

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Longsight, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105550

Headteacher: Mrs B A Porter

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sonja Öyen
7167

Dates of inspection: 25-26 February 2002

Inspection number: 194944

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: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Richmond Grove
Longsight
Manchester

Postcode: M13 0BT

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Father J Kennedy

Date of previous inspection: 6 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	11
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Joseph's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school in Longsight just to the south of Manchester city centre. The area has a high degree of social deprivation and many families move in and out of the area because of housing changes. A significant number of pupils left and joined the school during the last school year. Of the 182 pupils, 51 per cent are eligible for free school meals which is well above the national average. One pupil in three is from an ethnic minority and 6 pupils receive support in learning to speak English. The school has a small number of pupils from traveller families. Over the last five years the school has taken pupils from two other primaries that have closed but now has falling numbers in the younger age groups. Eighteen full-time and 10 part-time children attend the 45 place nursery. The children's attainment on entry to the nursery varies but is generally below that expected for their age. The school has identified 33 pupils as having special educational needs (17 per cent – below the national average) and 11 receive support from external agencies predominantly for moderate learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Joseph's is a good school that is rightly valued by the parents for its success in attaining good standards compared with similar schools. Systematic, rigorous teaching ensures the pupils learn well the basic skills of reading, writing and number. The pupils make good progress over time although the higher attaining pupils could do better. Good teaching and a lively curriculum motivate the nursery children who learn well. The teaching and curriculum for the infant and junior pupils, although satisfactory, show less vitality with much formal class work especially in the junior years. The headteacher's very good leadership and competent management ensure that all staff work hard to sustain the rise in standards achieved since the last inspection. The school gives good value for money because of the good standards of pupils' work and behaviour, and the harmony between pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds. The governors and subject managers are not holding the school fully to account as they have too few systems to analyse what it does.

What the school does well

- Standards are good compared with similar schools, especially in writing.
- The children in the nursery get off to a flying start because of the good provision.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher unites the staff and sets a clear sense of purpose in a caring, supportive school family.
- The pupils behave very well in class – they respect the firm discipline and know they come to school to learn. The school is calm and well ordered.

What could be improved

- The development of pupils' skills in using and applying what they know especially in mathematics and science.
- The greater involvement of pupils in organising their own learning and assessing how well they are doing.
- The effectiveness of the governors and subject managers in deciding what the school does well and what needs to be done to raise standards further.
- The rate of attendance.

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 sustained the strengths identified in the 1997 inspection and made good improvement in raising standards. It has successfully dealt with two key issues but aspects remain from the other two as areas for improvement. Standards are higher in English and science than they were in 1997. Standards dipped in 1998 when pupils joined from a school that closed, but they have climbed steadily and are now far higher than in similar schools. The installation and use of a computer suite have accelerated learning and standards in information and communication technology (ICT). The school has made efficient use of grants to purchase ICT resources and to ensure that members of staff upgrade their knowledge and skills. Since her appointment in 1998, the headteacher has been effective in improving the environment of the school, working with parents and other agencies, and in sustaining the calm, orderly nature of the school despite a high turnover of pupils each year and changes in staffing. She has developed and implemented effective child protection procedures. The teachers regularly monitor planning and are beginning to look at aspects of teaching and their impact on standards. This remains an area for development as does the development of pupils' independent learning skills. The governing body has been slow to develop systems to evaluate the impact of school improvement work.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	C	B	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	C	D	B	
Science	D	D	D	B	

Most pupils reach the level expected for their age at the end of Years 2 and 6 and have made good progress from a low starting point. The nursery children do well in developing speaking and listening skills, number awareness and early reading and writing skills. When they join the reception class, many are close to the standard expected for their age. Most Year 2 pupils do as well as others nationally in mathematics, especially in number. St Joseph's did far better than similar schools in the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds. The high percentage of Year 2 pupils who did well in writing placed the school in the top five per cent of similar schools. The pupils did not do as well in reading. Handwriting standards are very good. Pupils' work is extremely neat and tidy. Pupils structure their work carefully and use correct punctuation, spelling and grammar. In 2001, the Year 6 pupils did far better in writing than pupils in most other primaries. The overall standard in English was above the national average and well above when compared with similar schools.

