

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Upminster

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102334

Headteacher: Mrs C Jones

Reporting inspector: Mr J Woodcock
1624

Dates of inspection: 17th – 18th September 2001

Inspection number: 198225

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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	115 St Mary's Lane Upminster Essex
Postcode:	RM14 2QB
Telephone number:	(01708) 220277
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Gilham (vice chairman)
Date of previous inspection:	20 th October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
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	8 - 13
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	13
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	13
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	14 - 17

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is bigger than other primary schools in the country with a current roll of 360 full-time pupils aged between 4 and 11 years. It is a popular and oversubscribed school in a socially advantaged ward of Upminster. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is above the expected level as measured by baseline assessments in reading, writing and mathematics. Two pupils speak English as an additional language; this is low and similar to the last inspection report. The school has identified 42 pupils as having special educational needs; this is below the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs; this is below the national average and similar to the last inspection report. The proportion receiving free school meals is well below the national average. The movement of pupils joining and leaving the school is low. The inspection took place 10 days after the start of the academic year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good and effective school. By the end of Year 6, the standards pupils achieve are consistently well above average in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is very good and the leadership and management of the school are of high quality. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together and aspire to even higher standards. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are consistently well above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching and learning is very good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher, governors and key members of staff are of high quality.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good.
- The school's ethos for learning is excellent.

What could be improved

- Information for parents.
- The longer term planning for the development of the foundation stage of learning.

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 continued to improve since the last inspection in October 1997. Standards have risen, the quality of teaching has improved and the effective leadership of the headteacher and key members of staff continues to give the school a strong sense of direction and purpose. The key issues from the last inspection have been addressed well. Systems for marking and assessment of pupils' work are now good. The teaching of information and communication technology has improved and consequently pupils now achieve above average levels of attainment.

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	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	A	A	A	well above average A
mathematics	A	A	A	A	above average B
science	A	A	A	A	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

By the end of Year 6, test results are well above the national average; they are also well above average when compared with schools that have a similar intake. The proportion of pupils achieving high standards is well above average in English, mathematics and science. Trends over time show that the school is improving at a rate broadly in line with the national picture. Boys and girls achieve similar standards in English, mathematics and science. From 1996 to 2000, pupils' progress was well above average in English, mathematics and science when compared with schools in a similar context. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In the current Year 6, pupils are making good progress and are on course to achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The school is likely to exceed the statutory targets for 2002 and 2003. Standards in literacy and numeracy continue to be high. In the reception classes, children's skills in reading, writing and mathematics are above the expected level and they continue to make good progress towards achieving the early learning goals by the end of the year. Pupils' achievements in all other subjects are at least above average or better. In Year 6, pupils' achievements in French are excellent.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils take a pride in their work, are highly motivated and have a strong desire to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good. No bullying, racist or sexist behaviour was seen and none reported by pupils. The oldest pupils conduct themselves with high levels of self-discipline and set a very good example to others.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships with others are excellent. They have respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Many pupils are able to work independently. The older pupils take responsibility for helping others, particularly younger pupils. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils are keen to be involved in all activities offered by the school.
Attendance	Good. Unauthorised absence is below the national average.

Pupils' attitudes and enthusiasm for learning make a significant contribution to the ethos of the school and to the high standards achieved. Sustained concentration and a productive work rate are regular features of lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Very 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.

Overall, teaching is very good, particularly in the reception classes and in the juniors. In nine out of ten lessons, teaching is good; it is very good or excellent in over a third of lessons; no lessons were unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in the infants. In almost every year group, there were examples of very good teaching. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.

The key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well throughout the school. The teaching of mathematics, science and children under five is very good and pupils make good progress. The teaching of English and all other subjects is at least good and is often very good. Throughout the school, lessons are well prepared and planned; they provide interesting and stimulating activities that add to the enjoyment of pupils' learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge, manage pupils very well and expect pupils to work hard and achieve high standards. The excellent teaching is inspirational in quality and extends all pupils to the limit, particularly in French. The very good teaching is rigorously planned and taught, highly motivating and stretches all attainment groups. The enthusiasm of staff is obvious in all the tasks they undertake.

