

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Withnell, Chorley

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119680

Headteacher: Mr M. Braithwaite

Reporting inspector: Mr G. D. Timms
21038

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th October 2000

Inspection number: 225219

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Bury Lane
Withnell
Chorley

Postcode: PR6 8SD

Telephone number: 01254 830400

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev Fr. T. Cheetham

Date of previous inspection: 4th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Geof Timms 21038	Registered inspector	English Geography History Music Physical education Provision for children under five. Equal opportunities	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Jon Vincent 9691	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents and carers?
Clive Lewis 22831	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Art and design Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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The Registrar, Inspection Quality Division, The Office for Standards in Education, Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School serves a largely rural area, although most pupils are from the local villages of Withnell and Brinscall. The school is much smaller than most primary schools and has 75 full time pupils aged from four to 11 years old. They are taught in three classes with mixed age groups for most subjects. Within the classes pupils are grouped either by age or by their prior attainment. There are 16 pupils who are under five. Attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly that normally expected for children of their age. Attainment on entry to statutory schooling is also broadly average.

A below average proportion of the pupils take up free school meals. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average but the proportion who have statements of special educational need is well above average. A fairly high proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than when it is normal to start school or move on to secondary school. The school's current priorities include the updating of schemes of work, further improvement to the information technology curriculum, literacy and numeracy, and a focus on developing the science curriculum.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many strengths. Standards are good in English, history and music. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The pupils' attitudes to school are very good, as is their behaviour and their personal development. The quality of teaching is good. The cost of educating a pupil at the school is higher than most schools. However, the school is effective and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are good in English, history and music throughout the school; they are good in most subjects for children in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching is good, with much that is very good and this is promoting good learning.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' attitudes, their behaviour and their personal development and relationships are very good; there is no bullying or other oppressive behaviour.
- There is very good spiritual, social and moral development.
- Parents are very involved in the work of the school and this has a positive impact on their children's learning.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good.

What could be improved

- The analysis of assessment data is not yet used effectively when planning lessons.
- The teaching time available for pupils at Key Stage 2 is well below the recommended minimum.
- There is not enough homework, it is not planned to increase sufficiently for older pupils, and it does not prepare them for secondary education.
- The school improvement plan is not accurately costed.
- Pupils do not learn enough about other cultures or faiths especially through art and music.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Since then there have been a good number of improvements. There has been further development of the curriculum and provision of new schemes of work. In particular the curriculum for the new Foundation Stage has been effectively planned. There has been more monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, especially in literacy and numeracy. The role of the governing body has improved, especially with regard to financial planning and monitoring. The school development plan needs to be further improved. In addition, a lot of work has been done to develop and improve the buildings and resources. The school's capacity to improve further is good.

STANDARDS

The very small number of pupils who take the annual national tests makes the comparison of results from year to year unreliable and for this reason they are not published. For example, in 1999 only eight pupils took the Key Stage 2 standard assessment test for 11-year-olds; each individual pupil represented 13 per cent of the total. Data showing how pupils have improved as they move through the school has been analysed and this gives a positive picture of their progress and the value added by the school. The present Year 6 pupils have progressed by at least the amount expected and, in some cases, by a good deal more, in both English and mathematics.

Children make good progress in the reception year. In English, standards are good by the end of Key Stage 2. Significant improvements are evident in the results of the most recent tests for 11-year-olds. More pupils are now reaching the higher levels. Standards in reading are good and in writing they are satisfactory at both key stages. The good standards found in speaking and listening have been maintained. In mathematics, standards are satisfactory. The current cohort of Year 2 pupils are on course to attain standards at least equivalent to those expected nationally, with a significant proportion exceeding them. By the end of Key Stage 2, at age 11, pupils' attainment in mathematics is satisfactory. A small proportion of pupils in each key stage are attaining standards above national expectations for their age. In science, standards are good at the end of Key Stage 1, and satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. The targets set for pupils in 2000 have been comfortably exceeded and those set for this year look as though they will be achieved.

The trends in attainment over the past four years show that for 11-year-olds standards have improved at broadly the same rate as that found nationally. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities and their individual education plans. Standards in literacy are good in both key stages, and pupils make good progress. However, too few opportunities are found to use their writing skills effectively in other subjects, thus extending pupils' skills further. In numeracy, standards are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. In information and communication technology, good use is made of the recent improvements to resources in other subjects. Standards of attainment are broadly satisfactory at both key stages. This has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils' achievements are good in history and music by the end of Key Stage 2. They are satisfactory in design and technology and physical education, although there is very little evidence to indicate possible standards in art and design, or in geography.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and work hard while there.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite and well behaved.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Older pupils look after younger ones well and the relationships between adults and pupils are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

The positive nature of relationships in the school has a real impact on learning, enabling pupils to concentrate and make good progress. They are taught good working practices and the strong family ethos pervades all of the life of the school.

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.

There is no unsatisfactory teaching. It is at least satisfactory, with much that is good. This has improved since the last inspection. Seventy-three per cent of the teaching is good or better and 19 per cent is very good. For the children in the foundation stage (reception), all of the teaching is at least good and 17 per cent is very good. In English the teaching is consistently very good at both key stages. In mathematics the teaching is good overall and very good at Key Stage 1.

The teacher and nursery nurse who work in the reception class have a shared sense of purpose and consistency of approach that are significant strengths. The staff know the children well individually and provide suitable tasks for them, matching tasks to those with differing abilities or ages. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the introduction of the literacy and numeracy daily lessons has been well managed and this has resulted in more effective teaching in both subjects. Good use is made of the music co-ordinator's expertise when she teaches other classes. The school makes an effort to supplement the skills of teachers by using outside expertise, particularly in music and swimming. Homework is not well used to extend and consolidate learning.

Overall, pupils' learning is good and they are independent learners who concentrate very well. Teachers meet the needs of special educational needs pupils with appropriate support and differentiated tasks matched to their needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises with teachers and support staff appropriately. Support staff provide pupils with an appropriate blend of help and challenge. The school meets the needs of all its pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a satisfactory range of learning opportunities open to all pupils. The planning for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Cultural development is satisfactory but more needs to be done to improve pupils' understanding of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school looks after its pupils very well. However, the assessments of pupils' progress are not used effectively when planning lessons.

The school works well with parents and the information provided for them has improved. Good use is made of parents and other members of the local community in enriching pupils' experiences in school. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. However, the teaching time allowed at Key Stage 2 is well below the recommended minimum.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and key staff manage the school very effectively and successfully overcome the difficulties created by its small size.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors' involvement has improved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has begun to analyse test results and other statistics more fully but these are not yet used in planning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The financial planning and control effectively support educational priorities but the school development plan is not costed accurately enough.

The accommodation is now very good for a school of this size. Resources have improved and are satisfactory while the staffing is good. The increased non-teaching time available to the headteacher has enabled him to improve the management of the school since the last inspection. There is a clear, shared commitment to raise standards and to create a happy, successful school. The governing body needs to develop its role in monitoring and holding the school to account further. The school tries to ensure best value in its spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with problems or concerns. • The school provides an interesting range of activities. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They do not feel well enough informed about how their child is getting on. • There is not enough homework.

