

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC (VA) FIRST
SCHOOL**

Swanage

Dorset

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113829

Headteacher: Mrs Maeve Baker

Reporting inspector: Mr Keith Edwards
21190

Dates of inspection: 22-24 October 2001

Inspection number: 194989

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Manor Road Swanage Dorset
Postcode:	BH19 2BH
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Angela Gray
Date of previous inspection:	2 June 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves the parish of the Holy Spirit and St Edward in Swanage on the Dorset coast. It is proud of its status as a Roman Catholic (Voluntary Aided) school and maintains good links with the diocese. With 114 pupils aged between four and nine, the school is smaller than average. Numbers have grown slightly since the last inspection. St Mary's is a member of the Purbeck Small Schools Cluster and benefits from extra government funding to pool resources and activities. The school was offered "Beacon Status" on account of the pupils' sustained success in national tests. However, fearing that it might lead to too much disruption to the teaching in the school. St. Mary's declined the opportunity to participate in the scheme.

Most of the pupils live in the town although an increasing number attend the school from the surrounding communities. The children are admitted into the reception class on a part-time basis in the September after their fourth birthday. They become full-time pupils in their second term. The pupils are organised into five classes in single age groups. Most, but not all, of the pupils are white and all of the pupils have English as their first language. Most children have had some pre-school experience before starting in reception. Although statistical information from Ofsted shows that fewer than eight per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much lower than the national average, local statistical information indicates a much higher eligibility. However, very few families avail themselves of this benefit. The school has identified 30 per cent of its pupils as having special educational needs. This is above the national average. Two of these pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. She has a significant teaching commitment in the reception class. In addition there are three full-time and four part-time teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school that provides very good value for money. Results in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are consistently above those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The pupils' attitudes to the school are very good. The school benefits from good teaching and from very good leadership that have secured the position of the school in the heart of the community.

What the school does well

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average by the time the pupils leave school.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher and key staff is very good. The ethos of the school reflects its Catholic tradition and commitment to high standards.
- The quality of teaching is good and is particularly effective in enabling the pupils of all abilities to achieve well in literacy and numeracy.
- The strong focus on the personal development of the pupils has helped the children to develop positive attitudes towards learning.
- The school provides an enriched curriculum that provides high quality learning experiences for the pupils. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork that contributes strongly to the pupils' development. The

school has forged very good relationships with the parents and the community.

What could be improved

The accommodation impinges on the pupils' welfare and opportunities for independent learning.

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 June 1997. Since then the St Mary's has made very good progress. St Mary's was recently invited to become a Beacon School because of its consistently high test results in writing at the end of Key Stage 1. The school has increased its information technology capability significantly and the pupils now have regular lessons. Standards in music have improved since the school appointed a specialist music teacher. This has ensured that the pupils' standard of performance, both in singing and playing instruments, is well above average by the time they leave the school. The quality of music strongly contributes to the school's ethos.

St Mary's has been particularly successful in addressing the key issues from the last inspection. For example, the school has improved its assessment procedures to ensure that the work set is closely matched to the different ability groups within each class. The school now maintains detailed records on the pupils' achievements and tracks their progress as they move through the school. It is now very adept at identifying those pupils with special educational needs at an early stage and ensuring that they are set appropriate work. The pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with statements, are very well supported. The school development plan is a much improved document. It clearly sets out the priorities for development, is costed and has success criteria built in. The school brochures such as the prospectus and governors' report to parents fully comply with current legislation. Although there have been some improvements to the accommodation, the buildings are barely adequate for the effective delivery of the curriculum.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	A*	A	A	B
writing	A*	A	A*	A*
mathematics	A	A	A	B

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The pupils' attainment on entry to the reception class covers a wide range but overall it is broadly average. However, overall standards are about average. The pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and by the age of six most pupils achieve the early learning goals and many children exceed them in each area of learning. This is particularly the case in terms of their personal development and their communication skills. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher grades in English, mathematics and science in the national tests and assessments at the age of seven has risen significantly since the last inspection. Evidence from the work seen reflects the pupils' high test results.