In mathematics, few Year 6 pupils did well for their age. This kept the overall standard below the national average, but St Joseph's results were above the average of similar schools. In science, the school was close to the national average. The boys did much better than the girls. A scrutiny of work since September shows that Year 6 pupils carry out very few scientific investigations and are not used to writing scientific reports. The high focus on learning information is also apparent in other subjects. From the work seen, standards are as expected for pupils' ages. In ICT, Year 2 pupils' attainment is satisfactory but Year 6 pupils still have ground to make up especially in using ICT to control events.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; the pupils enjoy school and take pride in doing neat work. They are willing, diligent learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; the pupils are polite and show respect for adults. They are quiet in lessons and quick to do as they are asked.
Personal development and relationships	Good; pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds get on well together. They have too little chance to make their own decisions about learning and to work out their own ideas.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory; too many pupils are absent without due reason.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is consistently good, and sometimes very good in the nursery where the teacher and nursery nurse are skilled in extending the children's ideas and providing activities that interest them. As a result the children learn quickly. The teaching in the infant and junior classes is satisfactory overall. It was good in one lesson in four. This is not as high as in the previous inspection. As then, there is very occasional unsatisfactory teaching. The pupils learn well over time, especially in reading, writing and number, because of consistent teaching strengths in detailed planning, firm discipline, effective classroom management and organisation, and regular homework. In too many English, mathematics and science lessons, especially in the junior classes, the teaching lacks vitality. Pupils spend too much time copying work from the board, completing exercises or worksheets. The routine and repetition help the lower attaining pupils to consolidate their learning and to do as well as others but lessons do not pose enough new challenges for the higher attaining pupils. Pupils' learning was good when the teaching was lively and challenging and the pace was brisk. When the pupils are actively involved in practical work, as in discussions, ICT and art, the quality of their learning is often good as they try things out and learn from others.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; all National Curriculum subjects are taught but more emphasis lies on subject knowledge rather than skills. The effective use of themes in the nursery to link activities across the six areas of learning is less evident in the reception year.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory; individual work and repeated activities help pupils to make good progress over time. Less is done to tailor tasks in all subjects to meet individuals' needs.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory; pupils receive specialist help in learning English, and in lessons they are supported by the adults and their peers. Little is done to provide individual help and support materials.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; the moral provision is very strong - all the adults expect the pupils to show good self-discipline and respect for others. Praise is earned and pupils' work and achievements are shared. The school only goes some way in valuing the heritage and cultures of the pupils and the local area.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The staff know the pupils well; they care about them and want them to do well; they do not use well enough what they know of pupils' attainment to meet all their needs, especially those of higher attainers.

The parents are highly supportive of the school. Most are keen for their children to do well and they help them at home. A few help in classes and others take courses offered in school time.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the headteacher leads and manages the school efficiently. Not all subject managers are taking a firm lead in raising standards and improving the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory; the governors are very supportive but do not carry out all required procedures.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; the school is not looking closely enough at the links between teaching and learning and their impact on standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; healthy reserves are funding additional hours for support staff; the ICT suite is in regular use; some lessons are too long.

No field and an awkwardly shaped sloping playground limit outdoor physical activities. The school is immaculately clean and well maintained. Displays set a high standard in presentation. While the spacious nursery has a secure outdoor area, the reception children are cramped as their room is small. Many of the library books in classrooms are of poor quality. The school looks for good value in its purchases and sets challenging targets for pupils' attainment. Although it compares itself with others, it is only beginning to use available data critically to decide how well it is doing.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>In the questionnaires there was high support (more than 90 per cent agreement) for all aspects of the school's work bar one.</p> <p>The following points are the areas of strongest agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to work hard - homework is regular • The teaching is good and their children make good progress • Their children like school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities provided outside lessons. <p>The following points were raised by a few:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not knowing what topics their children were being taught • Limited sporting activities

The inspection team agrees in large part. The parents' very positive views reflect mostly those areas that the team find the school does well. The school offers a very limited programme of after-school activities and also few visits out of school. Visitors to the school enhance the curriculum. Sporting activities in and out of school are limited.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are good compared with similar schools, especially in writing.

