

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPHS R. C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sale.

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106348

Headteacher: Mr Anthony Murphy

Reporting inspector: Mr A. V. Calderbank
7979

Dates of inspection: December 4th - 5th, 2000

Inspection number: 224319
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

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4-11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

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Appropriate authority: Trafford

Name of chair of governors: Mr Gilbert Cain

Date of previous inspection: March 6th, 1995

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The Registrar,
Inspection Quality Division,
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Alexandra House,
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average sized primary school with 326 pupils on roll. Numbers have increased slightly since the time of the last inspection. The school caters for the needs of boys and girls aged four to eleven. There are 28 pupils on the register of special educational needs, two of whom have statements of special needs. These figures are both well below average. The majority of these pupils are receiving extra support for literacy and numeracy. There are only two pupils with English as an additional language. Their first languages are Greek and Italian. They are well integrated into all aspects of school life. The number of pupils who are entitled to a free school meal is below the national average. At the time of the inspection the deputy headteacher and Key Stage 2 co-ordinator were absent on maternity leave. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator was in hospital. The ability of the pupils who enter the school is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Standards in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave are much higher than the national average. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are below national expectations. Teaching is of good quality overall. Pupils who have special educational needs receive very good support and make good progress. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by the age of 11.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. The teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics is a strength.
- The headteacher provides good leadership, clearly focused on raising standards.
- Pupils behave very well, enjoy coming to school and have very good relationships with each other. They are eager to learn new skills.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Children's work is very well displayed around the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology.
- The role of curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring what works well or what could be improved in their subjects.
- The governors' involvement in school development planning and in ensuring that the school meets all legal requirements.
- The assessment and recording of pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science where they are of good quality.

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 March 1995 and since then satisfactory progress has been made. Effective action has been taken to assess and evaluate provision in literacy and numeracy, to identify areas for improvement and to set targets. Not only have standards risen in line with the national trend but the school has also improved its standards in comparison to similar schools. Progress has been slower than might have been expected in developing the role of co-ordinators in some other subjects. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection when it was found to have weaknesses in just over a fifth of the lessons seen. During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers' medium- and short-term planning is now consistent in English, mathematics and science and incorporates assessment procedures. Good use is made of the information to inform future learning. A curriculum policy for the Early Years has been introduced and the quantity and quality of resources improved. The school is providing the children with a sound start to their education. A much broader approach to school development planning is being taken. The School Development Plan includes building, staffing and staff development as well as curriculum matters. Priorities are appropriately costed and the plan is a useful document for school improvement. It is very appropriately focused on raising standards. However, the governing body is not sufficiently involved in school development planning. Whilst it is very supportive of the school and has put in place suitable measures to evaluate the impact of spending decisions it still does not meet all its legal requirements in terms of the information sent out to parents. Work for the award of Investors in People status has effectively increased all staff members' commitment to a team approach to school improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A*	A	A*	A*
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	B	B	A	A

Key	
Very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that standards achieved in English are very high compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. In mathematics and science pupils' achievements are well above average compared with all schools and with similar schools. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, all Year 6 pupils reached the level expected for their age in English and nearly all in mathematics and science. Over half reached the higher levels in all three subjects. The school's results at the higher levels were almost double the national percentage in English, mathematics and science. The aggregated test results from all three subjects place the school in the top five per cent of all schools nationally. Inspection evidence confirms these high standards and shows the school is well on course to meet its target for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in the national tests next year. Good use is made of the newly established information and communication technology suite to develop pupils' skills. Though standards in information and communication technology are rising, pupils' attainment in this subject is below national expectations.

Attainment on entry is above average. Most of the children under five make sound progress and are in line to achieve above the expectations for the age group in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year.

By the end of Key Stage 1 the proportion of pupils on course to achieve the expected levels in English, mathematics and science is above average. However, standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are well motivated, display an interest in their work and try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils show respect for others, are well mannered and polite. They move around the school in an orderly manner.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. When given the opportunity, pupils can organise aspects of their own learning and show initiative. They work well together and relationships are very good.
Attendance	Very good. Well above the national average.

This aspect is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy school life and want to learn. Their positive attitudes make a significant contribution to the good progress they make.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when just over 20% was found to have shortcomings. During the week of the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching and 70% was good or better. 20% of the teaching seen was very good or better. There is frequently very good teaching for the oldest pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 and this accelerates progress and boosts standards of attainment.