The findings of the inspection confirm the parents' positive views. The children do like school; their behaviour is very good. The inspection confirms that there is not enough homework and the policy needs reviewing and an appropriate structure putting into place. The information provided for parents is now good, having improved recently.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The very small number of pupils who take the annual national tests makes the comparison of results from year to year unreliable and for this reason they are not published. For example, in 1999 only eight pupils took the Key Stage 2 standard assessment test for 11-year-olds; each individual pupil represented 13 per cent of the total. This means that one or two pupils with special educational need or high attainment can have a disproportionate effect on the results. In addition, the level of mobility of pupils joining and leaving is quite high and this also affects results. Where possible data showing how pupils have improved as they move through the school has been analysed and this gives a positive picture of their progress and the value added by the school. The present Year 6 pupils who have attended the school for a number of years have progressed by at least the amount expected and, in some cases, by a good deal more in both English and mathematics.
2. When children enter the school, the testing of their levels of understanding shows that they are broadly average for their ages. They make good progress in the reception year and by the time children reach the age of five their attainment is good in personal and social development, communication, language, and literacy, and mathematics. Attainment is satisfactory in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. The targets set for Year 6 pupils in 2000 in English and mathematics have been comfortably exceeded and those set for this year look as though they will be achieved.
3. In English, standards are good. In reading, speaking and listening standards are good by the end of both key stages. In writing standards are satisfactory. In the 1999 national tests for 11-year-olds the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level was close to the national average, although no pupils reached the higher level. Standards have improved significantly since then and more pupils are now reaching the higher levels. Standards in reading and writing have improved since the time of the previous inspection and the good standards found in speaking and listening have been maintained. When compared with schools with similar pupils, the same difficulties of comparing such small cohorts remain. However, the overall picture, and the findings of the inspection, is one of improvement since the last inspection, brought about by the work of a reflective and hard-working co-ordinator, the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, improved resources and more direct whole class teaching methods.
4. Pupils' achievements in English are good. The pupils begin school with broadly average levels of attainment. The evidence of tests carried out over time shows that, for example, by the end of Key Stage 1 their reading and writing skills are well developed. This is maintained throughout Key Stage 2 and the progress made is good. Although different year groups vary widely over the past four years there has been an upward trend in attainment that is broadly in line with that found nationally.
5. In mathematics, standards are satisfactory and have been maintained since the previous inspection. The current cohort of Year 2 pupils are on course to attain standards at least equivalent to those expected nationally at the end of the key stage in mathematics and a significant proportion should exceed them. By the end of Key Stage 2, at age 11, pupils' attainment is similarly satisfactory overall. A small proportion of pupils in each key stage are attaining standards above national expectations for their age. Lesson observations confirm that pupils make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills in other curriculum areas such as science and information

- and communication technology lessons.
6. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are at least satisfactory and often good and they make good progress. The evidence shows that standards are rising and have done so since the introduction of the numeracy strategy.
 7. In science, standards are above the national average at age seven, and in line with the average at age 11. They have been maintained at this level since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress as they move through Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress during Key Stage 2. Pupils in both key stages have opportunities, during the year, to undertake a range of appropriate scientific activities covering all the science attainment targets, studying life processes and living things, materials and physical processes.
 8. Pupils' achievements in science are good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. In Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to develop the skill of formulating questions about their work. They use focused exploration and investigation to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding and attempt an explanation of their discoveries and to draw simple conclusions. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 6 understand that light proceeds from a source, that light is reflected from surfaces and that things are seen as a result of light emanating from them entering the eye. They understand the concept of a "fair test" and, with adult help, are carrying out systematic observations and measurements using information and control technology equipment, for example by using sensors to test different light sources. Where learning is good, in Year 1 and Year 2, clear progress was made due to the good relationships between teachers and pupils, the good pace and high expectations set by the teachers, resulting in a high level of pupil motivation.
 9. The trends in attainment over the past four years show that for 11-year-olds standards have improved at broadly the same rate as that found nationally. Although referring to a very small number of pupils, over the past four years of national testing, the attainment of boys and girls shows some significant differences. For example, at Key Stage 2 girls outperform boys in English, but the boys outperform girls in mathematics and science. However, this broadly matches the picture found nationally and there were no significant differences found during the inspection.
 10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities and their individual education plans. Their progress is carefully monitored through their individual education plans, which are reviewed regularly. There are no pupils who have English as an additional language.
 11. Standards in literacy are good in both key stages, and pupils make good progress. However, few opportunities are found for pupils to use their writing skills effectively in other subjects. In numeracy, standards are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. Pupils make good progress in the under fives and satisfactory progress elsewhere. In information and communication technology, good use is made of the recent improvements to resources in other subjects. Standards of attainment are broadly satisfactory at both key stages. This has improved significantly since the last inspection through better resources and teacher training.
 12. Pupils' achievements are good in history as shown by the evidence of the Greek Day, and in music, where the singing is good, by the age of 11. They are satisfactory in design and technology and physical education, although there is very little evidence to indicate possible standards in art and design, or in geography.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Attitudes to learning are mostly very good, and have been maintained since the last inspection. Children who are under five have very good attitudes to learning due to the teaching methods used. Throughout the school there is a calm, happy family atmosphere providing an environment that promotes pupils' learning. There is an atmosphere of constructive collaboration between adults and pupils built on mutual respect. Most pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic about their lessons and proud of their achievements. The family culture of the school adds enjoyment to pupils' learning.
14. Overall, the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is very good and parents appreciate the behaviour standards promoted by the school. All staff are excellent role models and lead by example. As a result, relationships between pupils and all staff are very good and continue to be a strength of the school. There have been no exclusions. No anti-social or oppressive behaviour from pupils was observed during the inspection and it was noticeable how the older pupils cared for their younger peers without prompting.
15. Personal development of pupils is very good. Apart from taking responsibility for routine tasks pupils use their initiative when they notice a need and act accordingly. Routine tasks and duties are carried out quietly and efficiently and without the need of supervision. One example was seen during school lunchtime when older pupils sat with younger children and gave assistance when necessary. Class monitors are appointed, and this further aids pupils' personal development and gives them responsibility.
16. Attendance levels are satisfactory and in line with the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average. However, there are incidences of holidays being taken during term time and these have a negative effect on the attendance figures. Attendance figures are not reported in the school prospectus and this is a statutory requirement that must be addressed.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. This has improved since the last inspection. Seventy-three per cent of the teaching is good or better and 19 per cent is very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching.
18. For the children in the Foundation Stage (reception), all of the teaching is at least good and 17 per cent is very good. At Key Stage 1, the proportion of good teaching is 67 per cent with 23 per cent that is very good. At Key Stage 2, 64 per cent of the teaching is good or better and 19 per cent is very good.
19. The teacher and nursery nurse who work in the reception class have a shared sense of purpose and consistency of approach that are significant strengths. The teaching of the children who are under five is consistently good. The staff know the children well individually and provide suitable tasks for them, matching tasks to those with differing abilities or ages. They make very good use of volunteer helpers and work experience students to provide children with opportunities to talk to and work with a variety of adults. All staff respond sensitively to the children's individual needs both during activity sessions and when working in different groups. The teaching demonstrates a good understanding of the needs of young children and of the curriculum for the foundation stage. A great deal of work has gone into the planning for this year. Lesson planning contains clear objectives and lessons are characterised by a good pace. For example, the literacy and numeracy strategies have been effectively adapted for the younger children and activities are kept at an appropriate length.

20. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the introduction of the literacy and numeracy daily lessons has been well managed and this has resulted in more effective teaching in both subjects. Teachers have trained and worked hard to implement the new frameworks and to adapt their teaching methods successfully especially to the need to provide appropriate work for pupils in mixed age classes. Subject knowledge in most subjects is good. Good use is made of the music co-ordinator's expertise when she teaches other classes. The school makes an effort to supplement the skills of teachers by using outside expertise, particularly in music and swimming.
21. Teachers meet the needs of special educational needs pupils with appropriate support and differentiated tasks matched to their needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises with teachers and support staff appropriately. Support staff provide pupils with an appropriate blend of help and challenge. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and integrated into the school community.
22. The best lessons in both key stages are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. These have a positive impact on the motivation of most pupils, and their behaviour is good. Occasionally lessons taken by the less experienced staff result in too high a noise level, but pupils always respond to reminders and instructions quickly. Teachers plan well to ensure lessons build on previous learning and, in most cases, they provide appropriate work for pupils of different ages and abilities in the same class, although scrutiny of pupils' past work shows that this is not always the case. Lessons are well prepared and resourced. For example, in one Key Stage 2 history lesson, the higher attaining, older pupils were provided with a more challenging task than others. However, evidence from pupils' work shows that in many lessons all children attempt the same task, which cannot be fit for the wide range of abilities and ages found in the class.
23. In a few of the satisfactory, as opposed to good lessons, the teaching did not provide enough guidance to pupils. For example, one group working on the computer were given too wide a task and they progressed slowly. Not enough opportunities are found by teachers to provide work that requires creative skills and initiative, such as pupil-planned and led activities or investigative work and research.
24. The homework policy is too vague and does not encourage teachers to give meaningful and increasingly challenging tasks which form an important part of the class work, and which they then mark and return or discuss. This does not prepare pupils adequately for secondary school. Parents will welcome the recent re-introduction of homework diaries, as they were critical of this aspect of the school's work.
25. Expectations of pupils' work and behaviour have improved since the previous inspection. The teachers' questioning skills are used effectively to extend and consolidate learning by targeting specific questions at particular pupils, for whom they are appropriate, especially in literacy. This is particularly important in the class with three year groups in it. Teachers' marking is satisfactory overall but does not always provide pupils with appropriately detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement. However, the whole class sessions at the end of literacy and numeracy lessons are well used to assess the progress made by pupils.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

26. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which successfully meets the needs of all its pupils. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for the teaching of all subjects in the National Curriculum and religious education. The pupils in the reception year are provided with an appropriate and well-planned curriculum based on the recommended early learning goals for the

Foundation Stage of education. However, although the quality and range of learning opportunities provided to pupils are generally satisfactory, the teaching time in Key Stage 2 is significantly below the nationally recommended minimum. As a result of this, although the time allotted to the “core” subjects of English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education is appropriate, the remaining time available for other subjects such as art, music, history, geography, design technology and physical education, is considerably reduced. The school curriculum, with the exception of literacy and numeracy lessons, is currently based on two- and four-year “rolling programmes” of topics. These are intended to ensure that the pupils do not repeat work in different years although they might repeat the same topic. Schemes of work to guide teachers’ planning are in place or are currently being revised for all subjects, and they take account of the recent curriculum changes. Evidence of planning for citizenship is not yet available. The curriculum is adapted effectively where appropriate for pupils with special educational needs.

27. The school has implemented the government’s recommended National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well, although the literacy strategy has had a more positive effect on standards. The planning and delivery of these, given the difficulties of small cohorts and the inevitable mixed-age and mixed-key stage classes, take appropriate account of the recommendations both for lesson format and for lesson content. The strategies are adapted effectively for the children in the Foundation Stage and this is assisting the good progress made in reading, writing and mathematical skills. The school provides effectively for equality of opportunity and the curriculum is enriched through the provision of a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, including sporting and adventurous activities, throughout the school year.
28. The school makes sound provision for pupils’ personal, social and health education. The governing body has made a decision not to include sex education in the curriculum; however, appropriate health and drugs awareness education is provided as part of the science curriculum. The school’s links with its partner institutions are good. Links with the secondary school to which most pupils move when they leave the school are good. Pupils attend the secondary school for induction visits and staff from the secondary school visit St Joseph’s. There are good links with the locality, and with local industry, such as the quarry, which successfully enrich the range of curricular opportunities provided for the pupils.
29. Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are good. An exemplary register of special educational needs is kept by the co-ordinator, and appropriately detailed individual educational plans are provided for pupils on the register. Provision of additional support for pupils with statements of educational need is of good quality.
30. The school makes very good provision for its pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through the concept of “one large family” promoted successfully throughout the school. This is a considerable improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection.
31. The school’s provision for pupils’ spiritual development is very good. Through the overall, whole-school ethos and whole-school assemblies, the school provides pupils with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs and enables them to reflect on their experiences.
32. Provision for pupils’ moral development is similarly very good. Principles distinguishing right from wrong are promoted appropriately, and consistently by all teachers and non-teaching staff, who provide very good role models. Provision for pupils’ social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and take responsibility for their work and for others. Older pupils look after younger pupils, for example, during lunchtimes and playtimes. Pupils’ awareness of the wider world community is increased by raising funds for a variety of charities.

33. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions, taking part in a range of local and county festivals and visiting local historical and industrial sites. At the time of the previous inspection, opportunities to enhance pupils' awareness of other contemporary cultures, particularly multi-cultural, were judged to be "severely limited". This situation has improved, so that pupils now are given appropriate opportunities to develop a satisfactory understanding of the diversity of other cultures through stories from other cultures in literacy lessons, studies of contrasting communities in geography and the study of other religions in religious education lessons. However, although provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall, opportunities for the appreciation of the music and art of other cultures and faiths remain limited.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school looks after its pupils very well. The family culture promoted throughout the school by all staff ensures pupils' welfare in an atmosphere where the older pupils support their younger peers without prompting. This high standard of pastoral care is supported by strong formal procedures which ensure pupils' well being.
35. The school has an appropriate child protection policy in place and the deputy headteacher has received the appropriate training. All members of staff know their pupils very well and are aware of the necessary procedures. A member of the governing body has responsibility for child protection matters. Attendance registers are marked neatly and are kept in accordance with statutory requirements. There are effective procedures in place for the investigation of unexplained absence or lateness. The school discipline policy is understood by pupils, encourages positive behavioural traits and effectively eliminates any oppressive actions. The school has a simple reward and sanction system that operates both on individual and class levels. In addition to this a further initiative has been introduced, by the lunchtime welfare assistants, to encourage good behaviour at lunchtime. These simple but effective methods encourage very good behaviour standards.
36. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory and the informal monitoring of personal development of pupils is good. A good system of individual record folders or portfolios enables staff to save samples of pupils' work to illustrate their learning. At present, these contain a lot of numeracy but not enough written work to show how skills are developing. However, these assessments are not used effectively to ensure that when planning lessons tasks are correctly matched to pupils' needs.
37. The school has a strong inclusion policy and as a result pupils with special needs are well catered for. There is good use of assessment procedures to identify pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator maintains an exemplary register of special educational needs pupils and there are appropriate procedures for placing pupils on the register. The school meets the requirements outlined in pupils' statements of educational need. All these procedures ensure that the well being, safety and personal development of all pupils in the school are paramount. The school knows and looks after its pupils very well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. Parents' links with school are good overall and this has improved since the last inspection. Many make themselves available to help both in school and on visits. Parents and other relatives help the teachers in class on a regular basis. For example, during the inspection the mother, grandmother and great aunt of a child visited a history lesson in the reception class to discuss toys. They gave examples of their childhood activities and the toys they played with, and the class discussed the

differences between then and now. This was a good example of parental involvement in the school and how this involvement has improved and developed since the last inspection.