Standards in literacy and numeracy are consistently well above average. The pupils maintain their good progress and by the time they leave school at the age of nine, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above what is expected. Pupils of all abilities achieve as well as they should in literacy and numeracy. The pupils achieve well in all subjects, especially science, physical education and music. The pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and this enables them to achieve well. Overall standards are consistently much higher than the national average and the school meets the challenging targets it sets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils take great pride in being members of the school. They concentrate on their work and try to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are very good. The pupils are very polite and courteous and move around the school in an orderly manner. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils are becoming mature and responsible. The quality of relationships is very good and this makes an important contribution to the ethos of the school and the quality of the life within it.
Attendance	Attendance levels are very good. Almost all children arrive promptly at the start of the school day and lessons start and finish on time.

The pupils' attitudes are a strength of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and it enables the pupils to make good progress. The quality of teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage and it enables the children to make good progress, especially in their personal and social development and their language development. The pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and so make good progress in learning basic skills. The teachers have a secure grasp of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and use these lessons to good effect. Particular strengths of the teaching throughout the school include high expectations, the quality of the teamwork with the other adults who support in class and the wide range of practical activities that the pupils do. These motivate the pupils and enrich their learning. Throughout the school, the teachers have established very good relationships with the pupils and maintain good discipline. Music is very well taught. The teachers are developing their expertise in information and communication technology and are using the new computer suite to good effect.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad, balanced and enriched curriculum for pupils of all ages. The range of opportunities provided for the pupils is a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for those pupils with special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator provides very good support for colleagues and very effective management. The school has developed detailed individual education plans that contain clear targets in literacy and numeracy for the pupils' improvement.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' personal development is very good; they are encouraged to have a mature, independent and reflective approach to learning. Provision for the spiritual, moral and social development is very good. More could be done to raise the pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity of society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and for ensuring the pupils' welfare are very good. The school makes very good use of assessment data to plan the work set for the pupils.

The community makes a very good contribution to the pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership provided by the headteacher and key staff is very good. The school benefits from having an effective management team that strives to ensure that St Mary's provides the best possible start for all of its pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is supportive of the work of the school and provides an effective role in monitoring its work. It has a clear view of future developments and complies with statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school includes success criteria in its improvement plan and has established clear priorities for development. It has taken very effective action to meet its targets, particularly with regard to raising standards and enhancing its resources and accommodation.
The strategic use of resources	The school has a clear strategic view of future developments. Its educational priorities are well supported through its financial planning. The school provides very good value for money.

There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. There are many shortcomings in the adequacy of the accommodation.

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 approachability of the school• The school expects their children to work hard and to achieve their best• The teaching is good• Behaviour is good• Their children like school• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible• The school is well led and managed	

The inspection team strongly endorses the parents' positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average by the time the pupils leave school.

1. Whilst the school caters for a wide range of abilities, the children's attainment on entry is broadly average. The pupils make good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment and achieve standards that are consistently well above average in the National Curriculum tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the age of seven. These results reflect the standards in the work seen. An analysis of the school's 2001 performance data shows that the performance of the pupils at the age of seven in reading and mathematics was well above that found in similar schools. In writing, the pupils achieved standards that were in the highest five per cent nationally. These test results are an improvement on the previous year's impressive results. This represents a significant success for the school.

2. The school is committed to raising standards through shared endeavour of all members of staff to encourage the learning skills of all of its pupils. Furthermore, the school carefully monitors the impact of new initiatives such as the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. At the age of seven, pupils have developed literacy and numeracy skills that will serve them well in Key Stage 2. They are particularly successful in writing, with accurate spelling and a good awareness of punctuation. Furthermore, because of the school's emphasis on speaking and listening, the pupils' range of vocabulary is well above average.

3. By the time they leave school at the age of nine, the higher attaining pupils have advanced strategies in reading to help them to access information; this includes skimming text to gain an overall impression and scanning it to locate information. They use their reference skills confidently and accurately when seeking information from books such as atlases. When reading aloud, the pupils use expression well and are sensitive to the finer nuances of the text. They show a good awareness of plot and characterisation and can predict likely outcomes in stories.

4. By the age of seven, the pupils' skills in writing are well above average. They write confidently and fluently for a range of purposes and in a variety of forms such as extended stories, letters and poetry. For example, one pupil composed this poem about Plasticene:

"Pull it
Long and thin
As string.

Roll it
Round and flat.

Make it any shape
You like
And then.....