Pupils work productively and at a brisk pace. They show an increasing ability to work independently and creatively and have very good knowledge of their own rates of learning. Pupils rapidly acquire new skills knowledge and develop their understanding of the tasks set. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards achieving their learning goals.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and caters very well for the differing interests and needs of the pupils. Good use is made of discretionary time, particularly for teaching French and Italian. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the statutory curriculum. All pupils have equal access and opportunity to participate fully in all learning experiences. Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision and support enable pupils to make good progress. A team of well-briefed classroom assistants is used effectively to support learning. Targets set for pupils are realistic and achievable.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good; cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are efficient and effective. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring pupils' achievements and for staff to be aware of pupils' social and emotional needs.

The school's links with parents are very good. Individual target setting for pupils helps parents to be part of their children's learning. Annual reports are informative, clearly identifying pupils' progress and indicating areas for improvement. The school provides an exciting curriculum that promotes above average levels of achievement in most subjects. Very good emphasis is placed on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The strong lead provided by the headteacher and deputy head sets high expectations for the school community and they are very well supported by other key members of staff. The staff are hard working and operate effectively as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors work effectively through committees to meet their statutory responsibilities. They are well-informed and effective as critical friends, particularly in monitoring the school's achievements and the budget.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring arrangements are very good. Test results are analysed and used well to help determine priorities. Effective action is taken when weaknesses are identified.
The strategic use of resources	The budget is managed very well. The school seeks to gain very good value for money in all its expenditure.

The leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, working in partnership, are of the highest quality. They have created an achievement culture that is enhanced by the Catholic beliefs of the community. The budget is managed judiciously and the funds carried forward from last year are being used well to meet the school's priorities this year and its longer-term building program.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are well behaved. • Their children are taught well and are making good progress. • Teachers are approachable. • Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • Most parents believe that the school works closely with them. 	<p>An analysis of the pre-inspection questionnaires shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 per cent of parents responding have concerns about children being set the right amount of homework; • 18 per cent have concerns about the range of activities outside lessons. <p>Some parents said that, while the information provided about the curriculum was welcomed, it was sometimes difficult to understand.</p>

The inspection team endorses parents' views about the strengths of the school. Parents believe that St Joseph's is a very good school. Inspection evidence shows that the school has a homework policy that gives good advice to parents on the frequency of homework and how to help their children. However, it is not always consistently followed by some teachers. Information about the curriculum is difficult to follow for non-teachers. However, the school does provide a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are consistently well above average in English, mathematics and science.

1. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well above the national average standards in English, mathematics and science; standards are also well above average when compared with schools that have a similar intake. The proportion of pupils achieving higher standards at level 5 is well above average in English, mathematics and science. Trends over time show that the school is improving at a rate broadly in line with the national picture. Boys and girls achieve similar standards in English, mathematics and science. From 1996 to 2000, pupils' progress was well above average in English, mathematics and science when compared with schools in a similar context. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve standards in line with the targets in their individual educational plans. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve similar standards to their peers.
2. The children enter school with above average skills in literacy and numeracy. In the reception classes, children's skills in reading, writing and mathematics are above the expected level and they continue to make good progress towards achieving the early learning goals by the end of the year. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils achieving higher standards at level 3 is well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. In the current Year 6, pupils are making good progress and are on course to achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. The school is likely to exceed the statutory targets for 2002 and 2003. Standards in literacy and numeracy continue to be high. Pupils' achievements in all other subjects are at least good or better. Since the last inspection, pupils' achievements in information and communication technology have improved from being unsatisfactory to good. In Year 6, pupils' achievements in French are excellent.
3. A strong emphasis is placed on reading throughout the school; this is supported well by parents, as the regular entries in homework book testify, and pupils make good progress. Pupils in Year 6 achieve high standards in reading. They respond well to characters in favourite stories and learn to make deductions from ideas presented in key texts. Teachers encourage them to express opinions about their choice of characters and pupils can identify key words and phrases to illustrate a point they are making. These skills are used effectively when gathering information for other subjects such as science, geography and information and communication technology.
4. Good standards in speaking and listening make a significant contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school and across a range of subjects. The ability to question, to discuss ideas in groups, to listen to the views of others and to justify those views in a mature way enables pupils to learn effectively from each other. When teachers intervene with probing questions, the quality of the dialogue is high, for example in a science lesson in Year 4 about designing fair tests and investigating frictional forces. Pupils are taught to use correct technical vocabulary to support their understanding in subjects such as science, geography and information and communication technology; this contributes well to the standards achieved in these subjects.
5. The school has identified pupils' writing skills as an area for improvement, particularly in the infants. The National Literacy hour and additional lessons have helped to create more time for pupils to write at length. These are being used well and pupils are making good progress. By the end of Year 6, over 50 per cent of pupils are achieving well above average standards. Samples of pupils' work show that they are given opportunities to write in many different styles and for a variety of purposes. Good attention is given to teaching the structure of writing and improving spelling skills, particularly for middle and lower attaining pupils. Pupils can organise their writing into paragraphs and use the conventions of punctuation correctly. They make good progress in developing the skills of drafting and editing. Pupils look for ways

