

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST FRANCIS DE SALES RC
INFANT SCHOOL**

Tottenham

LEA area: Haringey

Unique reference number: 102149

Headteacher: Miss M Mooney

Reporting inspector: Elisabeth de Lancey
22272

Dates of inspection: 21st - 22nd May 2002

Inspection number: 198431

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
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brereton Road Tottenham Road London N17 8DA
Telephone number:	0208 808 4432
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sam Smethers
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Situated in Tottenham, in East Haringey, St Francis de Sales Roman Catholic Infant School is an excellent school which has been awarded Beacon status and given an Achievement Award for excellence from the Department for Education and Skills. The immediate vicinity of the school presents all the challenges of inner-urban social deprivation. Almost all of the pupils come from the parish of St Francis, with a small but significant number coming from further afield, largely due to the school's good reputation. Unemployment in this area is very high and almost all families live in housing association properties or temporary accommodation. The school caters for pupils between the ages of three and seven. It is larger than other infant schools, with a current roll of 270 pupils in Year R to Year 2, of whom 149 are girls and 121 are boys, plus 60 children who attend the Nursery on a part-time basis. It is larger than at the time of the last inspection. Recently the movement of pupils into and out of the school at times other than the usual times of admission has increased and the profile of pupils has changed. Whilst the whole range of abilities is represented in the school's intake, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average. Pupils come from a rich diversity of backgrounds. About a quarter of the pupils are white, half are of black African heritage, and an eighth are of black Caribbean origin. There are four refugees from Africa. Over one-half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, which is very high, and much higher than at the time of the last inspection; 117 of these pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. One third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above average. There are 88 pupils (32%) on the school's register of special educational needs. This is higher than found in most schools. They have a variety of learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems and a high proportion have speech and language difficulties. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs. This too, is higher than at the time of the last inspection. The school maintained an established staff until the end of the summer term 2001 when four teachers left, mainly due to retirement or promotion. Five teachers were new to the school in September, including two who are new to the profession. There are strong procedures for the induction of new staff, and appropriate training opportunities have been identified to address any areas of inexperience. The school benefits from a government grant to promote the achievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a highly effective, inclusive school which welcomes pupils from a rich variety of backgrounds and enables all pupils to make major strides in their learning. The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent. Relationships between pupils and staff and amongst pupils are harmonious and respectful. The teaching is good. Children make an excellent start in the Nursery and their attainment by the end of Year 2 is good. The school creates a very supportive and challenging environment that successfully promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The arrangements for meeting the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are very good. Links with parents are an outstanding feature. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards attained in the national tests over the past four years have been almost consistently above average and often better.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher, established key staff and governors are outstanding.
- The quality of teaching is good and there are examples of very good and excellent teaching.
- The school offers a rich and varied curriculum.
- The excellent links with parents and the community greatly enhance pupils' learning.
- The provision for children attending the Nursery is excellent.

What could be improved

- Some aspects of writing, in particular narrative and imaginative writing. *

**The school has identified this as a relative weakness*

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1997. Only one weakness was identified at that time. Since then, the school has made very good progress improving the quality of teaching and a higher proportion of very good and excellent lessons was observed. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers now manage their pupils well, use a good range of teaching strategies and lessons proceed at a very good pace. Beacon Status and an Achievement Award for excellence have been gained. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests have improved, in particular at the higher level. New initiatives, for example the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the guidance for the Foundation Stage, have been introduced successfully, are thoroughly monitored, and their very good impact evaluated. Although the school continues to target standards in writing, there have been good improvements to well above national levels. Resources for information and communication technology have improved. The teachers have greater expertise and the teaching and use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is good. The school makes very good use of its analysis of test results by setting targets for individual pupils. These targets are shared with parents. The school's premises have been extended and more pupils benefit from its very good provision.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	A	A	B	A
Writing	A	B	A	A*
mathematics	A	A	C	B

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

National Curriculum test results over the past three years have usually been better, and often much better than those of similar schools. In 2001, pupils' results were well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and in the highest five per cent in writing. When compared with all schools nationally, pupils' results were well above average in writing, above average in reading and average in mathematics. In 2001, pupils' results in mathematics dipped from their previously very high levels because, although the pupils fully understood the mathematical concepts they had learned, a higher proportion than usual found it difficult to express themselves accurately in mathematical language. Results in writing are particularly impressive with almost a quarter of pupils attaining the higher level (level 3) which is well above the national average and in the highest five per cent when compared with similar schools. Pupils perform very well in reading and mathematics too at the higher level when compared to similar schools with one third of pupils attaining level 3 in mathematics which is very high, and more than one quarter reaching this level in reading which is high.

