

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124316

Headteacher: Mr C Ward

Reporting inspector: Mr R Fry  
21073

Dates of inspection: 17-18 September 2001

Inspection number: 196999

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **GLOSSARY**

Foundation Stage – (young children up to the age of 5+ in the nursery and reception classes) The curriculum includes the ‘Areas of Learning’ - language development, mathematical understanding, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative, physical and social development.

Key Stage 1 – Years 1 and 2.

Key Stage 2 – Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Curriculum – everything the school teaches pupils in and out of class, such as English, science and health education, visits and visitors.

Schemes of work – courses of lessons in eg. English, for teachers to use when planning lessons.

ICT – information and communication technology.

Baseline assessment – tests for young children when they join the school or in their first year.

Co-ordinator – teacher in charge of organising a subject, such as English or physical education.

School development (or improvement) plan – set of plans that show how the school will improve over the coming year or longer, what its priorities for action are and how it will spend its money.

National averages – refer to National Curriculum test results and teachers’ assessments in English, mathematics and science where there are national comparisons with all schools and similar schools.

National expectations – most pupils are expected to reach Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects at the age of 7 years and Level 4 at the age of eleven.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ford Green Road  
Norton-le-Moors  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire

Postcode: ST6 8EZ

Telephone number: 01782 234820

Fax number: 01782 534384

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs M Pepper

Date of previous inspection: 17 March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
21073	Roger Fry	Registered inspector
11437	Anthony Anderson	Lay inspector
21666	Andrew Margerison	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Lincolnshire Inspection Team

37 Park Drive  
Grimsby  
DN32 0EG

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>21</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Mary's Catholic Primary is an average sized school for boys and girls aged between three and eleven years. The school educates pupils from north Stoke and the surrounding area. It has 207 pupils on roll, including young children in the nursery. The school roll has steadily grown in size. Children's attainment on entry to the school is below what is typical of children nationally. Twenty three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Twenty two per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is average. Three pupils have English as an additional language. Two pupils have Indian backgrounds. The Roman Catholic Church will inspect religious education, acts of collective worship and pupils' spiritual development later in the year.

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

St. Mary's is a very effective, happy and caring school. It makes good provision for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minorities. Pupils make good progress. By the time they leave the school, standards of pupils' work are better than in most similar schools. The teaching is good and the work that pupils are set is demanding. All staff work very well together and seek to improve the standards of pupils' work. The cost of educating pupils is slightly above average. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Pupils make good progress from the time they enter the nursery until they leave. Pupils' standards of work in Year 6 are better than in many schools.
- The teaching is good and pupils learn effectively.
- The curriculum is good. The strategies for literacy and numeracy have been effectively put into action. There are other strengths, such as in information and communication technology (ICT) and music.
- The management and leadership of the school are very good. Consequently, there has been much progress since the last inspection.
- Pupils' moral and social education is very good.
- Parents have a high opinion of the school.

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

- The handwriting and presentation skills in Years 1 and 2 are not well developed.

*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 1997. Since then the school has made very good improvements. The teaching has improved and pupils' attainment is better. Standards have risen, particularly in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. The school now has established schemes of work and uses national guidance for subjects effectively. The time devoted to teaching each subject has been adjusted and the latest Foundation Stage curriculum for young children has been put into action. Teachers use school policies with a high degree of consistency. The Headteacher and staff have written a very good policy for teaching and learning which has a strong positive influence on how pupils learn. A good sex education policy has been written and forms an important part of the curriculum. There have been many other improvements. The school sets targets for pupils to attain and good assessment procedures are now in place. The school has many more books and other pieces of equipment for pupils to use in lessons. Classrooms now have banks of linked computers for pupils to use. The school development plan now gives the reader a clear sense of the school's purpose.

### **STANDARDS**

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

Performance in:	St Mary's compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	B	A	A*
mathematics	B	B	A*	A*
science	D	A	A*	A*

  

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

In National Curriculum tests in 2001, Year 6 pupils' standards of work in mathematics and science were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. In English, they were well above average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' results were very high in English, mathematics and science. Pupils reached their targets. In 1999, results were above average in English and science. Last year's results (summer 2001) were better than those in 2000. The school has sustained very high levels of performances in the last two years.