to improve their written work and make it more exciting and interesting for the reader, such as when interpreting the imagery associated with a spiders web. They understand the techniques of writing letters to persuade others about facts or opinions the author holds, for example when writing to save a tree from being felled. Throughout the school, pupils use a wide and interesting range of vocabulary to enliven their work. They use well their literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum.

6. In mathematics, mental practice sessions are well focused on the quick recall of numbers facts and accuracy of mental calculations. Pupils' errors and misconceptions are used well by teachers to provide a greater level of clarity and explanation, for example when studying number bonds in a Year 3 and 4 class. Overall, progress is very good and by the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving well above average standards for their age with nearly 40 per cent achieving higher levels of performance. This is due to the very good quality of teaching they receive. Higher attaining pupils are challenged and expected to work quickly and accurately. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of multiplication and division, and good investigative skills. Pupils with special educational needs receive good additional support, are growing in confidence and achieve appropriate standards by the age of eleven. In Year 2, pupils used number lines well to explain their thinking about solving addition and subtraction problems. In the reception class, subject-based vocabulary is demonstrated well and pupils are encouraged to use this when they explain how they ordered and matched numbers. By the age of eleven, samples of pupil's work shows that they can construct graphs and have a very good knowledge of angular measurement, directed number and coordinates. In all classes, pupils work productively at a good pace and show obvious enjoyment in the subject.
7. By the end of Year 6, pupils make very good progress in science, with over 60 per cent achieving well above average standards. This is due to the very good teaching they receive. Year 6 pupils are developing a very good knowledge and understanding about different types of materials and their properties. They undertake experiments successfully, showing very good observational and predictive skills. In Year 4, pupils have a very good understanding about the need for a fair test and recording their findings accurately when measuring the frictional forces between different types of materials. Pupils in Year 3 discussed, with considerable insight, how gravity acts on falling plates and about the forces at work when squashing and stretching a spring. Samples of previous work show that, by the end of Year 6, pupils have a very good knowledge of life processes and living things, electricity, light and sound. Teachers take considerable care to support pupils with special educational needs and, therefore, these pupils make very good progress and achieve good standards. By the end of Year 2, samples of work show that over 30 per cent of pupils are achieving standards that are well above the national average. Overall, pupils have a good knowledge of life and living processes, materials and physical processes. Their experimental and investigative skills are particularly well developed.

Teaching and learning is very good.

8. Overall, teaching is very good, particularly in the reception classes and in the juniors. In nine out of ten lessons, teaching is good; it is very good or excellent in over a third of lessons; no lessons were unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in the infants. In almost every year group, there were examples of very good teaching. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Very good or excellent lessons took place in French, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and in physical education. Teachers' good knowledge of the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage for under fives has a positive impact on pupils' learning. It enables pupils to make very good progress in acquiring new knowledge and skills and to increase their understanding in English, mathematics and science and in other subjects.
9. Lessons are well prepared and planned, with clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson so that they know exactly what is expected of them. In the best lessons, very good links are made between assessments of pupils' prior learning and subsequent planning so those tasks are pitched at just the right level. At the end of lessons, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learnt and how they have improved.

Homework arrangements are satisfactory and there are appropriate systems for communicating with parents. In the reception classes, very good planning and the effective use of assessment help with the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. The support these pupils receive is effective and they make good progress.

