

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hednesford

Cannock

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124354

Headteacher: Mrs E Wright

Reporting inspector: Elisabeth de Lancey
22272

Dates of inspection: 29th - 30th January 2002

Inspection number: 197513

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hill Top Hednesford Cannock Staffordshire WS12 5DE
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Father A J B Brown
Date of previous inspection:	15 th –18 th September 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school catering for pupils between the ages of three and eleven. It is situated in Hednesford, about two miles north of the centre of Cannock. It has a small Nursery which 47 children attend on a part-time basis. Children are admitted to the Nursery in the autumn term or the spring term following their third birthday. About half of the children who are eligible transfer to the school in the autumn term following their fourth birthday. Almost all of the pupils come from the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes but the school also draws pupils from further afield. Parents are employed in a variety of manual, clerical and professional occupations, and there is a wide range of housing types in the locality. The school is about the same size as other primary schools with a current roll of 210 pupils of whom 117 are girls and 93 are boys which is about the same as at the last inspection. They are organised into seven single-aged classes. The proportion of pupils who claim free school meals, six per cent, is below the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery represents a spread of ability. Overall it is below average. By the time they reach statutory school age, it is broadly average. Of the 25 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, for a variety of specific and moderate learning difficulties, including autism, five have statements of special educational needs. This is about average. All the pupils are of white ethnic origin. No pupils are looked after. The school has received the Department for Education and Skills' Award for excellence.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school which offers a good quality of education to all its pupils. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and they achieve high standards. This is largely due to the good leadership of the headteacher and the good quality of the teaching pupils receive. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils attain high standards in English and mathematics and science.
- Children in the Foundation Stage, which includes the Nursery and the Reception classes, make a good start to school.
- Good quality teaching and well-planned guidance from teaching assistants enable all pupils to learn effectively.
- The headteacher's good leadership gives the school a clear educational direction.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is good and this helps pupils to become mature and responsible.
- The pupils' very good attitudes to school, their good behaviour and their very good attendance contribute significantly to their very good achievement.
- The school has very good links with parents which make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- The range of independent writing at Key Stage 1 should be improved.
- Further planned opportunities for pupils to learn about cultures other than their own should be included in the curriculum.
- There is inconsistency in the quality of marking across the school.

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 September 1997 and a number of weaknesses were identified at that time. Most of these have been addressed satisfactorily and progress has been good. Teaching has improved, largely as a result of an effective programme of staff development. It is now good. There has been a significant improvement in pupils' results in the national curriculum tests for seven year-olds. The curriculum for geography is now well-planned and pupils' knowledge and skills are carefully assessed. Work in geography has improved accordingly. Procedures for ensuring Health and Safety are fully in place. The school's documentation meets statutory requirements, and information and communication technology now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although there are good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture and traditions, there are still insufficient

opportunities for them to learn about those of others. The school has good procedures to judge its own strengths and weaknesses and is, therefore well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

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

The results of the National Curriculum tests for eleven year-olds show that pupils have maintained consistently high standards over the past three years. The comparatively lower level in standards in 2001 was due to fewer pupils reaching the higher levels than in previous years. In 2001, pupils' results were well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results were above average in English and mathematics, and average in science. The trend in the school's results is broadly in line with the national trend. When compared with their results at seven years old, these results indicate that these pupils have made very good progress in English, and good progress in mathematics and science.

Pupils' results in the 2001 National Curriculum Tests for seven year-olds have surpassed previous results. Compared with all schools nationally, they were very high in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. In reading and writing, they were in the highest five per cent nationally. Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' results were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has improved on the gains made last year and the results show a strong upward trend.

Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards in English and mathematics are high and that pupils of all abilities are achieving well and making good progress. Standards in mathematics in Year 6 are higher this year. There is scope for further improvement in pupils' independent writing in Years 1 and 2, in particular, in the range of writing pupils use, and the use of writing across different subjects. Pupils are successful in meeting the challenging targets in English and mathematics which are set by the governing body.

