

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Wetherby

LEEDS

Unique reference number: 108020

Headteacher: Mrs L Wardle

Reporting inspector: Mr. M Newell 10638

Dates of inspection: 6th – 7th November 2000

Inspection number: 224584

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery, Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Barleyfields Road
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West Yorkshire

Postcode: LS22 6PR

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. Paul F. Moxon

Date of previous inspection: 26 April 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the market town of Wetherby in West Yorkshire. It is a Catholic school whose catchment area includes many surrounding villages as well as the town of Wetherby. The school is a popular school with 235 pupils on roll at the present time. This includes Nursery provision, with 52 children attending on a part-time basis. This shows quite an increase from the time of the last inspection when 204 pupils attended the school. Many of the children attend the Nursery before starting their full-time education at the school. Assessment data shows that children's attainment levels when they start school are generally, but not exclusively, above average. Most pupils are of white ethnicity, with only a low percentage of pupils that have English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well below the national average, with the percentage of statemented pupils being broadly in line with the picture found nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school that enables pupils to consistently achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school. The school works very hard to maintain these high standards, and is not complacent about what it has achieved. The quality of teaching is good overall with very good features in the teaching of the Nursery children. The school provides a stimulating curriculum that fully meets the needs of all pupils, including the highest attaining pupils, and those who have special educational needs. The commitment of those working at the school helps to promote the pupils' very good attitudes, exemplary behaviour and a thirst for new knowledge and learning. The school has very good procedures in place to assess and then track pupils' progress as they move through the school. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is well supported by all the staff and the Governing Body. In 1999 the school was awarded Beacon Status and inspection findings would certainly endorse this achievement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school enables the pupils to achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school.
- Teaching is good throughout the school with some very good teaching in the Nursery.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to work. Their behaviour is exemplary and attendance is excellent.
- The school provides a good range of stimulating learning opportunities that enhance pupils' learning across many areas of the curriculum. Provision made for children's learning in the Foundation Stage is particularly good.
- The provision the school makes for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Very good procedures are in place to assess and then track pupils' progress as they move through the school.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and has played a very important role in the continued development of the school. She is well supported by all who work at the school and the Governing Body.

What could be improved

- Some aspects of information technology.
- The opportunities for pupils to be more actively involved in problem solving tasks and setting targets for self-improvement.
- The marking of pupils' work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in 1996. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved. The quality of teaching has also improved with a higher incidence of very good and good teaching, and no unsatisfactory teaching. In terms of the specific issues that were identified, short term planning is now of a much higher standard, work is now set that meets the individual needs of pupils, and assessment for the youngest children in school is now of a very good standard. The school has certainly continued to provide an atmosphere in school that enhances pupils' self esteem and fosters a thirst for learning. The headteacher has made a significant contribution to the development of the school and is constantly evaluating ways in which the school could improve still further. The school is well placed for maintaining the current high standards in many aspects of its work.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A*	A*	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*	
science	A*	A	A	A	

On the basis of the end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, pupils' attainment has been consistently very high or well above average for the last three years in English, mathematics and science. Often the school's achievement has been in the top five per cent of schools nationally. The percentage of pupils exceeding the level expected of 11 year olds nationally is consistently well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools the results are at least above average and often much better. The test results for 2000 show a similar picture with a very high percentage of pupils achieving or exceeding the expected levels in all three subjects. These figures show that the school is maintaining its high standards and that there is sufficient challenge for pupils of all abilities. A similar picture emerges at Key Stage 1 where test results over the same period of time show high levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, with a high percentage of pupils exceeding the levels expected of 7 year olds nationally. Inspection findings indicate that this trend of high attainment is set to continue at both key stages with pupils of all abilities set to achieve their full potential. Although standards in information technology are satisfactory some elements of the subject are not as well developed as others. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement and has drawn up a good quality action plan to address the issue.

