

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST POLYCARP'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Farnham

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125206

Headteacher: Mr L Henry

Reporting inspector: Elisabeth de Lancey  
22272

Dates of inspection: 15-16 January 2001

Inspection number: 192990

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
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Waverley Lane Farnham Surrey
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Peter Rawlinson
Date of previous inspection:	27-30 <sup>th</sup> January 1997

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Polycarp's Catholic Primary School is a denominational school situated in the small town of Farnham catering for 383 pupils between the ages of four and eleven. It is bigger than most other primary schools. It serves 13 parishes in the two dioceses of Portsmouth, and Arundel and Brighton. Most pupils travel to school by car or coach. Unemployment is low and three per cent of pupils are known to be for free school meals, which is below the national average. The pupils are organised into 14 single-age classes. Children join the reception classes in the autumn term following their fourth birthday. At the time of the inspection 36 of the children were under five. Almost all of these children benefit from some form of pre-school education. The children's attainment on entry represents a spread of ability but is above average overall. Fifty-seven pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is about average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs, this number is below average. Of the three per cent of pupils who speak English as an additional language, which is slightly higher than in most schools, only one pupil is at an early stage of language acquisition.

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

This very successful school provides a very good education for all its pupils. A high proportion of very good teaching enables pupils to make very good progress and attain high standards by the time they leave the school. The school has effective strategies to promote educational inclusion and equal opportunities for all pupils. It makes good provision for gifted and talented pupils through its partnerships with local institutions. Pupils with special educational needs receive well-structured support which enables them to make good progress and achieve well. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and key staff. The governing body fulfils statutory requirements responsibly. There is a strong commitment to maintaining successful practice and raising standards further. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics and science and attain very high standards by the time they leave the school.
- High quality teaching enables all pupils to learn effectively.
- The very good provision for children in the Foundation Stage gives them an effective basis for future learning.
- Very good leadership and management give the school a clear educational direction; the school looks carefully at how it can improve and plans effectively to raise standards.
- The school provides a rich curriculum which is enhanced by a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, including educational visits and visitors to school, fosters pupils' excellent personal development.

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

As identified by the school:

- Standards in writing at both key stages need to be raised further.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils' progress in the acquisition of investigative skills in science needs to be accelerated.
- Throughout the school, the quality of educational provision in information and communication technology should be raised further.

*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 January 1997. Since then its very good improvement has included consolidating its strengths and developing in other areas, including all those identified as weaknesses. Pupils now make very good progress and high academic standards have been maintained. Teaching has improved, largely as a result of a good programme of professional development. Day-to-day assessment is incorporated into teachers' planning and pupils have equal access to design and technology and physical education. The headteacher's role in the monitoring of teaching has been extended. In response to the key issues identified in the last report the school has made very good progress. It has strong procedures to judge its own strengths and weaknesses and is, therefore, well placed to sustain high performance.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A*	A*	A
mathematics	A	A*	A	A
science	A	A*	A	A

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

In the 2000 national tests for 11 year olds, pupils' results in English, mathematics and science were well above average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. In English, they were in the highest five per cent of all schools. Pupils achieve particularly well at the higher level in all subjects. These high standards have been maintained for several years and the trend over the last four years has been above that seen nationally. It is a strength of the school that these high standards have been maintained over several years. The school has set appropriately challenging targets in English and mathematics for the future and is on course to meet them.

In the 2000 national tests for 7 year olds, pupils' results in reading were well above average when compared to all and similar schools. In writing, they were average when compared with all schools nationally but below average when compared with similar schools. In mathematics, they were well above average when compared with all schools and above average when compared to similar schools. Although, there was a slight dip in writing in 2000, trends over time indicate that the performance of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics exceed those found nationally. At both key stages, pupils' results in writing are weaker than those in reading.

Analysis of work during the inspection confirms that pupils achieve well and standards in reading, mathematics and science are very high but there is scope for further improvement in writing, and in the use of writing in other subjects of the curriculum at Key Stage 1. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and exceed the learning goal in all areas of learning. The differences in the performances of boys and girls match the national trends.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils are eager to come to school and they are enthusiastic about their work. This makes a significant contribution to their progress and attainment.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: the school is an orderly community. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent: pupils take responsibility for their own actions and respect the rights and needs of others. Relationships are excellent throughout the school.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. It is in line with the national average.

Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning, their excellent personal development and relationships with staff and each other make a strong contribution to their achievements.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Of the lessons seen, 100 per cent were satisfactory or better, 38 per cent were good, 43 per cent were very good and ten per cent were excellent. Examples of excellent teaching were observed in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2. The teaching of English was very good overall, and in mathematics it was good. The high quality of much of the teaching observed makes a significant contribution to the rate at which pupils have acquired new knowledge, developed their understanding, learned additional skills and maintained high standards. Strengths in the teaching include the very high expectations teachers have of their pupils, the very good relationships all staff sustain with pupils, the effectiveness of their teaching methods and the opportunities teachers provide for pupils to work independently. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop these skills across the curriculum. The school is successful in meeting the needs of all its pupils. Effective teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants for pupils with special educational needs and very good opportunities for gifted and talented pupils secures the progress of these pupils and ensures their inclusion. Pupils have good knowledge of their learning and they achieve well. They are keen to learn, to explore new ideas and to talk about their work. They work hard, persevere with challenging tasks and develop good skills in independent learning.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: throughout the school the pupils follow a rich curriculum which is broad and balanced. It satisfies the requirements for literacy and numeracy whilst giving pupils good access to other subjects. It is challenging for higher-attaining pupils. Extra-curricular provision is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: Effective teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants secures the consistent progress of these pupils and ensures their inclusion.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: the school promotes a climate within which pupils are encouraged to understand right from wrong, to take responsibility for their own actions and understand the viewpoints and experiences of others, including those from other cultures. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills which have a positive impact on their achievements.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: this is a caring school where pupils' well-being is central and reflected in all of its work.

The school enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers and maintains good relationships with them. The school and parents and carers work effectively in partnership to promote pupils' learning.

The curriculum is enriched by the very good quality provision for educational visits, instrumental tuition, competitive sports and through visitors to the school. There is a good programme for developing pupils' personal, social and health education.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: the leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff give a clear educational direction; the school looks carefully at how it can improve and plans effectively to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: governors fulfil all their statutory obligations responsibly. They are actively involved in strategic planning and are effective in helping to manage the school's continuing success. They carefully consider the cost effectiveness of their decisions and adhere to the principles of best value.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: The school has very effective systems in place to monitor pupils' academic and personal development and the quality of teaching. It uses the information well to consolidate its strengths and identify areas that need further improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: the school makes very effective use of its resources.

The school is very well managed. The senior management team plays a positive role in leading the work of other teachers. The governing body takes an active part in the school's development. Subject co-ordinators are involved in evaluating the quality of the curriculum and the quality of teaching and their findings are used well to help teachers improve their good practice and identify their training needs. The school applies the government's principles for best value.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are happy at school.</li> <li>• The attitudes and values the school promotes enhance the children's personal development.</li> <li>• School trips and visits are varied and provide excellent learning opportunities for the children.</li> <li>• They are very satisfied with the progress their children make and the standards they achieve.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The arrangements for providing information to parents about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The range of after-school clubs, especially for younger pupils.</li> </ul>

The large majority of responses made by parents who returned a questionnaire or attended the meeting prior to the inspection were very positive about the school. The findings of the inspection team support these positive views. The school expects the children to work hard. Teaching is very good and pupils make very good progress in their learning. Children are very positive about the school and they are mature caring and considerate. Pupils of all ages gain valuable learning experiences from the wide range of educational visits. The school holds parent consultations termly; if parents wish to see another teacher about their child's progress, the school arranges such additional meetings on request.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Pupils make very good progress and attain very high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school.**

1. Pupils' attainment on entry to the reception class is generally above average. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress during their time in school and attain results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 which are well above average compared with all and similar schools in English, mathematics and science. In English, pupils' results are in the highest five per cent of all schools nationally. Pupils achieve particularly well at the higher level. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining level 5, which is above that expected of pupils aged 11, was well above the average compared with all schools and similar schools. It is a strength of the school that these high standards have been maintained over several years. The improvement over the last four years in English, mathematics and science is at a higher rate than that seen nationally. Similarly high standards were evident in the work seen during the inspection. This reflects the high quality of much of the teaching observed. Appropriately challenging targets have been set for the future and pupils are on course to achieve these targets.
2. The school's results in the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. When compared to similar schools, the results were well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and below average in writing. The results in writing were lower than those in previous years. The higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this cohort may account for these weaker results. Pupils achieve particularly well in reading and mathematics. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching level 3, which is above the level expected of pupils aged seven, was well above average in reading and above average in mathematics. Similarly high standards were evident in the work seen in reading and mathematics during the inspection. Standards were below average in writing, but inspection findings suggest that a minority of pupils are achieving higher standards this year. Trends over the last four years indicate that the performance of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics exceed the average.
3. The school has taken action to improve further the standards that the pupils attained in 2000. Through its monitoring procedures, it has identified those pupils who would benefit from extra support. Classroom assistants are deployed effectively to secure maximum inclusion for all pupils. Some have been trained to use the Additional Literacy Support materials to help lower-attaining pupils achieve higher standards in reading and writing. The staff use these structured teaching materials well to help these pupils improve their work.
4. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate very good skills in speaking and listening. They are very confident and articulate and speak with clarity and enjoyment in formal and informal situations. As they move through the school, they listen with growing attention and concentration. They sustain more prolonged conversations, make mature contributions to class discussions and learn to adapt their increasing vocabulary in response to different situations. Pupils share ideas, offer advice to one another and show respect for the opinions of others. They present their work well at the end of lessons. The teachers encourage pupils to use appropriate, specialist vocabulary and this has a positive effect on pupils' ability to express themselves