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average. They make an excellent start in the Nursery and their progress along the 'stepping stones' during the Foundation Stage is very good. By the time these children leave the Reception classes most children have attained the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and a few exceed them.

Over the past four years, results in reading and writing have kept pace with the national trend. Results in mathematics are below the national trend. Inspection evidence and the school's own assessments of current Year 2 pupils indicate that results will not be as good this year and that fewer pupils will attain the higher levels. This is because there is higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in the current Year 2. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are good. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress and achieve well. They also achieve well in other subjects of the curriculum and good standards were seen in information and communication technology, art and design, drama and music, in particular singing. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set for them. The pupils who speak English as an additional language also make very good progress and attain similar, and often better, standards than other pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very proud of their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite and show respect for each other, staff and visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils thrive in the school's supporting ethos. They show respect for different viewpoints. Relationships are harmonious.
Attendance	Good. The school works very hard to sustain high levels of attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Good	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.

Teaching in the school is good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Teaching in the Nursery is excellent and there were examples of very good teaching in literacy and numeracy in Years 1 and Years 2. Throughout the school, basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are taught well. Teachers build well on pupils' emerging knowledge and skills using teaching methods that show a firm understanding of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are set by ability for literacy and numeracy and are taught in smaller groups. The quality of learning in these groups is usually very good because pupils are given close attention and teachers have a smaller range of abilities to cater for. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; these pupils benefit from sensitive support which enables them to achieve success. Staff relate very well to pupils and sustain very good relationships with them. They have high expectations of their work and behaviour. As a result, the pupils make good use of their time in school and work at a good pace. Teachers use questions well to help pupils to recall their previous work and to help them gain good knowledge of their own learning. Teaching is less successful when the teacher does not develop the lesson content sufficiently to engage all pupils; consequently, the pace of learning slows and some pupils are distracted. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are taught well, they make rapid progress in learning English and have full access to all aspects of school life.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. A wide variety of additional activities extends pupils' learning experiences. There is a strong emphasis on the development of performing and visual arts. The provision in the Nursery is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Support for pupils with special educational needs, including those who are gifted and talented, is carefully planned and the staff meet the needs of these pupils very well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to acquire a new vocabulary through participating in a wide range of stimulating activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Strong Christian values underpin this provision. All aspects of pupils' development is given a high priority and this is evident in all areas of the school's work. Assemblies make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Each child is valued as an individual. The school provides a safe and supportive environment in which pupils prosper. The procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. All members of staff are given a clear lead by her personal example and vision for the future. Established key staff work very well together and make a strong contribution to the management of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a deep commitment to the school. They are very well-organised and well-informed. They provide the school with very effective support, guidance and critical evaluation.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has a wide range of arrangements for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of its provision.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The resources available to the school are very carefully deployed and educational priorities are appropriately funded. The principles of best value are applied very well when decisions are taken about spending.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents are helped to become fully involved in their children's education.• They are pleased that their children like coming to school.• The school expects their children to work hard and they make good progress and attain high standards.• Their children are helped to become mature and responsible and their behaviour is good.• The school works closely with them, keeps them well informed and responds well to their suggestions and concerns.• The school is well led and managed.• Teaching and homework arrangements are good and contribute well to pupils' learning.• They like the ready access to the teachers.	

The team agrees with the parents' very positive views of the school. Parents have no major areas of concern.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards attained in the national tests over the past four years have been almost consistently above average and often better.