1. In 2001, the school's overall results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science were higher than those of most similar schools for both the seven-year-old and eleven-year-old pupils. The percentage of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils who reached the level expected for their age was also close to the national average in mathematics. In English, the school did better than the national average at the end of Year 6. An impressive achievement for the school was the pupils' equally good attainment in reading and writing. Nine out of ten Year 6 pupils reached the expected level for their age in writing when nationally only six out of ten pupils did so.
2. The schools' results in the tests for seven-year-olds were well above the average of similar schools in reading and mathematics and very high in writing. Although only three out of four pupils reached level 2 as expected for their age, one in five, predominantly girls, did better than this and this good achievement raised the standard. The overall writing results were not only above the national average but also placed St Joseph's in the top five per cent of similar schools.
3. Standards in the school have followed the national upward trend since the inspection in 1997 although there have been peaks and troughs. In 1998 standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 dipped markedly in English, mathematics and science when pupils joined St Joseph's from a school that closed. Many pupils have made good progress in the junior years and are now attaining the level expected for their age in Year 6.
4. One pupil in three is from an ethnic minority group. Not all have English as an additional language and of those who do, not all need support in learning to speak English. The analyses of the school data produced by the local education authority show that there is variation in the attainment of pupils from the different groups especially at the end of Year 2. Pupils from African heritage often do particularly well in reading and writing and attain above the expected standard. Pupils from traveller families do not always do as well as the others because of gaps and discontinuity in their schooling.
5. The school is aware that the girls do better than the boys in the infant years but then the boys catch up and do better than the girls in the junior years. This has reversed the picture of 1997 when the junior girls outdid the boys in English, mathematics and science. In all three subjects, the boys' attainment has risen significantly over the last four years so that in 2001 they did better than boys nationally. In English, the boys were at least a term's progress ahead of boys nationally. This is a significant achievement for the school.
6. The school is just beginning to set targets for each year group, to track pupils' progress over their time in school and to analyse test results and identify trends. Recent work to look carefully at the content and quality of pupils' writing has helped to focus the teachers' attention more closely on how writing is being taught and the need to develop further the pupils' skills in writing descriptively and imaginatively.
7. Inspection evidence indicates that current standards are not as high as those indicated by the 2001 results. The school far exceeded its targets in 2001 and the targets for this year are more realistic but challenging given the attainment of many

pupils at the end of Year 2. The school intends to run “booster classes” for the Year 6 pupils and school evidence shows that they played a key role in raising pupils’ attainment last year. Regular tests and exercises in reading, writing, mathematics and science are also preparing the pupils for the national tests.