accurately and to use language effectively to explain, enquire and compare.

5. Pupils' reading skills are very strong. Enthusiasm for reading is evident in pupils of all ages. Younger pupils talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors and illustrators. They enjoy reading books by Anthony Browne, Anne Fine and Roald Dahl. In Key Stage 2, pupils read a very good range of popular and classic fiction, by Edith Nesbitt, Louisa Alcott, Dick King-Smith, Charles Dickens, and Philip Pullman. They talk articulately about their favourite authors and why they like or dislike particular books. They are anticipating the next Harry Potter book eagerly; many listened to the broadcast of the most recent book and await the film with great interest. One pupil gave a clear account of why he preferred his father's reading of the book to the broadcast version. Pupils talk critically about differences between books and their film versions such as *The Secret Garden*, *Matilda* and *A Hundred and One Dalmatians* and express their preferences clearly. Many parents give valuable support by reading regularly with their children and this has a positive impact upon standards. Older pupils' understanding of more advanced texts is good. In a Year 6 lesson, the higher attaining pupils showed a good grasp of the main features of the opening chapter of *Nicholas Nickleby* and used their knowledge imaginatively as a basis for writing their own 'Victorian' stories.
6. Pupils' research skills develop well; at Key Stage 2 they make good use of dictionaries and thesauruses. They understand the purpose of the contents, index and glossary. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are confident using the Dewey decimal system.
7. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident and competent at handling numbers and they perform quickly and accurately in the mental mathematics sessions. Their mathematical understanding is effectively developed through a well-structured, integrated approach with good opportunities for them to work in groups and to undertake investigations. They divide decimals accurately to two places by 10, 100 and 1000 and are confident explaining how they calculate and identifying the methods they have used when solving problems. In Year 2, they use their knowledge of addition and subtraction to solve problems involving money and higher-attaining pupils add and subtract two digit numbers to 30. They readily explain number relations and patterns and use basic number facts appropriately.
8. Pupils have a very good scientific knowledge and understanding across the science curriculum. The school's recent emphasis on developing investigative work in science helps pupils use their scientific knowledge effectively while developing good experimental skills.
9. High standards in literacy and numeracy contribute effectively to the very good quality of pupils' learning across the curriculum. These skills are developed successfully in other subjects, which in turn, help to develop and refine those skills. In history, pupils read and write reports and dramatise plays; in science, they use their tabulation and graphical skills to record the results of experiments and in design and technology, pupils' weighing and measuring skills are used to prepare ingredients for biscuits and to make slippers. However, at Key Stage 1 standards in writing in other subjects are weaker than those in English.
10. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress towards the appropriate targets set for them. This is because the teachers plan their work carefully and, in close collaboration with the classroom assistants, provide good support for each of the pupils.

