

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **MARYVALE RC JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL**

Kingstanding, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103426

Headteacher: Mr B Desmond

Reporting inspector: Mr J R Francis  
17976

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 225178

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Old Oscott Hill  
Kingstanding  
Birmingham

Postcode: B44 9AG

Telephone number: 0121 360 1434

Fax number: 0121 366 6581

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Fr A Holtham

Date of previous inspection: June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Maryvale Junior and Infant school is a Catholic voluntary aided school serving the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption Maryvale in Birmingham, and takes pupils from a wide area. Some of the areas served by the parish have pockets of deprivation, although the number of pupils eligible for a free school meal is around the national average. It is an average sized school with 226 pupils on roll, 61 of these being under six years of age, including 32 children attending part-time in the recently opened nursery. There are significantly more boys (152) than girls (125). Most pupils are of white European heritage and only three pupils have English as an additional language. There are 34 pupils on the register of special needs, broadly in line with national average and three pupils have statements of special educational need. Pupils' attainment on entry is slightly below average in English and mathematics. The headteacher began at the school in April 2000.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Maryvale is an effective and improving school. Pupils generally make good progress during their time in school. The quality of teaching is good, and teachers' expectations continue to rise. Pupils work very well together: the very good relationships found throughout are a strength of the school. The recently appointed headteacher and staff work well together and the co-ordinators are developing their roles well. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils attain standards well above those of similar schools in English and science;
- The quality of teaching is good;
- The headteacher leads the school well and provides clear direction;
- Relationships throughout the school are good; pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave well;
- The provision for children in both the nursery and reception classes is good.

#### **What could be improved**

- Attainment in mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2;
- Pupils' writing in English and other subjects, including their handwriting;
- Standards in information and communication technology throughout the school;
- Attendance.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The key issues from the previous inspection in June 1996 have been addressed well and the school has continued to develop. The greatest improvement is in the quality of teaching, from 1996, when only three-quarters of the teaching was satisfactory or better, to the present, where three-quarters is good or very good. This has not yet had the impact the school would have hoped on standards, for example, in mathematics. However, current work shows a better level of attainment than the results of the most recent national tests would indicate and the school is on course to meet its targets. The recently appointed headteacher has continued to build on the progress the school had made, and there is a determination to raise standards further. Standards in information and communication

technology have not improved since the previous inspection and overall are still below those expected for pupils of this age. The computer suite currently being developed will provide better quality facilities and the opportunity for teachers to teach the necessary skills more effectively. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

## 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	D	A	D	A
mathematics	D	D	D	C
science	C	B	B	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Test results from 2000 show standards of attainment in science are above the national average, while in English and mathematics they are below average. Apart from well above average test scores in 1999, standards in English show little change over the last three years. However, when these results are compared with similar schools to Maryvale, pupils are achieving well above average standards in English and science by the time they are 11. Standards in mathematics are in line with those of similar schools and have stayed at this level over the last three years. When the school's progress over the last four years is compared with the national picture, it shows pupils' attainment in Maryvale has been broadly in line with the national trend. Current work in pupils' books show improved standards, close to what is expected for pupils of this age. Standards in information and communication technology are below the average by the time pupils are 11.