Teachers plan their lessons very well and have high expectation of what pupils are capable of achieving in English, mathematics and science. Teachers make good use of assessment in these subjects. The teaching of numeracy and literacy skills, firmly based on established national strategies, is of a high quality. Pupils in need of additional help with their learning receive very good support from class teachers, additional teachers and support assistants.

The quality of learning is good. Throughout the school pupils benefit from teaching in English and mathematics that focuses firmly upon the development of subject specific skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school places a strong emphasis upon the teaching of English, mathematics and science.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school is successful in the early identification of pupils who have special educational needs. Their progress is carefully monitored and parents are fully involved at all stages.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are given appropriate support.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL [continued]

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils develop a strong moral code based on Christian values and staff work very hard in encouraging pupils to consider their actions on others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Pupils are very well cared for on a day-to-day basis. The headteacher and his staff know each pupil well as an individual. The good monitoring of pupils' academic progress in English, mathematics and science provides teachers with the information they need to plan work. However, procedures are not sufficiently rigorous in other subjects to evaluate progress.

Parents play a significant part in helping and supporting their children at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership is good. The headteacher encourages all staff to play a part in decision making and has worked hard and successfully to raise standards throughout the school. Responsibilities have been delegated well.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is supportive of the school and has an appropriate committee structure in place. However, it is not sufficiently involved in the strategic management of the school and some legal requirements are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Test results are analysed and effective targets set for future improvement. The school has good systems in place for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning in English and mathematics. Procedures for evaluating what works well and what needs improving in other subjects are a weakness.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Resources are used well. Good use is made of the information and communication technology suite and this is having a positive effect on the speed with which pupils are developing their skills and knowledge.

The headteacher's leadership, particularly his ability to delegate, is one of the school's strengths. The school fulfils its mission statement. It is appropriately staffed and the internal accommodation is clean and well cared for. However, the hall, some classroom areas and playgrounds are small for the number of pupils on role. The school ensures good value for money on purchases.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Children's behaviour is good and they enjoy coming to school. ◆ The school's high expectations of what their children are capable of achieving and the progress they make. ◆ The school is helping their children to become mature. ◆ They feel comfortable about approaching the school with any problems. ◆ The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The information they receive about how their children are making progress. ◆ The range of activities the school provides outside of lessons. ◆ The amount of homework children receive.

Parents' strong support for the school is well seen in the high return of questionnaires and the positive comments expressed at the parents' meeting. The inspection team agrees that pupils enjoy coming to school. The school expects pupils to work hard and as a result they make good progress in English, mathematics and science. During the week of the inspection parents were observed being made to feel very welcome by the school. The reports parents receive about pupils' progress do not contain all the necessary information. A suitable range of after-school activities is available but parents are expected to make a financial contribution. Inspection evidence shows that homework is sufficient and contributes to the progress pupils make.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by the end of Key Stage 2.

1. Since the last inspection in April 1995 not only have standards risen by the end of Key Stage 2 in line with national trends but the school has also improved its above average performance in relation to similar schools. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, all Year 6 pupils achieved the level expected for their age in English and nearly all in mathematics and science. These results show that standards in English are very high compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. In mathematics and science pupils' achievements are well above average. Just over half of the class reached the higher levels in all three subjects. The proportions within the school at the higher levels were almost double the national percentages in English, mathematics and science. The aggregated test results from all three subjects places the school in the top five per cent of all schools nationally. As at the time of the last inspection there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in any of the subjects.
2. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are very good at the end of both key stages. Pupils' listen attentively throughout the school. By the age of seven they respond appropriately to questions and instructions and engage in discussion with adults with increasing confidence as they relate the story line to "The Owl and Pussy Cat." They have a good range of vocabulary and often use language typical of older children. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use specialist vocabulary successfully and speak confidently, fluently and with expression. Good progress is made throughout the school.
3. Attainment in reading is well above average at the end of both key stages and pupils are making good progress. Successful establishment of the National Literacy Strategy, which has been introduced since the previous inspection, and its associated direct teaching methods have had a beneficial impact on the range and quality of literature made available and on the standards achieved. By the age of seven most pupils are reading fluently. Higher attainers know the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts and are able to use contents and index to locate information. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils read accurately and with good expression. In discussions about their reading they show a good understanding of themes, characters and plot. However, though pupils are able to search for information from non-fiction books they are not familiar with the organisation of the school library or the Dewey System.
4. Writing skills are being taught well and have improved since the previous inspection. The school is allocating extra time each week specifically for extended writing. This is an aspect which it has identified as in need of development. Throughout the school pupils learn how to plan and structure their work and to use features that will ensure an effective story or piece of narrative. Pupils learn procedures, rules and skills through regular spelling, comprehension and grammar exercises. Standards are well above average by the end of both key stages and pupils make good progress.
5. In Key Stage 1, the pupils use their knowledge of stories from books read to practise setting the context and introducing different characters. A strength of this writing is the very good use made of punctuation and the appreciation for language. For example, pupils in Year 2 based a piece of work on "The Rainbow Fish" and one child wrote "The other fish always cried, 'Come on Rainbow Fish! Come and play with us.' But the Rainbow Fish just glided past silently and proud." They write for a good range of different purposes, such as, writing a letter from Mr. Wolf apologising to Miss Hood for his behaviour.