## High quality teaching enables all pupils to learn effectively.

11. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection; all areas of weakness identified then have been overcome. The successful implementation of comprehensive monitoring procedures to judge the effectiveness of both teaching and learning have helped staff in raising the quality of educational provision. Teaching is now very good throughout the school. During the current inspection, teaching was judged excellent in ten per cent of lessons, very good in 43 per cent, good in 38 per cent and satisfactory in the remaining nine per cent. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in the Foundation Stage and in English in Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This high quality teaching is the most important contributing factor to the rate at which pupils acquire new knowledge, develop understanding, learn additional skills and maintain high standards. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently very good. Throughout the school the teaching quality in English is very good, overall, and in mathematics, good.
12. Teachers are clear about what they want their pupils to learn. Their planning is very good and lessons are carefully designed to build on pupils' knowledge and understanding and develop their learning. Teachers have very high expectations of all their pupils and they consistently require them to do their best. They ensure pupils remain aware of this by reminding them, and through the challenging work they set, the probing questions they pose and the appropriate oral and written feedback they give to help pupils complete their work successfully. As a result of this well-structured approach, pupils have a clear understanding of their own work, how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. This is underpinned by the teachers setting of appropriate individual targets for pupils and by their requiring pupils to make their own considered and relevant self-evaluations of their work. Teachers relate well to their pupils, they use praise sensitively and openly value pupils' contributions, and, when necessary, discretely admonish errant behaviour. Therefore, pupils are highly motivated and confident tackling new tasks. Teachers group pupils carefully and give clear instructions for interesting activities which are well matched to the full range of pupils' abilities. They conduct their lessons at a brisk pace and use a good variety of teaching styles which strike a suitable balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to work independently. Consequently, throughout lessons pupils concentrate on their work, and pupils of all abilities make good gains in their learning.
13. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. All staff make good use of the school's 'Red Files' to exchange information, update records and ensure that pupils' work is well tailored to their individual needs. These pupils receive well-structured help from teachers and support staff and they have access to all areas of the curriculum. Planning ensures that additional help for the pupils does not undermine their participation in all aspects of school life. As a result, the pupils achieve well and make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual educational plans.
14. Teachers make very good use of pupils' previous learning to shape engaging introductions to their lessons which draw effectively on pupils' contributions. For example, in the Foundation Stage, a teacher ensures that all the children participate in recalling the story of *The Gingerbread Man* by selecting specific children to develop the story or correctly repeat recurrent passages. To ensure pupils understand what is expected of them, teachers explain carefully each lesson's purpose and the work pupils will be doing. In Year 1, a teacher insists that lower-attaining pupils describe, in

some detail, how they calculate their answers and demonstrate how their methods may be used in new situations. Teachers use learning resources well to develop new concepts. For example, a Year 2 teacher draws effectively on the familiar story *Red Riding Hood* to explore the notion of character profiles. She sets high standards by asking pupils to give evidence from the story to support their opinions. Consequently, pupils identify relevant information and organise it appropriately to justify their views.

15. Teachers use group work effectively to promote pupils' reflections on their own work and that of others. In Year 3, a teacher's encouragement helps pupils assess confidently their own work and that of their partners as they each develop a sequence of movements. Consequently, pupils make good progress in refining their control of their actions. Teachers are successful in supporting pupils' learning of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. For example, in Year 4, a teacher reinforced spelling rules by modelling their use and sounding out letter combinations to help pupils with their own identified spelling needs. Individual improvement is a central focus of the school's teaching. In a Year 5 art and design lesson, by discussing colour, texture and shape, a teacher increases pupils' understanding of aesthetics. Thereby, she helps individuals to make informed selections of materials to express their carefully-considered designs. In their best literacy lessons, teachers select interesting books to develop pupils reading and writing skills. In Year 6, for example, pupils reading *Tom's Midnight Garden* develop their imaginative and analytical abilities by describing Tom's fears and feelings as he moves between time zones.

**The very good provision for children in the Foundation Stage gives them an effective basis for future learning.**

16. Children make a very good start to their education. They enter the reception class with a wide range of experiences and skills. The provision in all areas of learning is very good. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, most children achieve well and exceed the early learning goals in all areas of learning and are working at the early stages of the National Curriculum. Children are helped to reach these standards by the high quality teaching and the good adult support they receive.
17. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. The children demonstrate a very good level of maturity and independence for their age and this is shown as they move from one activity to another and in the relationships between the children. They are sensitive to the needs of others. For example one child, unprompted, explained sensibly to a new entrant what was expected during a gymnastics lesson.
18. The children are positive, eager to learn and to demonstrate what they can do. Their enjoyment of learning is apparent in all their work. They have a good understanding of class routines, sitting quickly and quietly on the carpet so that they make a prompt start to their lesson. They are polite, put up their hands to answer questions and take turns to speak or when sharing equipment. They are fully involved in all their activities and are becoming more independent when changing for physical activity or when choosing resources. They answer their teachers confidently and clearly during registration. Their behaviour is excellent.
19. The quality of teaching is very good and the personal, social and emotional development of children is given a high priority. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce good social interaction and to provide co-operative working activities; for instance, when playing in small groups in the role-play areas. All the staff have very high expectations of the children and they respond well. Classroom rules are clearly

understood and all children know exactly what is expected of them. The work areas are very well organised and resources are easily accessible; consequently, children develop independence and good work habits. The very good relationships between the teachers, the classroom assistants and the children contribute significantly to the positive learning atmosphere in the reception classes.