10. Many teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations. Pupils respond well and are challenged and extended by the tasks set, especially in English, mathematics and science. Teachers provide interesting and stimulating activities that add to the enjoyment of learning and result in a very good pace of work and effort from pupils. Excellent teaching is inspirational in quality and extends all pupils to the limit, particularly in French. Teachers manage pupils very well and expect pupils to work hard and achieve high standards. Pupils work productively and at a brisk pace. They show an increasing ability to work independently and creatively and have very good knowledge of their own rates of learning. Pupils rapidly acquire new skills knowledge and develop their understanding of the tasks set and pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards achieving their learning goals.
11. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. In literacy lessons, a good balance is achieved between class teaching, group work, individual support and plenary sessions. In Year 6, a teacher was skilled in helping pupils to examine word endings using dictionaries and text. In Year 5, the teacher used probing questions to encourage pupils to think more deeply about stories and what makes a good ending. In Years 3 and 4, the teachers modelled language well, particularly the use of expressive words and phrases when encouraging pupils to discuss and write about the thoughts and feelings of a new girl or boy joining the school. In Year 2 handwriting was skilfully taught, pupils were highly motivated and worked with sustained concentration. Good attention is given to the teaching of sentence structure and the use of phonics to improve spelling skills in Year 1. In the reception classes, the teachers' enthusiasm and expressive use of language helped the children to share and articulate their thoughts and feelings when identifying hidden objects in a "feely" box.
12. In numeracy lessons, mental practice sessions are well focused on the quick recall of numbers facts and accuracy of mental calculations. Pupils' errors and misconceptions are used well by teachers to provide a greater level of clarity and explanation, for example when studying number operations in Years 3 and 4. In the reception class, the teachers' good knowledge of how younger children learn helped provide a good range of apparatus to enable them to explore and recognise different numbers. In Year 1, the tasks set matched the differing needs of pupils and good use was made of practical apparatus to help pupils develop a better understanding of place value. Teaching in Year 2 was particularly effective when number lines were used to help pupils add and subtract numbers by shifting to the left or to the right. In Year 3, very good support is given to lower attaining pupils to improve their mental arithmetic when solving 2 digit number problems. In all classes in Years 5 and 6, teachers have very good subject knowledge that is used well to diagnose pupils' difficulties and take corrective action quickly. They combine with good questioning techniques with high expectations and this helps to extend pupils' knowledge and promotes high standards by challenging their thinking.

The leadership and management of the headteacher, governors and key members of staff are of high quality.

13. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher who is an outstanding teacher. Together they set high standards and lead by example. Their self-evaluation of the school's performance is very good and identifies accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The headteacher has a clear view of how she wants the school to develop. This is conveyed to staff and they share her commitment to provide a high quality education for pupils. The school's aims are met well. The headteacher has very high expectations of staff and provides them with positive and constructive advice on their performance. Very good teamwork and clarity of purpose are exemplified in the high expectations that staff have of pupils and in the stimulating environment that supports good learning. Co-ordinators recognise the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and give effective advice, support and guidance

to their colleagues such as in English, mathematics and science and for teaching pupils with special educational needs.

14. All staff and governors are involved in the process of identifying priority areas for development, based on a careful analysis of the current situation. The school development plan is constructed well and clearly identifies costs, training needs and success criteria to bring about continuous improvement over the next three years. The governing body is well informed and effective as a critical friend, particularly in monitoring the school's performance. They have used good selection procedures to appoint many high quality staff to the school. The budget is managed very well, carefully monitored and the planned use of the current surplus meets the school priorities well, for example, to provide improvements to the school building and extra resources for information and communication technology.
15. Systems for target setting are now well established. Teachers carefully analyse pupils' strengths and weaknesses and identify what pupils need to work on to make further improvements. Very good analyses of test results and a detailed system of tracking the attainment of individual pupils have been devised and developed by the headteacher and key members of staff. This has enabled the school to identify pupils' writing, for example as an area for improvement. Challenging targets have been set for cohorts of pupils and teachers set class and individual targets, for example in English and mathematics. Teachers are constantly striving to raise pupils' levels of achievement.

The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good.