8. Standards in writing are good. They are high in handwriting and presentation of work. Pupils get off to a good start in writing in the nursery. In the infant and junior years they learn how to spell, use punctuation and to structure their work.
9. The good standards in writing are due to a number of reasons:
 - The quality of teaching is sound. The teachers have good subject knowledge in how to teach spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting. They use the literacy hour to teach the key features of different types of writing and to develop the pupils’ awareness of technical terms. For instance, older juniors have written their own poems in various forms such as cinquains, limericks and haiku.
 - In two lessons seen, lively, structured teaching ensured pupils in Years 2 and 3 made good progress in writing through initial discussions about words, phrases and how they are used. For example, initial discussion about rap and its Afro-Caribbean origins, followed by clapping and chanting, helped Year 3 pupils to improve their awareness of timing, rhythm and rhyme in compiling their own work.
 - Weekly writing sessions are helping to develop the pupils’ skills in structuring stories and using language for effect. Many Year 2 pupils are already writing at length, including speech and details of characters in their stories. In some cases, they are using effective words and phrases such as “*so they did*” to round things off. Year 4 pupils worked hard to compile an introductory paragraph to a fantasy and used a good range of adjectives to extend their initial sentences.
 - Throughout the school, the pupils write neatly and take care in how they set out their work. Regular sessions of handwriting teaching and practice ensure that the pupils learn how to join letters and how to write in a uniform, mature style.
 - Similarly, weekly spelling homework and tests are effective in helping pupils learn how to write common words correctly. Year 6 pupils have developed the habit of looking up the meaning of words they do not know and of checking their spellings.
 - Much time is given to exercises in grammar and punctuation. The pupils are expected to write these in their best handwriting and are encouraged to get them done in a set time. As a result, they become used to writing quickly but neatly.
 - The lower attaining pupils lift their attainment as they learn to use the basic skills in their writing. Additional teaching support and the use of national support programmes have helped to increase the percentage of pupils who attain the higher levels within Level 2. In 2001, 71 of the 75 per cent who attained Level 2 were working at Level 2B or above. The school is similarly effective in raising the attainment of Year 6 pupils from Level 3 into Level 4.
 - The introduction of targets such as “*I will leave spaces between my words*” is helping pupils to concentrate on what they need to remember. When marking pupils’ work, some teachers are also giving pupils helpful comments on what to do. For example, the remark “*using a new line for speech indicates that a different person is speaking*” gave clear guidance to a Year 5 pupil on how to improve.

The children in the nursery get off to a flying start because of good teaching.

10. Eighteen children attend the 45-place nursery on a full time basis and ten attend either the morning or the afternoon session. The children start nursery after their third birthday but it is often difficult to tell the three- and four-year-olds apart as all are

confident and at ease. They learn quickly because they are interested in the activities and because the good teaching develops their knowledge and skills in all six areas of learning. The sessions run smoothly and there is little upset or fuss from the children as they know the routines and what they are expected to do. The activities are well organised and the younger children benefit from watching the older ones especially in how to tidy away. The warm, accepting but encouraging style of the adults fosters the children's independence and their willingness to have a go at new things.

11. The teacher and nursery nurse work well as a team. They have a good understanding of how young children learn through experience and both are skilled in talking with children to develop their ideas and sustain their interest. They make use of every opportunity to engage the children in conversation and to prompt their thinking. While waiting for all to wash their hands, the teacher discussed ways to decide who might go first into lunch. She separated the children by the ways their footwear fastened and guided the children to see how wellingtons did not fit into any of the existing sets. This practical task showed that many of the children were already secure in counting to 10 and recognising patterns.
12. Similarly in a very good story sharing session, the nursery nurse made the most of the children's comments and interest to develop their awareness of "Mr Wolf's Week". The children could not help but join in as their attention was drawn to details in the pictures and they were encouraged to offer their ideas. Questions such as "Why do you think he has put the stick in?" and "So what do you think happened next?" led to the children giving extended explanations and descriptions.
13. Such sessions are very effective in developing the children's personal, social and emotional skills as well as their communication, language and literacy skills. The adults manage the children very well and control them by making suggestions and offering distractions. They can be firm when needed but generally, the children respond quickly to instructions and behave well. They pay close attention to the adults and are confident to ask questions, make comments and offer their own suggestions.
14. The curriculum and sessions are planned thoroughly and conscientiously. The planning shows clearly the staff's very good understanding of how the whole curriculum develops the children's skills and knowledge. The adult-led activities interlink with ongoing child-chosen activities to develop aspects of the six areas of learning. The cross references to the steps in the early learning goals build on what the staff know about the children's stages of development although there is no clear distinction between what is expected of the higher attaining and lower attaining children. Themes such as *Clothes* are used very effectively to link ideas and to provide a context for particular experiences. For example, the children are reading numbers on price tags, counting coins and sorting items in the "Clothes' shop" as well as creating their own scenarios and choosing what they need from the very good range of props. A strength of the planning is the identification of clear learning intentions and activities for the different parts of the outdoor area. Over the terms, the planning shows systematic development in challenge for the children.
15. The same attention to detail is evident in the way the staff are recording each child's achievement in the six areas of learning. The staff jot down significant things the children do and say as part of their day-to-day interaction with the children and then they plot each child's progress against each early learning goal. This is giving a good overview of progress and where children need additional experience or are ready for a new challenge. It is also showing clearly the value added by the nursery provision.