20. Children make very good progress in communication, language and literacy through well-planned activities related to the appropriate objectives in the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and through the language-rich environment of the reception classes. The children experiment with, practise and apply their communication and language learning across a wide range of play and practical activities. They develop very good skills in speaking and listening. For example, they listen well to their teachers giving instructions, explaining procedures and reading stories. They recall the stories they have heard accurately, sequencing events correctly and describing characters and their actions well. Most children form letters correctly and write their names accurately. All the children recognise and order the letters of the alphabet and know the sound they make. They demonstrate their knowledge of alphabetical order by answering the register in reverse order, sorting the railcards at the railway station, and the passports in the travel agents. After reading the story of *The Gingerbread Man*, higher-attaining children know that *cat* comes before *children* and *children* before *cow*. These children also write stories with simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation appropriately, and they apply their knowledge of sounds to spell regular words accurately. They read a good range of familiar words and take their reading books home regularly to share with their parents.
21. Teaching in this area is very good. Role-play areas are linked effectively to the class topic 'Journeys' and are imaginatively planned to encourage children to exchange ideas, develop their communication skills and enhance their knowledge and understanding of the world. In one class, children book holidays in the travel agents. In the other they re-create Farnham Station, recording voice-overs for the station's loudspeaker and stopping, starting and winding back the tape recorder to play the announcements. Literacy lessons are well planned and delivered against identified objectives. Opportunities to develop children's language are fully exploited. Good use is made of 'Big Books' and of a flip chart to model reading and writing, and ensure that all the children are involved and participate in reading and writing activities. Very good attention is given to developing children's phonic skills through interactive games that encourage them to listen. Pupils' reading and writing benefits from the display of stimulating language materials, such as labels, captions, vocabulary lists and 'class' books which include examples of children's writing. The author focus, for example Alan and Janet Ahlberg, encourages children to read widely.
22. The children make very good progress in mathematics. Their mathematical understanding is developed through a wide range of enjoyable, practical activities that support the teaching and learning of mathematics. These activities encourage them to count, to sort, to match and to work with numbers, shapes, space and measures. The children count at least to ten and many continue counting to much higher numbers. Most children combine two groups of numbers to find the total as they develop an understanding of addition, and of more and less. They use mathematical language confidently; for example, they know that you need different currencies to travel to different countries and that you read a timetable to find the most convenient train.
23. The teaching of mathematics is very good. Mathematics sessions are well planned, suitably challenging and good use is made of resources to help children understand.

The teachers' sense of enthusiasm makes learning fun, and children are keen to take part in practical activities; for example, when they divide ten cubes to see how many different combinations will add up to ten. Good class management promotes a good working atmosphere in which all children are actively engaged and fully involved. Staff are good at exploiting opportunities in daily routines, when giving out drinks, for example, to encourage children to solve simple problems such as 'How many more cups do we need?'

24. The teachers are very effective in planning a curriculum for the Foundation Stage which promotes the early learning goals and the inclusion of all children. Classroom assistants are well briefed and make a valuable contribution to the children's learning by focusing on individual or groups of children, helping them to work and understand activities, asking questions to support their thinking and reinforcing specific vocabulary. The staff provide a rich learning environment in which children are encouraged to explore, express and communicate their ideas.

**Very good leadership and management give the school a clear educational direction; the school looks carefully at how it can improve and plans effectively to raise standards.**

25. Drawing on the positive organisation structures identified at the last inspection the headteacher and key staff have developed and refined their management procedures and addressed completely the key issues set out in the inspection report. In particular, they have improved the quality of educational provision throughout the school. Their very good leadership and their valued relationships with the well-informed and active governing body have secured strong partnerships of respected colleagues. The team spirit within and between the staff and governors underpins the school's successful drive for the attainment and maintenance of high standards. It also supports key staff in their annual review of their subjects and in their identification of relevant priorities for development.
26. The headteacher's decisive leadership in establishing an effective system for the monitoring of teaching and learning has been of particular importance in raising standards. Well-structured classroom observations with immediate and considered feedback to staff lie at the heart of this comprehensive evaluation programme. Its explicit aim to continually improve pupils' learning is understood fully by all staff and governors and each is clear about their role in this programme. All subject co-ordinators share responsibility for the monitoring of all aspects of teaching in their own subject area. They review teachers' planning, scrutinise pupils' work, analyse test results and participate in a well-judged timetable to observe classroom practice. Subject co-ordinators are not required to set out their action plans to an agreed format and some clarity is lost in how they will be monitored against agreed criteria. Governors monitor teaching quality through detailed termly reports from the headteacher and the outcome of visits from local authority consultants. This latter group has an integral role in assisting the school in assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of its systems through joint classroom observation and gauging improvement over time. This is good practice. The school's successful preparations for, and introduction and review of literacy and numeracy are indicative of the success of the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures to improve pupils' learning.
27. Governors meet all their statutory obligations and those with defined tasks carry them out appropriately, drawing usefully on their broad personal and professional expertise. Many are fully involved in the life of the school while others are frequent visitors. They make good use of their time in school, and after designated visits governors report