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the time they leave the Reception class. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: Pupils are happy to come to school and respond enthusiastically to the learning opportunities they are offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: Pupils behave well in lessons, in the playground and around the school. They are polite and responsible.
Personal development and	Very Good: Pupils are confident and self reliant. They are sensitive to

relationships	the feelings of others and are keen to take responsibilities.
Attendance	Very Good: Attendance is well above the national average, and there is no unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching in the school is good overall and has a positive impact on learning and achievement. At Key Stage 2, teaching is very good and examples of excellent teaching were observed in English and very good teaching observed in mathematics. Teaching was excellent in just over one-tenth of lessons, very good in just over one-fifth, good in almost one-half of lessons and satisfactory in the remaining fifth. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teaching in the Foundation Stage was good with one-third of lessons judged to be very good. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. These expectations are communicated clearly to the class and pupils respond well because they know what to do and how to do it successfully. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic about learning and they display very good attitudes to their work. Teaching assistants provide effective help and guidance, in particular, for pupils with special educational needs to ensure that they achieve as well as they can and are included in all activities. Very good relationships between staff and pupils foster a positive classroom climate in which pupils are confident that their views will be listened to and respected. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are generally taught well but insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' independent writing skills in Years 1 and 2. There are good examples of information and communication technology being used well to support learning in English and mathematics.

In the best teaching, lessons are planned well and ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to succeed. Lesson introductions are used well to consolidate and build on pupils' previous learning and questions are skilfully framed to engage and challenge pupils of all abilities. Discussions at the close of lessons are used well to reinforce and extend what has been learned. In these lessons the teachers create and maintain a very good climate for learning and offer challenging activities which enable the pupils to achieve high standards. Where teaching is less successful, tasks do not challenge all pupils, the end of lesson discussions are not used effectively to consolidate learning and teachers' marking does not offer sufficient guidance to help pupils to improve their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: The school offers many learning opportunities There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. A good range of additional activities, including residential visits, is offered outside the school day.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: the support for pupils with special educational needs is carefully planned. It ensures that they are included in all activities and helps them to make good progress.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: the school successfully promotes pupils' personal development. It is very successful in developing their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' awareness of cultures beyond their own is limited. Further improvements are planned.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: teachers know their pupils very well. They provide very good educational and personal support. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are good.

The quality of relationships in the school is very good. The school has very effective links with parents. Parental satisfaction with the school is very strong.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: the headteacher's clear vision for continuous improvement is shared by staff and governors and they work well together towards a common purpose.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory: the governing body makes a sound contribution to shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: the school keeps a thorough check on how well it is doing. It makes good use of comparative information to help it devise more effective ways of working. This has a positive impact on the achievement of the pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Good: educational priorities are appropriately funded. Spending decisions are made according to the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The care and consideration shown to their children. • The good quality of the teaching. • The high expectations of work and behaviour. • The support for children's personal development. • The good leadership of the headteacher. • The strong partnership with parents. • Their children make good progress. • Their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no areas where parents felt that improvements are required.

Inspectors agree with the very positive views expressed by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils attain high standards in English, mathematics and science

1. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress along the 'stepping stones' which show the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that they need to learn during the Foundation Stage in order to achieve the early learning goals. They are well on their way to reaching or exceeding these goals in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. They are well-motivated, rapidly absorb new knowledge and extend their understanding as a result of the interesting curriculum and the good quality teaching they receive.
2. Pupils' results in the 2001 National Curriculum Tests for seven year-olds have surpassed previous results. Compared with all schools nationally, they were very high in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. In reading and writing, they were in the highest five per cent nationally.
3. Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' results were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has improved on the gains made last year and the results show a strong upward trend.
4. Pupils' performance at the higher level has also improved. In 2001, the percentage of pupils attaining level 3, which is above that expected of seven year-olds, was very high in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. In reading, they were in the highest five per cent nationally.
5. The results of the National Curriculum tests for eleven year-olds show that pupils have maintained consistently high standards over the past three years. In the National Curriculum tests for eleven year-olds in 2001, results were well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results were above average in English and mathematics, and average in science. The comparatively lower level in standards in 2001 was due to fewer pupils reaching the higher levels than in previous years. The trend in the school's results is broadly in line with the national trend.
6. When compared with all schools the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level, level 5 was well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. When compared with schools which take pupils with similar backgrounds, results were average in English and science, and just below average in mathematics. When compared with their results at the end of Year 2 these pupils have made very good progress in English, and good progress in mathematics and science.
7. Work seen during the inspection broadly reflects the national test results in English and science but indicates that more eleven-year-old pupils should attain the higher levels in mathematics this year. A significant majority of pupils in the present Year 6 class, for example, calculate accurately the specific percentage of a given sum of money and explain clearly how they reach the answer. In English, pupils' attainment is above average. Standards in speaking and listening are high throughout the school. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and contribute well to paired and class discussions. This is because teachers manage their pupils very well and take care to involve them in lessons. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils were given very good stimulus and encouragement to make a significant contribution to a class discussion about improvements to a playground. Year 6 pupils, highly motivated by the book 'I am David' by Anne Holme were very articulate when describing their responses to