39. Overall the parents are satisfied with the school. They feel comfortable approaching the school with problems and the majority believe that the school works closely with them. They think the school provides an interesting range of activities and their children enjoy going to school.
40. Information for parents is good and has improved since the last inspection. The school continues to operate an 'open door' policy and there are two parents' evenings a year. Parents appreciate the clear information contained in the annual reports and the detail specific to their children. Parents receive a comprehensive prospectus containing detailed and appropriate information. The information they receive before their child starts school is useful but the guidelines are heavily based on the local authority ones and the school would benefit from personalising the message further. In addition, there is a weekly newsletter to parents that keeps them fully up to date with school activities. The provision for homework is not regular or well organised enough and a number of parents are unsure of the value of much of that set.
41. The Friends of St. Joseph's raise considerable funds each year through various initiatives. These funds provide valuable additional resources that further enhance the pupils' learning and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. At the last inspection, leadership and management were judged to be broadly satisfactory. This is much improved since that time and the leadership demonstrated by the headteacher and key staff is now very good. Since the last inspection, the headteacher, together with the staff and governing body, has worked extremely hard to improve standards and keep up with a variety of national and local initiatives, while continuing with a heavy teaching commitment. However, the headteacher's teaching skills are a real strength and they have a positive effect on the other staff as well as pupils.
43. The lack of available time has limited the opportunities for monitoring teaching but this has been addressed in English and mathematics and the time available out of the classroom is being targeted by the English and mathematics co-ordinators at this need. A further strong aspect of the leadership is that the headteacher and staff are aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses. They demonstrate a strong commitment to the continued development of the school and further improvement of standards. This is particularly well illustrated by the amount of work recently and successfully put into improving standards in English and mathematics through the introduction of the national numeracy and literacy strategies, together with the efforts made to improve resources and teaching in information and communications technology.
44. The mission statement and aims for the school's work are clear, based on its Catholic ethos, and focused on the creation of a 'caring community' and preparing pupils effectively for their continuing education. The aims are firmly embedded in the work of the school and are effectively met. The action plans based on the last inspection have been carried out successfully. The school improvement plan, which was criticised at the last inspection for being over ambitious, is now more practical and useful although it does not relate priorities to the budget closely enough. It is devised after a thorough analysis of the school's needs, taking account of local and national initiatives, as well as staff and governors' views. Governors are not involved early on in the process but they discuss and review the plan during the year. The school does not have any appraisal of staff in place at present but is planning appropriately for the introduction of statutory performance

management next term. Appropriate induction procedures are in place for new staff and newly qualified teachers.

45. The small size of the school means that three staff take on most curriculum and management responsibilities. They work closely together, successfully planning and teaching the curriculum for pupils aged from four to 11. The headteacher is able to monitor the work of others informally. The subject co-ordinators have successfully overseen the introduction of the recent national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and this work has resulted in improvements to the standards pupils have achieved. In literacy, more formal monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place, involving the headteacher, co-ordinator and local authority adviser. This good practice does not take place in most other subjects at present. The school has begun to develop a more detailed analysis of the results of standardised tests and other assessment information. Further analysis of this information is not yet used to improve planning and prioritise areas for development and extra funding more accurately.
46. The membership of the governing body has been reasonably stable over recent years. The involvement of governors in the life of the school, especially of the finance committee, has improved greatly since the last inspection. However, there is still some way to go to ensure that all governors have a clear picture of life in the school on a day-to-day basis. The Chair of the Governing Body supports the school effectively in the local community, and is positive about the priorities that are important for the development of the school and aware of some of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The amount of time given to the school by governors varies. The governors with specific links to priority areas of the school's work, such as numeracy, literacy and special needs, are knowledgeable but there is a need to create more formal opportunities during the day for all governors to see the school in action. Attendance figures are not reported in the school prospectus.
47. At the last inspection the governing body did not have a good enough grasp of its strategic role and the long term financial planning was 'sketchy'. Under the leadership of a knowledgeable and enthusiastic governor this has improved and is now good. There are clear terms of reference for the work of the finance committee and governors are provided with a satisfactory level of financial information, taken from that provided by the local education authority. Financial planning, day-to-day control and administration are good. The school has improved resources for information and communication technology and continues to improve standards in literacy, numeracy and science. The targets set by the school with the local authority for the last academic year were met and early indications are that this year's will also be achieved. The school applies the principles of best value appropriately.
48. The school plans and uses allocated financial resources effectively to meet identified needs. Overall, good use is made of the available resources. Staff are well deployed, as are the volunteer helpers, and there is a satisfactory match of professional expertise to curricular responsibilities. The school pays due regard to staff development. The recent training of teachers and governors for the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has been effective. The management of the special educational needs provision is good.
49. The accommodation has been greatly improved through the provision of a school hall, new classroom, playground and an improved playing field. The new hall is used effectively for a variety of activities, particularly by the children in the foundation stage. Good use of the room was observed, not only for physical education lessons but also assemblies, dance and music lessons. The school makes good use of the local authority library service to provide appropriate resources when needed, especially in history. The provision and use of resources to meet the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Since the last inspection there have been

some improvements in the provision of resources, especially in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. In order to continue the good improvements in teaching and learning made since the last inspection, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- make more use of assessment information and test results when planning lessons to ensure that pupils' skills and concepts are progressively developed in line with their ages and abilities and that work is matched more closely to their abilities; (Paragraphs 22, 36, 45, 71, 72, 85 and 99)
- review the teaching time available at Key Stage 2; (Paragraphs 26)
- ensure that the school improvement plan is accurately costed; (Paragraphs 44)
- devise a clear policy for the provision of appropriate homework; (Paragraphs 24)
- improve pupils' multicultural development, especially through art and music from different faiths and cultures. (Paragraphs 33 and 106)

51. In addition, the governing body should consider including the following minor weaknesses in their action plan:

- ensure the correct reporting of attendance; (Paragraph 16 and 46)
- provide more opportunities for writing for different purposes; (Paragraph 11, 36, 69 and 71)
- develop teachers' marking skills to provide more guidance, advice and support to help pupils improve; (Paragraph 25 and 71)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	54	27	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	75
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3
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	8
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
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.