SQUASH it flat
And start again"

5. By the age of nine, the higher attaining pupils are already working at a level more often expected of pupils two years older. They have a secure grasp of narrative and know how to use paragraphs. All of the pupils develop a fluent handwriting style and know how to use language, grammar and punctuation to create effects. Their literacy standards enable them to work readily in subjects where they need to use their reading and writing skills. For example, the pupils write biographies of famous people from history such as Alfred the Great and record accurately their experiments in science. When writing instructions they are very clear and very well ordered. The pupils have a good command of subject specific vocabulary that they use with confidence and to good effect, especially in mathematics and science.

6. In mathematics, the pupils respond well to the teaching and make very good progress. They respond well to the emphasis on mental mathematics and are making good progress in calculations involving money, fractions and measurement. The pupils of all ages are well-motivated by the pace of the warm-up activities that the teachers introduce to sharpen the pupils' mathematical agility. When working in groups, the work set is well matched to their abilities and this enables the pupils to achieve success and to grow in confidence. Most of the pupils in Year 4 can make calculations involving thousands and have a good understanding of place value. They know how to round up or down to the nearest hundred and accurately calculate fractions of different sums. The pupils apply their skills in numeracy very effectively in other subjects such as science and geography and use their knowledge of data handling to display information in a range of tables and graphs. For example, in a project to investigate favourite sandwich fillings, the pupils in Year 3 use information and communication technology to show their findings in pie charts.

The leadership provided by the headteacher and key staff is very good. The ethos of the school reflects its Catholic tradition and commitment to high standards.

7. The school benefits from very good leadership from the headteacher supported by a dedicated and enthusiastic staff. A very effective working partnership has been established between the headteacher and her deputy. There is a strong team spirit within the staff that is based on a commitment to an open evaluation of their professional practice to achieve further school improvement. The headteacher is very supportive of her staff and provides a very good role model. She has established very effective management structures and has empowered and motivated her colleagues to continue to strive for higher standards. The headteacher is respected both by parents and pupils, and enjoys the full support of her governors. This impacts positively on the quality of education. Curriculum responsibilities are devolved to teachers and curriculum planning is carried out co-operatively.

8. The headteacher strongly encourages a positive, caring ethos that promotes high standards of academic attainment and personal development through her personal style. She knows her school and the pupils extremely well and has enabled children of all abilities and backgrounds to feel happy in the school and share its values. This is reflected in their work and their relationships with their peers and adults. The Catholic tradition permeates the daily life of the school and supports the values of care and respect. There was overwhelming support for this aspect of school life from the parents.

9. Since the last inspection, the school has been particularly successful in addressing the key issues and has made very good progress overall. It has improved its assessment procedures to ensure that the work set is closely matched to the different ability groups within each class and builds successfully on what the pupils already know, understand and can do. The school maintains detailed records on the pupils' achievements and tracks their

progress as they move through the school. It is very adept at identifying those pupils with special educational needs at an early stage and ensuring that they are set appropriate work. The pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with statements, are very well supported by the additional staff employed in the school. The co-ordinator has a regular programme of non-contact time so that she can monitor the quality of the support for the pupils with special educational needs and liaise with their parents and other agencies. The quality of the support for those pupils with special educational needs is a significant factor in the school's success in the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results.

10. The school development plan is a much improved document. It clearly sets out the priorities for development, is costed and has success criteria built in. For example, the school has budgeted prudently to ensure that it has sufficient funds to support the building programme that is so urgently required to improve the learning opportunities and welfare of the pupils. Although there have been some improvements to the accommodation, the buildings are barely adequate for the effective delivery of the curriculum. The school brochures such as the prospectus and governors' report to parents now fully comply with current legislation.

11. In addition, St Mary's was recently invited to become a Beacon School because of its consistently high results in the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests in writing. The school has increased its information technology capability significantly and pupils are now involved in weekly lessons. Standards in music have improved as a result of the school's investment in specialist teaching. This has ensured that the pupils' standard of performance, both in singing and playing instruments, is well above average by the time the pupils leave school. The quality of music in the school strongly contributes to the ethos.

The quality of teaching is good and is particularly effective in enabling the pupils of all abilities to achieve well in literacy and numeracy.