The records are not being used in the reception class so it is difficult to track the children's progress on leaving the nursery.

16. The teacher has good ideas that catch the children's interest and take their learning forward. Two good examples were the collection of spectacles and the activity of sharing biscuits between two toy bears. The children were invited to visit the optician to choose a pair of glasses. They tried on different frames until they found one they liked. For one boy, finding a case absorbed his full attention for more than five minutes as he tried to fit his chosen glasses into several different cases. The children also concentrated hard when they used a dice to decide how many biscuits Big Bear and Little Bear should get. They were quick to see why one bear felt aggrieved when he did not get as many as the other. The teacher's "*Oh dear! How can we make sure that both have the same number of biscuits?*" led to different ideas from the children including the giving of a biscuit by one bear to the other. In discussing this, the children spontaneously used the terms "less" and "more" and justified their comments by referring to the different amounts. Such skilful methods are ensuring the children learn effectively and spontaneously.

The strong leadership of the headteacher unites the staff and sets a clear sense of purpose in a caring, supportive school family.

17. The headteacher is an enthusiastic leader who wants the children to do well and has high expectations of them and the staff. She is highly visible in and around school, greeting visitors and talking to pupils and staff and checking that all is running smoothly. The school runs like clockwork as systems are organised, all the staff know what they are to do and the headteacher has her finger constantly on the pulse. New staff are quickly made to feel at home and given personal and professional support as needed. This reflects the headteacher's concern for all in the school.
18. The headteacher took time and care in preparing the necessary documents for the inspection and ensured that the staff did likewise. The detail and high level of consistency in the quality of curriculum planning since the beginning of the school year testifies to the staff's conscientious attention and shared commitment to doing a job well. In line with the school's mission statement and its Catholic foundation, the headteacher also takes the lead in fostering "*a community based on love and care for the individual*". She knows the staff, pupils and their families and is quick to offer support and guidance. Her warmth, interest in and concern for others are an integral part of the ethos of the school.
19. Since her appointment in 1998, the headteacher has placed her stamp on the school. She has worked with the teaching and non-teaching members of staff so that all feel their skills and expertise are being used well. She has worked with the teachers to develop their role as subject leaders and managers, involved them more closely in school development planning and steered them towards monitoring and evaluating what they do. Central to this is the professional development of the staff. All are taking seriously the training to update their ICT skills. The impact can be seen in the use of spreadsheets in planning documents, the nursery newsletter, worksheets for pupils and captions and labels as part of displays. Their growing confidence and knowledge in using ICT are factors in the improved provision for ICT, which was a key issue from the last inspection.
20. The school improvement plan sets out a clear working schedule for the year that involves all the staff and governors. Due attention is given to the school environment and the ongoing programme of refurbishment and decoration. The replacement of

toilets and wash-basins has much improved the facilities for the pupils. The school is immaculately clean and tidy. This reflects the pride taken by the caretaker and cleaning staff in doing their work well and also the headteacher's ability to motivate the staff and exact high standards from them.

21. The headteacher knows her staff very well and has made prudent management decisions in drawing on individual skills and expertise to allocate responsibilities. Recent changes in staffing have led to a reorganisation of the management structure. The senior management team are relatively new to their roles but the headteacher is sharing the decision making process and encouraging them to initiate action. Work to scrutinise pupils' progress in writing and mathematics has started a more critical approach to looking at consistency in teaching and identifying where changes or refinement are needed. The deputy headteacher's knowledge of the families and the parish is used well in the school's links with parents and in dealing with pastoral matters.

The pupils behave very well in class – they respect the firm discipline and know they come to school to learn. The school is calm and well-ordered.