Five years olds attain standards close to those of children nationally and make good progress in all the 'Areas of Learning' they study. The teaching in the nursery and reception class has had a positive effect on young children's standards of work. Young children soon become confident and learn many important skills, such as how to work together with others and settle to tasks.

Results in English for Year 2 over the last four years have varied between well below average and well above average in comparison with all schools nationally. At the end of Year 2 in 2001, pupils' National Curriculum test results were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics in comparison with similar schools. The number of pupils in each year is small, which means that National Curriculum Test results cannot be relied upon as indicators of the school's performance on their own. Pupils' attainment varies from year to year according to the capabilities of different year groups. However, the school has identified the need for an improvement in standards of literacy, such as raising standards of handwriting and presentation of work, in the infant years. This improvement has begun; the focus on better teaching is having a positive effect. The trend is towards improved results and achievement.

During the inspection, Year 2 pupils' standards of work observed were slightly above average in English and mathematics. Pupils were making good progress. The standards of work of the eleven year olds observed were above average in English, mathematics and science at this early stage in the year. In all three subjects, pupils were found to be making good progress. Pupils were attaining the standards expected in all other subjects observed at seven and eleven years old.

Pupils achieve well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and the quality of teaching now ensures that pupils make good progress from the time they enter the school until they leave it. Good achievement is present in many subjects, such as music and information and communication technology. Achievement in the junior years is very good because the teaching has been sharply focussed on what pupils need to learn. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well and they attain the targets they have. Pupils with English as an additional language take a full part in all lessons and their achievement is as good as other pupils.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
--------	---------

Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show a keen interest in school life and make the most of lessons, special events and clubs. Most pupils listen attentively to teachers and each other during lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils mostly behave well in lessons and at playtimes. Movement around the school is also good. Pupils are reliable and helpful. Behaviour is particularly good in Year 6 where pupils are mature and hard working.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils progress well in lessons because they make friends easily and most co-operate enthusiastically. Older pupils work independently for long periods. They enjoy being treated as capable young people. The school's emphasis on developing pupils' social skills has been successful.
Attendance	Average nationally and above the city average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
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.*

Teachers' close attention to young children's individual needs in the nursery and reception classes is good and children make a good start to their education. Activities are varied and well planned. Young children under five years old and older pupils are taught progressively more difficult ideas in a logical order. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 continue the good start made in the Foundation Stage. However, there is not enough emphasis on good presentation of work. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 often show much interest in their work and their powers of concentration are mostly good. Pupils are particularly effectively managed in; for example, Years 2, 3 and 6 and consequently pupils make rapid progress with learning new things. Across the school, there were some minor disruptions in a small number of lessons. A few pupils at this very early stage of the year have not yet settled consistently to work.

Across the school, English (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy) are effectively taught. The good organisation and challenging work set in literacy and numeracy lessons have led to pupils' good progress and very high results in Year 6. There is a high level of consistency in the teaching across the school. There is a purposeful atmosphere in classrooms and all teachers have a wide spread of knowledge and skills. Teachers reinforce ideas effectively and repeat key points of lessons. Pupils learn at a good pace. Work is particularly well matched to the needs of small groups of pupils in each class. Pupils are well challenged by what they have to do. Teachers are very clear about what it is that pupils will learn in each lesson and they check that this has happened. The quality of lesson planning, work sheets that pupils use and of information displays on classroom walls is high. Teachers naturally integrate information and communication technology (ICT) into their lessons to good effect and pupils have learned many ICT skills. Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress. Pupils' capacity to learn is extended effectively and the needs of all pupils are met in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress because teachers meet their needs effectively.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught consistently. High priority is given to teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils have many opportunities to use computers and take part in musical events.



Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision is well managed. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Teachers and support staff help pupils effectively in lessons. Pupils with statements of their special educational needs are well integrated into all lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. All pupils are well integrated into all lessons and have no difficulties with English. Pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in everything that the school does. Good displays of pupils' work enhance classrooms and many parts of the school. There are many clubs for pupils to join, which they enjoy. The social and moral tone of acts of collective worship is very strong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Procedures for improving pupils' behaviour are good. The newly created school council is a valuable addition. There is a high level of detail in teachers' end of year reports to parents. Displays of information for pupils are excellent.