Results of national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2000 show that in comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment is above average for writing and well above average for reading and mathematics.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave well around the school. They are keen to come to school and enjoy all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are unfailingly polite to visitors and behave well even when not directly supervised.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils play and work together well and teachers encourage this through group work in lessons. Older pupils have responsibilities which help with the smooth running of the school, but there are further opportunities that could be given to them.
Attendance	Attendance is below average, but the school is trying to address this and is slowly beginning to show improvements. Much of the absence is due to parents taking pupils on holiday in term time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and in three-quarters of lessons, teaching was good or very good. This is a significant improvement on the teaching seen at the time of the previous inspection. Good teaching in the newly created foundation stage of nursery and reception classes is giving pupils a very good start to their education. Teaching of English is often good, particularly work seen in literacy lessons, and this is beginning to show in improvements to the quality of pupils' work. However, further attention needs to be given to improving pupils' writing, including their handwriting, in English and other subjects. Mathematics teaching is improving as teachers become more familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy. Further work is needed to broaden the range of approaches for teaching mental and oral mathematics and so improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of computation. In some classes the overuse of worksheets across a range of subjects limits what pupils achieve and prevents some pupils making the progress they should.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a well thought out curriculum in place, which caters for all pupils, and a wide range of educational visits and visitors enriches pupils' education. The school values the arts. Further work is needed to improve provision for information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is a good and effective system in place to assess and monitor the progress of these pupils and provide appropriate support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The Catholic ethos of the school underpins all of its work. Pupils are taught to value each other. The expectations for good behaviour are high. The school's mission statement successfully guides the life and work of the school. Pupils' cultural development is good and has improved since the time of the previous inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school demonstrates a caring approach to all of its work. Staff provide a good role model for pupils in their manner and approach. Pupils' academic performance is recorded well by teachers, which helps to identify any weaknesses, and so improve their progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The recently appointed headteacher provides good leadership and clear direction to the work of the school. Teaching, planning and pupils' attainment are all monitored regularly. Day-to-day management is good. The subject co-ordinators are effective in their roles.



How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is supportive, has an appropriate committee structure and is well informed about the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are sound systems in place for monitoring the work of the school. These are still being developed, but include analysis of data and the progress the school is making towards its targets. Co-ordinators are beginning to be more involved in evaluating the work in their subjects. Further work is planned to develop more accurate assessments in English and mathematics.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the school's resources. The budget is linked to the school's priorities and is analysed carefully to provide a clear breakdown of all spending and its impact on pupils' education. Careful thought is given to all major spending decisions to ensure the schools gets best value for money.

The headteacher is building successfully on the strengths of the school and involving the staff in realising the school's mission statement. Teaching and non-teaching staff work well together, and the newly created nursery is already making an impact on the education of the youngest children in school. Resources are satisfactory, and when fully in operation, the new information and communication technology suite will be a good facility.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school;</li> <li>• The school is very approachable;</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard;</li> <li>• They are well informed about their children's progress;</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed;</li> <li>• Teaching is good;</li> <li>• Children are helped to develop maturity and responsibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework provided for pupils;</li> <li>• The contact with teachers at the start and end of the day.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive comment of the parents. They also feel that homework is used well to consolidate what pupils do in school. The school is addressing issues of consistency between classes. The physical layout of the school makes informal contact with parents more difficult but the school is aware of this and is looking at ways of making it easier.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Pupils attain standards well above those of similar schools in English and science**

1. Pupils' attainment in English by the age of 11 has remained below the national average over the last four years, with the exception of 1999, where against the school's trends, results were well above average. However, when compared with similar schools, results are well above average. The work currently seen in pupils' books is closer to what is expected nationally for pupils of seven and 11 and does not reflect the test results of summer 2000.
2. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, and in most classes, good questioning by teachers develops and extends pupils' answers. Most pupils answer questions or offer comments during lessons and listen attentively to the answers of others. The very good relationships in the school mean that pupils feel confident about offering opinions and ideas during class discussions.
3. Pupils enjoy reading and are developing a critical appreciation of a range of books. Work seen in literacy lessons is successfully developing pupils' skills to enable them to discuss and explain the content of their book. During a discussion in a Year 5 class around the use of colloquial language in a story, pupils were able to show which parts were written in dialect and recognise these as direct speech. They were also able to identify the emotions that the characters were experiencing and demonstrate their understanding by using cards prepared and given out by the teacher showing a range of abstract nouns such as joy, fear and bewilderment.
4. Teaching of English is often good, particularly work seen in literacy lessons, and this is beginning to show improvements in the quality of pupils' work. However, further attention needs to be given to improving the quality and range of pupils' writing, including their handwriting, in English and other subjects.
5. Attainment in science is above the national average. Pupils' books show a range of work covering all attainment targets. Teachers are clear about the importance of investigative work and try as far as possible to involve pupils in this on every occasion. This is successful in improving pupils' understanding of scientific concepts. Pupils are familiar with experimental and investigative work and co-operate well during practical activities. However, sometimes where the group is too large it makes it difficult for all pupils to be involved effectively and some become mere observers.