22. The school has sustained the strength in the pupils' very positive attitudes, behaviour and relationships that was praised in the last inspection.
23. Nearly all of the parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that the pupils' behaviour was good. Eighty per cent of parents strongly agreed that the school expects their children to work hard. Parents at the meeting commented that the school is calm, orderly and organised. The parents and their children like the school because the pupils "*know what is expected of them .. the teachers do not tolerate any cheek or bullying*". These sentiments echo strongly the reality. The pupils behave very well in class. They often work in total silence especially in the junior classes. Year 1 pupils whispered to each other as they discussed the alphabetical order of words.
24. The pupils behave well because the teachers exert strict discipline. The teachers are firm but fair and the pupils know that they mean what they say. They monitor the pupils closely and are quick to pick up on any infringements, such as pupils getting out of their seats, and to remind pupils of what is expected of them. This discipline ensures that pupils apply themselves in lessons and their work rate is good. They enjoy their learning, especially when it is something practical, such as using the computers, or when it is something they know they do well. Most take pride in producing neat, tidy work and take care in using rulers and in their handwriting.
25. The pupils know what is acceptable and what happens if they behave otherwise. They value stickers for good work and know that they have earned them as the teachers do not give praise freely. Parents and pupils accept that there are sanctions, such as lost playtime, if rules are broken.
26. The school is well ordered. The pupils obey the rules and know that once inside school, they are there to learn. Pupils from different social and cultural backgrounds work happily together. The teachers know the pupils very well and sense their moods. They are quick to take action when pupils have a disagreement or annoy one another, and the headteacher excluded pupils last year for a fixed period for their poor behaviour.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The development of pupils' skills in using and applying what they know especially in mathematics and science.

27. In many of the lessons seen, there was little time given to pupils dealing with problems other than those in exercises or tests. There was little evidence of the use of situations arising from themes or from life in school to pose problem-solving situations for the pupils. In mathematics, much of what the pupils do is based on workbook or text-book exercises. In science, the pupils have little opportunity to plan and carry out investigations themselves. Although the pupils learn how to use the four rules of number, and also learn key scientific facts, they do not develop the skills in applying this knowledge, particularly in the junior years.
28. In the daily mathematics lesson, the teachers often make good use of the initial part of the lesson to rehearse pupils' knowledge of multiplication tables and number bonds. This is often done at a fast pace and shows the pupils' often quick facility in using basic number skills. The pupils cope well when they follow a number process they know. They are less competent in tackling and solving open-ended questions and mathematical problems that involve the application of different strategies. It is often only the higher attaining pupils who see the relationship between numbers. For example, many Year 2 pupils struggled to identify numbers that were factors of 2 and 5 even though they had followed the process of locating multiples of 2 and 5. Not all the teachers encourage the pupils to explain the strategies they use and too often, the questions do not extend or challenge the higher attaining pupils.
29. In science, the balance between practical and theoretical science in the infant years sways more to the theoretical in the junior years. Here the teachers tend to demonstrate scientific processes rather than allow the pupils to find out for themselves through practical investigation. The pupils have little experience in predicting, testing and evaluating their findings and all pupils cover the same work at the same level of difficulty. This ensures that all experience the same content but does not ensure that pupils achieve as well as they might in the area of scientific enquiry.
30. The teachers comment that they feel constrained by the demands of the national tests to limit the curriculum to ensure that pupils are taught what they need to know. The curriculum widens after the tests in May so that pupils work in topics and projects that cross subjects and draw on pupils' skills and knowledge. The challenge for the school is to retain the strengths but to widen the curriculum and to ensure that it promotes the development of pupils' subject skills as well as their subject knowledge. Currently, especially in mathematics and in science, the development of pupils' ability to explain, to use abstract ideas and to understand how to apply knowledge of procedures is not being promoted well enough. This hinders overall achievement, particularly for the higher attaining pupils.

The involvement of pupils in organising their own learning and assessing how well they are doing.

31. A key issue in the 1997 inspection was the need to provide more opportunities for pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, to undertake research and develop independent learning skills. The school has only been partly successful in dealing with this. It has made improvements in making homework commitments clear and in developing chances for pupils to take responsibility for others. In applying for the position of

“Lunchtime Buddies” the older junior pupils have given good accounts of their skills and experience and the reasons why they should be chosen. Year 6 pupils have recently used their initiative and own time to compile evidence to petition the headteacher about the use of the school’s outdoor area. This has drawn on many skills including research into garden centres. However, the encouragement of pupils to use their initiative and abilities to organise themselves is less evident in lessons.