The school has a close and very good partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very positive influence on the school. Since the last inspection, the school has responded very effectively to what needed to be done. Staff with responsibilities are effective in their work. The administration of the school is very efficient.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Many governors take an active role in helping to manage the school. They understand its strengths and what still needs to be done. The staffing committee, for example, successfully appoints good staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The very good school development plan identifies what the school needs to do in the coming years. The plan is used to check progress towards targets very well. Staff make many checks on the work of the school and the quality of teaching has improved as a result.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has made good use of the money available to it and 'best value' is found for many major purchases. The school is good at raising funds for important projects. The very small under-spend is kept in reserve to ensure that the school's good provision is maintained. The school has bought a laptop computer for each teacher to use, which has helped teachers to plan lessons and create very good worksheets for pupils to use.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Fifty per cent of questionnaires were returned and 25 parents attended the meeting

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children like going to school very much and make good progress with their work.</li> </ul>	Virtually all parents are very pleased with what the school offers.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The right amount of homework is set for children of different ages.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and parents are kept well informed of their children's progress.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable when approaching the school with a question or problem.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of children and it helps them to mature.</li> <li>• The school is very well managed and led.</li> <li>• There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul> |  |
|---|--|

The inspection team agrees with parents' very positive views.

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 days of receiving the inspection report, showing how the school will tackle the improvements needed. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Pupils make good progress from the time they enter the nursery until they leave. Pupils' standards of work in Year 6 are better than in many schools.**

1. Pupils achieve well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and the quality of teaching now ensures that pupils make good progress from the time they enter the school until they leave it. Good achievement is present in many subjects, such as music and information and communication technology.
2. There are a number of significant reasons why standards and achievement have improved since the last inspection. The very good management of the school and teachers' dedication are important factors. The school has very carefully identified its areas of weakness over the years and put into action plans to rectify them. Adults work closely together and what they agree is what they do. Therefore, there is consistency throughout the school. The headteacher and senior staff make checks on the quality of teaching and this has been a significant factor in improving the quality of lessons. Another factor is that the school has decided to spend much money on good quality resources. A particularly good example is in information and communication technology. (ICT) All classes have good quality computers to use at all times during the school day. Pupils' standards of work in ICT have improved. Standards in many subjects improve because teachers display pupils' work and important information very clearly. They also provide interesting and very well considered work sheets and other information for pupils to use. Pupils are always clear what they have to do, how long they have to do it and they receive rewards when a job is well done.
3. Five years olds attain standards close to those of children nationally and achieve well in all the 'Areas of Learning' they study. The nursery and reception teaching has had a positive effect on young children's standards of work. Young children soon become confident and learn many important skills, such as how to work together with others and settle to tasks. By the end of the reception year, most children show interest and excitement about their work and form good relationships with adults and other children. They explore the meanings and sounds of words and listen well to stories and songs. Most children speak clearly and successfully read familiar common words. They write their names, write simple sentences and count reliably to 10.
4. Results in English of Year 2 pupils over the last four years have varied between well below average and well above average in comparison with all schools nationally. However, the school has identified the need for an improvement in standards and achievement in the infant years. This improvement has begun and the focus on better teaching is having a positive effect. Teachers plan very carefully, and include accurate targets for children to attain by the end of each lesson. The work that is provided is now very well matched to pupils' needs. These two factors have a major influence on the success of lessons. Average attaining pupils observed in Year 2 demonstrated that they could define particular words, such as 'whirlwinds' in an English lesson and give change from 20 pence in mathematics. In science, pupils read about the story of wool and answered questions that they had been set on the very well written work sheets. Higher attainers, for example, gave change in a mathematics lesson from forty pence and lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs change from five pence. In English, pupils were observed developing their language skills using computers. They entered text, used the cursor effectively and deleted what they did not want successfully. Pupils' achievement has improved from the satisfactory level of previous years.
5. Achievement in the junior years is very good because the teaching has been sharply focussed on what pupils need to learn. Pupils with English as an additional language take a full part in all lessons and their achievement is as good as other pupils. All pupils reach their high targets because a range of very good teaching tactics is used in Year

6. For example, the deputy headteacher uses the funds for 'booster' classes very effectively. Pupils who are on the borderline between levels 3 and 4 of the National Curriculum and between levels 4 and 5 receive extra attention. The success of this process is evident in the school's results.