David's experiences.

8. By the age of eleven, many pupils are enthusiastic readers who talk lucidly about the plots and characters in their favourite books. They use their knowledge of narrative forms to help them compose their own stories. Pupils in Year 3, for example demonstrate their good grasp of the features of traditional tales by using story language imaginatively to write sequels to 'Jack in the Beanstalk'. Pupils write for a variety of purposes and audiences and there are some good examples of pupils applying their writing skills in other subjects, in particular, history. In Year 6, most pupils use paragraphs to structure their writing and employ different types of sentence to good effect. The work of higher attaining pupils is grammatically correct and figurative language is used effectively to engage the reader.
9. By the age of seven, pupils read accurately from a range of fiction and non-fiction books. Most pupils are well supported at home. When reading in a literacy lesson they follow the text and understand its meaning. For example, pupils in Year 2 identify rhyming couplets and read the poem 'Shaun's Prawns' fluently and with good expression. Most pupils write in simple sentences, correctly punctuated and use their knowledge of sounds to spell simple words.
10. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well in mathematics. For example, they reliably add and subtract single numbers to 15 in their heads; the higher-attaining pupils work confidently with larger numbers and give good reasons why their answer is correct.
11. Pupils attain standards in science which are well above average by the age of seven and eleven. The pupils' knowledge and understanding are better than their skills of scientific enquiry. The school is aware of this and has rightly identified the teaching of investigations in science as a priority.

Children in the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and the Reception classes, make a good start to school.

12. The provision in all areas of learning is good. A wide range of imaginative and stimulating activities is offered, some initiated by the teachers and others which children choose for themselves. Planning and assessment procedures are thorough and the partnership between staff in the Foundation Stage is very good. The teaching is good and the children receive sensitive support from all staff. As a result, children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. By the time they leave the Reception classes, they are likely to have reached or exceeded the early learning goals in all areas of learning and some children will be working at the early stages of the National Curriculum.
13. The development of children's personal, social and emotional skills is a strength in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children have very good opportunities to become familiar with the staff and the surroundings of the Nursery before they are admitted during the year before their fourth birthday. They are, therefore, well prepared to start in the Nursery class feeling confident and secure. There is effective liaison between the teachers and children in the Nursery and the Reception classes. As a result, when the children transfer from the Nursery, they settle quickly into the routines of the school.

14. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of children making decisions for themselves in order to promote their growing independence. For example, group activities and the daily snack time in the Nursery are used to develop children's ability to make considered choices and to emphasise the importance of politeness and consideration for others. The children help to care for the environment and take pride in tidying away by themselves. Even the youngest children hang up their painting aprons carefully, wash and dry their hands and dispose of the towels sensibly. By the time they leave the Reception classes, the children demonstrate a very good level of maturity and independence for their age and this is shown as they confidently select their own activities and concentrate well on those initiated by adults. They show a good awareness of the needs of others; for example, in knowing how to take turns, to share equipment and to offer help when needed. There are good opportunities for children to show their feelings in a variety of situations, as seen during story-time and role-play when they respond with obvious enjoyment. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children play well together and have excellent relationships with the adults with whom they work. Staff have high expectations of their behaviour, based on respect and an awareness of the needs of others. As a result children's behaviour is very good and they have a clear sense of right and wrong. The children are eager to learn and to demonstrate what they can do. Their enjoyment of learning is apparent in all their work.
15. Children make a good start in developing their language skills. Great value is attached to talk and the children are encouraged to communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas. They experiment with, practise and apply their communication and language learning across a wide range of play and practical activities; for example, they make up their own stories and act them out in the role play areas. They enjoy looking at books and listen attentively to stories joining in with the parts they know and predicting what might happen next. In the Reception class, they join in with the parts they know when reading together. They read a good range of familiar words and take their reading books home regularly to share with their parents. They know most of the sounds that letters make and use this knowledge in their own writing. They write captions and labels successfully, holding a pencil correctly and forming letters with care.
16. The children have good opportunities to explore mathematical ideas in their work and play. Staff are good at exploiting opportunities to develop children's understanding of mathematics and encouraging the correct use of mathematical language in all aspects of their work. In the Nursery there is a strong emphasis on teaching counting and developing children's understanding of shape and comparative size. They use this knowledge effectively in the Reception class as they select appropriate clothing to dress dolls of different sizes. Most children count to 10 and many count beyond. They know how many there will be if there are one, two or three more or less and use 'more' or 'less' confidently to compare numbers. All the children know a good number of counting rhymes and songs that enhance their mathematical learning.

Good quality teaching and well-planned guidance from teaching assistants enable all pupils to learn effectively.

17. The quality of teaching throughout the school has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. It is now good. During this inspection, teaching throughout the school was assessed as excellent in just over a tenth of the lessons seen, very good in just over a fifth, good in almost half of the lessons, and satisfactory in the remaining fifth. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen.

Examples of good teaching in English and mathematics were observed throughout the school. In addition, high quality teaching was seen in these subjects in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2.

18. This good quality teaching is underpinned by the very good relationships between the staff and the pupils and the adults' sensitive use of praise. This promotes pupils' confidence and helps them to understand that they are valued and their contributions welcomed. Teachers plan their lessons well, identifying clearly what they want pupils of all abilities to learn. This is a measure of the school's commitment to continuing to raise standards. It is reflected in the high quality provision for information and communication technology which is used effectively to support pupils' learning. Teachers inform the pupils of their high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and work rate. As a result pupils know what they are to do and what is required of them. They successfully promote pupils' independence; for example, in a Year 6 information and communication technology lesson, pupils were encouraged to resolve their own difficulties and find their own solutions to the problems they were set. High expectations are sustained through effective questions which develop pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the teacher asked the pupils to reflect on their writing and consider how it could be improved by using alternative words and phrases. She then challenged them to say why they had made their choice and explain the difference it had made. Teachers make good use of pupils' contributions to consolidate basic skills. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher asked pupils to explain how they calculated their answers. She complimented them on doubling or halving amounts, and in demonstrating their understanding of the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages.
19. Teachers subject knowledge is good and in the best teaching, technical language is used confidently and teachers make work more demanding. Their insistence on pupils using the correct language helps to reinforce their learning as they improve the accuracy of their responses and display greater precision in the sequences they describe. For example, in Year 2, the teacher insisted that pupils explain what they were doing by using phrases such as 'increasing by ...', 'decreasing by ...' or 'counting on in ...'.
20. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and fully included in all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to set tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty. Staff make effective use of information and communication technology, carefully selecting programs to motivate pupils, to offer them structured practice and reinforce their learning. Teaching assistants offer good support and guidance, consequently, pupils achieve well and make good progress towards the appropriate targets set out in their well-constructed individual education plans.
21. Where teaching is less successful, tasks do not challenge all pupils, the end of lesson discussions are not used effectively to consolidate and extend learning and teachers' marking does not offer sufficient guidance to help pupils to improve their work.

The pupils' very good attitudes to school, their good behaviour and their very good attendance contribute significantly to their very good achievement.

22. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. The children settle very quickly into the Nursery and continue to grow in confidence as they move through the school. They are friendly and courteous and willing to talk to adults with whom they form very good relationships. The school has a strong family feeling with, for example, older pupils

looking after younger ones. Pupils are kind to each other, particularly, when one of them is seen to be distressed. They respond very well to their teachers; they enjoy their work and are keen to learn. From an early age, pupils work well both on their own and with one another, learning the skills of collaboration with the encouragement of the staff. They learn to listen carefully, follow instructions, wait for their turn, and work and play happily together.

23. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work. They take full advantage of the good quality teaching they receive and respond particularly well to the interesting and challenging activities which they are offered in many lessons. They respond to instructions promptly and willingly contribute their thoughts and ideas to class discussions. Pupils settle to work very well, usually sustaining very good levels of concentration for long periods of time. Younger pupils share resources, taking turns and helping others to find what they need. Older pupils work constructively in pairs discussing their work productively with one another; for example, when they are working at the computer.
24. The attendance rate is well above the national average and unauthorised absence is low. Pupils arrive promptly at school ready to begin their lessons. This regular and punctual attendance has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

The provision for pupils' personal development is good and this helps pupils to become mature and responsible.

25. The school welcomes all pupils and is successful in creating a strong Christian ethos which is firmly based on respect and care for others. It seeks to develop self-esteem in all its pupils and to promote mutual respect and responsibility. The school is an orderly community in which everyone is valued and the learning and participation of all pupils is central to its work. Staff work hard to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential.
26. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated into the school. Teachers take care to ensure that these pupils have equal access to every aspect of the curriculum. There is good liaison with their parents and with external agencies.
27. Staff encourage pupils to develop self-confidence and self-reliance and parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Pupils feel that the school is their community and they effectively contribute to its life. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of citizenship as older pupils learn to take responsibility for others and to discuss and negotiate new initiatives; for example, a change in school uniform so that all pupils may wear trousers. Pupils are further helped to develop an understanding of society by taking responsibility for routine tasks and assisting in assemblies; they respond well to this trust.
28. The quality of relationships between all members of the school community is very good. Members of staff and pupils show their mutual respect for one another and this contributes to the caring ethos within the school.

The headteacher's good leadership gives the school a clear educational direction.

29. The headteacher's clear vision for the improvement of school is shared by all staff and governors. There has been a strong focus on the raising of standards and the school's results over recent years have confirmed its success in this. The headteacher's teaching programme enables her to retain a clear understanding of the needs of pupils and staff. Her commitment to a supportive learning environment, which 'enables each child to succeed, to feel a sense of worth and values their variety

of talents', informs all aspects of the school's work. It is consolidated by the very good relationships between the parents and the school. The headteacher values the staff and governors and recognises their contributions are essential to the school's success. As a result they work together constructively for the good of the school. The good teamwork amongst all staff is helping to promote pupils' positive attitudes and improve their learning. The headteacher supports subject managers effectively and ensures they have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities. They advise their colleagues, monitor planning, examine pupils' work, observe classroom practice and offer demonstration lessons. This has helped raise the quality of teaching in recent years. To sustain success the headteacher encourages the staff to consult widely to help them refine their ideas. Consequently, their priorities are relevant and manageable. They are helped in this through the headteacher's regular meetings with the chair of governors and the local authority inspector. This is further reinforced in the annual reports presented to the governing body by the subject managers of English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education.

The school has very good links with parents which make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.

30. Parents are very satisfied with the education provided by the school and the progress made by their children. They report, for example, that their children like coming to school and that their behaviour is good. They consider that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. Almost all parents believe the teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. They appreciate the help their children are given to become mature and responsible. The very positive views of parents are endorsed by the findings of the inspection.
31. Staff have very good relationships with parents. Most parents feel that the school works closely with them and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or concerns. This can be seen as parents and carers deliver and collect their children from the playground and exchange information informally about their children. The induction programmes in the Nursery and Reception class play an important part in building a bridge between home and school.
32. The range of information provided for parents, such as the school prospectus, regular newsletters and the governors' annual report to parents is comprehensive and well presented. Parents are given an outline of work to be covered in school, as well as work they can do at home in order to support their children. Pupils' annual reports give useful information about their progress and include comments on what they need to do to improve. The school holds two parents' evenings each year when parents are involved in reviewing and setting targets for their children.
33. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their child's progress. They are involved in regular reviews of provision and the school carefully considers their views when making decisions about their children. Their attendance at these reviews is very good and close links with external agencies help underpin the high quality provision for these pupils.
34. The staff value the contribution parents make and the impact of parental involvement on pupils' learning is very good. The number of parent helpers in school is impressive and they are used effectively to support group activities and to accompany pupils on educational visits. A particularly strong feature of the school's partnership with parents is the training it provides for them; for example, in information and communication technology. The involvement of parents enriches school life and enhances children's learning. The Parents', Teachers' and Friends' Association