32. In many of the lessons seen the teachers directed and controlled the pupils’ learning. The teachers determined what the pupils would do, how their work would be recorded and which resources they would use. In many cases, they also gave out the resources and oversaw their collection later. Apart from very basic classroom routines, the pupils often had few chances to take ownership of any part of the learning process, to make any decisions or to organise what they would do.
33. Most planning documents refer to teaching objectives, how the lesson will be organised and what the pupils will do. Few identify clearly what pupils are to learn or where there are different learning objectives for groups and individuals to reflect what they already know and can do. This is one reason why the teaching is not stronger. In ICT, the listed learning intentions provide a useful model to guide other planning. Many lessons, especially in the junior years, follow the same structure of teacher introduction followed by pupils working to complete a worksheet or to copy work that the teacher has put on the board. In several lessons, time was lost as the teacher went through the worksheet with the pupils before they completed it. Having given the answers to the questions orally, this then became a handwriting exercise for pupils rather than a problem-solving one. A scrutiny of pupils’ work shows that all pupils often do exactly the same work irrespective of their prior attainment. This is not consistent throughout the school but is a noticeable feature. There are relatively few examples of pupils writing up information in their own way. In science, for example, much of the work is copied.
34. In literacy hours and mathematics lessons, the quality of teaching varies as there are inconsistencies in how the teachers are following nationally recommended practice. The teachers have given thought to ways of allowing pupils to work independently but in many cases this is done through the teacher giving out work, organising the groups and leaving them to get on with the work, rather than the pupils taking responsibility for organising their own learning.
35. Few teachers explain explicitly the purpose of the lesson and discuss with pupils what this might mean for them. Occasionally the teachers refer to the group literacy targets that have been agreed and how these relate to the lesson. Similarly, few teachers make best use of the time at the end of lessons to review what the pupils had learnt and help them to assess how well they have done. In the lessons seen, these sessions were often rushed and were more an occasion for pupils to show what they had done rather than to identify what they had learnt and needed to remember. In the better sessions, the teachers dealt with common problems or helped the pupils to apply their learning to a slightly different situation but did not always ask the pupils to evaluate their own learning.
36. The teachers have identified writing targets for groups of pupils. The targets are couched in personal terms “I will ...” but opportunities are missed in lessons and as part of work to invite the pupils to comment on how well they think they are doing in meeting their targets. The older junior pupils keep their own reading record but this does not indicate their views about their reading performance nor which attainment level they know they have attained.

The effectiveness of the governors and coordinators in deciding what the school does well and what needs to be done to raise standards further.

37. The governors are very supportive and proud of the school but they are not meeting all their responsibilities. The governing body has yet to put in place all necessary arrangements in relation to special educational needs, procedures to monitor the performance of teachers, and relevant health and safety legislation. The work of the committees is light as much is done by the full governing body. The minutes of meetings show that the governors are considering relevant matters but do not indicate action to be taken nor who is responsible. This makes it difficult to see the role of the governors in determining the way forward for the school and in holding it to account. Governors rely heavily on the headteacher for information and have been slow to make full use of national, local and school data to evaluate how well the school is doing. For example, the data shows that standards in mathematics have fallen at Year 6 in the last two years to below the national average, but there is little to show that governors have queried why this might be.
38. The governors keep a monitoring eye on the school's finances and are used to dealing with the problems of a varying budget because of changes in the number of pupils on roll. They are aware of the budgetary implications of a falling number of pupils in school but there is little to show the school is considering spending options. Since 1997, even though funds have been used to retain teachers and keep single age classes, the governors have built up the school's reserve funds to an unacceptably high level. They are using some funds this year to increase the number of hours worked by support staff but other areas of need, such as the range of books, are not being dealt with.
39. The school is still in the early stages of developing systems to assess its own effectiveness. It has several efficient monitoring systems but is not as effective in using the information to decide the next steps. The teachers are setting targets for pupils' attainment throughout the school. The tracking of pupils' progress in writing through an assessment each half term is a useful initiative. It is strengthening the teacher's awareness of the criteria of the different levels of attainment and removing some of the tentativeness in previous years in judging what pupils can do. This partly explains the disparity between teacher assessment and Year 6 pupils' attainment in the 2001 tests.
40. The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor the content of teachers' planning. However, other subject managers are not using information from teachers' planning, their scrutiny of pupils' work and observations of teaching to assess their impact on standards and to identify where improvements can be made and how they might be achieved.