1. In the National Curriculum tests in 2001, pupils' results were well above average in writing, above average in reading and average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, pupils' results were well above average in reading and writing, and in the highest five per cent of schools in writing. Results were above average in mathematics.
2. Over the past three years results have been better than national averages and much better than those of similar schools, except in mathematics in 2001. In 2001, there was a slight dip in the school's results from the very good standard of all pupils reaching Level 2 or above in the 2000 tests. This was due largely to a decline in the performance of boys, in particular those who joined the school when it changed from a two-form to three form entry. These pupils did not attend the school's Nursery; a significant proportion of them were diagnosed as having special educational needs, with specific language difficulties. The pupils attain very well in most subjects at Level 3, the exception being spelling. Results in writing are improving for all pupils. In 2001, results in writing were particularly impressive with almost a quarter of pupils attaining the higher level which is well above the national average and in the highest five per cent when compared with similar schools. Pupils perform very well in reading and mathematics too, with one third of pupils attaining Level 3 in mathematics which is very high compared with similar schools and more than one quarter reaching this level in reading which is high.
3. The setting of pupils in ability groups in Years 1 and 2, for English and mathematics, when pupils have the advantage of working in smaller groups with pupils of a similar ability has helped to maintain high standards. However, inspection evidence and the school's own assessments of current Year 2 pupils indicates that results will not be as good this year and that fewer pupils will attain the higher levels. This is because there is higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in this year group.
4. There is a wide range of attainment amongst children when they enter the Nursery. They make very good progress along the 'stepping stones' and almost all the children transfer to the Reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five. They are joined by thirty additional pupils who have had a variety of pre-school educational experiences and some who have had none. There are some very able pupils but many children enter the school with below average standards of attainment. The staff build very effectively on children's earlier experiences and most children who have attended the school's Nursery are on the way to reaching the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the time they leave the Reception Year and a few exceed them.
5. Throughout the school pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. In English, pupils' attainment is above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The school places great emphasis on the development of pupils' oral skills. Teachers have worked hard to strengthen their questioning skills to ensure understanding. They sensitively develop the pupils' confidence in expressing their views in discussions by encouraging the pupils to respond to questions fully and by developing strategies to extend their vocabulary. The high level of support from

classroom assistants helps those pupils who are at an early stage of language acquisition. The classroom assistants sit with these pupils to help their understanding. By the end of Year 2, most pupils speak with confidence, have a good vocabulary and enthusiastically contribute to discussion. For example, they talked animatedly about their local football teams, the 'World Cup' and their support for teams in their home countries. Pupils' listening skills are very good. They are attentive in class and listen to instructions carefully. They listen to stories on tape whilst following the text in the book and this successfully develops both their listening and reading skills. The pupils' reading skills are good. Pupils enjoy reading and take their books home regularly to share with their parents. They read aloud accurately, fluently and expressively, paying attention to the punctuation and most show a good understanding of the book they are reading. The pupils also know a good range of authors and express their preferences clearly. For example, one higher attaining Year 2 pupil expressed his preference for Roald Dahl's books while another preferred books by Ruth Brown, because, '*She has an interesting way with words and the illustrations are very detailed.*' Others preferred the animal stories such as 'The Hodgeheg' written by Dick King Smith. When asked what makes a good book? One pupil in Year 2 replied, '*When you get to the end of the page you can't wait to turn it over and read more.*'

6. Pupils have a good understanding of the differences between fiction and non-fiction and use non-fiction books well to find out the facts they need to complete their studies. Most pupils write in simple sentences which are correctly punctuated, and they use their knowledge of sounds to spell simple words. Particularly good progress has been in the writing of non-fiction. Pupils write effective instructions; for example, for making a clay pot or a necklace from seeds. They write accounts of shared visits to places of interest such as the park, and imaginative reports on meeting 'Red Riding Hood'. They compose and illustrate attractive pamphlets on, for example, frogs and butterflies using non-fiction 'big books' as models. Improving pupils' writing has been a priority for the school. Staff have analysed pupils' writing in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and examined the curriculum to identify areas that will support and extend the opportunities for pupils to write in a variety of styles. These links are very well used by teachers to improve writing and pupils enjoy the work because it is relevant. For example, pupils write detailed directions of their journeys from their homes to school in geography, and record their stages of growth in science. Although there are good examples of pupils composing stories that are based on well-known tales, such as Jack and the Beanstalk and Cinderella, their story writing skills, descriptions and imaginative writing are relatively weak.
7. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 are average. Most seven-year-olds rapidly add and subtract simple numbers in their heads, use a number line accurately and are becoming increasingly skilled at doubling numbers to twenty and beyond. They recognise multiples of 2, 5 and 10 and most pupils can explain how they have arrived at their answers. Higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of numbers to one thousand and solve problems using three digit numbers. Pupils collect information and illustrate it by drawing different charts and graphs and know how to interpret information correctly. For example, one class showed the popularity of the various football teams they support on a colourful bar chart. Work on classifying and describing two- and three-dimensional shapes builds progressively through the school and by the end of Year 2 most pupils name these shapes correctly and recognise reflective symmetry in two-dimensional shapes. Pupils become increasingly familiar with the relationship between multiplication and division and make good progress in using standard measures. Staff are aware that