The children in the Foundation Stage achieve beyond and in some instances well beyond the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals. Assessment data of children's attainment when they start school indicate above average levels of attainment. Children get a good start to their educational lives in the Nursery and Reception classes and this is reflected in the good and on occasions very good progress they make.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils of all ages and abilities have very positive attitudes to school and to work. They apply themselves conscientiously to all tasks, and maintain high levels of interest and motivation.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in class and around the school. Pupils show excellent manners and great awareness of the needs of others.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils relate very well to one another and to the adults with whom they come in daily contact. Relationships are very good and contribute significantly to the overall quality of life within the school. More opportunities need to be provided for pupils to undertake investigative tasks and to be more actively involved in setting their own targets for improvement.
Attendance	Attendance levels are excellent and very high when compared to the national picture.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall 23	Good	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 is good overall. Teaching is often very good in the Nursery and occasionally very good for the older pupils in the school. During the week of inspection teaching was very good in 13 per cent of lessons, good in a further 57 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in the rest. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teaching in the Foundation stage is never less than good and ensures that the children have a good start to their education. Very good emphasis is placed on first the development and then the extension of early literacy and numeracy skills. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 literacy and numeracy are generally taught well and this has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. In the best numeracy lessons pupils are encouraged to explore different ways of solving problems, to extend their mental agility skills and to take part in challenging investigative activities. This good practice is not as consistent across the school as it could be. Reading and writing skills are taught well across the school. Teaching in the school is often characterised by good planning, high expectations and effective classroom organisation and management. In most lessons tasks are suitably challenging and ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. Teachers mark pupils' work on a regular basis, but insufficient attention is given to how pupils might improve and on occasions the flamboyant style of marking detracts from the content and presentation of the pupils' work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils' learning is further enhanced by visits out of school and by visitors to the school. The provision and curriculum at the Foundation Stage is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are well written and contain challenging and achievable targets. Pupils receive well-targeted support from effective support staff. All these factors help to ensure that pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Positive values and attitudes are consistently promoted and pupils are encouraged to have tolerance and respect for the views of others. Much is done to raise pupils' awareness of art and music and to extend their understanding of other traditions and cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils and recognises and caters for their individual needs. The well being and happiness of pupils are the shared concern of the headteacher, staff and Governing Body. The very good procedures that are in place to assess and track pupils' attainment and progress play an important role in the achievement levels of pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher. She has played a pivotal and important role in the achieving and maintaining of high standards. She is well supported by all staff who share this commitment to high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body works hard to support the headteacher and staff in their work, and fully meets its statutory duties. Governors know the school well, take an active role in the management of the school and have become increasingly effective in holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher and staff carry out detailed analyses of test and assessment data and use the information to identify any areas for improvement, set targets and then carefully monitor progress towards the stated targets. Very good procedures are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of staff and resources to enhance pupils' learning. The school is always looking at ways to extend learning through good use of facilities such as the grounds of the school. The principles of best value are applied well when purchasing goods or services and the funds are spent well. Financial planning is of a good standard.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fact that their children enjoy coming to school. • The progress children make during their time at school. • The good standards of behaviour. • The good quality of teaching. • The high expectations the school has. • How well the school is led and managed. • The manner in which the school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • More information about how their children are getting on. • A closer working relationship between the home and school. • A greater range of extra- curricular activities.

The inspection findings support the positive views of the parents and agree with their perceptions that this is a school with many strengths. The information that is provided for parents regarding how their children are progressing and what is taught is similar to that found in the majority of schools and is therefore judged to be satisfactory. Although there is a little variability in the setting of homework, the range and amount of homework that is set is generally satisfactory. In terms of the links between home and school and the approachability of staff, little evidence was found to indicate that this is a serious issue. However the school is very keen to ensure that links between the home and school are as strong as possible to further enhance pupils' learning. With this in mind the school is to consult with parents to examine ways in which the partnership could be strengthened for the benefit of all pupils. The amount and range of extra-curricular activities are similar to those found in schools of this size and are satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school enables the pupils to achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school.