The rate of attendance is unsatisfactory.

41. At the time of the last inspection, the rate of attendance was judged to be satisfactory although lower than the national average. Over the last three years, attendance has been very low. Last year, the attendance rate was 90.5 per cent. In the autumn term 2001, attendance rose to 92 per cent but there was considerable variation between the classes with some as low as 88 per cent. Current attendance is running at 88 per cent with the lowest attendance from the classes of oldest junior pupils. This is having a detrimental effect on some pupils' learning particularly in English,

mathematics and science and the school is not even close to meeting the target of 95 per cent attendance agreed by the governors.

42. The school has efficient systems to monitor and to reward good attendance. Parents at the meeting with the Registered Inspector commented on their children's eagerness to be punctual "*so their class might win the cup*". The secretary is quick to contact parents when pupils do not arrive at school and when there has been no communication from them. The school agrees to a higher than average amount of absence but the main concern is the very high rate of unauthorised absence which is six times as high as in most schools. The headteacher and staff know well the pupils who arrive late or who take days off school without permission. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Officer to deal with the situation. Part of the problem is that families often leave the area without informing the school and absence accumulates. The school has also noticed a pattern of absence on Fridays and Mondays. On the first day back after the half term holiday, a significant number of Year 6 pupils were reminded by the teacher to bring a letter explaining their absence before the holiday.
43. The school has considerable information about the rates of absence but it has not used it to track attendance in relation to pupil's achievement and attainment, nor to help to explain trends in standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. In order to raise standards further and continue the programme of school improvement, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Increase pupils' skills in all subjects, but most especially in mathematics and science, by providing more experiences for pupils to acquire, practise and apply their skills and by developing the teachers' skills in presenting pupils with stimulating practical situations.
(paragraphs 27-30)
- Ensure that teachers' planning identifies clearly not only what the pupils will learn and how their learning may best be achieved and assessed, but also includes increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas, solve problems and choose methods and resources to do so.
(paragraphs 31-36)
- Improve the effectiveness of the governors and staff in determining how well the school is doing by clarifying roles, responsibilities and accountabilities so that all are clear about what they are to do to achieve the school's priorities, are empowered to do so and know how they are to evaluate the action taken to make improvements.
(paragraphs 37-40)
- Develop strategies to heighten parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and implement ways to ensure the school achieves at least its target of 95 per cent.
(paragraphs 41-43)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	7	17	1	0	0
Percentage	0	4	27	65	4	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 almost four 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)	23	182
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		87

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	33

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	41

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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
	2001	14	10	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	13
	Girls	7	7	9
	Total	18	18	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75(74)	75(93)	92(89)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	7	8	7
	Total	18	19	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75(93)	79(89)	75(63)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89(88)

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
	2001	11	13	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	11	7	10
	Total	21	17	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88(73)	71(69)	88(88)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58(58)	58(54)	58(58)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	23
Black – other	9
Indian	4
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	81
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
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.75
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	133

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5

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	2
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

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	4	0

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	2000/1
	£
Total income	498,725
Total expenditure	504,601
Expenditure per pupil	2,461
Balance brought forward from previous year	80,746
Balance carried forward to next year	74,870

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	199
Number of questionnaires returned	83

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	25	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	28	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	31	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	69	23	7	0	1
The teaching is good.	73	24	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	29	6	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	28	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	18	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	59	33	6	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	67	31	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	34	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	25	18	7	12