although some pupils fully understand the mathematical concepts they find it difficult to express themselves accurately in mathematical language. Teachers understand the needs of these pupils and they are helped to access the curriculum through additional support and imaginative resources.

8. Pupils also achieve well in other subjects of the curriculum and good standards were seen in information and communication technology, art and design, drama and music, in particular singing. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set for them. The pupils who speak English as an additional language also make very good progress and attain similar and often better standards than other pupils.

The leadership and management of the headteacher, established key staff and governors are outstanding.

9. At the heart of this highly effective school is a headteacher with excellent leadership and exceptional management skills. She draws effectively upon these abilities to express her wholehearted commitment to the school, to the raising of pupils' standards of achievement, to the development of staff and governors and to the enriching of relationships with parents and the community. The headteacher leads by example, from welcoming pupils on entry to school, through the setting of homework to the celebration of pupils' achievements in the displays which flow around and out of her office. The school's sustained effectiveness over the years is a measure of the headteacher's success in securing the devoted support of all who work in and for the school. This has enabled the school to achieve Beacon Status through which it has given support and guidance to other schools, and promoted good practice with its hosting of an 'Early Years Conference'. The acting deputy head had a significant role in this achievement and plays a key role in its effective management. As the school moves through a period of significant staff change at a time of national and local recruitment difficulties, the headteacher is alert to the implications for the school. Drawing on her proven record, the induction of new staff ensures they all share the school's aims and are committed to their realisation.
10. This model of dedication is reflected in the work of all members of staff and the effective teamwork through which they carry out their duties. The senior management team meet frequently to direct the school's growth and ensure that developing issues are addressed or properly planned for. Teachers meet regularly in year groups to plan work and support each other. This open, co-operative approach informs the work of the curriculum co-ordinators, most of whom are relatively new to their posts and exercise different levels of responsibility. Each is clear about the priorities for their subjects and the support that staff need. For example, one co-ordinator organised a training day to develop staff expertise in using a range of materials to help them improve pupils' skills in creative activities. A second co-ordinator is working on assessment materials to help colleagues more accurately gauge pupils' needs. Another is preparing to monitor classroom practice by undertaking a series of teaching observations under the guidance of a local authority inspector. This carefully planned and thorough approach to management and the time each co-ordinator is given to carry out their responsibilities are the hallmarks of the school's structured management style.
11. It is within that context that the school's effective monitoring and evaluation procedures are operated. They offer a comprehensive, well-designed and supportive programme for the development of teaching and learning. They have enabled the

school to maintain high standards and the staff to commit to raising them further. This is particularly evident in the work of the established co-ordinator for mathematics. She has observed teaching throughout the school and has fed back to all staff, monitored teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work, and guided staff on the use of information and communication technology in mathematics. In addition, through workshops, she has helped parents identify activities they can pursue at home to support their children's learning. In relation to this, she invites parents to assist their children in attaining designated targets by setting out specific guidance for them. For example, she sets out a series of questions for parents to explore with their child which will *'Help them understand the concept of time, help with ordering and sequencing'* and she ends *'Have fun'*.

12. Led by the dynamic and perceptive chair of governors, the governing body has built very effectively on its very good relationships with the staff. Governors have forged a strong team of confident practitioners which has helped them in successfully undertaking their performance management duties. They have formed a committed governing body which has a clear understanding of the school. They liaise closely with staff and draw readily on the advice and guidance of the headteacher to develop the work of their active committees and to fulfil their statutory obligations. Governors bring a breadth of expertise and experience to the school, and individuals have accepted the role of nominated governor for various aspects of the curriculum; for example, science and special educational needs. In this role governors work closely with subject co-ordinators to review subject content, teaching and learning and report back regularly to the governing body. This has provided governors with a significant channel to improve their knowledge of the curriculum and the school's working practices. They are now well positioned to assume responsibility for this regular reporting to the governing body. Through their successful fulfilment of their roles as 'critical friends' and in their oversight of standards, they are fully aware of the school's achievements in securing their mutual commitment to educational inclusion and equal opportunities. They have a clear vision for the school and set appropriate priorities for improvement, underscored by a strong finance committee which adheres very well to the principles of best value.