16. The curriculum is broad and balanced, caters very well for the differing needs of the pupils and is a strength of the school. The school provides effectively for pupils of all ages, gender and ethnic diversity. All pupils have equal opportunity and access to participate fully in all learning experiences. It promotes above average levels of achievement in most subjects. Good use has been made of the time available, particularly for teaching French and Italian to older pupils. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. All subjects are taught in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum, the nationally agreed syllabus for Catholic Education and the Early Learning Goals for pupils under five. Planning systems are very good. The school gives strong emphasis to literacy and numeracy. The National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well and are helping the school to raise standards.
17. In addition to the statutory curriculum, the school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for boys and girls. These include athletics, badminton, football, netball, rugby and short tennis. Pupils have good opportunities to participate in competitive sports. Effective use is made of visiting sports coaches to improve pupils' games skills. Other activities encourage pupils to participate in chess, computer, mathematics and prayer clubs; this they do with enthusiasm. Parents' concerns about lack of provision are not justified.
18. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They benefit from the good quality help they receive from the special needs teachers and classroom assistants. These pupils are identified as early as possible and contact is made with the parents so that they can be actively engaged in providing appropriate support in partnership with the school. Provision for higher attaining pupils is very good and they achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. They are challenged and extended by the work set. Many of these pupils have additional opportunities to excel by participating in the LEA's pupils' enrichment project.
19. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Cultural development is enhanced by the successful "African street child" project. The school has an appropriate homework policy to support learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. It helps create opportunities for pupils to be supported by parents and conforms with the recently published national guidance.

20. Links with the community are very good, particularly with the local parish and youth groups. Parents are encouraged to help support pupils' learning in school. Local business supports well developments in information and communication technology. Effective liaison with the local police and school nurse creates good opportunities for pupils to discuss issues about the misuse of drugs and growing-up in a supportive and sensitive manner. Educational visits are used to widen pupils' experiences of the locality, the region and communities further afield. There is very good liaison with local secondary schools' resources and this contributes to the smooth transition of pupils to the next stage of education.

The school's ethos for learning is excellent.

21. The interaction between pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and personal development, the care they receive the partnership with parents and the high standards achieved produce an excellent climate for learning.
22. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and make a significant contribution to the ethos of the school and to the high standards achieved. They enjoy coming to school. Pupils take a pride in their work, are highly motivated and have a strong desire to improve. They work hard and are determined to take advantage of what the school has to offer. Good concentration and a productive work rate are regular features of lessons. Many pupils attend the very good range of after-school and lunchtime clubs; they participate willingly in concerts and sporting activities. In 45 per cent of lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good or excellent, particularly in English, mathematics and science; they are good in a further 50 per cent. Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions, work things out together and have a go at new ideas. In response, pupils are interested and receptive learners.
23. All adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and give clear, consistent messages about what is right and wrong. A strong moral code of conduct, which grows from the Christian faith of the school, is well established in the day-to-day habits of all the pupils. Pupils understand fully the school's systems of rewards and sanctions and the action to be taken if anti-social behaviour occurs. They conduct themselves with mutual respect and self-discipline. Throughout the school, pupils are polite and well mannered to each other and to adults and visitors. No bullying, racist or sexist behaviour was seen and none reported by pupils.
24. Pupils' personal development and relationships with others are excellent. They have respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. The oldest pupils conduct themselves with high levels of self-discipline and set a very good example to others. They take responsibility for helping others, particularly younger pupils. Pupils are keen to be involved in all activities offered by the school. They work together well, sharing ideas and materials in a mature way. Older pupils have well-established work habits and their work-rate in lessons is consistently high. Many pupils are becoming independent, confident learners. Displays of pupils' work around the school make a strong visual impact and help to boost pupils' self-esteem.
25. Strong role models and good teamwork amongst teachers and support staff promote excellent relationships between adults and pupils, which are warm and friendly. Throughout the school, equipment and books are used carefully and shared fairly and pupils respect the school surroundings. Older pupils help in the smooth daily running of the school in many ways, such as assisting in keeping resources tidy and easily accessible and helping younger children in the reception classes. They all have equal opportunities to experience responsibility because of the regular changes in the allocation of these tasks. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to work together in small groups and relationships within these are very good, such as when using the computers and undertaking investigative work in science. The many extra-curricular activities and educational visits enhance further pupils' excellent personal development.
26. Pupils receive very good care. Teachers provide very good support and guidance for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs work hard to achieve the targets set in their individual educational plans and make good progress. They respond well to the sensitive and effective support that classroom assistants give them. Procedures for child protection and for

ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. Staff are aware of the pupils' social and emotional needs and very good provision is made to monitor pupils' personal and academic development. The headteacher and deputy headteacher know the children by name and constantly mix with them, giving words of encouragement and setting high expectations for achievement and personal development.