12. The school has maintained the quality of teaching reported in the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching is good and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' progress. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils' attainment and behaviour. The teachers make very good use of assessment information in literacy and numeracy lessons to ensure that pupils of different abilities are enabled to make good progress. Of the 13 lessons observed, 11 were either good or very good. The quality of teaching is consistently very good at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4.

13. The quality of teaching in the reception class is good. The teachers carry out a programme of baseline assessments when the children start school and they use this information to plan suitable work. The good monitoring of the children's progress ensures that any children with special educational needs are well supported. They are identified at an early stage and appropriate action is taken. The personal development of the children is well promoted through the rich variety of practical experiences that are presented to them. For example, in a role play activity based on the theme of a clothes shop, the children learned the importance of co-operation as well as building on their vocabulary. The teachers have high expectations of the children in terms of behaviour and attainment. For example, in a successful lesson about celebrations, the teacher used a range of methods to enable the children to achieve more than they expected. Through her careful use of questioning she helped the pupils to recall important events in their own lives such as birthdays. She also enabled the pupils to establish what was the essential information to be included on a greetings card. Adult support is used very effectively to ensure that pupils remain on task and follow instructions carefully.

14. The quality of learning is good. The staff work well as a team and clearly understand the needs of young children. They plan well together and set challenging and interesting tasks, which are linked to the areas of learning. The members of the team place a strong emphasis on the development of the children's language. They encourage the children to work independently and to make choices in their work. By the end of their reception year the children's attainment is above average in all of the areas of learning. They become confident learners who have a secure foundation in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

15. In Key Stage 1, the teaching enables the pupils to continue to make good progress. This is particularly the case in the Year 2 class where the lessons have pace and rigour. For example in a reading lesson, the teacher uses assessment well and her organisational skills very effectively to ensure that all of the pupils are working in the appropriate group and are well supported by other adults. In the lesson observed, the class teacher concentrated on one group. She used her questioning skills very effectively to ensure that the pupils fully understood the text. In a science lesson in the same class, the class teacher's use of questions skilfully guided the pupils' thinking when they were investigating chemical solutions. The teacher uses a broad range of methods to maintain the interest of the pupils and to encourage the pupils to solve problems in their heads. This is particularly true in mathematics lessons. For example, the teacher uses games very effectively to develop the pupils' agility in mental calculations. She further develops the pupils' thinking by requiring them to explain their calculations to the remainder of the class.

16. In Key Stage 2, the teaching successfully builds on what the pupils already know, understand and can do. It ensures that the pupils within the different ability groups are challenged. For example, in a very successful geography lesson in Year 3, the pupils were required to act as travel agents and, through their discussions in groups, allocate different categories of people to suitable holiday destinations using specific criteria. Not only did this exercise deepen the pupils' understanding of different locations, but also their skills of analysis and reasoning were developed.

17. This good practice is continued in Year 4 where great emphasis is placed on giving the pupils problem solving activities to further develop their thinking and to extend their vocabulary. For example, in a successful literacy lesson, the pupils were required to distinguish between fact and fiction in selected newspaper articles. The work set was well matched to the different ability groups within the class and the pace was good. Throughout the lesson the class teacher made very good use of the classroom assistant to support learning, especially those pupils with special educational needs. A key feature of the lesson was the use made of information and communication technology to support learning. The pupils were successful in experimenting with fonts and layouts to achieve dramatic effects for newspaper headlines for familiar folk tales such as "Little Red Riding Hood". This practice of using information and communication technology is a common feature of lessons throughout the school. The teachers take great care to ensure that the computers in the suite and in the classroom are well used to support learning across the curriculum. The pupils are highly motivated and they make the most of their time when practising their skills particularly in mathematical and language exercises. Furthermore, the teachers are very successful in integrating the homework set to reinforce what has been taught. The parents are very appreciative of this aspect of teaching because they know what to expect and know that the practice is consistent throughout the school.

The strong focus on the personal development of the pupils has helped the children to develop positive attitudes towards learning.

18. The pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to the school. They have great enthusiasm for learning and persevere with their work. In the reception class the children respond well to the rich variety of activities that are prepared for them and apply themselves well to their learning. They quickly accept what is expected of them and behave with remarkable maturity. The children interact well and most handle resources sensibly for most of the time. They respond well to the routines that have been established to tidy away equipment at the end of one lesson in preparation for the next.