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	7	5	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	5	6
	Girls	5	5	4
	Total	9	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75	83	83
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	6
	Girls	5	4	5
	Total	9	8	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75	67	92
	National	82	86	87

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	60
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)	3.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	40

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	141 011
Total expenditure	133 165
Expenditure per pupil	1 988
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	7 846

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	75
Number of questionnaires returned	17

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	0	6	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	29	12	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	76	12	12	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	63	29	6	0	6
The teaching is good.	53	35	0	6	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	24	18	6	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	24	18	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	44	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	24	18	6	6
The school is well led and managed.	35	40	12	0	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	47	0	6	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	12	18	0	12

Other issues raised by parents

Parents commented on the strengths evident in having mixed age classes, such as older pupils helping younger ones, and they appreciated the hard work of the teachers in overcoming the difficulties of working in a small school.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. The reception children form part of a mixed reception/ Year 1 class. At the time of the inspection there were 16 children under five, which is a large group when compared to other year groups in the school. The arrangements for entry to the school are appropriate and benefit individual children who are clearly happy and secure. The school provides good advice to parents, through local authority produced materials. These have not been adapted and personalised to suit the particular circumstances of the school.
53. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. The systems and procedures which the class teacher and her nursery nurse follow ensure that children make very good progress towards achieving the nationally agreed early learning goals for communications, language and literacy, and in mathematics. Progress is good in personal and social development and in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. In physical and creative development, progress is satisfactory. There are very effective methods for teaching literacy and numeracy, adapted from the national strategies and appropriate for children's ages and abilities. By the time children reach the age of five their attainment is good in personal and social development, communication, language, and literacy, and mathematics. Attainment is satisfactory in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. The nursery nurse plays a very important part in the success of these lessons, especially with the younger children. The staff know the children well and this knowledge informs the work they provide. They make a very effective team, planning and assessing progress together and the quality of teaching is at least good and often very good.
54. Although provision for outdoor activities is difficult to manage due to the access to the playground, good use is made of the new hall to enable children to use larger toys and take part in noisier activities. In addition, the use of sand and other practical activities takes place in the entrance area outside the classroom. This ensures that even in inclement weather children are able to experience a full range of learning activities. Resources are good and appropriate for the ages of the children.
55. The leadership and management of the early years provision are good. The staff are committed to providing an effective learning environment in which all children are valued and given the opportunity to achieve their potential. They take a full part in the life of the school and are well cared for by the older pupils.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. The teaching and learning are very good. Staff set up very good daily routines which children accept and understand, and which have a positive impact on pupils' social development as they get older. They make good progress in relating to each other and to adults. They come eagerly into school at the start of each session. They behave very well and are polite and concerned towards each other. They listen to each other when, for example, they take part in group discussions. They develop sustained concentration in most activities and learn to take turns and share. For example, when using the floor robot with a parent helper, children patiently waited for their turn.

Communications, language and literacy

57. The teaching and learning are very good. Children learn to write letters and numerals through direct teaching and opportunities for emergent writing. They are articulate and good speaking and listening opportunities are provided. The good deployment of volunteer helpers means that children get plenty of opportunities to discuss their work with an adult. For example, in one lesson about old toys, parents and grandparents visited the class to talk about games they had played when young. Children listen attentively in assemblies and to stories. They take books and word cards home and even early in the year have a good understanding about how books work, and that text carries the meaning in a story. In discussion it is evident that they are enthusiastic about books, and happily share one with an adult, telling the story from the illustrations.

Mathematical development

58. The teaching and learning are very good. Most children are becoming familiar with number words and can use them appropriately. Many are able to count to ten and some can give the missing numbers in a sequence. The higher attainers are beginning to be able to add two groups of objects together. There are appropriate opportunities to sing number rhymes and children do so enthusiastically. Good use of the computer and an appropriate keyboard helps consolidate pupils' counting and adding skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. The teaching and learning are good. In their topic about 'People' children are given the opportunity to experiment with their senses and to catalogue different materials and objects into the sense used to recognise them. So, for example, they learn to differentiate between things we hear, smell, touch or taste. A song about how our senses work through different parts of our bodies helps make the activity enjoyable and increases children's understanding. The computers are used effectively in a variety of subjects. Children can also program a floor robot to move forwards, backwards and to turn.

Creative development

60. The teaching and learning are satisfactory but this is the area of learning that is less well developed. Children have opportunities to use paint, but usually on very teacher-directed tasks, which do not allow for enough exploration. Good opportunities to sing and learn to play percussion instruments exist, and good use is made of the musical expertise of a teacher from another class for this. The good use of the sand tray gives children further opportunities to develop the story from their literacy text in an imaginative and creative way.

Physical development

61. Children make satisfactory progress and the teaching and learning are sound. They have a growing awareness of their own bodies and can control their movements well when working with others. They use a variety of materials and tools with the level of expertise expected for their ages. In the hall, children practise their catching and throwing skills using beanbags. Good opportunities are provided to use sand and soft modelling materials.

ENGLISH

62. Standards are good. The small number of pupils in each year group makes comparisons between different cohorts unreliable. For example, in the 1999 national tests for 11-year-olds the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level was close to the national average, although no pupils reached the higher level. Standards have improved significantly since then and more pupils

are now reaching the higher levels. Standards in reading and writing have improved since the time of the previous inspection and the good standards found in speaking and listening have been maintained.

63. When compared with schools with similar pupils, the same difficulties of comparing such small cohorts remain. However, the overall picture, and the findings of the inspection, is one of improvement since the last inspection, brought about by the work of a reflective and hard-working co-ordinator, the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, improved resources and more direct whole class teaching methods.
64. Pupils' achievements are good. The target set for pupils in 2000 have been comfortably exceeded and those set for this year look as though they will be achieved. The pupils begin school with broadly average levels of attainment. The evidence of tests carried out over time shows that, for example, by the end of Key Stage 1 their reading and writing skills are well developed. This is maintained throughout Key Stage 2 and the progress made is good. Although different year groups vary widely over the past four years there has been an upward trend in attainment that is broadly in line with that found nationally.
65. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. They benefit from good support from class teachers who are aware of their individual needs. At times pupils who are high attaining or who need extra support move from one class to another, to enable them to work at an appropriate level. Comparisons between the achievements of boys and girls are difficult due to the small cohorts magnifying any imbalance between the sexes. However, the inspection evidence shows no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls at the present time although overall the girls outperform the boys at both key stages.
66. In speaking and listening, pupils' attainment is good and has been maintained at this level from the previous inspection. They are articulate and well spoken, willing to talk to adults and to each other. They listen well in lessons and assemblies and this has a positive impact on their learning. By the end of Year 2, pupils talk with interest about their books and their work. They answer questions sensibly and contribute well in class. For example, in Year 2 pupils recite poetry and talk and listen confidently. They follow the rules of discussion and know that they must put their hands up to answer questions. By Year 6, pupils' listening and speaking skills are often very mature. They contribute effectively to class discussions, such as one about different styles of newspaper writing. Higher attaining pupils are particularly fluent, but pupils of all attainment speak clearly in conversation.
67. Standards in reading have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. Younger children are learning to read well from a structured scheme, which now includes detailed phonic work based on the National Literacy Strategy. Parents provide good support by reading with children at home regularly. A good proportion of the pupils are members of a public library and the pupils' attitudes to books are largely positive. Teachers need to ensure that a good record of pupils' reading skills is kept to help diagnose weaknesses in provision. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils read fluently, accurately and confidently. Middle attaining pupils are able to break words up into smaller portions to enable them to decipher them accurately. Less able pupils also read at an appropriate level with fluency and enjoyment, showing a sound comprehension of the text and illustrations. For example, one girl explained a drawing in the book of a lamp was in a style that 'could be Japanese.'
68. By Year 6, pupils have good reading skills and many are fluent and expressive readers. They can read a variety of reference books or newspapers, and they are confident users of dictionaries and a thesaurus. Their own tastes in reading vary between young novels, fantasy stories and non-

fiction books. In Year 4 pupils can read a complex article about the artist Lowry with understanding and are then able to discuss and criticise the writing style. The majority of the pupils also clearly enjoy reading and these positive attitudes are evident throughout Key Stage 2. A number of lessons, such as one on Romans, provide opportunities for pupils to use research skills using books or the computer. They do this well with the books and with increasing expertise on the Internet.