6. At this early stage in the year, pupils showed that they knew the characteristics of a very good story. They knew that *Oliver Twist* is a social commentary and higher attainers have a very clear understanding of what this means and of examples current now. In science, most pupils have a good understanding of food chains and of the relationships between some organisms. Pupils use words such as carnivore, herbivore and omnivore with understanding. In mathematics, pupils use several methods to work out mentally 140 multiplied by 15 and 32 by 50. Higher attainers played a game that tested their speed of mental agility because of the competitive element that any game gives. Lower attainers, for example doubled and halved numbers up to 24
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and they attain the targets in their individual education. The quality of the individual education plans has improved. Targets are now short-term and can be measured easily. Pupils, for example, have targets that refer to learning particular letter sounds over periods of a few weeks.

### **The teaching is good and pupils learn effectively.**

8. Young children under five years old and older pupils are taught progressively more difficult ideas in a logical order. At the Foundation Stage, teachers provide a series of activities which include; drawing, matching shapes, grouping animals by colour, building bricks, sand activities and songs. Teachers skilfully ensure that children move from group to group and that each child receives much personal attention. Teachers ask children how they are getting on, what they have done and how well they have done it. Teachers reward children who have worked hard. There is a happy and constructive atmosphere in the nursery because all adults are clear what they are trying to do. The management of the school gives clear direction about how the curriculum should be taught and about the degree of positive interaction with the children.
9. The inspection occurred very early in the autumn term, a time when teachers and pupils establish routines for the coming year. Over the past four years, there has been much very good teaching, which reflects in pupils' standards of work. Since the last inspection teachers have worked very hard to improve their skills. Many examples of very good teaching were observed during the two days of the inspection. The policy for 'Quality Teaching and Learning' has had a major positive influence in practice. Teachers strongly believe in its content and put it into action effectively. Teachers share common goals. For example, as a result of the school's desire to include everyone, pupils with English as an additional language make equally good progress and learn as well as all other pupils.
10. In the reception class, a very good literacy lesson was observed. The teacher began by reinforcing the rules about how the class should sit on the carpet. The teacher explained very clearly what children would learn in the lesson. She introduced children to the 'contents page' of a book and how to use it. The teacher showed very good knowledge of how to teach young children the basics of using books. Children were captivated and behaved very well. The teacher then set work that was well matched to the capabilities of different small groups of children in the class. By the end of the lesson, for example, they all consolidated the idea that print in a book goes from left to

right when you read it and where to find out what is in each chapter of a book. Higher attaining children learned what a full stop was and further developed their understanding of the names of different letters. The teaching in the Foundation Stage fosters good progress and achievement.

11. The staff follows a single behaviour code which means pupils know what is expected of them in every class. Pupils are particularly effectively managed in, for example, Years 2, 3 and 6 and consequently pupils make rapid progress with learning new ideas. Pupils in Year 2 have clear targets for behaviour, for example, 'Try to put up your hand before you speak.' There are also targets to attain in literacy and numeracy, which are displayed on the noticeboard. Across the school, there were some minor disruptions in a small number of lessons. A few pupils at this very early stage, ten days into the new school year, have not yet settled consistently to work. On two occasions, teachers expected pupils to sit for too long during the taught part of literacy and numeracy lessons. Some pupils lost concentration and their progress slowed.
12. In a very good science lesson in Year 2, the teacher explained some of the results of children's investigations. During that afternoon, pupils learned that many materials occur naturally and that people alter some of these materials before they are used. The lesson was very well prepared. Suggestions and guidance for pupils were very clear and aspects of pupils' work sheets were excellent. Work sheets contained just sufficient information to allow pupils to carry out the activities; they were interesting and colourful. Pupils were therefore motivated even further to have a go at the well organised activities. These included pupils investigating the story of wool and how it is used and how cotton is made.
13. In Year 4, pupils' work in lessons is very well matched to their capabilities. The effect of this very good match is that pupils complete their work with minimal support and also learn new ideas. When everyone came together at the end of a literacy lesson, the teacher organised pupils very quickly so that no time was lost. She used open questions that gave pupils every opportunity to give detailed answers. The teacher checked pupils' understanding as she asked them about their answers. Most pupils knew from a brief description of the characters that the teacher gave, who the characters were. The teacher's expectations of pupils' behaviour were high and pupils responded well. Pupils showed they had learnt about the characters in the story and had developed an appreciation of the variation in the characters. Higher attainers read fluently and with expression.
14. English (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy) are effectively taught. The good organisation and challenging work set in literacy and numeracy lessons have led to pupils' good progress and very high results in Year 6. Over the last few years, pupils in Year 6 have achieved well above average standards and on occasions very high standards in English, mathematics and science. The good teaching throughout the school has had the most impact in the junior years. The teacher in the Year 6 completes pupils' primary education and she sets an excellent example to all staff. She thoroughly revises all aspects of the subjects tested in a rigorous and meaningful way. Pupils have responded very well indeed to her teaching and the National Test results are proof of this. The Year 6 teacher treats pupils as young adults and has very high expectations of their behaviour and attitudes to work. Lessons are interesting and pupils know how important their work is.
15. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson, pupils learnt several ways of multiplying large numbers quickly in their heads. The lesson began very well and pupils immediately concentrated