6. The quality of work being produced by Year 6 is high. Good use is made of interesting beginnings to capture the reader's interest right from the very beginning. For example, one child began her story "Rapidly he darted from shadow to shadow. No one noticed him. He stopped behind the jagged rocks, listened..... waited..... As quick as a flash his arm was grabbed." Throughout the key stage pupils spell words of increasing complexity correctly. The presentation of their work in clear, legible and joined handwriting is very good.

7. In mathematics, the pupils have a good knowledge of number. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced well and the increased focus on mental mathematics is helping to sharpen pupils skills in seeing relationships between numbers and using different strategies to solve number problems. During Key Stage 1 satisfactory progress is made and standards are above average. Year 2 pupils are able to produce graphs to show their favourite poems and can use a number line to work out 8 divided by 2. They have a good command of number bonds and answer correctly simple money problems. Good progress is made during Key Stage 2 and standards of achievement are well above average. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a good understanding of the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages. They enjoy applying their knowledge to working out practical everyday problems. For example, those asked had little difficulty finding out mentally how much you would have to pay for a television set priced at £120 but reduced by 10% in a sale. The ease with which they can recall multiplication table facts greatly enhances the speed of their problem-solving.

8. All pupils have good scientific knowledge and by the end of Key Stage 2 standards are well above those found in most schools and pupils make good progress. They are able to recall well facts they have been taught. Year 2 can tell you all about Food Triangles and what you need to eat to have a healthy diet. In Year 5 pupils know that plants need water, light and warmth in order to grow. Most can correctly name the parts of plants and explain fertilisation. Scrutiny of work from Year 6 shows that pupils are involved in investigations, for example, finding the best insulating material. However, there is no evidence of pupils being given the opportunity to set up an investigation for themselves even though they have a good understanding of what makes a fair test.

The quality of teaching is good overall. The teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics is a strength.

9. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when just over 20% of lessons were found to have shortcomings. During the week of the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching and 70% of lessons were good or better. 20% of the teaching seen was very good or excellent. There is frequently very good teaching for the oldest pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 and this accelerates progress and boosts standards of attainment. At the time of the inspection the deputy headteacher and Key Stage 2 co-ordinator were absent on maternity leave and both reception classes were being taught by temporary teachers.

10. A key factor in the improvement in the teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is the thorough planning, which now contains clear objectives for what the pupils are to learn during the lesson. These are often shared with the pupils and referred to as the lesson progresses. As a result, pupils are left in no doubt what the lesson is about. For example, a Year 2 teacher used the geography lesson objectives well to structure the session, and to evaluate the pupils' knowledge of the similarities and differences between living on the island of Struay and in Sale.

11. The school has adopted the recommendations from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for most subjects. These guidelines give a clear framework for how knowledge, skills and understanding should be built up through the school and support lesson planning. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has helped to provide detailed structures for teachers' planning in English and mathematics. In most classes there is a suitable balance between whole-class, group and individual work. The previous inspection found that progress was limited in lessons where teachers failed to provide appropriate work for children of different abilities. During the current inspection, in nearly all instances, the tasks which the pupils were expected to complete were imaginative and the work pitched at levels which closely matched their prior attainment. This was very evident in the three classes containing mixed-age groups of Years 4 and 5.