1. The school promotes very high standards and pupils consistently achieve results that are well above the national average and higher than those found in similar schools. This is a school that is constantly looking for ways in which to improve and there is no sense of complacency. This commitment to high achievement results in pupils of all abilities fulfilling their potential.
2. Reading standards are at a very high level at the end of both key stages. The school places considerable emphasis on the development of reading skills from a very early age. In the Nursery and Reception classes children are introduced to a stimulating range of books and recognise the importance of print at an early stage of their development. The way that teachers and support staff read stories captures the interest and imagination of the children and fosters in the children an early love of literature. Children are very well supported by their parents who do much to strengthen children's reading skills by regularly reading to or listening to them read. At Key Stage 1, pupils are systematically taught a range of different skills to help them tackle unfamiliar words and to gain a greater understanding of the texts they read. Pupils quickly become independent readers and can locate information in books using the contents and index pages. The school places much emphasis on the pupils using dictionaries. As a result the pupils' spelling ability increases at a good rate as well as their early referencing skills.
3. Reading skills continue to develop at a good rate at Key Stage 2. Many pupils read a wide and varied number of books and poetry. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to read fiction and non-fiction and consequently pupils know the works of many authors, poets and playwrights. The pupils clearly enjoy reading and this shows in the very expressive manner in which they read. Throughout the key stage pupils read unseen text with confidence and accuracy, and quickly grasp the meaning. Teachers continue to extend pupils' reading skills by teaching skills such as skimming and scanning. This means that many older pupils are able to locate information very quickly or can get the gist of a piece of text after only a brief read through. This progressive extension of pupils' reading skills means that by the time pupils leave school many are very proficient and accomplished readers who are attaining standards well above the level expected nationally.
4. Pupils throughout the school have very good speaking and listening skills that help them in their studies across the curriculum. At both key stages pupils listen very carefully and contribute very well to class and group discussions. Pupils of all ages articulate their ideas clearly and with high levels of confidence. Teachers clearly value the contributions that pupils make and this means that pupils are always ready to offer their thoughts and opinions. Pupils are perceptive when given the opportunity to make an evaluation of their work or that of others. Many pupils have a well-developed and expressive vocabulary and often use it effectively to present persuasive arguments. Pupils are adept at organising their thoughts in a logical manner and always show a readiness to listen to and respond to other points of view with a high level of maturity.
5. Pupils achieve high standards in writing by the time they leave school. At Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to write for a wide range of purposes such as news, letter writing, reports on events such as the school fair, creative stories and the re-telling of fairy stories. From an early age the pupils are taught the importance of presenting their work

in a legible manner and invariably they take pride in their work. The school places particular emphasis on accurate spelling, and the utilisation of correct grammar and expressive vocabulary. All of these features are often present in pupils' work. The good progress continues at Key Stage 2. Pupils continue to be provided with a wide range of opportunities to write for different audiences and purposes. Pupils write articles for newspapers, about treks to the North Pole, study different characters in plays and novels, write poetry and plays and even write murder mysteries. The varied and interesting writing stimuli enthuse and challenge the pupils. The pupils are taught the importance of sustaining the plot of the story and of developing characters as the piece of writing unfolds. The end result is often an extended piece of writing that contains original and interesting ideas. Spelling is often accurate and punctuation, grammar and vocabulary are used effectively to enhance the quality of the text. Pupils take a pride in how they present their work and make good use of their writing skills in other subjects of the curriculum such as when writing about the Ancient Greeks or writing up their scientific experiments.

6. Pupils' numeracy skills are very well established from an early age, and pupils are confident and accurate when handling numbers. In the Foundation Stage the children are provided with many opportunities to engage in practical numeracy activities that allow them to gain a good grasp of number and shape in everyday life. The considerable emphasis the school places on numeracy, results in pupils of all ages knowing how to check the reasonableness of their answers, using their impressive knowledge of number facts. They know, for example, that if they add two even numbers together and make an odd number, they have made a mistake. Most pupils have immediate recall of number facts and number bonds, and this helps them to work quickly when carrying out written calculations. By the time pupils leave school many are attaining standards that exceed the level expected nationally for eleven-year-olds. The highest attaining pupils are consistently provided with sufficient challenges and achieve the standards of which they are capable. Results are consistently at a high standard across all elements of the subject.
7. Attainment in science is at a high level at both key stages. Pupils have a high level of scientific knowledge across all aspects of the subject. The pupils work together to collect evidence and answer questions about living things, materials and physical phenomena. The enthusiasm of the pupils and the expectations of the teachers result in pupils using reference materials to find out for themselves more things about science. This significantly increases pupils' knowledge base. Pupils recall of what they have learned is very good and they are able to talk lucidly about scientific knowledge and facts. When pupils are provided with opportunities to design tests, make predictions or explain phenomena using theories or their extensive knowledge, they do so with great success and a sense of enjoyment.