The quality of teaching is good and there are examples of very good and excellent teaching.

13. The good quality teaching reported at the last inspection has at least been maintained with some features showing significant improvement. The proportion of high quality teaching has increased and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. During this inspection, teaching throughout the school was assessed as excellent in two lessons, very good in seven lessons, good in two lessons and satisfactory in six lessons. Examples of high quality teaching were observed in the Nursery and in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
14. The teachers and support staff relate very well to the pupils and sustain very good relationships with them. The calm and sensitive manner through which the staff manage the pupils helps each of them to recognise how much they are valued. This instils confidence in the pupils, and helps those with learning needs and those with challenging behaviour sustain their concentration, and supports them when they find it difficult to cope. For example, in a Year 2 class, the teacher sat with a distressed pupil and sensitively drew from him his idea of a messy bedroom so that when they parted the child was settled and recording his observations. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' standards of work, behaviour and work rate. This is one

means by which staff demonstrate their commitment to raising standards for all pupils. A Year 2 teacher, for example, made her expectations clear when she required one group to identify features which distinguish fiction books from non-fiction. Teachers carefully foster pupils' use of letter sounds to help them with reading and spelling. This helps pupils' understanding and provides them with skills to develop their independence. For example, a reception teacher encouraged a group of pupils to use the sound of the first letter of words to help them match the words with the appropriate pictures.

15. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to consolidate their knowledge and understanding through well-structured repetition and reinforcement activities. By this means the basic skills of number relations, letter formation and grammar are reinforced. For example, a Year 1 teacher used a jumbled sentence activity to emphasise the use of capital letters and stops. In doing so she drew on key words used earlier in the lesson to compose the sentences. This helped to motivate the pupils by sustaining their interest in the task through activities with which they were already familiar. Teachers use question and answer techniques effectively to help pupils recall previous work, build lively introductions to lessons, explore pupils' thinking and help them understand how well they are doing. This challenges and encourages pupils, helps them clarify their thinking and promotes their use of more precise statements. At the end of a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher sensitively questioned the pupils to help assess their knowledge of strategies to find unknown numbers so that she could identify appropriate activities to develop their understanding. Setting for numeracy and literacy, and the provision of individual pupil targets help to ensure that work set is appropriate for the full range of pupils' abilities. The teachers' very good planning of the curriculum and their individual lessons underpins these effective teaching and learning strategies.
16. Where teaching is less successful, the teacher does not develop the lesson content sufficiently to engage all pupils and as a result, the pace slows and some pupils are distracted. Additionally, insufficient opportunities are taken to sustain the participation of all the pupils, for example, by using whiteboards frequently. In a small number of lessons, the lack of challenge for some groups of pupils undermines their progress and the inappropriateness or insufficiency of resources results in some disengagement for some pupils.
17. The school provides well for its gifted and talented pupils. In most lessons work is appropriately challenging and they are given very good opportunities to excel in music and drama. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school's aims for special needs are well known, supported by parents and set out in the school's policy statement. Individual education plans, which describe the school's strategies for supporting pupils' progress towards clearly stated targets, are drawn up for all pupils requiring them, and appropriate targets are set. The pupils are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum and setting ensures they receive individual support in small groups. This helps to bolster their sense of achievement and gives them the confidence to participate fully in the activities provided for them. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also well supported and have access to all aspects of school life. Consequently, they achieve well and make very good progress towards the individual targets set for them.
18. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and they make a valuable contribution to the quality of educational provision. They work closely with class teachers to ensure a consistent approach in their teaching. This has a beneficial effect on each

pupil's progress. All staff succeed in helping all the pupils to feel secure. This is reflected in the very good attitudes the pupils have to their work and the enthusiasm with which they pursue their tasks.

The school offers a rich and varied curriculum.