back to the governing body to help in the development and review of policy and practice. They see their role in overseeing standards and that which they sensitively term 'objective friend' as integral to these processes. They attach special importance to consultation and have established clear procedures to engage staff and parents, and, through the former, the pupils. These procedures are an inclusive part of the governors' active involvement in strategic planning and on which they draw productively for ideas and proposals. The current year's plan is discussed at the governors' annual meeting with parents and copies are distributed to all families. This is good practice. Strategic planning is not publicised as widely; for example, subject co-ordinators' long-term plans are not summarised within the publicised school development plan. Consequently, the school's current initiatives are not set out within the longer-range developments which have been agreed and planned, and of which they are a part. Overall, very good leadership and management by key staff and the active support of governors ensure a clear commitment to educational improvement.

**The school provides a rich curriculum which is enhanced by a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, including educational visits and visitors to school, fosters pupils' excellent personal development.**

28. The school provides a rich curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant and successfully promotes the intellectual, physical, moral, social and personal development of all its pupils: girls and boys, those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and those who are gifted or talented. It complies with statutory requirements and meets the school aims. The staff implement the guidance in the literacy and numeracy frameworks effectively and they have developed good strategies for teaching the key skills identified in each of them. A particular emphasis needs to be placed on developing pupils' writing skills which are weaker than their skills in speaking, listening, reading and mathematics. Teachers generally provide good opportunities for pupils to improve both their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
29. Curricular planning is very good. Planning for children in the Foundation Stage integrates successfully with the early stages of the National Curriculum and takes account of those children who are ready to make further progress in their work. All policies are in place and reflect the school's aims. They are supported by well-constructed schemes of work, based on national guidelines and have relevant objectives which reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum. The staff use the detailed objectives in the frameworks for teaching literacy and numeracy and plan the pupils' work appropriately. The school's schemes of work provide a very clear framework for planning and give good guidance to teachers. They identify the progression of skills and understanding to be developed in each subject as pupils move through the school. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
30. There is good provision for gifted and talented pupils and the curriculum takes account of these pupils' needs. In Year 6, the school selects its most able pupils in science to be taught each week by a science specialist from a local secondary school. Pupils with a particular aptitude in art attend additional classes run by a subject specialist. In addition to occasional extra-curricular classes at school, gifted pupils are encouraged to attend classes in English, mathematics and science at local institutions. Musically-talented pupils have extra tuition from peripatetic teachers and these pupils have opportunities to play in the school band and take the music exams of a national college.

31. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are good procedures for identifying such pupils at an early stage in their education. Individual educational plans are written for all pupils on each appropriate stage of the special needs register and contain relevant short-term targets linked to suitable strategies. Very good teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants secures the progress of these pupils and ensures their inclusion. Provision fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice and statutory reporting requirements.
32. The school is fully committed to equal opportunities and has regard to all statutory requirements. The staff ensure that all pupils have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum including design and technology and physical education. Teachers plan work to provide for the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented. They are concerned to develop pupils' abilities whether academic, artistic or sporting. The school encourages girls and boys to take part in all activities. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy equal access to the whole curriculum and the full range of the school's activities; this is enhanced by the high quality of the support from classroom assistants.
33. The curriculum is further enhanced by a broad programme of educational visits which makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development. There is a very good extra-curricular programme, which includes art, sporting, musical, dance and drama activities and a French club. Pupils have worthwhile opportunities to develop their special interests and talents: in sport, through clubs and competitive team games and in music, through a wide range of instrumental tuition including violins, guitars and recorders. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to perform with others and they develop a good sense of audience and occasion. The school is proud of its Christmas productions in which all pupils take part. Pupils participate in liturgical celebrations, carol concerts and Christingle services. The school choir sang at the Anvil Theatre, Basingstoke and at the Albert Hall. Pupils have also attended performances by 'Shakespeare 4 Kids' and 'The Polka Theatre' in London. There is a rich programme of educational visits,

including residential visits to the Isle of Wight in Year 5 and to an outdoor activity centre in Year 6. These opportunities enhance the curriculum and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.