Teaching is good throughout the school with some very good teaching in the Nursery.

8. The quality of teaching is good with examples of very good teaching in the Nursery. During the week of inspection teaching was very good in 13 per cent of lessons, good in a further 57 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in the rest. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed.
9. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good and, in the Nursery, examples of very good teaching were observed. Planning is of a high standard and clearly identifies what children are to learn from each activity. In the Reception class basic skills are taught well and the emphasis that is placed on the teaching of phonics, reading and numeracy skills alongside stimulating, practical activities means that

children make good progress and also thoroughly enjoy their learning. In the Nursery varied activities are constantly provided that stimulate and enthuse the children. During the inspection the children were learning about their senses and everything in the class was set up so that they could explore and understand their senses. The staff prepared an exciting range of items for children to experience including perfumed paint, feely boxes and other ingredients for children to touch or smell. An imaginative use of resources or an unexpected method of presentation brings routine activities to life. The Nursery Nurse and teacher work very effectively together. The manner in which they develop children's vocabulary and communication skills by constantly talking about the activities, whether it be role-play, painting, construction or numeracy activities is most impressive. Every activity the children take part in is seen as a learning opportunity and at the same time children display nothing but pleasure, fun and a high level of motivation.

10. Throughout the school teachers clearly enjoy their work and this in turn enthuses the pupils, and makes them want to learn. Introductions are effective, particularly when clear explanations are given and pupils are made aware of what they are going to learn. Pupils' contributions to class discussions are always valued and this makes them feel confident, and encourages them to ask questions, offer ideas, and present their opinions. Teachers celebrate originality of thought or opinion. In a Year 6 literacy lesson the class were examining viewpoints on animal testing. The pupils' differing viewpoints were listened to and pupils were clearly not diffident about presenting a different viewpoint to their classmates, or suggesting a completely different way of tackling the issue.
11. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and often use their knowledge and enthusiasm to motivate, challenge and enthuse pupils. This is often seen in history and art, for example, where the interest of pupils is captivated to such an extent that they carry out extensive personal research at home. In a Year 5 art lesson on the work of Escher, the teacher introduced the topic with great knowledge and was able to deal confidently with pupils' questions as well as setting challenging ones of her own. Her detailed knowledge meant that by the end of the lesson pupils were creating good quality, original designs of their own that showed they had a high level of understanding of the techniques used by Escher.
12. The school does not follow the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies but has adapted parts of the strategies to meet the needs of the school and its pupils. Most lessons begin with a well-paced introduction in which there is a review of previous work. Often in mathematics the lessons are split up into sections with direct teaching and then opportunities to practice and extend skills. Teachers often review what has been achieved. This cycle is very effective in helping pupils to grasp new ideas and in dealing with misconceptions. Much of the work that is set throughout the school is challenging and based on teachers' high level of expectation and meets the needs of individual pupils.
13. Teachers have very good strategies for managing behaviour. There are few incidents of loss of concentration. Much emphasis is placed on celebrating achievement and good behaviour and pupils respond with courtesy and a respect for others. Teaching and support staff work well together. Relationships between staff and with pupils are very good and this helps to create a very effective learning environment.
14. The good, and on occasions very good, quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved and the good progress that pupils make. Work is often challenging and ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. The consistently high standards that the school achieves reflects the good quality of teaching present in the school.

Pupils have very good attitudes to work. Their behaviour is exemplary and attendance is excellent.