#### **The quality of teaching is good**

6. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the time of the previous inspection where only three-quarters of the lessons seen were judged to be satisfactory or better. During this inspection, three-quarters of the teaching observed was of good or very good quality and accounts for the improvements seen in pupils' books. However, this improvement has not yet started to have the impact the school would like to see on pupils' results.
7. Lessons are planned carefully with clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils and referred to at the end of the lesson to judge the progress pupils have made. In the most effective lessons, pupils themselves are encouraged to use these to measure their own success. The introductions to lessons are used effectively, and

the plenary sessions at the end of the lesson are generally done well. During a literacy lesson in Year 6, using the story of Rikki Tikki Tavi, the teacher made maximum use of the teaching time and kept the pace brisk.

8. Small group work is a feature of many lessons and teachers group pupils in various ways for lessons depending on their prior attainment. This is not only used in subjects such as English and mathematics, but is even seen, for example, in a Year 2 music lesson on composition where the teacher used her knowledge of pupils' abilities to group them for the task. Questioning by teachers is good, and is used effectively to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills and extend their understanding. All teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' language.
9. The quality of teaching in the newly formed foundation stage of nursery and reception classes is good and often very good. The teachers and support staff have very good knowledge of what these young children need to develop and learn, and provide a range of worthwhile experiences for them.

### **The headteacher leads the school well and provides clear direction**

10. The recently appointed headteacher, with the support of the senior staff and governors, is continuing to develop the school and maintain the distinctive and positive ethos that is found in all of the work of the school. The day-to-day management is good. A working atmosphere has been created which has a clear focus on higher expectations and co-ordinators are developing their role in supporting this. Detailed analysis of test results has been carried out to make more informed judgements on the effectiveness of the school. Teaching and learning are monitored and pupils' achievements are celebrated publicly. Parents are confident in the headteacher's ability to continue to develop the school and raise standards further.

### **Relationships throughout the school are good; pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave well**

11. The very positive attitudes of the pupils come through the clear mission statement and distinct Catholic ethos that underpins all of the work of the school. Pupils are taught to value each other and 'make a difference'. These values positively support pupils' learning. From the nursery to Year 6, the expectations for good social behaviour are high and made clear in every class; behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils listen to each other's views, work co-operatively and share tasks fairly. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work, are keen to come to school and enjoy all aspects of school life. They are unfailingly polite to visitors and behave well even when not directly supervised. Pupils play and work together well and teachers encourage this, for example, through group work in lessons. Parents rightly consider that behaviour in the school is good and that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible citizens.

### **The provision for children in both the nursery and reception classes is good**

12. The recently created nursery class is giving children a very positive start to their school life. The teacher and nursery nurse are very knowledgeable about the needs of children of this age. A wide range of well-planned activities and experiences are provided to develop their learning, social skills and independence. This is built on

effectively in the reception class where work becomes more demanding and the teacher's expectations of children increase with age and ability. Teaching in these classes is never less than good and often very good.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Attainment in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2**

13. In national tests in 2000, pupils in Year 2 attained the national average, and were well above that of similar schools, mainly due to the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3. However, this is not being effectively built on, and results at the end of Key Stage 2 (11 year olds) over the last four years have shown pupils' attainment in mathematics to be consistently below the national average and only in line with that of similar schools by the end of Year 6. The main reason for this is the large proportion of pupils who do not make sufficient progress between Year 3 and Year 6 and only attain Level 3 by the time they are 11. Added to this is the relatively low proportion that attains the higher Level 5: only 15 per cent compared to the national average of almost 25 per cent. This is an area of relative weakness when compared with standards in the other core subjects of English and science. However, current work shows a better level of attainment than the results of the most recent national tests would indicate.
14. The curriculum covers all aspects of mathematics and places suitable emphasis on investigations. However, further work is needed to broaden the range of approaches for teaching mental and oral mathematics to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of computation and their speed of recall. Mathematics teaching is improving as teachers become more familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy, but there is a wide variety in the quality of teaching seen throughout the school and not enough teaching linking mathematics to pupils' everyday experiences. In some classes, the overuse of what are often low quality worksheets, limits the response pupils can make and prevents some pupils making the progress they should.
15. The mathematics co-ordinator, with the support of the headteacher and external numeracy consultant, has observed mathematics lessons and identified areas for development. Further work is planned by the co-ordinator to address the issue of teaching oral and mental mathematics more effectively. The school development plan also indicates that work is to be undertaken to improve teachers' understanding of what are appropriate levels of work and standards for each year group.