19. In Key Stage 1, the pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other; in discussions they take turns and make their contributions clearly and sensibly. They remain on task in literacy lessons and become totally absorbed in their work. This makes a significant contribution to the purposeful atmosphere that permeates the school. In Key Stage 2, the pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and are pleased to discuss their ideas. For example, in a geography lesson, the pupils discuss which holiday destinations would be the most suitable for different groups of people. They are well motivated and persevere. The pupils who work independently in the information and communication technology suite show determination to complete their mathematical exercises before the end of the lesson.

20. The school strongly promotes a family atmosphere and the importance of caring for each other as members of that family. For example, the pupils are expected to consider which of their classmates is worthy of the honour of being the pupil of the week. This results in a special weekly assembly when these achievements are acknowledged and applauded. They are mature and confident in their dealings with adults because of the high expectations that are set for them.

21. The parents strongly approve of the standards of behaviour which are maintained at the school. St Mary's is a very orderly community. The pupils themselves are models of good behaviour, are highly motivated and strive to improve. They move around the school in a purposeful manner and remain on task in class. They are polite and courteous and very helpful to visitors. Through their charity and community experiences, the pupils learn to understand the needs of others and they play a full part in working in an orderly community.

The school provides an enriched curriculum that provides high quality learning experiences for the pupils. The provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils is very good.

22. The school provides a broad, balanced and enriched curriculum for pupils of all ages. All statutory requirements are met. In the recent past the school has given a strong priority to the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The national strategies have been appropriately customised to meet the needs of the school and its pupils. The curriculum is enhanced by an imaginative series of visits to places of interest such as the local bakery and country park as well as visitors to the school. For example, the pupils in Year 2 had the opportunity to work with a professional illustrator and used his techniques to illustrate their own stories.

23. The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. The school plans its curriculum for the youngest children well and is particularly successful in helping the children's personal development and their language skills. All aspects of learning are addressed. The teachers and support staff work very effectively together as a caring, supportive and encouraging team. They readily acknowledge and praise the children's achievements. The adults are very good role models; they listen with genuine interest to

what children have to say and speak with courtesy and consideration. This promotes the children's self-esteem and confidence, and fosters the development of positive attitudes towards learning. Those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported.

24. Particular effort is made to enhance the curriculum through providing a wide range of rich, stimulating and challenging activities for pupils. The teachers (and other adults) give much effort and time after school for the benefit of pupils. This very good provision has a very positive effect on the pupils' learning. In particular, the support for music is very strong. All of the pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder, have violin or clarinet lessons and sing in the school's choir. During the inspection, many of the school's musicians performed in a special concert in the town to raise money for more musical instruments. In addition, a small group of dedicated pupils and parents work to improve the school's gardens and grounds. Sport is well addressed. The pupils benefit from the tuition provided by willing volunteers and are very successful in local tennis and football tournaments.

25. There is a strong awareness amongst staff of equal opportunity issues. All pupils have an equal opportunity to extend their learning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The pupils have equal access to all aspects of school life. The quality of their individual education plans is very good. These are carefully formulated to promote good progress for the pupils with special educational needs in literacy and numeracy. The higher attaining pupils are enabled to reach their potential.

26. The provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils is very good. Pupils of all ages are given a voice and their views and ideas are valued. Teachers use literature and episodes from holy books to help pupils to reflect upon their place in the world. Religious education is a daily event for the pupils and this has significant impact on their spiritual development. Assemblies are used to great effect to help the pupils to consider the universal issues of life. For example, in a very moving assembly on the theme of harmony and friendship, the pupils from both key stages read, sang and danced to convey the message.

27. The pupils at St Mary's clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. The school has equality of opportunity at the heart of its ethos and ensures that all pupils are aware that racial abuse and bullying will not be tolerated. Assemblies are used very effectively to promote positive images of good conduct and to discourage inappropriate behaviour.