15. The children in the Foundation Stage have good levels of confidence and interest. They quickly become conversant with the routines of the school day, and respond well to their teachers' high expectations of achievement and behaviour. They are keen to come to school and quickly settle into the work and activities that are provided. The quality of the activities that are provided in the Nursery capture the imagination of the children who then show high levels of concentration and motivation, staying on a particular activity for a surprisingly long time. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are encouraged to become independent. This shows in the way in which children take out and put away resources, make choices and decisions when selecting materials and resources. In role-play activities or when playing games children quickly establish who will play each character or agree rules. Already in the Reception class children are keen to do well and take a pride in their work.
16. Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 continue to show very good attitudes to school and to work. Most recognise the importance of schooling and are keen to grasp the opportunities provided. Pupils of all ages work with impressive levels of concentration. Once a concept has been explained to them they are keen to get on with it. Pupils value the time they have in school and ensure they do not waste any. On many occasions pupils were seen helping their classmates if the teacher was working with another group of pupils. When pupils are provided with opportunities to investigate or solve problems they rise to the challenge with a great sense of determination and perseverance. The bigger the challenge the more they enjoy it. Many pupils are enthused by what they are taught whether it is about life in Kenya, ancient history, or the rights and wrongs of animal testing. With no prompting from teachers pupils carry out independent research at home and then share their findings with the rest of the class. This not only enhances the individual's learning but also that of the rest of the class. Pupils produce large amounts of written work both within a lesson and over time. They take a pride in their work and are only too keen to talk to visitors about the work they have completed. The attitudes displayed by pupils of all ages make a significant impact on the standards achieved and the progress that pupils make.
17. From the youngest to the oldest pupils in school the standard of behaviour is exemplary. The quality of behaviour does not waver from the classroom, to moving around the school, to the playground. Pupils show a real care and concern for the needs of others and show a great awareness of how their words and deeds could impact on others. In lessons pupils listen respectfully to the views of others and wait for an opportune moment before making their own contribution. The school expects high standards of behaviour, but in a manner that pupils feel they genuinely want to conform and not because of fear of punishment. In the playground pupils play very well together and no instances of inappropriate behaviour were observed. For much of the inspection pupils had to stay indoors at break times because of inclement weather and even in these circumstances the standards of behaviour did not drop. The pupils organised board games, charades or simply continued their class work, all without adult prompting. The older pupils were even mindful of the time and had put away games and got out books and equipment for the next lesson by the time the teacher returned to class! The atmosphere in school is certainly conducive to effective learning. Without a doubt the pupils make a powerful contribution to this atmosphere through their very good attitudes and their exemplary behaviour. Discussions with the pupils show that they love coming to school and do not like to miss a single day. This is borne out by the school's excellent attendance rate, which is well above the national average and is testimony to the high regard that both parents and pupils have for the school.

The school provides a good range of stimulating learning opportunities that enhance pupils' learning across many areas of the curriculum. Provision made in the Foundation Stage is particularly good.

18. The school places considerable emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This is done through the discrete teaching of the skills within lessons and also by using every opportunity to extend pupils' skills in other areas of the curriculum. In history, for example, pupils write factually and creatively about aspects such as Ancient Greece, life on the Mary Rose or what it would have been like to have been a soldier in Ancient Rome. In geography rather than simply filling in worksheets pupils are expected to carry out their own research and write a descriptive piece on the water cycle or Wetherby's twin town. In religious education pupils compare their lives to Katanga in Kenya or re-tell Bible stories in their own words. Opportunities are provided for pupils to use and extend their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. In history, for example, they calculate time lines, in geography they work out grid references and bearings and in science, they examine the different ways in which they can handle and record data in their science work. The good quality schemes of work that are in place for all subjects ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum that covers all elements of the National Curriculum. These schemes systematically built on what pupils have previously learned.
19. The school provides a good range of visits and experiences that add to pupils' learning. The school has taken part in different initiatives such as a Millennium Project at Harewood House and the Nuffield Oral History Project. These initiatives involved the pupils examining many aspects, including design and technology through the ages, how information technology has evolved over time and given them excellent and exciting opportunities to work with a national dance company. These experiences not only furthered pupils' academic development but also made a significant contribution to their personal development by enabling them to interview a wide range of people and gain a wider perspective of the society in which they live and how it has changed over the past centuries. The school values the links it has made with the local community and members of that community come into school to help within the classroom and at social events. There are also occasions when pupils interview older members of the community about, for example, their childhood experiences. The pupils designed a batik banner as part of a wall hanging project and the different pieces were all put together by the local sewing circle. Such activities enhance the school's role as a pivotal part of the local community and also add to pupils' personal and social development. The school has visited museums, art galleries and visiting musicians have added a cultural dimension to pupils' learning. The pupils benefit from visits by professional rugby and football coaches. In addition the school provides extra- curricular activities of a sporting and musical nature. Each year the school puts on dramatic and musical productions that provide many pupils with the opportunity to perform or simply help to put the show on. These productions are renowned throughout the local community, thoroughly enjoyed by parents as well as pupils and again bring an added dimension to pupils' lives at school.
20. The Foundation Stage of the school provides a wealth of learning opportunities for children. Teaching and support staff work very well together in setting up a range of activities that excite and enthuse the children. In the Nursery the children take part in painting, construction, musical and physical activities as well as language and communication and number activities. The great strength is that each activity is set up with a specific learning goal in mind. Every opportunity is seized upon to extend children's learning. Children mix and experiment with colour, they compare different containers to see how much water they hold, they have to build models only using a set