with great application. The teacher showed how to use a system of doubling or halving numbers to help handle large numbers when multiplying them mentally. The teacher was extremely adept at involving all pupils, including those with special educational needs. All pupils had the chance to answer a question, and most did. The teacher used enough examples to allow pupils time to learn and practise the different techniques. Pupils' group work was very well matched to their capabilities. In keeping with lessons across the school, information and communication technology was used most effectively to help reinforce ideas, in this case, about numbers. The targets were very clear and referred to what pupils would learn in the lesson.

**The curriculum is good. The strategies for literacy and numeracy have been effectively put into action, and there are other strengths, such as in information and communication technology (ICT) and music.**

16. Teachers' close attention to young children's individual needs in the nursery and reception classes is good and children make a good start to their education. Each morning and afternoon, teachers present children with a wide range of activities based on the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. \* Activities are varied and well planned and children soon gain in confidence. The curriculum develops children's motivation to learn. It begins to develop young children's respect for their own culture and of those of other people. Pupils learn to experiment with language, make up their own stories and poems and to spell. The curriculum introduces children to counting, addition, subtraction and patterns in numbers. Children use their senses to investigate the world around them and learn to move with greater control and co-ordination.

\*Social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

17. Pupils have very good opportunities to use computers and take part in musical events. Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology in lessons and of national guidance to help them plan lessons. Computers are used as a normal part of many lessons. Nearly all classrooms have five modern computers for pupils to use. This arrangement is successful because they are instantly accessible at all times of the day. Teachers have a good knowledge of the programs the school has. In a successful science lesson about materials in Year 3, eight pupils worked in pairs with the computers. Pupils developed a capacity to ask questions and to define different materials by reference to their properties. Computers are frequently used to reinforce ideas and to give pupils plenty of practice of different skills. For example, Year 6 pupils worked successfully with on-screen examples of multiplication sums that pupils had to work out mentally.

18. The school provides a very good curriculum for musical performances. The Key Stage 2 choir has participated in a concert with other Catholic schools at the nearby High School. The choir sang very well on stage and used many hand and body actions to make their performance more exciting. Parents and friends of the school have enjoyed a range of Christmas performances. Last year staff and pupils put on 'Starstruck.' Many pupils took part in this adaptation of the Christmas story. Pupils sang many songs with associated actions. Groups of pupils danced very well and some pupils had extensive spoken parts to learn. Others sang on their own. The show made very good use of coloured lights and backing music written and arranged by the staff.