19. The quality of the curriculum offered to pupils is a strength of the school. The school has given careful consideration to planning a curriculum that is stimulating and relevant, involves all children and engages their interest. It fully reflects the diverse community from which the pupils come and gives them a valuable insight into the wider world. It provides regular opportunities for pupils to enjoy exciting experiences and to deepen and extend their learning.
20. All of the National Curriculum subjects are taught in a systematic way that builds effectively on pupils' previous learning. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very effectively to promote high standards in English. As a high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language the school places a strong emphasis on the rapid acquisition of English. Teachers are particularly successful at developing pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills, and enabling them to use and improve them in other subjects. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been well implemented and a current priority is to develop pupils' ability to express themselves clearly in mathematical language.
21. The school places a strong emphasis on the development of the performing and visual arts and provides a wealth of high quality experiences in these areas. Pupils benefit from regular drama lessons and there is an after-school drama club for the oldest pupils. Their participation in drama activities and opportunities to act and speak out during assemblies contribute positively to pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to become involved in music, drama and dance projects, such as the 'Outreach Tap Dancing Project' and to perform in the school's Christmas and end-of-year productions. They sing very tunefully in assemblies, perform further afield in public festivals such as the 'Khuthazo Festival', and have participated in making a video recording of 'JC 2000'. These worthwhile opportunities help foster pupils' confidence and self-esteem and develop a very good sense of audience and occasion. In addition, the pupils took part in an arts workshop organised by a well-known art materials company and there are arrangements in place for the school to have an artist-in-residence later this term. The school welcomes many visitors each year to help enrich and enliven the curriculum. Carefully planned educational visits also make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

The school works very effectively with parents and their views of the school are very good.

22. The partnership with parents is an outstanding strength of the school. Parents are welcomed into the school and encouraged to be fully involved in all aspects of their children's education. They express a high degree of satisfaction with the school. The experience is as friendly, caring community where their children are encouraged to work hard and behave well and where they are helped to grow in responsibility. Parents appreciate the good quality of the teaching and the high standard of leadership provided by the headteacher. They like the ready access to the school and the teachers and the rich range of activities in which their children are involved.

Parents report that they are well informed about the school's arrangements for homework. Parents are very satisfied with the information they receive about their children's progress, in particular the targets which identify the next steps in their learning.

23. Parents value the wide range of information they receive from the school. The annual reports give parents a clear indication of what their children can and can not do. The school prospectus and home-school partnership book are detailed and well presented and explained to parents at familiarisation sessions before their children enter the school. Newsletters are regular and informative and keep parents in touch with the day-to-day life of the school. The governors' annual report to parents fulfils statutory requirements.
24. The school places a high priority on securing the involvement of parents in their children's learning and staff work hard to give them support to achieve this. In addition to well-presented leaflets giving them information about the topics their children are going to study, parents are given careful guidance on helping their children to read, and examples of suitable prayers for them to share with their children at home. They are invited into school to workshops in reading and writing, science, music and first aid. Most recently, a very successful mathematics week was very well attended by parents. These, together with very attractive displays and exhibitions of children's work ensure that parents have a good understanding of the curriculum and how it is taught, and gives them good opportunities to celebrate their children's successes. There are daily opportunities for informal exchanges of information between parents and staff, particularly in the Nursery. Parents greatly appreciate the support they are given to help them become more active participants in their children's learning.
25. A considerable number of parents are involved in school life in a variety of ways. Some make story tapes for the children to listen to, others help in the classroom, with outdoor activities, visits, fundraising and links with the community. Parents are invited to weekly assemblies, and celebratory services are held at the church of St Francis; these are very well attended. Parents' involvement enriches school life and enhances children's learning.

The provision for children attending the Nursery is excellent.

26. The provision is very good in all areas of learning. The Nursery is a vibrant and exciting learning environment. A wide range of imaginative and stimulating opportunities is offered to children, supported by a variety of attractive resources. The curriculum is very well planned, it provides a very good balance between adult and child-initiated activities, direct teaching and opportunities for children to pursue their own interests. Assessment procedures are thorough. The quality of teaching is excellent. The staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They work very well together as a team and successfully manage the inclusion of all children. As a result, children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well. As a result of this very good start most children are on course to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the time they leave the Reception classes and a few will exceed them.