raises funds for the school and organises social events to raise money for charity.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The range of independent writing at Key Stage 1 should be improved.

35. Although pupils' results in writing have been well above the national average and much better than those of similar schools over several years, standards in writing of seven year-olds are weaker than those in reading and mathematics. This reflects the national trend. There is a lack of sufficiently well-planned opportunities for pupils to write independently and too few tasks are designed for them to apply and extend their independent writing skills in other subjects. Planning does not always identify the skills that are to be taught in order for progress to be made in writing; for example, writing effective openings or using adjectives to enhance settings. As a result, skills are not developed sufficiently or systematically. Pupils lack familiarity with a range of writing so that they can adapt their writing to suit the audience and purpose; for example, instructions, explanations, recounts and poetry. During the inspection too little writing was seen that reflects pupils' individuality and creativity.

Further planned opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures than their own should be included in the curriculum.

36. The school offers many good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture and traditions through their work in history and geography, through visits to interesting places and by welcoming visitors into school. However, it is less effective in promoting cultural diversity in order to prepare pupils to live in a multi-ethnic society. Although pupils are developing an increasing awareness of different religious beliefs through their work in religious education their knowledge of other cultures and traditions is weak. There is little evidence of the contributions of other cultures to world developments included in the curriculum. The school is aware of these shortcomings and has useful plans to overcome them.

There is inconsistency in the quality of marking across the school.

37. There are very good examples in the school of teachers' marking offering useful guidance to pupils to help them improve their work. This marking gives pupils written feedback. It confirms pupils' attainment or informs them about what they can do to develop their understanding of the task. In other instances the teacher identifies targets for the pupils' future learning. This practice links directly with the school's procedures for the setting of longer-term targets. It also stresses the school's commitment to raising standards and, for the pupils, it confirms the school's higher expectation of their performance. However, this is not consistent practice across the school. The emphasis is on monitoring pupils' work to ensure it has been completed and acknowledging this with a tick and, on occasion, an encouraging phrase. In these circumstances, teachers are not recording advice for pupils to help them recognise what they should do to improve their work, or acknowledging where they have made improvements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

38. In order to build upon its considerable strengths and to improve standards further, the school should:

Improve the range of independent writing at Key Stage 1 by:

- ensuring that pupils are familiar with a range of writing and providing opportunities for them to practice their developing skills;
- planning purposes and opportunities for writing that are linked to other activities across the curriculum.

Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about cultures other than their own by:

- planning opportunities for pupils to learn about the contribution of other cultures in all areas of the curriculum.

Improve the consistency of marking across the school by:

- ensuring that the good practice that exists in the school is shared by all staff.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	4	9	4	0	0	0
Percentage	11	21	47	21	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	210
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	25

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	20	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	12
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	30	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (96)	94 (96)	100 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	12
	Girls	20	19	19
	Total	29	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (89)	94 (86)	97 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	20	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	17
	Girls	20	18	20
	Total	34	35	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (100)	95 (100)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	17
	Girls	20	17	20
	Total	34	32	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (100)	86 (100)	100 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	180
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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	115

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	426,897
Total expenditure	422,255
Expenditure per pupil	1,594
Balance brought forward from previous year	64,800
Balance carried forward to next year	69,442

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	234
Number of questionnaires returned	105

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	18	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	74	25	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	75	25	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	36	7	0	10
The teaching is good.	79	21	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	32	5	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	12	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	24	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	66	30	2	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	89	8	0	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	24	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	30	4	0	18