19. The school frequently records its shows and other events on CD-ROM. They are sold to parents and the community for a small profit. Money raised is used for school projects. Parents appreciate the school's recorded music because they can listen to their children at home. The provision for musical performances is another example of the very good management of the school. Relationships with the community and parents are enhanced and pupils have many opportunities to show what they can do. The standard of their work improves as they get older.
20. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught consistently. High priority is given to teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The quality of the curriculum is a major positive influence on the standards that pupils attain. The curriculum is very well matched to pupils' needs by the skilful teaching. The yearly, termly and weekly planning of the curriculum is very good. Teachers use assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do effectively to help them plan lessons in subsequent weeks. Parents report that their children feel that the school makes learning fun.
21. There is a good range of additional activities available to all pupils as they move through the school. There is a strong emphasis upon pupils' personal development in several subjects, such as science and the sex education programme. Pupils discuss matters in weekly 'circle time' discussions. The school offers the following clubs; football, netball, rounders, needlecraft, French, computing and flute. Years 5 and 6 pupils spend a week at the nearby outdoor education centre.
22. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been well implemented. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils enjoyed the story of 'Doodling Daniel.' The teacher read the story in a lively way and then later pupils learned more about the sounds of letters. The National Numeracy Strategy indicates that reception pupils should learn to count to ten reliably. In the lesson observed, pupils also matched numbers and then put them in order. Pupils enjoyed the lesson because the curriculum for numeracy is presented in interesting and practical ways, for example, where pupils have objects to move and very well produced work cards to read. Pupils have rich investigative and experimental experiences in science and other subjects. In Year 5, pupils investigated three types of soil to see how much air each contained. In Year 1, pupils had a lot of fun drawing self-portraits. Pupils used sponge and paint, charcoal, pastels and chalk on black paper to good effect.
23. There is a whole school policy for 'Quality Teaching and Learning,' where expectations are made very clear about what staff should do. A very important feature of the school's organisation is that all staff agree courses of action and carry out what is agreed. The curriculum therefore builds consistently on what pupils already know. Teachers make good use of the guidance for subjects provided for all schools. The many very good displays demonstrate the quality of work and the breadth of the curriculum. Pupils learn much from the carefully considered displays that teachers put on the walls. Apart from examples of pupils' work, teachers also display important information. A very good example of the quality of the school's displays was seen in the Year 3 classroom. Pupils have very good information about how to tell the time because the classroom clock has been labelled in such a way to explain telling the time.

**The management and leadership of the school are very good. There has been much progress since the last inspection.**

24. Teachers with responsibilities are effective in their work. English, mathematics and science co-ordinators have developed their subjects effectively. For example, the co-ordinator for English has spent the last six years developing how English should be taught, and consequently pupils' results have improved. In mathematics, a scheme of work has been added to the National Numeracy Strategy to provide extension work for pupils and reinforcement of key ideas. In all three subjects, resources have improved considerably. Because of effective subject co-ordination, teachers have boosted the performance of pupils in science particularly effectively. Year 6 pupils learn study skills in the spring term so that they can do their best when they are examined during National Tests. The headteacher and staff have trained and set goals for improvement together. This means, for example, that targets for lessons are consistently well written throughout the school. Overall, the school is successful because all teachers work together to improve what the school does.
25. The co-ordinator for pupils up to age 7 years fully recognises the need to challenge average attaining pupils with harder work and to set targets for individual pupils to attain. This process has already begun and was evident in the successful teaching in Years 1 and 2.
26. The administration of the school is very efficient. There is a good system for recording attendance and the school has been successful in reducing the number of pupils who arrive late or who do not have a reason for their absence. The headteacher ensures that the school is safe on a day to day basis. Behaviour in the playground during the inspection was very good.
27. Since the last inspection, the school has responded very effectively to what needed to be done. The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear direction for the school. He knows all pupils well and takes a detailed interest in their standards of work. The deputy headteacher sets a rigorous example in all matters, not least in her teaching of the Year 6 class. Standards of pupils' work have been high and pupils make very good progress. There is a very good emphasis on the improvement of standards of pupils' work throughout the school.
28. The governing body provides good support for the management of the school and has ensured that it makes a significant contribution to the school development planning process. Some governors work in the school or visit it regularly. The chair of governors has a clear view of the strengths of the school and what it needs to do next. Governors make checks on what the school does and any matters that arise are discussed thoroughly. A committee of governors regularly reviews the way the school spends its money. The staffing committee successfully appoints good staff.
29. Governors, parents and friends of the school have raised large amounts of money to ensure, for example, that the school building is well maintained and pupils have modern books and equipment to use. There is a strong sense of shared purpose evident between all groups involved in the school. The aims of the school are clearly reflected in its work.
30. The range and quality of books and equipment for teachers and pupils to use in lessons are good. Good resources have had a positive effect on what the school provides. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is effectively managed. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs early in their school careers. This has allowed the school to develop individual education plans that boost pupils' performances, in many cases up to the standards that are expected nationally by the



time pupils are eleven years old. The targets pupils have now are short-term and easily measured. For example, pupils are set the task of learning the sounds of several pairs of letters over a few weeks. In the past, some targets were more general and were less helpful because pupil's progress could not be easily measured.