12. The teachers' use of questions to find out what their pupils know is often very good. Most teachers are adept at asking good follow up questions in reply to pupils' initial responses which provide valuable information, especially when planning follow up lessons. Good examples of this were observed in the literacy and numeracy sessions.

13. A strength of the school is the successful teaching of skills in reading, writing, spelling, handwriting and mathematics. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of literacy and numeracy. This enables them to explain new ideas and concepts clearly. They enthuse the pupils through their own interest and love of the subject matter. Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. In both key stages class reading, writing and number sessions are effective in developing pupils' awareness of text and number patterns and relationships. In the literacy hour teachers are good at demonstrating to pupils relevant styles of writing and helping them to put the skill into practice. For example, a Year 6 teacher modelled very effectively the process of writing a newspaper report. She emphasised the "5 Ws" – Who? What? Where? When? and Why? Before allowing the pupils to work with a partner to write a headline and first paragraph for news report.

14. In numeracy pupils are given a good grounding in number bonds and know their multiplication tables well. As a result, Year 4 pupils were able to work out quickly such problems as "If there were 30 biscuits in a packet and a fifth were eaten - how many would there be left?" Teachers are imaginative in providing a range of situations within which children can enjoy practising basic mathematical skills. For example, in a lesson on angles Year 6 pupils used white boards to work out their answers. They were not afraid to make mistakes because they knew they could easily rub out what they had written down and correct it. The use of such resources increases pupils' confidence and encourages them to "have a go."

15. All teachers manage pupils well and create a calm and purposeful working atmosphere. This allows all pupils to concentrate and to do their best, whilst encouraging pupils to develop a mature and independent approach to their learning. The practice of sometimes having appropriate music playing softly in the background is also helping to create a good atmosphere for pupils to work in. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and are quick to deal with infringements. Due emphasis is given to reinforcing appropriate attitudes through the use of praise.

16. The relationships between staff and pupils are an important strength of the school. Adults treat pupils with respect and pupils respond very well to this. These very good relationships make a valuable contribution towards the quality of the learning and the standards achieved.

17. Pupils' work is marked regularly and conscientiously and is always supportive of pupils' good efforts. However, in some classes comments do not give pupils sufficient guidance on how their work might be developed or improved.

18. Skilled support staff work closely in partnership with teachers and have a significant impact on learning and the standards of work. During the inspection this was particularly evident in the two reception classes where the nursery nurses' knowledge of the classroom routines and children was very helpful to the temporary teachers.

The headteacher provides good leadership, clearly focused on raising standards.

19. The headteacher is one of the school's major assets. He is strongly committed to the school and its pupils and leads the school very effectively. Despite all the administrative pressures associated with being a headteacher, his stated aim - "I am here to work with children," prevails and this is one of his key strengths. The headteacher is dedicated to promoting high standards and in ensuring a Christian ethos in which pupils can flourish. He has been very successful in ensuring that since the time of the last inspection standards have continued to rise. For example, in the Year 2000 end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science the percentage of higher attaining pupils achieving Level 5 and above was almost twice the national average.

20. The culture of reflection and evaluation at the heart of the school is evident in the way the headteacher and staff co-operate well in the decision-making process. All are involved in drawing up and updating the school development plan. All aspects of the school are now considered but the main drive of the plan is the continuous improvement in the quality of education provided and the raising of standards. The educational priorities identified are the right issues for the school in its present circumstances. Staff feel valued and this has been recognised in the award given to the school of 'Investors in People' status. The headteacher is very well supported by a committed and effective staff team. Inspection evidence shows that the headteacher has undertaken classroom monitoring in English and mathematics. However, he is yet to involve co-ordinators sufficiently in evaluating curriculum provision.

21. The school's budget is in deficit but with the support of the Local Education Authority plans are in place to remedy the situation. Despite the scarcity of funds the headteacher has managed to ensure that resources are at least satisfactory. The resources available to the school are very efficiently managed and are used strategically to improve the good quality of provision. For example, extra money has been provided by St. Joseph's Parents' and Teachers' Association and allocated to information and communication technology to equip the new computer suite. This has been backed up by a programme of staff training to ensure its effective use in helping to raise standards and provide value for money.