69. Pupils' attainment in writing throughout the school is satisfactory. They make good progress in learning basic handwriting skills, how to create sentences and some common grammar. However, not enough opportunities exist, especially for the older or higher attaining pupils, for them to use these skills in meaningful ways or for different purposes. In Year 1, pupils learn to write sentences related to the text they are studying. They have good handwriting skills following small group directly taught sessions with the teacher. By the end of the year pupils show clear improvement in their letter formation skills and their use of capital letters and full stops. In Year 2, pupils' spelling improves, their handwriting is joined neatly and they are able to order jumbled words into a sensible sentence. In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to redraft their work and to write good beginnings to stories. Punctuation is less accurate where they write a more extended piece of work. Their work is mostly neat, written in ink and often pupils are beginning to develop a mature individual style. There are not many opportunities found for creative writing or extended factual writing in other subjects, such as history, where too much of the written work consists of filling in worksheets or answering low level comprehension questions, or pages printed from the Internet.
70. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are often very good at both key stages. Where attitudes are only satisfactory it is due to the teacher allowing too much off task chatter and pupils become somewhat restless and noisy. They clearly enjoy the literacy lessons and demonstrate enjoyment of a variety of texts. Pupils enjoy reading and joining in with whole class work. Older children work well independently or collaboratively on tasks. The good attitudes shown are partly due to the well-planned lessons that take good account of the different ages and abilities in each class.
71. The quality of teaching is mostly very good at both key stages and never less than satisfactory. This has improved since the last inspection, largely through the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and improved resources. Teachers have worked particularly hard to make the strategy work for classes with up to three year groups, by planning work carefully and the lessons are mostly very productive. For example, following work on one text which appealed to all ages, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 completed tasks related to the theme of newspapers but which were pitched at different attainment levels. However, scrutiny of work from last year demonstrates that work is not always well pitched to different abilities and on a number of occasions all pupils complete the same exercise, which is too easy for some and too hard for others. Teachers of older pupils put an emphasis on oral work, which means that, on occasion, not enough time is allocated to written tasks. However, pupils are usually expected to work at a good pace and produce a good amount of work. The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs enables them to take part in lessons fully. The learning support staff often help in whole class sessions, and in the individual work by supporting appropriate pupils. The day-to-day assessment of pupils' attainment is satisfactory but not enough attention in the marking is paid to comments that set targets for improvement. A lot of the assessment takes place through question and answer sessions at the start and end of lessons.
72. The subject is well led by an effective and knowledgeable practitioner who thinks deeply about the subject and has worked hard to introduce the literacy strategy in mixed age classes. She has undertaken research on a number of issues, as part of an on-going higher degree course. One of these projects has discovered a link between music teaching and literacy that would benefit from further exploration. Another has shown that when pupils work together on a shared text over one

year it is the middle ability pupils who benefit the most. An appropriate policy for the subject is in place. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been effectively managed and is having a positive impact on standards. The medium term planning is good and the headteacher, co-ordinator and local authority adviser have monitored the planning, teaching and learning in lessons. The school does not have a clear system for the assessment and recording of pupils' writing skills.

MATHEMATICS

73. Lesson observations during the inspection, a scrutiny of work undertaken during the first few weeks of the current school year and discussions with pupils during lessons indicate that the current cohort of Year 2 pupils have made satisfactory progress and are on course to attain standards at least equivalent to those expected nationally at the end of the key stage in mathematics. Evidence from the last year indicates that a significant proportion of the pupils are likely to exceed the national expectation. By the end of Key Stage 2, at age 11, pupils' attainment is similarly satisfactory overall and they make satisfactory progress. A small proportion of pupils in each key stage are attaining standards above national expectations for their age. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
74. During the previous school year, the school has successfully adopted and implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. Under this new scheme of work, pupils undertake a wide range of learning in all areas of mathematics. Samples of pupils' work demonstrate that pupils in both key stages undertake an appropriate variety of work on shape, space and measures, and tackle a range of problems involving handling data and investigation during the course of the school year. Lesson observations confirm that pupils make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills in other curriculum areas such as science and information and communication technology lessons.
75. Most pupils in Year 1 are able to count reliably up to 20 and back to zero, they know the number names and are able to say them in order. Most understand the process of addition, combining sets to make a total, understanding the + and - signs and how to use them in a "sum". A significant proportion of pupils are attaining above national expectations for their age. They are adding to ten using number dice and a number line and using the related vocabulary confidently. Although a minority of pupils in the Year 2/3 class are working confidently at Year 3 objectives, the overall attainment of the current Year 2 cohort is satisfactory for their age and stage of the school year on the evidence of their present work.
76. In Key Stage 2, most pupils in Year 3 are able to subtract units from tens and units, as, for example, when calculating $15 - 8$. They can explain their strategies for doing so confidently. The majority of Year 4 pupils in the Year 4/5/6 class are calculating fractions of numbers, for example, two-thirds of 30, some with adult assistance. A small minority of Year 4 pupils are working at levels significantly above expectations for their age and are working successfully with Year 5 pupils and the majority of Year 6 pupils at aspects of the Year 6 programme of study. The majority of Year 5 pupils are, similarly, working above expectations for their age. However, the majority of the current cohort of Year 6 pupils are working at expected levels for their age and are converting fractions accurately and confidently.
77. The quality of learning in lessons observed was very good in the one lesson observed at Key Stage 1, consistently good in Key Stage 2, and good overall. In both key stages, teachers ensure pupils are well-motivated and the pace of lessons is good or better, with a good variety of activities ensuring pupils' attention and high level of motivation. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for appropriately in teachers' planning with suitable tasks and additional support, and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them.

78. Attitudes and behaviour in mathematics lessons are consistently good at both key stages. Pupils enjoy and are enthusiastic about their mathematics work, especially the mental and oral "warm-up" activities. They respond well to their teachers and work together well without the need for constant teacher-intervention.
79. The quality of teaching in mathematics lessons at Key Stage 1 is very good and in Key Stage 2 it is good. Teachers utilise a good range of strategies to motivate and interest pupils. They follow the recommended numeracy strategy format and programmes of study closely, plan lessons well, provide a good range of resources and use praise and questioning well. They ensure all pupils are paying appropriate attention, use correct mathematical vocabulary and terminology and provide good opportunities for pupils to explain their methods and practise what they know. Teachers provide appropriate activities and support for the wide range of ages and differing levels of ability in their classes, challenging higher-attaining pupils appropriately and supporting pupils needing additional support well.
80. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall and funding has been allocated appropriately to purchase additional resources to support the implementation of the numeracy curriculum.

SCIENCE

81. Attainment in science is good overall by age seven, and pupils make good progress as they move through the key stage. The attainment of the current cohort of pupils in Year 6 is satisfactory overall and they make satisfactory progress. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The scrutiny of work undertaken in the first few weeks of the school year and, in some cases, examples in pupils' files of work from the previous year, indicates that pupils in both key stages have opportunities, during the year, to undertake a range of appropriate scientific activities covering all the science attainment targets, studying life processes and living things, materials and physical processes.
82. In the infants, pupils listen to sounds and link illustrations to the five senses, and they are beginning to develop the skill of formulating questions about their work. They are beginning to use focused exploration and investigation to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding and are attempting an explanation of their discoveries and to draw simple conclusions. Pupils in Year 2 study light and are able to identify differing light sources. They understand that darkness is the result of the absence of light and are beginning to understand that light is reflected from surfaces such as mirrors and polished metal.
83. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 6 understand that light proceeds from source, that shadows are formed by objects resisting the passage of light, that light is reflected from surfaces and that things are seen as a result of light emanating from them entering the eye. They understand the concept of a "fair test" and, with adult help, are carrying out systematic observations and measurements using information and control technology equipment, for example by using sensors to test different light sources.
84. The quality of learning in lessons is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in the one lesson observed at Key Stage 2. Where learning is good, in Year 1 and Year 2, clear progress was made due to the good relationships between teachers and pupils, the good pace and high expectations set by the teachers, resulting in a high level of pupil motivation. Pupils with special educational needs are supported appropriately and make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2. In the best lessons,

pupils show interest in the activities and are keen to answer the teacher's questions, replying with enthusiasm and confidence. Most work quietly and conscientiously, working together well and clearly enjoying their science lessons.