number of shapes or pieces. Every opportunity is exploited to use the outdoor facilities because they add another dimension to children's learning. Although in the Reception class the tasks set are often more formal and structured, opportunities are still provided where necessary for children to learn through structured free play activities. The detailed planning at the Foundation Stage ensures that tasks provide a vibrant atmosphere where children learn in an exciting and often fun manner.

The provision the school makes for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good.

21. The school's life is characterised by a strong Catholic ethos. There is a feeling of being part of the school family but also being part of a much bigger family. The manner in which pupils come to assembly is very impressive. All pupils recognise the importance of the occasion and enter with heads bowed and hands joined. Lighted candles help to create an aura of calm and serenity. Discussion often revolves around the needs of others whether it is victims of the local floods or the situation in Israel. Opportunities are constantly used both in assemblies and in lessons to draw pupils' attention to the world in which they live. Teachers are always willing to discuss issues of a moral and social dimension and are not afraid of spending unplanned time just allowing pupils to think and reflect on what they have heard. Music and prayer are prominent features of school life and there is a real sense that pupils feel they can help others less fortunate than themselves through prayer as well as money and gifts.
22. Pupils' moral and social development is promoted very well. The school recognises each pupil as an individual and there is much emphasis given to pupils taking and accepting responsibility both for tasks around the school and for their own behaviour and actions. The younger pupils in school are given opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility by undertaking routine tasks around the school. In class there is a great expectation that they will work independently and play a pivotal role in helping to put out and put away learning resources. As pupils get older they add much to the family nature of the school by helping and caring for younger pupils. Pupils can regularly be seen setting up the hall for assemblies and physical education lessons. Classteachers often provide many tasks for pupils to undertake within the class that help the school day to run smoothly. All pupils respond with great maturity. The school raises funds for many deserving causes and the pupils take a full and active part in these activities. Fundamental to the life of the school is the manner in which all staff sensitively help pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong. The school actively provides a moral code as a basis for behaviour that is promoted throughout the life of the school. School and class rules are discussed with pupils so that they have a full understanding of the need for certain rules. Almost without fail pupils follow the rules. The many discussions that take place in religious education and personal and social education allow pupils to develop and express their moral values and personal understanding across a range of issues including prejudice, equal opportunities and personal rights and responsibilities.
23. The school does much to promote pupils' cultural development. The pupils study other world faiths such as Judaism and Islam that gives them a good insight into the beliefs and traditions of others. Pupils are provided with opportunities to listen to music from different parts of the world, to play musical instruments from different countries and to study the work of non- Western artists. The school has developed a strong link with a village in Kenya, which has provided excellent opportunities for pupils to gain a deep and empathetic understanding of the villager's life-style, beliefs and traditions. The visits the pupils make to places of cultural and historical interest do much to celebrate their own culture. The links that the school has established with another primary school in a very different area again does much to pupils' wider personal development.