22. Because of the absence of the school's deputy headteacher and Key Stage 2 co-ordinator the headteacher has had to reorganise his senior management team. This he has done well. Not only have all aspects of school life continued to run smoothly but also the two new temporary members of the team have been given valuable additional experience in school management. The school operates well on a day-to-day basis, despite the potential problems associated with having temporary and small classrooms, a small hall, no school field and small playgrounds. The school's administrative staff provide good support and ensure the smooth running of the school.

23. Parents who attended the parents meeting and who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt strongly that the school was well led. The inspection team fully endorses this view. The headteacher knows his pupils well and is highly respected in the community. Discussions held with pupils show that they like and respect him. In a poem written about the school one child wrote, 'Mr Murphy is our headteacher, he knows us all by name, if he ever left St Joseph's, it would never be the same.'

Pupils behave very well, enjoy coming to school and have very good relationships with each other. They are eager to learn new skills.

24. Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships make a positive contribution to the school's ethos and the quality of pupils' learning. Comments from parents, both in the questionnaire and at the meeting prior to the inspection, support this view. The school has maintained the high standards found in these aspects at the time of the previous inspection.

25. Behaviour in and out of lessons is very good and this has a positive effect on the standards being achieved. Pupils have a good understanding of the rules and respond well to the system of rewards and incentives for good work and other successes. They move around the school in a quiet, orderly manner and show respect for their surroundings. There is no evidence of graffiti or litter. Pupils are very polite and helpful to adults and look after resources carefully. They are open and very courteous to visitors and happy to show them around the building. Pupils talk proudly about their school. Even though the playground is small, playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant occasions and both boys and girls play together sensibly. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. There have been no exclusions and no evidence of bullying was observed during the inspection. All staff provide very good role models for pupils and have a positive approach to discipline. Parents are proud of the way that pupils behave in school.

26. Relationships at all levels are very good and a strength of the school. Staff, governors, pupils and parents work together to create a happy, caring environment where the individual is valued and respected. During discussions pupils are able to express their opinions with confidence knowing that they will be listened to and valued. Pupils with special educational needs and the few who speak English as an additional language are well integrated in the life of the school. In St. Joseph's individuals are valued for the contribution they make to the life of the school.

27. Discussions held with pupils of all ages show that they enjoy coming to school. In lessons they work well with other pupils when asked to do so. During the inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils shared their ideas well on how they might produce a design for a charity Christmas Card. Younger pupils planned out sensibly together how they might undertake a scientific experiment. Pupils not only get on well with each other but also with all members of staff with whom they come into contact.

28. Because teachers make lessons interesting, pupils are eager to learn new skills. This was very apparent in an information and communication technology lesson when pupils learned how to compile a data base and from it produce graphical representations. Pupils consulted notes made in a previous lesson on what keys to use and then proceeded to use this information well to produce different types of graphs. In another class pupils showed great enthusiasm in identifying different types of angles following on from an excellent introduction to the topic by the teacher.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

29. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and are suitably challenged. The school has a very good special educational needs co-ordinator. The two classroom assistants who have undertaken additional training in special educational needs give good support to individual pupils. Visiting specialist staff also support pupils well. The school is rightly proud of this aspect of its provision.

30. Teachers plan appropriate work for pupils with special education needs especially in English, mathematics and science and make sure that they receive the necessary support to successfully complete the activities. The school is very aware of pupils' strengths and weaknesses through its assessment and testing procedures in English, mathematics and science. The school's well written policy documents include clear guidelines on what staff must look for in assessing whether pupils have learning difficulties. As a result, pupils are identified at an early stage and well written individual education plans drawn up that include both short- and long-term precise learning targets for pupils to achieve. In the 2000 end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests all pupils in that age group with learning difficulties managed to achieve the nationally expected level in English.

31. The co-ordinator is experienced and skilled in special educational needs and is given time to fulfil her role. She has attended relevant courses and kept the staff informed of changes in the provision. During her weekly half day release from class teaching much of the time is spent in monitoring effectively the progress of all pupils on the special educational needs register. Because she has this weekly contact with pupils, she is able to ensure that the work they are doing in class is appropriately matched to the targets on their individual education plans. This ensures that pupils make good progress in developing the learning skills they need. In addition to this she gives the pupils additional help in developing their information and communication technology skills. The role of the co-ordinator has been developed well since the previous inspection. Pupils know they are cared for and valued and this has a positive impact on their learning.