28. The pupils are encouraged to act responsibly and are provided with many opportunities to carry out class duties or to serve the whole school community. They are currently promoting healthier life styles and are involved in projects such as litter collecting to conduct a survey on pollution. The pupils learn about the values and beliefs of others' in lessons and assemblies and show respect for different life styles. However, the school is less successful in raising the pupils' awareness of and celebrating cultures other than those in the European tradition. The pupils show their concern for others less fortunate than themselves, such as groups of war refugees and those suffering from famine and natural disasters, by organising events and raising funds for charity. However, the school could be more overt in helping to prepare the pupils for life in a culturally diverse society.

There is a strong sense of teamwork that contributes strongly to the pupils' development. The school has developed very good relationships with the parents and the community

29. Since the last inspection, the school has increased the number of adults working in the school. There are now sufficient teachers for all of the pupils to be taught in classes with just one age group. The school has also increased the number of classroom assistants to support the pupils' progress. The school encourages a wide range of adults to support the work in classrooms on a paid and voluntary basis. Trainee teachers and volunteers work in classrooms and the number of classroom assistants has risen from four to nine. Those working with the pupils with special educational needs have received specific training. There is a strong sense of teamwork. The contribution of these adults is clearly valued and they have a clear understanding of their role. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, four adults, including the class teacher worked to support reading groups and in each case the quality of questioning and intervention was very good. This is because the school values the contribution of other adults and works hard to ensure that everybody knows what is expected of them.

30. The school values its partnerships with other schools. It is an active member of the Plymouth Catholic Schools Diocesan Cluster as well as the Purbeck Pyramid Cluster. The latter provides a forum for local schools, representing pupils from the Foundation Stage through to Year 13, to discuss initiatives and priorities and to pool resources. This is a very effective organisation that enables the school to measure its performance against others in similar circumstances and to share good practice. For example, samples of the pupils' work are compared and this helps the school to evaluate its performance and to raise expectations. It provides an opportunity for the headteachers to meet to discuss ideas and determine policies. Joint targets are set for school improvement and these are used to inform individual school development plans. Subject co-ordinators from the representative schools have the opportunities to meet to discuss the practicalities of introducing new initiatives such as the new National Curriculum. This spirit of co-operation impacts positively on the pupils' learning.

31. The contribution of the local community to pupils' learning is very good. Parents are very involved in the work of the school and appreciate the school's open door policy. There are many offers of assistance and support. For example adults visit the school to support sport and gardening, to help with information and communication technology and to read stories to the children. Parents help to encourage home study, and the local parish gives active support. The local priest regularly takes assemblies in the school. The pupils entertain local senior citizens with concerts and carol singing and share harvest gifts.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The accommodation impinges on the pupils' welfare and opportunities for independent learning.

32. As in the last report, the school's accommodation is clean and well maintained. However, although there have been improvements, it is barely adequate to deliver the demands of the curriculum. The new partition that divides the reception and Year 1 classrooms has resulted in considerable noise reduction and has improved the quality of learning for the children. There have been substantial improvements to the external accommodation, including a spectacular play ship.

33. The school has converted two small rooms into an information and communication technology suite and a library, although the latter is cramped and cannot be used as a study area. Furthermore, because of the nature of the building, it is not able to be used independently by the pupils because of concerns about their health and safety.

34. The accommodation has further weaknesses. There is only one toilet for the reception children and no water and no toilet for the pupils in the temporary Year 4 classroom. The toilets for the Year 1 children are in very poor condition and there is only one adult toilet for all the staff. There is no suitable room for a sick child to be tended. Furthermore, the school office has to be used as a corridor from the hall to the external classrooms and the headteacher cannot hold confidential interviews in her office as the door cannot be shut.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Continue to strive for improvements in the school's accommodation to improve the facilities for the pupils' independent learning and their welfare (paragraphs 32-34)
- The school should also consider giving greater emphasis to raising the pupils' awareness of, and celebrating, the multi-cultural nature of contemporary society.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	13
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	8	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	23	62	15	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR– Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	114
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5
Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	38
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	11	7	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	18	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	94 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	18	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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	114 (FTE)
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 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	160

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Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	244571
Total expenditure	241714
Expenditure per pupil	1888
Balance brought forward from previous year	36671
Balance carried forward to next year	39528

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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	128
Number of questionnaires returned	85

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	26	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	60	30	1	0	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	69	26	0	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	38	6	1	14
The teaching is good.	79	16	0	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	32	4	0	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	13	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	17	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	60	35	1	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	67	27	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	27	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	30	2	0	11