31. The policy for 'Quality Teaching and Learning' is an important guidance document for teachers. It sets out clear expectations for all staff. For example, subject managers (co-ordinators) are expected to monitor progress in their subjects and advise the headteacher on action needed. Teachers have regular time away from the classroom to carry out their other duties. This process is successful, because literacy and numeracy have been put into action effectively. The policy covers many areas of teaching and learning and outlines what is expected of pupils and of parents. Because of clear management expectations, several areas of the school's work are outstanding, such as the range of information that there is in classrooms for pupils to use and to learn from. There is very clear guidance about techniques of good teaching. For example, teachers are required to 'keep to the point' and to 'use concrete examples' in their teaching. Presentation of work features strongly in the document and this area is a focus for the school presently.
32. The school's evaluation of its performance is very good. The school checks its progress rigorously through the school development plan and associated documents. Staff have analysed the quality of pupils' work and watched their colleagues teach. This process has had a positive effect on teachers' work, because recommendations for improvement have been made in reports to teachers and they are followed up. The local education authority provides a helpful self-review document and the school has made good use of it. The school has very clearly identified its strengths and areas for improvement. There is a comprehensive range of policies and schemes of work. The school checks pupils' progress carefully in all subjects. Teachers have looked closely into the comparative achievements of boys and girls. All pupils are included in all the school does.
33. The headteacher, governing body and staff have successfully recorded the school's priorities in the school's development plan and improvement action plan. The plans are very useful tools that the school uses to judge progress towards its targets. Targets are reviewed regularly. The current school development plan is a very good working document. It shows that the school is dedicated to raising standards further and contains virtually all that the school needs to do to make further progress. The school development plan follows a very good format. Priorities are identified and costs are clearly outlined. The document indicates that the school knows its strengths and areas for development very well. The budget under spend is small. The school, correctly, maintains a small sum of money for contingencies, such as to offset the effects of any temporary loss of pupils. The school is good at raising funds for important projects. The school has joined the 'Private Finance Initiative' to help maintain the school at a reasonable cost. The school has bought a laptop computer for each teacher to use, this spending has helped teachers, for example, to plan lessons and create very good worksheets for pupils to use.

#### **Pupils' moral and social education is very good.**

34. Pupils' moral and social development has had a positive effect on the way they approach their work and in the degree of effort they make. Pupils were very well behaved during the singing practice for older pupils. The headteacher reminded pupils

that the aim of the school was to attain the highest standards in all things. The headteacher therefore expected excellence from pupils. Pupils responded by putting in a significant level of effort in their singing and maintained very good concentration throughout the practice.

35. Pupils progress well in lessons because they make friends easily and most co-operate enthusiastically. Older pupils work independently for long periods and enjoy being treated as capable young people. The school's emphasis on developing pupils' social skills has been successful because the school takes the time to educate pupils about doing the right things. Pupils mostly behave well in lessons. Movement around the school is also good. Pupils are reliable and helpful and examples were observed at playtimes of older pupils helping younger ones. Behaviour is particularly good in Year 6 where pupils are mature and hard working. Pupils respond very well to the demands made of them and very good achievement is the result.
36. 'Doing right' features strongly in acts of collective worship. The social and moral tone of acts of collective worship is clear. The keynote for the inspection week was the act of collective worship on Monday about 'distraction.' Pupils entered the hall very quietly and respectfully. The headteacher involved six pupils in the story, to the delight of everyone watching. He skilfully demonstrated how various things distract us from doing the right thing. For example, he reminded pupils that television and video games distract us from making friends and going to Church.
37. Pupils from Years 1 and Year 2 meet together for acts of collective worship regularly. The Tuesday gathering was about how Jesus helped St. Matthew. Pupils listened attentively and responded well to questions. They answered confidently with relevant answers. Pupils gained a wider understanding of what being selfish means. The act of worship effectively developed pupils morally and spiritually.
38. At the meeting for parents, parents reported how pleased they were that their children became involved in fund-raising for overseas development projects and for the 'Children in Need' appeal. The school has begun a school council, where representatives from each class bring their thoughts and wishes to the notice of teachers so that the school can be improved further. Parents strongly approve of the way that the school develops their children's capacity to speak in public. Parents noted that all pupils have the opportunity to take part in everything that the school does as they grow older and that there are many clubs for pupils to join, which they enjoy.