32. The school has very good links with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs and this aspect has improved since the last inspection. Liaison takes place on a regular basis both formally and on an informal basis. For example, during the week of the inspection a review meeting was held with the parent of a child with a statement. This was a very positive meeting due mainly to the in-depth knowledge that all parties concerned had about the child.

Children's work is very well displayed around the school.

33. As a direct result of the popularity of the school, the number of pupils on roll has risen in recent years. Though the accommodation is not generous, all the available space is used effectively and imaginatively, so that pupils are not disadvantaged in their learning. Plans have already been passed to increase the accommodation. The very effective use of displays of pupils' work both in classrooms and public areas adds considerably to the attractiveness of the school premises and creates a stimulating and welcoming place in which to learn. Some of the art and design work on display is of a very good quality. For example, a collaborative fabric picture produced during an after-school art club shows that pupils have an appropriate understanding of perspective. Good examples of children's writing are also prominently on display around the school. The careful arrangement of these displays helps to celebrate pupils' successes and show that their work is valued.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in information and communication technology at the end of Key Stage 2.

34. Standards of achievement in information and communication technology by the end of Key Stage 2 are below national expectations. Pupils in Year 6 can log on and access software by inserting CD ROMs in order to research information from Children's Oxford Encyclopaedia. They use the keyboard efficiently and can create line graphs, bar graphs and pie charts. Pupils demonstrated that they could access mathematics and interactive science programmes about energy and forces. However, they are unfamiliar with spreadsheets and have no access to the Internet.

35. However, the school has put in place an action plan with a view to raising standards. The development plan is already beginning to make a positive impact. Good use is being made of the newly established information and communication technology suite to develop pupils' skills, and this resource along with the additional training staff have received and the effective implementation of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines is helping to raise standards and improve the quality of pupils' learning.

36. In all the information and communication technology lessons observed during the inspection the quality of teaching was good. Clear explanations were given about the skills to be developed. A good pattern of organisation exists throughout whereby the class is taught in two separate groups. As a result, the quality of learning is good, because pupils have a computer to themselves and the teacher is able to spend more time with the pupils ensuring that they remain on task and receive the necessary help and guidance when they need it. Pupils are now making good progress throughout the school and developing appropriate skills systematically.

37. Though the computer suite is well used and is a valuable asset, equipment in the classrooms is old and outdated. The school is aware of this and has plans to purchase 12 new RM PCs with its National Grid for Learning Phase 3 grant, to network them and to obtain Internet access and e-mail provision. The school has high aspirations for information and communication technology and is eager to take on board the technological developments that the National Grid for Learning initiative has to offer. The school is well placed to raise standards to meet the national expectations.

The role of curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring what works well or what could be improved in their subjects.

38. All curriculum co-ordinators have a good knowledge of their subjects and are conscientious and hard working. Monitoring has been used well to track teachers' planning. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have monitored the quality of planning in their subjects, but they, like other subject co-ordinators in the school, have not been given the training or opportunity to monitor classroom practice and the quality of provision in any consistent way. The headteacher has observed all teachers in their classrooms. He recognises the need to involve co-ordinators more fully in this process to give them a better understanding of what works well or what could be improved in teaching and learning in their subjects in order to raise standards. This was made a key issue at the time of the previous inspection and still has not been fully addressed.

The role of the governing body in the management of the school.

39. The governing body meets on a regular basis and has in place an appropriate system of committees. All governors are very supportive of the school and proud of its achievements. Individual governors have attended training sessions on numeracy and literacy and take responsibility for these areas. There is also a special educational needs governor who keeps herself fully informed about all aspects of special educational needs provision.

40. Though governors have put in place appropriate measures to evaluate the impact of spending decisions through monitoring of the school's development plan and provide committed support for the school, they are insufficiently involved in its strategic management. Too much has been left for the headteacher and staff to do. For example, governors only become involved in school development planning at a very late stage.

41. The governors fulfil most of their legal required duties but there are some omissions. For example, the annual governors' report sent out to parents does not contain all the legally required sections. There is no reference to rates of pupils' authorised absence and no detailed statement of the progress made in implementing the action plan drawn up following the previous inspection. The annual written reports on pupils' progress includes some well written statements about what pupils know, understand and can do in most subjects. However, in some subjects, such as design and technology, there is no clear statement about what individual pupils can do.

42. Whilst most policies are in place and have been approved by the governing body there is no health and safety policy that addresses the specific needs of the school. This was reported at the time of the last inspection and has not been addressed.