85. The quality of teaching in science lessons ranges from good in Key Stage 1 to satisfactory in Key Stage 2, and is good overall. In the best lessons, teachers give clear explanations and are confident in their subject knowledge. They motivate pupils very well, maintain a brisk pace throughout the lesson, have a good rapport with their pupils and appropriately high expectations of work and behaviour. Although teaching was satisfactory overall in the one lesson seen at Key Stage 2, in the mixed-age Year 4/5/6 class, there was limited difference in the activities provided for pupils' of different ages and abilities, leading inevitably to some inattention from the younger and less able pupils.
86. In most cases, lessons are planned well, with clear links to the National Curriculum programmes of study, and good links with other curriculum areas such as English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The school has made science a priority for development in the current school year, after two years focusing on the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies. Resources for the subject are satisfactory in range and quality.

ART AND DESIGN

87. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, providing insufficient evidence on which to make secure judgements about the level of pupils' attainment in art or the overall quality of teaching in the subject. From the available evidence, it is clear that the full National Curriculum is covered and that the progress pupils make is broadly in line with that found elsewhere. There was very limited work available for scrutiny to provide evidence of pupils' attainment.
88. Discussions with Year 6 pupils indicate that art, in common with most foundation subjects, has suffered significantly from the school's concentration on improving pupils' language, literacy and numeracy skills. Although it was not possible to make a judgement of pupils' drawing or painting skills, these discussions indicate that pupils' knowledge and understanding, especially of artists' work, are limited. In the one lesson observed, junior pupils learned about artists and craftsmen in Roman Britain. They looked at and handled artefacts from the period, knew about art from different traditions and considered the texture, pattern and form of the objects. The quality of teaching and learning observed was satisfactory.
89. The co-ordinator for the subject has produced a scheme of work based around a four-year rolling programme of topics. This scheme of work is suitably linked to the attainment targets of the National Curriculum and, if followed closely, will ensure appropriate coverage of the attainment targets for art. However, the few examples of art work available for scrutiny suggests this system of linking all art lessons very closely to overall topics leads in many instances to art being seen as an adjunct to history or geography, resulting in limited progression in the key skills and knowledge of the subject. For example, during the first few weeks of the new school year pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, all pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 inclusive, in two classes, have produced versions of Roman mosaics in their art lessons and these do not suggest any improvement in the level of skill across classes.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and that was at Key Stage 1. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 2, making secure judgements on the overall quality of teaching and learning at either key stage impossible. However, a survey of the limited number of samples of work on display throughout the school, discussions with teachers and with Year 6 pupils indicates

that pupils undertake a generally appropriate range of activities in which they design, make and evaluate products and that they make generally satisfactory progress in design and technology at both key stages.

91. In the one lesson seen, Year 2 pupils were constructing models of aqueducts, in a link to their current class project on “The Romans”. They were developing ideas appropriately, assembling and combining/joining materials and working with tools, materials and components to make quality products. They were marking, measuring and cutting out card accurately for their aqueduct models. Pupils are well-motivated and clearly enjoy the work, listen sensibly to others’ suggestions and work productively. Other work was on display around the school, clearly linked to the current school history topic – models of Roman catapult machines and Celtic jewellery, for example, with pupils’ designs and evaluations of their work. The quality of teaching in this one lesson was satisfactory.
92. The school has decided to adopt the nationally recommended scheme of work for the subject in Key Stage 2, linking each design and technology project to the current topic. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

93. The school plans its geography and history work on a topic basis, giving equal amounts of time over the year to both subjects. The planning shows that the National Curriculum is covered appropriately and statutory requirements are met. Plans are for a two-year cycle of topics at Key Stage 1 and a four year cycle at Key Stage 2. This is due to the small size of the school and ensures the correct coverage of the subjects without unnecessary repetition. However, the evidence available indicates that history has a much higher profile in the work of the school.
94. No geography lessons were taking place during the inspection. From discussions with older pupils, it is evident that a satisfactory coverage of topics has occurred over the years and this has been maintained since the previous inspection. For example, recently pupils worked on a weather topic. They have studied maps and learned to use simple coordinates, read symbols and to use the compass. They can describe how contour lines work and how to find the highest point locally. They had learned about some other countries through a topic on national football teams. This involved some good research work using books, magazines and the Internet.
95. Pupils are much clearer about the history they have learnt. They can describe topics on Victorians, Egyptians, Saxons and Vikings, and the Tudors. History lessons were observed in all classes and good links are made with other subjects such as art. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 connected learning about artists and craftsmen in the past to their work on Romans and the teacher made good use of artefacts borrowed from the local museum service. At Key Stage 1 pupils in a design and technology lesson worked on mosaics and discussed the making of aqueducts, again linking this to the Romans. Overall, standards have improved since the last inspection and progress is good.
96. In one good lesson, Year 1 pupils learned about changes to toys over recent years from listening to visiting grandparents and studying toys from the museum service. This lesson gave pupils a very good opportunity to talk about changes with adults and to handle artefacts. In Year 2 and 3 pupils can describe what life was like for the Romans in Britain. They recognise an amphitheatre from a photograph and the good use of a timeline is helping develop their chronological understanding, especially of dates AD or BC. Pupils use correct vocabulary accurately and confidently speak about archaeologists, aqueducts, and emperors. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils can research books and encyclopaedias to find out about Roman gods, although they are less secure in

using the Internet and would benefit from more focused guidance on where to search for information. All Key Stage 2 pupils have a sound understanding of the differences in lifestyles between the Celts and the Romans. They discuss artefacts, such as a slate, pen and clothing with interest.

97. Overall, pupils throughout the school are well motivated and interested in historical facts and information. They are well behaved in lessons, handle artefacts with care and the youngest children work very productively alongside a variety of adults.
98. The quality of the teaching in history is good. It is not possible to judge the teaching in geography. Teachers plan well and make a great deal of effort to obtain resources that will interest and enthuse their pupils. Very good use of visiting adults is made. Topics often lead to an effective climax, as happened during the previous year with a topic on Ancient Greece. Children dress up for the day and sample aspects of life in ancient times, such as Greek food, music, dance and a number of other activities. This helps bring periods of history to life for the pupils.
99. It is evident from the previous year's work that too many pupils of different ages and abilities are given the same worksheet, rather than having work well matched to their prior attainment. This results in higher attaining pupils not being challenged by tasks, and less able pupils filling in worksheets that they do not fully understand. However, the planning of a whole school topic provides a good opportunity for some consistency of provision and for teachers to plan together and share resources efficiently. These plans do not have enough detail and do not show a clear progression of skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