27. The school values highly the partnership with parents and their active support in its daily life. Home-school agreements are supported well by parents. Parents value highly the good quality school reports and the opportunity to discuss regularly their children's progress. Together with the teachers they share a strong commitment to continuous improvement and the Catholic faith of the school. The parent teacher association is a strong feature of the school, organising a wide range of events throughout the year. The association has provided additional equipment that has made a significant impact on pupils' education.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Information for parents.

28. Parents believe that St Joseph's is a very good school with high standards of achievement and a strong catholic ethos. They value the information received from the school which they believe is good. Parents find the annual school reports informative and appreciate the opportunities to consult staff about their children's progress. Many parents have found the guidance about helping their children to learn, how they can support homework and the outline of the curriculum followed very helpful. They find the annual governors' report to parents and the school prospectus very informative. However, views expressed at the parents' pre-inspection meeting and written comments indicate that they would value further refinement to this information.
29. Inspection evidence shows that the school has a homework policy that gives good advice to parents on the frequency of homework and how to help their children but not all parents are aware of its content. Scrutiny of homework diaries and discussions with older pupils indicate that it is not always consistently followed by some teachers and some parents. Information about the curriculum is difficult to follow for non-teachers. The school is aware of these issues and has been planning to improve the information provided. The annual governors' report to parents and the school prospectus do not meet statutory requirements. Details about the school's admissions policy and pupils' absence rates are not included in the school prospectus. The annual governor's report to parents lacks detailed information about admission procedures and lacks other details about clerking and arrangements for elections.

The longer term planning for the development of the foundation stage of learning.

30. The quality of curriculum planning, teaching and learning in the foundation stage for children under five is very good. Children are making good progress towards achieving the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Although reference is made to the foundation stage of learning in the school development plan, it would be beneficial to have more detail. Issues concerning monitoring learning and baseline assessment are included in the infant development plan and are used well. There is a lack of detail about future priorities, the training needs of staff, resource requirements and success criteria to plan the longer-term development for this stage of education. There is a lack of a playing area for children to use large construction apparatus, wheeled toys and climbing frames to develop gross motor skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

31. Within the context of the well above average standards achieved in English, mathematics and science, the very good teaching and learning and high quality leadership and management, the school should now undertake the following refinements:
 - (1) improve information for parents by:

- providing more guidance about the curriculum, written in non-specialist terms;
- clarifying homework arrangements and monitoring their consistent implementation;
- meeting the statutory requirements for the school prospectus and annual governors' report to parents (paragraphs 28 and 29).

(2) improving the longer-term planning for the foundation stage of learning by:

- developing an action plan specifically for under fives;
- improving provision for outdoor play activities (paragraph 30).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	22	4	0	0	0
Percentage	2.5	32.5	55	10	0	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 more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	360
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
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	24	23	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	24
	Girls	23	23	22
	Total	45	45	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (94)	96 (98)	98 (92)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	22
	Girls	23	23	23
	Total	45	45	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (94)	96 (96)	96 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	28	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	17	19
	Girls	27	25	27
	Total	47	42	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (92)	86 (90)	94 (90)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	19	19
	Girls	27	26	27
	Total	47	45	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (92)	92 (94)	94 (92)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	284
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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)	14.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.7
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	124.5

FTE means full-time equivalent

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	700815
Total expenditure	667873
Expenditure per pupil	1919
Balance brought forward from previous year	119780
Balance carried forward to next year	152722

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	360
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	23	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	29	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	38	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	50	11	0	0
The teaching is good.	64	35	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	44	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	25	4	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	21	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	45	9	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	64	35	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	35	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	39	18	0	10

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents have concerns that, although the information provided about the curriculum was welcomed, it was sometimes difficult to understand.

The inspection team endorses parents' views about the strengths of the school. Parents believe that St Joseph's is a very good school. Inspection evidence shows that the school has a homework policy that gives good advice to parents on the frequency of homework and how to help their children. However, it is not always consistently followed by some teachers. Information about the curriculum is difficult to follow for non-teachers. However, the school does provide a very good range of extra-curricular activities.