Very good procedures are in place to assess and then track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

24. When children start school assessments are carried out to find out their level of attainment. These assessments are very thorough and provide an excellent guide to what children can or cannot do. The information that is gained is used in an impressive manner to guide future work and to set targets for development. Ongoing assessment is a constant feature in the Foundation Stage and teachers and support staff have an excellent grasp of children's attainment. The staff keep very good individual portfolios of what children have achieved, which contain dated photographic evidence or samples of children's work, together with teachers' comments about the level of achievement. These portfolios provide an ideal way of recording children's progress as well as an invaluable and treasured document that can be shared with parents on consultation evenings.
25. The very good practice that starts in the Foundation stage continues at Key Stages 1 and 2. The school carries out a range of reading, number and reasoning tests in addition to the nationally required tests at the end of the key stages. Impressive use is made of the data that these tests produce. The school carries out very detailed analysis of the data and looks specifically for patterns of weakness in elements of subjects, by gender, for groups of pupils and even for individual pupils. Excellent profiles are kept of pupils' attainment and progress and teachers know at a glance what pupils are achieving. The school is constantly seeking ways in which it can raise its standards even higher. This is a school that does not rest on its laurels. The school makes rigorous use of all available test and assessment data to set targets for the school, for year groups and for individual pupils in English, mathematics and science. If it appears that a pupil is not likely to achieve his or her target or could exceed the set target, then additional support is provided. The targets that the school sets are constantly at a challenging level. This very rigorous approach to assessment and target setting has played a pivotal role in the very high standards the school achieves.
26. The school is adept at identifying areas for improvement. An example of this is the manner in which writing standards were lower than reading standards. Although this is also the case nationally the school carried out a thorough analysis of completed scripts, examined practice across the school and then decided that in order for pupils to write the detailed pieces they were completing, they would have to complete the task at a faster rate to achieve the higher levels that had been predicted. The school is already implementing strategies to address the issue. It is this attention to detail that underpins much of the school's success.
27. The school has developed very good exemplars of work for all subjects of the curriculum. These provide excellent guidance on what constitutes different levels of attainment and provide a very useful reference point for teachers as well as a record of the good work that is clearly being completed in school on a regular basis.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and has played a very important role in the continued development of the school. She is well supported by all that work at the school and the Governing Body.

28. The headteacher leads the school in a very effective manner and has been an instrumental figure in the development of the school and the high standards it achieves.

She has an excellent grasp of the school's strengths but is equally determined to sustain the school's high standards. In 1999 the school was awarded Beacon Status for numerous aspects of school life including leadership and management, high attainment and provision in the Foundation Stage. This is further recognition of the qualities of leadership and management that the headteacher brings to the school. The headteacher has set up in the school a very good system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school. This includes the regular observation of lessons and the regular scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. After visits to lessons or scrutiny of work or planning, formal feedback is given and targets for improvement set where necessary. Where targets are set these then form the focus of the next observation. The willingness of staff to reflect critically on what they do, together with the rigorous monitoring procedures introduced by the headteacher have been instrumental factors in the improved teaching that has occurred since the last inspection.

29. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards have improved significantly and procedures for assessment are now a strength of the school. The work that is set challenges the highest attainers and ensures that they achieve their potential. The commitment that all who work at the school show to sustaining high standards suggests that the school is well placed for maintaining the current high standards in many aspects of its work, and for continued development. The headteacher receives good support from all the staff at the school. All staff work together well and form an effective team that continually strives and succeeds in providing a good quality of education for all pupils. Regular staff meetings ensure that staff are consulted about new initiatives and are fully involved in drawing up the identified priorities in the school development plan. The plan is an effective document and is clearly the vehicle for driving the school on. Priorities are costed, appropriate timescales are set and effective procedures are outlined to help ensure targets are met. Its greatest strength is the fact that the success criteria are linked to improving standards.
30. The headteacher is well supported by a knowledgeable and committed Governing Body. They know the school well. Relationships between the school and the Governing Body are very good. Many governors visit the school on a regular basis and help in the classroom and one governor is a part of the school's self review group. This gives them good first hand experience of the school at work and gives them an excellent insight into the quality of education the school is providing. Governors regularly attend training courses that enable them to set school issues and initiatives in a wider national context. The Governing Body discusses policies in detail before final ratification. Financial planning is of a good standard and governors recognise the importance of assessing the impact on standards of major spending decisions.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Some aspects of information technology.