34. As a result of this very good provision the pupils develop very positive and mature attitudes. They are welcoming to visitors, friendly and polite. Relationships are excellent throughout the school, pupils are caring and considerate towards others. This is seen in the way in which older pupils interact with younger pupils and look after them, and pupils with special educational needs are integrated into the class. Pupils support one another well for example, they work effectively in pairs and small groups during science lessons and play amicably together in the small playground. A wide range of adults work within the school and their mutual respect sets a very good example to the pupils. The pupils know right from wrong and understand the implication of their actions upon others. They are keen to accept responsibility and carry out a number of routine tasks with enthusiasm and efficiency; for example taking registers to the office and helping in the school library. The school emphasises the need for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. They set appropriate targets with their teachers, persevere when presented with challenging work, and assess their own work. For example, they discuss their performances during physical education lessons and compile written evaluations of their own work after history topics. Through regular homework tasks, pupils develop good levels of initiative and personal responsibility. Personal development is further promoted through the school's effective implementation of its personal, social and health policy.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

### Standards in writing at both key stages need to be raised further.

35. At the end of Key Stage 2, results in the 2000 national tests show that the proportion of pupils who did not reach the national average was higher in writing than in reading and mathematics. Whilst almost three-quarters of the pupils attained level 5 in reading, less than a quarter attained this standard in writing.
36. Although standards in English at Key Stage 2 are well above the average compared with both all schools nationally and similar all schools, inspection findings confirm that standards in writing are not as high as standards in reading and they could be higher.
37. At the end of Key Stage 1, results in the 2000 tests show that the proportion of pupils who reached the national average in writing was much lower in writing than in reading. Whilst the proportion who reached level 2 was close to the average when compared with all schools nationally, it was below average when compared to similar schools. Pupils performed well in reading, with more than half of the pupils attaining level 3, but only three per cent attained this level in writing, which is below the national average and the average for similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that a few pupils are working at the higher level this year.
38. The staff and governors are committed to raising standards in writing. It is a priority in the school development plan. They have drawn up a comprehensive plan for the monitoring of standards. The subject co-ordinator has examined the English test papers carefully and has analysed strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance to inform future teaching. There is a planned programme for staff development which includes the sharing of good practice, participation on courses such as 'The National Literacy Strategy-Grammar for Writing', observing the county's leading teachers of literacy and support from local authority consultants. The school has reviewed its approach to the teaching of writing conventions, styles and genres, and pupils benefit from a sound range and balance of writing experiences across the curriculum. The school is giving greater emphasis to the teaching of writing both within the Literacy Hour and in other subjects. Inspection findings suggest that this approach is helping to improve the quality of pupils' writing. For example, in one excellent lesson, after sharing the objectives with the class, the teacher read an extract from the opening chapter of *Nicholas Nickleby* using a large version of the text projected on to a screen. The pupils were then asked to say how the author had used dialogue to reveal facts about the characters. Lastly, the teacher directed the pupils to look at the way Dickens punctuated dialogue and the quality of the reporting phrases. Their understanding of the conventions for punctuating dialogue and the importance of the quality of the reporting phrases on the impact of speech were reinforced as pupils applied this knowledge to edit their shared writing. During their group work the pupils worked in pairs to write their plans for their stories set in Victorian times. There were some good examples of pupils using dialogue effectively to set the scene at the beginning of their writing:

*'It's Sam, Sam, the mustard man,' bellowed Sam, as he entered the Fortescue House.*

Their writing showed that they were using adjectives and adverbs imaginatively for description and the higher attaining pupils used language very effectively to create a sense of period. This example illustrates features of good practice which exist in the school and is making a positive contribution to improving pupils' writing.

39. Where standards of work were not so high, the links between reading and writing were not sufficiently clear; the features and layout of a text were not made explicit, and there was insufficient direct guidance and support for the majority of pupils to write confidently and to reflect these features in their own writing.
40. There are some very good examples of higher-attaining pupils using the themes and structures of good quality texts as a basis for writing and of pupils using the editing process effectively to improve their work. All pupils write for a range of purposes and use their writing skills well in other subjects, in particular history. Higher-attaining pupils understand the language conventions and grammatical features of different types of text. However, in order to improve their work, the majority of pupils need to strengthen the balance of narrative, plot and description in their stories and to use a more varied sentence structure. Standards of presentation are generally good. There is a clear progression in the development of handwriting skills, but the spelling skills of lower-attaining pupils are weak.
41. At Key Stage 1, the teachers link writing tasks effectively to reading activities and pupils deepen their understanding of the key features through the use of 'Big Books' for class discussion. Collaborative writing, where the teacher acts as a scribe is also effective in developing pupils' writing. Pupils are developing a sound understanding of story structure and character and are learning to differentiate between description and qualities. Most pupils write in simple sentences but they need to increase the length and range of their sentences and develop their vocabulary in order to improve their work. A few higher-attaining pupils are using dialogue effectively to move the narrative forward, for example:

*After Red Riding Hood's mummy had packed the basket, she said  
'Take this straight to your granny's and do not talk to strangers'.*

These pupils are also using narrative links such as 'after three days' and 'suddenly' effectively to signal time sequences.