### **Pupils' writing in English and other subjects, including their handwriting and presentation**

16. Pupils' writing covers an appropriate range of styles. However, this is not sufficiently built on in English or other subjects to encourage pupils to extend and develop their ideas or make their sentences more complex or interesting. They do have a sound appreciation of grammar and punctuation and use these accurately in their writing. One area of weakness throughout most of the school is handwriting and presentation. The oldest pupils in school still print much of their work. Many pupils have poor pencil grip and form letters and numbers incorrectly. Teachers themselves do not always set a good example in their writing in pupils' books or on the board. Pupils' progress in writing is further hindered by the number and quality of the worksheets used in many classes. These often demand little of pupils in the way

of writing beyond completing sentences or filling in boxes. The school is, however, aware of these shortcomings and has plans to address them.

### **Standards in information and communication technology throughout the school**

17. Since the previous inspection the demands of the curriculum for information and communication technology have increased significantly but the school has not been able to respond to these sufficiently because of the relatively low number and capability of computers in the school, and teachers' own lack of knowledge. These shortcomings are now being addressed through the creation of a purpose built computer suite and staff training. Many staff are working to improve their own levels of skill and knowledge and further training is being provided for all teachers. The computer suite is only partly operational but should be completed for the end of the spring term, including an Internet link. The adoption of national guidelines for information and communication technology is providing a structure for teaching skills as pupils move through the school, but for many pupils these are still at a relatively low level. There is a clear difference in confidence and attainment between those pupils who have access to computers at home and those who only use them during lessons.
18. The co-ordinator is very new to the role but has a determination to make it both a subject in its own right and widen its use across the curriculum. Presently the school finds it difficult to fulfil all of the requirements of the information and communication technology curriculum with the equipment it has.

### **Attendance**

19. While there have been improvements since the previous inspection, attendance remains below the national average. The school has put into place many good initiatives to encourage higher levels of attendance, including rewards and certificates for pupils and a public celebration of full attendance. However, parents keeping children away from school without good reason, or taking them on holiday during term time thwart much of this.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

20. The school should now:
  - Improve pupils' attainment in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2, to bring it more closely into line with the attainment in the other core subjects;
  - Improve the quality of pupils' writing in English and other subjects, including their handwriting and presentation; #
  - Improve standards in information and communication technology throughout the school; #
  - Improve levels of attendance.

*# these areas have already been identified by the school and are included in their development plan.*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### 21. Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### 22. Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	24	57	19	0	0	0

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

### 23. 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)	16	226
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	58

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	34

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

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	11

### 24. Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### 25. 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	19	11	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	15
	Girls	9	9	11
	Total	23	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (89)	73 (89)	87 (89)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	15
	Girls	9	10	10
	Total	22	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (84)	80 (89)	83 (65)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### 26. 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	19	22	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	17
	Girls	20	17	22
	Total	33	30	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (85)	74 (64)	95 (90)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	16
	Girls	20	18	22
	Total	32	31	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (64)	76 (67)	93 (84)
	National	70 (68)	73 (69)	79 (75)

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

**27. Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	11
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	6
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	198
Any other minority ethnic group	5

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

**29. Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.2
Average class size	27.4

**Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	83

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	22

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**28. 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.*

**30. Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	477,609
Total expenditure	489,416
Expenditure per pupil	1,927
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	- 11,807



### 31. Results of the survey of parents and carers

#### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	226
Number of questionnaires returned	104

#### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	34	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	43	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	38	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	43	21	7	1
The teaching is good.	61	36	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	46	8	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	28	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	35	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	44	2	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	38	0	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	42	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	38	8	0	5