The assessment and recording of pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

43. The school has put in place effective assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Statutory and optional test results are being analysed carefully and used to monitor pupils' performance in the different attainment targets. Weaknesses in overall performance are identified and used as a basis for changes in provision in the following year. For example, the school has identified extended writing as an area in need of further input and has allocated extra time in order to improve standards. This is good practice and the school's well above average standards in English, mathematics and science is testimony to the success of its assessment arrangements.

44. At present, there is no whole-school approach to the assessment and recording of pupils progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Where assessment procedures are firmly established, teachers are able to provide a better match of activities to pupils' learning needs and this helps them to make consistently good progress. This was very evident with last year's Year 6 pupils when they all achieved the expected standard in English and just over half the higher levels. However, few ongoing records of progress are kept in, for example information and communication technology.

45. The use of day-to-day assessment is effective, with teachers making good use of questions and feedback to develop pupils' learning. However, standards of marking are inconsistent throughout the school. The best examples contain suggestions of ways in which pupils can improve their work, but in some classes marking is just a tick with a positive comment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. As it continues to strive to improve the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

a. raise standards in information and communication technology by:

- ◆ implementing fully the action plan and scheme of work so that skills in all strands are developed progressively as pupils move from class to class;
- ◆ ensuring that pupils of all ages have regular access to up-to-date information and communication technology equipment;
- ◆ providing opportunities for pupils to apply their information and communication technology skills in other subjects;
- ◆ providing appropriate in-service training to develop staff confidence and competence in teaching all the strands of information and communication technology and how to apply them in other subjects;

b. improve the monitoring of classroom practice by subject co-ordinators by:

- ◆ devising and implementing a defined, consistent and structured approach to the monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice in all subjects;
- ◆ providing training for co-ordinators in the skills required to carry out curriculum leadership;
- ◆ providing time for curriculum leaders to carry out their duties;

c. involve the governing body more in the strategic management of the school by:

- ◆ ensuring that all statutory requirements are met;
- ◆ involving governors more effectively in setting targets for improvement and monitoring progress made in achieving them;

d. review the school's assessment arrangements in art, design and technology, geography, history, information technology, music and physical education by:

- ◆ using the very good practice that exists in English, mathematics and science to devise assessment procedures for all other subjects to track the development of pupils' skills;
- ◆ ensuring that the assessments are carried out systematically and on a regular basis;
- ◆ making sure that the results from assessments are analysed to set clear targets for future learning for individuals and year groups;
- ◆ using the information to inform teachers' future planning in the subjects;
- ◆ developing whole-school portfolios to help teachers' confidence in assessing pupils' attainment against National Curriculum levels.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
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
5	15	50	30			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll		YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		326
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		13

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		28

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	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.2

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	29	23	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	29	28
	Girls	21	22	20
	Total	49	51	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94% (88%)	98% (83%)	92% (81%)
	National	84% (82%)	85% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	27	29
	Girls	21	19	23
	Total	49	46	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94% (85%)	88% (88%)	100% (90%)
	National	84% (82%)	88% (86%)	88% (87%)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	18	23	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	18	16
	Girls	23	20	23
	Total	41	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100% (80%)	93% (88%)	98% (88%)
	National	75% (70%)	72% (69%)	85% (78%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	17	18
	Girls	23	18	19
	Total	41	35	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100% (80%)	85% (88%)	90% (85%)
	National	70% (68%)	72% (69%)	80% (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	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	280
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)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	27.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	54

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	1999-2000
	£
Total income	510,401
Total expenditure	524,589
Expenditure per pupil	1,599
Balance brought forward from previous year	-17,724
Balance carried forward to next year	-31,912

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	326
Number of questionnaires returned	122

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75%	24%	1%	0%	1%
My child is making good progress in school.	56%	37%	3%	1%	3%
Behaviour in the school is good.	65%	32%	1%	1%	2%
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31%	39%	12%	7%	10%
The teaching is good.	60%	35%	2%	1%	2%
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46%	43%	8%	2%	2%
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72%	22%	4%	0%	2%
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66%	30%	1%	1%	2%
The school works closely with parents.	53%	35%	10%	1%	1%
The school is well led and managed.	67%	25%	2%	2%	4%
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67%	31%	1%	1%	0%
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38%	44%	10%	3%	6%

Because of rounding not all rows may add up to 100%.