42. The pupils have regular opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences and there is good evidence of the characteristics of different forms of writing being taught in other subjects; for example, labelling in geography, news reports in history and evaluations in design and technology. However, the quality of writing in these subjects is not of a high enough standard at Key Stage 1; pupils are not transferring their writing skills to their work in these subjects and in turn are not improving their writing skills sufficiently in their recordings in other subjects.

**At Key Stage 1, pupils' progress in the acquisition of investigative skills in science need to be accelerated.**

43. An analysis of teachers' assessments of pupils' attainments in science at the end of Key Stage 1 revealed that there was a weakness in pupils' investigative skills. There were insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to design their own investigations or to comment on the results of experiments. This was restricting pupils' learning. Guided by the expertise of the subject co-ordinator, the school has adopted a new scheme of work which has an appropriate emphasis on the development of these

skills. Lesson observations and an analysis of the pupils' work indicates that this is now in place, but it is not established and it is too early to judge its long-term effectiveness. The school will need to evaluate whether it is meeting its objective to raise standards throughout the year.

**Throughout the school the quality of educational provision for ICT should be raised further.**

44. The school has identified the need to develop further the use of information and communication technology. Development across the school has been constrained because of the lack of confidence of some staff in using information and communication technology and drawing on it as a teaching resource. The subject co-ordinator and staff have drawn up an audit of their development needs and have established a comprehensive programme linked to a national training initiative to raise the quality of teaching throughout the school. There are limitations in the provision and the deployment of resources. Future development includes the provision of a small computer suite with Internet links, and the upgrading of computers and programs. This represents a substantial financial investment supported by the government initiative for the expansion of information and communication technology in schools. The school does not have formal procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' attainments. These are planned as part of the school's comprehensive review of the subject following the introduction of the revised National Curriculum.
45. The school clearly values the contribution that information and communication technology can make to pupils' learning and its plans reflect the high priority given to this development. They plan to increase the opportunities for pupils to develop, apply and refine their skills in information and communication technology.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. As identified by the school, in order to improve further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

**(1) Improve standards in writing at both key stages by:**

- ensuring that all classes continue to have regular and frequent writing sessions to teach compositional skills in fiction and non-fiction as a basis for developing independent writing skills;
- ensuring that the relevant features of the language of different types of writing are made explicit to pupils so that they reflect them in their own writing;
- developing pupils' sentence structure and ensuring that standards of writing in all subjects are high at Key Stage 1.

(Paragraphs 9, 28, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42)

**(2) At Key Stage 1, pupils' progress in the acquisition of investigative skills in science need to be accelerated by:**

- continuing to implement the new scheme of work in science so that appropriate attention is given to the development of pupils' investigative skills at Key Stage 1.

(Paragraphs 8, 43)

**(3) Throughout the school, the quality of educational provision in ICT should be raised further by:**

- developing teachers' individual skills through the established professional development programme;
- implementing up-dated procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' attainments;
- improving resources so that pupils have more opportunities to practise and develop their computer skills and draw on them to support their learning.

(Paragraph 44)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10%	43%	38%	9%	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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	383
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	57
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	34	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	27	31
	Girls	26	26	26
	Total	56	53	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (95)	88 (93)	95 (91)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	31	31
	Girls	26	26	26
	Total	56	57	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (93)	95 (93)	95 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	23	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	22	23
	Girls	34	31	33
	Total	56	53	56
Percentage of pupils At NC Level 4 or above	School	95 (96)	90 (98)	95 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	21	22
	Girls	32	31	32
	Total	53	52	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (94)	90 (94)	92 (96)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	305
Any other minority ethnic group	13

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	27.4

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	112

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	600,744
Total expenditure	593,116
Expenditure per pupil	1,634
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,887
Balance carried forward to next year	27,515

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	383
Number of questionnaires returned	173

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	35	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	46	6	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	56	4	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	53	11	3	0
The teaching is good.	49	46	2	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	52	22	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	38	8	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	45	5	1	3
The school works closely with parents	26	51	17	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	41	48	6	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	51	4	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	32	23	11	13