27. There is a very strong emphasis on the children's personal, social and emotional development. Children and their parents are welcomed into the Nursery at the beginning of each session. They are familiar with the routines. For example, the children select their name label from a table, hand it to a member of staff and settle happily on the carpet after they have said goodbye to their parents. Children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves in order to promote their growing independence. They confidently select their own activities and persevere well with those initiated by adults. The children play harmoniously and have excellent relationships with the adults with whom they work. They show a growing awareness of the needs of others, for example in learning how to take turns, to share equipment fairly and to take pride in tidying away after themselves. Staff exploit all opportunities to encourage the building of children's self-esteem, to provide opportunities for them to thrive and to celebrate their success.
28. The staff are very good at developing children's communication, language and literacy skills in the language rich environment of the Nursery. Great value is attached to talk and they are skilled at encouraging children to speak and developing their vocabulary when involved in activities. During art and design activities for example, they were encouraged to talk about the colours and shapes they had cut and pasted onto the crowns they had made. Outside in the sand, and in the construction area, they extended their language as they built castles, and made up stories about 'Kings and Queens' as they dressed up and role played in the castle. They used magnifying glasses to observe the beans they had planted and used language confidently to compare size. The children respond well to the sensitive interventions by staff who constantly encourage them to talk about their activities and help them to extend their language so that they can share their ideas, thoughts and feelings. The children love listening to stories and rhymes, joining in with the parts they know and predicting what will come next. They enjoy looking at books in the imaginatively decorated book area; for example, a group of children each with a copy of 'The Green Queen', were successfully encouraged to talk about the pictures and to tell the story. They handle books carefully and understand that books are made up of words and pictures. They are enthusiastic about reading and eagerly select their favourite books. Parents reading with their children at home help to develop their enjoyment. The children are beginning to write their names accurately. They hold a pencil correctly, writing letters with care. The staff instruct the children well, showing them how letters should be correctly formed, sounding out the letters with which they are familiar and scribing for them when appropriate. The oldest children are encouraged to use different forms of writing, for example, writing labels on their pictures of beans.
29. The children are each valued and cherished by the adults who work with them. They look forward to the many visitors who help to enrich and extend their knowledge and understanding. For example, the children had great fun counting and selecting buttons for the adults to sew on to their 'Pearly King and Queen' costumes which they wore when a member of the 'East End Society for Pearly Queens' came to tea. All the children were eager to show photographs of themselves wearing their new clothes.
30. The children are clearly very happy in the Nursery environment. When asked to talk about their pictures about what made them happy, one child answered, '*Coming to school makes me happy*'.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Improving the quality of pupils' narrative and descriptive writing.

31. The school has been very successful in improving pupils' writing, especially their non-fiction writing, but this has not been matched by improvements in narrative and descriptive writing. There are good examples of pupils being given good guidance to help them structure stories by putting events in order. These stories usually have a clear beginning, middle and end. Older pupils plan their stories well using story boards or a story maps which show how a story moves from place to place and timelines to support writing about a series of events to help recount an experience. However, characters and settings lack description, sentences are not linked with interesting words to show how events are sequenced and the use of tenses is inconsistent.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

32. Improve the quality of narrative and descriptive writing by:
- establishing a positive climate for story writing through the regular reading of a wide range of stories and helping pupils to build up a selection of narrative forms that they can use to help them compose their own stories;
 - encouraging pupils to model their stories on well known tales, making changes to characters, settings or events;
 - continuing to develop the range of pupils' vocabulary;
 - encouraging pupils to use the past tense consistently in their stories. (paragraphs 6, 32)

All these points for improvement have been identified by the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	2	6	0	0	0
Percentage	12	41	12	35	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 5 percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	60	270
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	78

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18	88

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	166

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	94.8
National comparative data	93.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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
	2001	43	45	88

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	40	39	38
	Girls	44	43	43
	Total	84	82	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (97)	93 (97)	92 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	39	37	40
	Girls	43	41	45
	Total	82	78	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (95)	89 (93)	97 (90)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	33
Black – African heritage	134
Black – other	4
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	74
Any other minority ethnic group	23

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	252

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	61
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	832,018
Total expenditure	835,331
Expenditure per pupil	2,785
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,436
Balance carried forward to next year	43,123

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	300
Number of questionnaires returned	198

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	11	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	78	22	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	75	24	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	64	28	5	1	3
The teaching is good.	85	15	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	22	1	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	16	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	89	10	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	88	11	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	81	17	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	37	5	1	18