#### **Parents have a high opinion of the school.**

39. The school has developed a close and very good partnership with parents. The links with parents are another feature of the very good management of the school. The very good links have come about because the school has given high priority to making the school accessible to parents. Parents have responded very well to the school's invitations to take an active part in the school's activities.
40. There has been a significant improvement in links between parents and the school since the last inspection. A high proportion of parents returned the questionnaires for this inspection. Parents showed in large numbers how very positively they feel about the school. For example, 98 per cent of parents feel that the school is well managed. Ninety seven per cent of parents feel that the teaching is good and 99 per cent of parents reported that their children like school. Children feel positive about

schooling because teachers make lessons interesting and show much personal interest in all pupils' wellbeing. Contented parents communicate this to their children and therefore children at school know that they are receiving a good education.

41. The school provides a very informative weekly newsletter called 'The Messenger,' which is a friendly and informative publication. It includes a school diary of events and other matters of interest, such as about clubs and what pupils will be doing in lessons. Each year the school asks parents to complete a questionnaire so that it can gauge aspects of its success and areas that need further work. Parents have a genuine opportunity to influence positively aspects of what the school does. The school has a very good 'web-site' on the Internet, which it uses to communicate with parents. The school publicises, for example, documents of interest to parents and other schools in this very effective way.
42. At the meeting for parents, there was strong support for the school. Parents have noticed, for example, that the school has bought and installed many new computers. They feel that musical performances are a particular strength of the school. Overall, parents are pleased with the standards of work their children attain. Many children love reading. Parents said that their children moved to the next school with good levels of skill and knowledge in the different subjects. Parents reported a wide range of things that they are very pleased with. End of year reports are extensive, detailed and give parents a very full picture of how their children have progressed over the year.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Years 1 and 2 pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are not well developed.**

43. Years 1 and 2 pupils are effectively taught to hold a pencil and pen properly, and to write from left to right and from the top to the bottom of the page. By the end of Year 2, most pupils form their letters correctly and they are of similar size. Pupils put regular spaces between letters and words. The content of pupils' writing shows definite improvement. However, by the end of Year 2, pupils are not expected to join their letters, which most pupils would be capable of doing. In many pupils' exercise books, there has been limited progress in the improvement of presentation of work.
44. Because the management of the school monitors its work thoroughly, the issue of presentation and of a joined hand writing style has already been identified. The school has identified literacy at Key Stage 1 as a major area for improvement in the next twelve months.
45. To a limited extent issues of presentation apply to mathematics. Some pupils find it difficult to maintain columns of numbers when they set out their work, which makes it more difficult for them to make correct calculations and to understand their work easily. Pupils have not had enough teaching about the value of careful, deliberate positioning of numbers on paper.

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

46. In order to raise standards of literacy further in Years 1 and 2, the headteacher and staff need to:

- teach pupils a joined style of handwriting;
- teach the importance of clear and neat presentation so that pupils communicate more effectively.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	12	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	28	48	24	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	181
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	41

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	31

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	10	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	7	6	9
	Total	16	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (74)	71 (74)	86 (93)
	National	86 (83)	84 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	9
	Girls	6	9	7
	Total	15	19	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (78)	90 (81)	76 (78)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	9	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	17	18
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	25	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (78)	96 (83)	100 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	16	18
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	23	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (74)	93 (83)	100 (87)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	149
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	25.9

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	86
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	380941
Total expenditure	379611
Expenditure per pupil	1908
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	1330

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	207
Number of questionnaires returned	103

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	43	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	58	35	3	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	45	3	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	51	3	1	9
The teaching is good.	63	34	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	43	4	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	29	4	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	26	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	46	46	7	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	66	32	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	32	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	39	6	0	6

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents strongly supported the school and no widely held issues of a negative nature were raised.