31. The school has worked hard to improve attainment in this area of the curriculum and has greatly improved its resources. Examples were seen during the inspection of pupils using computers to support work in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are competent at word processing, at merging pictures and text, and handling data by the time they leave school. Most pupils use the computer to draft and edit their work and can interrogate a database and set up a spreadsheet. Although standards are satisfactory overall, there are elements that need further development. The school does not possess the necessary equipment for control technology and monitoring work with sensors and this prevents pupils covering all the required elements of the subject and attaining at a higher level. In addition the school is not yet utilising the full potential of information technology as a means of communication through electronic mail or regular use of the Internet. All these areas are already included in the action plan for the subject and are due to be put in place within the next twelve months.

The opportunities for pupils to be more actively involved in problem solving tasks and investigative activities and for setting targets for self-improvement.

32. There is no doubt that the school is achieving high and in some subjects very high standards by the time pupils leave school. Pupils often show a high level of knowledge. However pupils are not consistently provided with opportunities in subjects such as mathematics and science to be actively involved in problem solving or investigative tasks. In mathematics, for example, pupils are not asked often enough to examine the different ways in which problems could be solved and then comparing the different methods. The regular asking of questions such as "How did you work that out?" would provide valuable information about pupils' mental processes and help to gauge the depth of the pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding. In science pupils are not always asked to use their scientific knowledge in practical and investigative tasks to predict or to explain what might happen, why things happen or to simply test out how clear pupils are about what they have learned. A more focused approach to investigative and problem solving with the suggested level of questioning could improve pupils' understanding to an even higher level.
33. The school attaches considerable importance to target setting and the process has been an important factor in helping to raise standards. At the present time however the school does not actively involve pupils in setting their own targets for improvement. There are, for example, few opportunities for pupils to discuss elements of their work with staff and then together identify challenging but realistic areas for development. The end of year school reports do not provide the chance for pupils to discuss and record targets for the following year. Older pupils do not attend consultation meetings alongside their parents when targets could be discussed and agreed. This could be effective in furthering pupils' attainment and also in strengthening the working partnership between home and school.

The marking of pupils' work.

34. Teachers mark pupils' work on a regular basis. The school has an adequate marking policy but the policy is not always followed in practice. Too often marking does not offer sufficient guidance on what pupils need to do to improve. On occasions marking is cursory and provides little more than a tick or a cross. On other occasions major or

commonly repeated mistakes are not pointed out and the pupils continue to make the same mistake. There are some excellent examples of marking in the school, which provide excellent pointers for development or clearly state why a piece of work is of a good standard. There is clear evidence that pupils take on board the comments made by teachers and the good work is maintained or the less satisfactory work improves. The excellent practice that exists needs to be disseminated across the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

35. In order to build upon the school's many strengths, high attainment levels and the good quality of education it provides, the headteacher staff and governors should:

1) Further improve standards in information technology by;

- acquiring the necessary equipment to enable pupils to carry out appropriate monitoring, control and sensor work ;
- ensuring opportunities are provided for pupils to explore the full potential of electronic-mailing and use of the Internet.

2) Provide more opportunities for pupils to;

- be more actively involved in problem solving and investigative activities that will deepen their knowledge and understanding ;
- be more actively involved in setting their own targets for improvement.

Improve the quality of the marking of pupils' work so that it clearly outlines what pupils need to do to improve their work and that when work is off a good standard clearly stating why this is the case.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	13	57	30	0	0	0

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	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	209
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	17

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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	17	16	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	33	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (96)	100 (96)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	82 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	33	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (96)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	82 (81)	87 (84)

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
	1999	14	14	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	27	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (100)	100 (92)	100 (100)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	27	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (100)	100 (96)	100 (100)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	172
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.4
Average class size	27.6

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	4.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	89

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	1.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	434805
Total expenditure	439218
Expenditure per pupil	1870
Balance brought forward from previous year	870
Balance carried forward to next year	-3543

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	287
Number of questionnaires returned	117

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	1.5	0	1.5
My child is making good progress in school.	63	31	3	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	25	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	40	13	2.5	2.5
The teaching is good.	74	23	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	40	16	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	34	16	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	27	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	34	41	17	7	1
The school is well led and managed.	67	30	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	38	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	46	9	3	8