mathematics targets to improving problem solving and investigation skills. A third target concerns further improvements in behaviour. Each teacher reflects upon these overall intentions and interprets them for his/her class, setting targets at the start of each term. These are then reviewed at the end of term to enable objectives to be changed as needed.

19. Individual pupil targets are set each half term by teachers in consultation with the pupils themselves, and these are recorded in pupils' files, referred to as 'pupil profiles'. Targets include personal development objectives, such as concentration, punctuality and behaviour, as well as academic challenges such as spellings or tables facts. Where possible these add further definition to the class targets. These too are regularly reviewed through discussions between the teacher and pupils, and changes made as the targets are met. Discussions involve a careful review of pupils' books and any assessment marks. The

mathematics and literacy targets are written in the front of the 'home-school' book to try to ensure the objectives stay in the forefront of the pupils' minds.

20. Staff always have in view the school's end of key stage national assessment targets, and how individual and class targets will contribute to these. These targets are important elements in the school's performance management strategy.

21. A system of rewards supports the process, valuing the successes of individuals. Each week a pupil is selected who has achieved a great amount – the 'star for the week'. Merit marks are given which can result in a certificate, and pupils' names are written in the 'Golden Book' when very high standards are achieved. Pupils' successes are celebrated in assemblies.

22. The system is complex and still evolving. The headteacher is aware that too much bureaucracy in administering the system would waste pupils' and teachers' time, and detract from what could be achieved. Pupils appreciate the reward system and current arrangements are helping in improving motivation and standards across the school.

The staff team is very ably led and managed by the headteacher, supported by governors.

23. The headteacher has generated a very good school ethos where the needs of the pupils are paramount. Pupils' academic success, personal development and enjoyment are promoted very effectively by the education provided. Staff also are listened to and respected and their morale is high, with a very good team spirit. Constructive criticism is accepted and appreciated by the headteacher, staff and pupils, as a means of achieving even greater success. The work of the staff reflects the school's mission statement and the direction established for the school by the headteacher. The vision for the future is clear. Leadership is very good as are the management systems. The deputy headteacher provides very good support for the headteacher, setting an example for her colleagues on the staff.

24. The strong and principled leadership of the headteacher is seen in the rigorous application of the school rules for behaviour, as pupils enter assembly and during breaks and lunchtimes. It is seen, equally, in the excellent professional care shown for pupils and staff. Honesty and integrity, always in a context of showing respect for others, are key tenets of all working practices.

25. Following the last inspection, the headteacher set in motion developments to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to strengthen the curriculum and assessment. These changes have been very successful. Target setting has been one of the most important developments, with the associated aspect of interpreting data in order to know where to focus energy and expertise. A second and equally important aspect has been monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, identifying where weaknesses exist, and ensuring that appropriate action is taken to bring about change. Lessons were monitored and feedback provided for staff on relative strengths and points for improvement. The outcomes of these initiatives, and others, are seen in the improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement, and the maintenance of very good pupil attitudes and school ethos. Further work is needed, however, in improving some aspects of teaching and learning.

26. The issue of poor relationships between governors and senior managers referred to in the last report has been resolved and reversed. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and provide very good support for the headteacher and all staff. This support takes the form of praise for the good work achieved, but governors do hold staff to account for

what takes place. Governors come from a wide range of backgrounds, including education, management, personnel and finance, which the school finds very helpful. There is no complacency. Both governors and senior staff referred to the importance of not developing a 'cosy' relationship, which would be of no benefit to anyone in the school community.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Pupils are taught for less time each week than is usually the case. The substantial time allocated to teaching English, mathematics and religious education means there is insufficient available for several foundation subjects, so standards in these subjects are not high enough.

27. The overall time available for teaching is significantly less than the nationally recommended minimum of twenty-one hours in Key Stage 1 and twenty-three and a half hours in Key Stage 2. Assemblies on four days a week and hymn singing on one day take up a substantial proportion of time, which is very well used and from which the pupils benefit greatly. These important occasions result in the strong spirituality and sense of community that are so apparent in St Joseph's. This time, however, reduces the available curriculum time, restricting what can be taught in a range of subjects.

28. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of pupils in the core subjects of English and mathematics. A daily lesson of English and mathematics is provided, following the national guidance laid down in the literacy and numeracy strategies. The time allocation is appropriate, with additional emphasis on literacy, particularly speaking, and writing in other subjects. The high standards the pupils attain in both English and mathematics in Years 2 and 6 in national tests provide clear evidence of the success of current arrangements. Religious education lessons also have 'core' priority in this Roman Catholic school, taking place on four or five occasions each week in every class. The overall result of the very successful assemblies and appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics and religious education is that time available for other subjects is insufficient, particularly history, geography, art and design and technology. The shortage of curriculum time is restricting pupils' achievements in these subjects. Lack of time is also a factor in little use being made of the school's computer network in subject lessons – a National Curriculum requirement for most subjects - and in too little emphasis on the development of practical skills in science.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

29. In order to raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) increase the curriculum time available each week, so that more time is spent teaching history, geography, art, design and technology and practical science, and using computers in subject lessons.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	7	6	2	0	0
Percentage	0	29	33	29	10	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents about five percentage points.

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	180
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	15	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	14	13	15
	Total	27	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	93 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	13	14	15
	Total	26	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (95)	96 (100)	100 (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 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	9	15	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	12	12	14
	Total	20	20	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (88)	83 (85)	92 (92)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	10	11	10
	Total	18	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (85)	79 (85)	79 (81)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

NB where the number of boys or girls taking assessments is ten or less figures are not included in the table

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	-
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	152
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.2
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	91

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.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	-	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	-	-
Other minority ethnic groups	-	-

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	200-2001
	£
Total income	372,823
Total expenditure	371,844
Expenditure per pupil	2,010
Balance brought forward from previous year	28,470
Balance carried forward to next year	29,449

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	30

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	33	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	37	10	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	53	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	57	13	7	0
The teaching is good.	45	45	7	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	50	10	13	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	37	13	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	53	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	23	47	20	7	3
The school is well led and managed.	40	37	13	7	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	33	10	3	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	38	14	21	7