100. Three lessons were observed during the inspection. These took the form of demonstration lessons by the class teacher, which are intended to be followed up by pupils working at computers during the rest of the week. Good use is made of information technology in other subjects. For example, monitoring equipment was being used in a science lesson at Key Stage 2 and pupils were observed using the Internet to research their work in English and history lessons during the week. Pupils' answers and responses during these lessons, and observations of pupils at work on the class computers, indicate that by the ages of seven and 11, pupils' attainment is generally equivalent to national expectations for their age in all the attainment targets. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall as they move through the school. This is a significant improvement on the judgement made at the time of the previous inspection that pupils in Key Stage 2 had "limited opportunities to use information technology".
101. Pupils are given a very good start to their understanding of and confidence in using information technology when they enter the reception class. Before the age of five, a few weeks after starting school, children are learning to use a floor robot and beginning to understand that putting instructions into the robot results in an action. Some Year 1 pupils in the same class are using "Talk and Write Away", changing the font and some are able to print their work out. In Year 2, pupils are able to use the "shift" key on the keyboard to produce capital letters and are beginning to understand how to change font colour and font style. In a history lesson, two pupils were confidently using the Internet, logging on to the BBC Education site to find out about King Caratacus for their class project on the Romans. Similarly, two Year 3 pupils in an English lesson were completing a poem, "Daisy Is A Brainy Snail", on the Internet. Year 6 pupils can use a database and they know that the terminology for information is "data". They learn how to prepare information ready for development using computers. They work with a variety of information and understand the need for the careful framing of questions when collecting, accessing and

interrogating information, demonstrating understanding that inadequate information will give unreliable results.

102. The quality of learning ranges from satisfactory to very good, and was good overall. Where teaching is very good or good, pupils are well motivated, concentrate well and enjoy the lesson, resulting in good progress. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory in one lesson and very good in two of the lessons. The quality of teaching in both key stages is at least satisfactory and at times very good, especially in the juniors. Where teaching was very good, the teacher demonstrated very good subject knowledge, employed a good range of very successful classroom management strategies and maintained a very good pace throughout the short lesson, resulting in very good quality of learning.

103. The school has a satisfactory ratio of computers to pupils and has used extra funding effectively to link all classrooms and offices to the Internet. The school now has five relatively new, up-to-date "workstations" in the classrooms in addition to a number of older computers still in use. The school has benefited from very effective parental support. For example, one parent has recently designed and built the school's own website and pupils are enthusiastically interviewing staff and taking pictures with the school's digital camera with a view to putting their work onto the site.

MUSIC

104. Only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1 and attainment was good. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 2, although part of the rehearsal for a forthcoming production was seen. The achievements of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are above those expected of pupils aged 11. Other evidence, such as a tape of pupils' compositions, indicates that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and parents are very positive about the standard of music in the school. The provision of the new hall allows pupils to come together for singing. It also acts as a useful base for instrumental tuition, providing ample room for musicians and allowing them not to disturb others.
105. Pupils throughout the school sing well when they have the opportunity. Some of the assemblies are enhanced by the pupils' ability to sing melodically in tune. All pupils participate in the singing. However, not enough opportunities are taken to develop their appraising skills through the discussion of music played as they enter and leave the hall.
106. Pupils in the juniors were observed learning a difficult song for a forthcoming production. They were able to fit quite difficult words into a complex, Gilbert and Sullivan-style tune. In discussions pupils remember using instruments to compose four or two beat patterns and to compose music for different footballing countries. They particularly enjoyed the 'midsummer madness' concerts where adults and pupils got together and put on a show for parents. Younger pupils sing enthusiastically and tunefully. They perform songs with actions and can play a variety of percussion instruments appropriately and with care. They know the difference between 'shakers', 'tappers' and 'scrapers'. The provision is enhanced by good quality violin tuition provided for small groups of pupils. Other children learn woodwind instruments. Pupils make good progress and are able to play together well. The pupils obviously enjoy these sessions and are happy to share their playing with adults. They are supported well by their parents who encourage them to practise at home. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about music from other cultures.
107. Music lessons throughout the school are taught by one of the teachers who has good individual expertise and a good subject knowledge and understanding. In the one lesson observed the teaching was good. Lessons are planned well, both individually and as part of a recently introduced national scheme for music. However, the planning does not clearly state the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught through the listed activities, allocating time slots for the activities and identifying assessment opportunities. The pace of lessons is brisk and the pupils are kept fully involved both mentally and physically.
108. The behaviour and attitude of the pupils are good. The majority clearly enjoy singing and playing instruments. Further musical opportunities have been offered in a lunchtime recorder group run by one of the teachers, although this is not functioning at present. The pupils have good opportunities to perform in large concerts involving many children from different schools. This is a good social experience for the older pupils as they prepare for secondary education. They have worked alongside a local male voice choir. Research undertaken by the one of the teachers as part of a course has linked music to an improvement in pupils' literacy skills. The resources for music are good but there is no use of computers for composition at present.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

109. During the inspection only lessons at Key Stage 1 and Year 3 in dance and games were observed. In addition, the older Key Stage 2 pupils have regular swimming lessons with the help of local authority swimming instructors and they attain a good standard with all reaching the

expected level or better. The teachers' planning indicates that the full National Curriculum is covered. The overall provision has improved since the last inspection, largely due to the improved facilities with the new building and playground and field developments. Whole school planning, and the allocation of time to the subject are satisfactory and meet the needs of most pupils. The progress made by the end of both key stages is broadly in line with that expected for pupils of that age and standards are satisfactory. For both key stages, this is as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as all pupils and there are no aspects of the subject denied to them.

110. The pupils at Key Stage 1 follow commercial radio programme for dance. They follow instructions well and move confidently. The teachers' good interventions guide pupils in altering the tension of their bodies to represent different types of toys. By the end of the lesson they have improved control over their movements. By the end of Key stage 1 pupils understand the need to warm up their bodies before exercise and good teaching makes them well aware of a variety of safety issues. They have sound throwing and catching skills. In dance, Year 2 pupils develop their skills to represent movements made by water or to create strong movements. They respond appropriately to the music played.
111. At Key Stage 2, pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 take part in a residential visit and this enables them to take part in a wide range of outdoor and adventurous activities. They experience walking, kayaking, archery, raft-building and climbing. This is a valuable opportunity to also develop their personal and social skills.
112. The attitudes of pupils are good throughout the school. They listen carefully to instructions and respond to teachers quickly and safely. Their behaviour is good, and they use an appropriate variety of apparatus some of which they can access themselves. For example, in Year 2 and 3 pupils prepare the hall for activities by marking out an area with cones. Pupils all bring the correct clothing to school and change quickly and sensibly for lessons.
113. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school, although teachers' subject expertise varies. On occasion pupils can become over excited during activities and this causes the noise to rise to an unacceptable level. Teachers dress appropriately for lessons and this sets a good example for the pupils. The commercial dance tape was effectively used by the teacher as a resource, rather than being slavishly followed. The school is very small, and the number of skilled, available staff is limited but a good range of extra curricular activities is provided for pupils. Recently the school has made use of a parent volunteer to help with skittleball. Other clubs are run by staff, but little use is made of outside expertise, such as from local sports clubs. One local professional football club has presented the school with a kit for the school team, and over the years a number of pupils at the school have become involved in local sports clubs.
114. The present scheme of work is based on a nationally recognised syllabus but the local authority has recently produced updated guidelines that the school is planning to adopt. Resources have improved, as has the accommodation. An old part of the school is now a good hall, a new playground has been developed and, largely thanks to a friend of the school, the field has been levelled and much improved. There has been no monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject.