

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ST MARTIN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reading

LEA area: Reading

Unique reference number: 110038

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Fletcher

Reporting inspector: Dr Vivien Johnston  
8402

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 225081

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pendennis Avenue Caversham Park Village Reading
Postcode:	RG4 6SS
Telephone number:	0118 901 5544
Fax number:	0118 901 5544
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Simon Bradford
Date of previous inspection:	7-9 May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Dr Vivien Johnston 8402	Registered inspector
Mrs Vivienne Phillips 9053	Lay inspector
Mr David Major 27709	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Qualitas Education Consultants Ltd  
Langshaw  
Pastens Road  
Limpsfield Chart  
Oxted  
Surrey  
RH8 0RE

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 Registrar  
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>10</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>16</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Martin's Catholic Primary school is a voluntary aided infant and junior school, with 127 pupils on roll including four in the reception year. It is smaller than many other primary schools. Children are admitted to the reception year in the term in which they have their fifth birthday. The overall number of boys and girls is similar, but in two year groups the proportions are very unequal: Year 2 has many more boys and Year 6 has many more girls. Almost all the pupils are white. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average, and mostly their needs are not severe. One pupil has a statement of special need. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. They are not at an early stage of learning English and do not need extra help.

The school takes pupils from the residential areas of Caversham Park Village, Emmer Green and Sonning Common. Most pupils come from a Catholic family background. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Overall, the pupils' socio-economic background and their attainment on entry are well above average.

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

The effectiveness of the school is good. Standards in English and mathematics are well above average, both when the children enter the school and at the end of Year 6. Results in the national assessments of English, mathematics and science are also high compared to schools nationally and to similar schools. The teaching and pupils' learning are generally good, and so pupils achieve well. The school is led and managed effectively. It has a strong community ethos that values pupils and encourages them to be confident and responsible. The cost per pupil is above average, partly because of the school's small size. Nevertheless, it provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils do very well in English and mathematics, and results in the national tests are high.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and set them challenging work that they enjoy doing.
- Pupils are keen to learn, responsible and behave well.
- The school's ethos is very positive: the pupils are cared for well, and are encouraged to do their best.
- Good leadership and management have enabled the school to improve.

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

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), which are lower than they should be because pupils have not learned about and used computers often enough.

*The area 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 May 1996. Its improvement since then has been good. All four key issues for action identified by the previous inspection were dealt with successfully, and the strengths identified then have been maintained. The school's good relationship with parents has been further developed. The curriculum planning has been revised, and teachers' marking of pupils' written work is now consistent. The school development plan is detailed and thorough. Other improvements include the introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, which has contributed to the rise in standards and to improving results in the national tests. Computer resources have recently been upgraded, and each class now has a time each week when they are taught ICT. These improvements are enabling pupils to make good progress, although they are not yet attaining the standard they should in this subject. The quality of teaching is similar to that reported by the last inspection. The school is well placed to maintain its strengths and to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	A	A*	A	well above average A
mathematics	A	A	A*	A	above average B
science	A	A	A	A	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

At the end of Year 2 in 2000, the school's results in the national assessments of reading, writing, mathematics and science were well above the national results and those of similar schools (those with similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). The trend since the last inspection is of an improvement. Girls have tended to do better than boys, by a greater margin than nationally.

At the end of Year 6 in 2000, the results in English and mathematics were in the highest 5% nationally, and exceeded the school's targets. The school's targets for 2001 are higher. They are challenging but achievable. The school expects the results to fall in 2002 because of differences in the proportions of high- and low-attaining pupils in the year group. Each year group has relatively few pupils, which makes a fluctuation in results likely. Nevertheless, the school's results have improved each year since the last inspection. Boys and girls have done equally well.

The attainment of the children entering the reception year is well above average. Those who entered this term have already attained the early learning goals that relate to language, literacy and mathematical development and so are working within the National Curriculum for these areas of their learning. They are achieving well because of the challenging teaching. At the end of Year 2, standards in English and mathematics are well above average overall. However, the standard in writing attained at the end of Year 2 was lower than the test results because some of the teaching was not challenging enough. The standards attained in English and mathematics by Year 6 pupils are well above average. Throughout the school, pupils' speaking, listening and presentation of their written work are particularly strong. Overall, pupils' achievement is good. It is best at the start of the infants and in the final years of the juniors, because of good teaching which enables the pupils to fulfil their potential in literacy and numeracy.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic learners, and are keen to do well. They enjoy school, and join in activities willingly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour around school is very good. In the playground, their play is lively but controlled, and they cope well with the constraints of the small area. No pupils have been excluded. In lessons, pupils generally work hard. Occasionally, some pupils become restless because teachers do not manage the lesson activities purposefully enough.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are co-operative and helpful to teachers and each other. They show respect and concern for others, and are aware of others' needs and feelings. The older pupils show an excellent sense of responsibility, particularly in their running of house activities.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance rates are well above the national figure. The proportion of unauthorised absence is below average. Pupils arrive on

	time, and lessons start promptly throughout the day.
--	--

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

All the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory or better. It was good in 36% of the lessons, and very good in a further 21%. English and mathematics are taught well, as are the skills of literacy and numeracy. The most effective teaching is provided for the youngest and the older pupils.

The teaching in the reception year is good. The children respond well to the challenging tasks and pace of the lessons, in which learning is made fun through a wide variety of activities. The pupils in Year 1 are also keen to learn and join in enthusiastically. The work is well matched to their needs. In Years 2 and 3, the teaching and pupils' learning are satisfactory overall as the tasks are generally appropriate and the pupils work willingly. Occasionally, weaknesses in teaching slow the pace of pupils' learning and lead to some restlessness. Evidence indicated that during the last school year some of these pupils did not make sufficient progress because the work set was too easy. The teaching of the pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 is good, and sometimes very good. The teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort and attainment, and focus strongly on teaching subject knowledge and vocabulary. The pupils respond by working hard and making good progress as they are keen to do well.

Overall, the school meets the pupils' needs well as the teachers plan carefully for the mixed-age classes. The lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are given good support by teaching assistants, and are enabled to make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are covered, together with religious education and personal, social and health education. ICT is now being taught. The planning provides appropriately for the mixed-age classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good in lessons, because teachers know the pupils' needs well. Good support is provided by teaching assistants, who liaise well with class teachers. Some pupils' targets on their individual education plans are too general, while other pupils have precise targets that show clearly what they each need to learn.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, with some very good features in the promotion of moral and social development. The system of rewards and sanctions is very clear, and staff promote pupils' self esteem strongly. The house system gives older pupils excellent opportunities for developing their sense of responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. The school is a caring community in which good behaviour is promoted strongly. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory. A good system of target setting has recently been introduced, to help pupils make progress academically and in their personal development.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides purposeful and supportive leadership, and has managed the school's improvement well. The other staff are also hard-working, and have managed their areas of responsibility effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors are actively involved in school life. They have a good knowledge of how well the school is doing, including in academic standards. The strong culture of collaboration between governors and the staff enables the governing body to challenge the school and act as its critical friend in a very supportive way.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating have helped to improve standards. The school development plan is good, with clear priorities which are based on the school's evaluation of what needs to be done.
The strategic use of resources	Good. A wide variety of resources is used well to encourage learning. Staff make good use of the limited accommodation available. The school applies the principles of best value well. It seeks to obtain good value for money, although the budget is tight.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and are making good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good, and their children are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• Parents are kept well informed about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The school is approachable.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching of Year 3 pupils.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' views. The pupils like school and overall are making good progress. The teaching is good overall, and staff make it clear that pupils should work hard and do their best. However, the teaching of the pupils in Years 2 and 3 has some weaknesses, as parents who attended the meeting commented, although overall it is satisfactory. The quality of information given to parents is high, particularly in the regular reports on how well pupils are doing. The school welcomes parents' involvement and does its best to resolve any queries or complaints they raise. It is well led and managed.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Pupils do very well in English and mathematics, and results in the national tests are high.**

1. The attainment of the children on entry to the school is well above average overall, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The children who joined the school at the start of the term have already attained the early learning goals that relate to literacy and mathematics and so are working within the National Curriculum in these areas. They are particularly confident orally, and have wide vocabularies. They listen attentively, and answer questions clearly and relevantly. They have a good knowledge of stories, and join in retelling them with the older pupils. They read confidently and write legibly, forming their letters correctly. They know numbers to twenty, and work out simple problems to do with sequencing numbers, adding and counting money. Their personal, social and emotional development is also well above average, which has enabled them to adjust quickly to the demands of full-time education. From this very good start, the reception children and pupils in Year 1 achieve well and make good progress because the teaching is effective.
2. Results in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 have improved consistently since the last inspection. In both 1999 and 2000, the Year 2 test results were much higher in reading than in writing, to a greater extent than nationally, although both were well above average. This difference was reflected in the standards attained at the end of Year 2 in 2000. Pupils are confident, enthusiastic readers. They take books home regularly, and are given good support by their parents. This helps them to do particularly well in reading. The evidence of pupils' written work showed that achievement in writing is satisfactory overall, though pupils are doing much better in Year 1 than Year 2 because of the difference in the quality of teaching. For example, the younger pupils have good opportunities to write independently, whereas the older pupils have been given too many worksheets that require short answers. This was why standards in writing at the end of Year 2 were lower than the test result last summer, although they were above average. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average. The pupils listen very attentively and well, particularly when they are stimulated by challenging questioning, and speak fluently and expressively.
3. Results in the mathematics tests at the end of Year 2 are similar to those for reading. Pupils' written work showed that they attained well above average standards in all areas of mathematics by the end of Year 2, with a particular strength in numeracy. They have also been posed challenging problems in mathematical investigations, and have carried out some complex work on shapes.
4. Results at the end of Year 6 have also risen steadily since the last inspection. In 2000, they were very high in English and mathematics. Although this standard is not fully reflected in the reading, writing and mathematics of those now in Year 6, their work is well above the expectation for this stage of the school year. As the teaching is good and the pupils are making good progress, the results in 2001 are likely to be similar to those of the previous year.
5. In English, pupils in the juniors have had good opportunities to write in a variety of styles, both in the literacy hour and in work in other subjects. Although they tend to spell inaccurately, pupils' writing is expressive, using adventurous vocabulary. The higher-attaining pupils vary their language very successfully, such as to write persuasively and to create atmosphere in narrative. They make confident use of dialogue in their stories, and punctuate it accurately. The lower-attaining pupils have learned to organise their writing into coherent paragraphs, and to punctuate correctly.
6. Standards of presentation are high, in English and mathematics. Pupils are taught a fluent, cursive style of writing from the reception year onwards. Written work is neat and careful, in the infants as well as in the juniors.
7. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic, confident readers. The oldest juniors discussed their choice of fiction well, explaining their preferences. They showed good levels of understanding of implied meaning, and of characters' motives. The standard of speaking and listening is very high

throughout the school. Pupils are very articulate. They have wide vocabularies, and express their ideas fluently. They listen with understanding, and respond thoughtfully to each other and to their teachers.

8. In the juniors, standards in mathematics are well above average. For instance, in a lesson seen during the inspection, Year 6 pupils worked on long multiplication, estimating the correct answer and using several methods to work their answers out and check them. The higher- and average-attainers understood and used several methods to multiply three and two digit numbers correctly. The lower-attainers and pupils with special educational needs were given the support they needed to enable them to work out short multiplication problems, with a good emphasis on the importance of using mental calculation to estimate and check answers, as well as recording their work neatly.

9. Science results are also well above the national figures at the end of Years 2 and 6. However, there was insufficient evidence of pupils' current work in science to make a judgement on how well they are doing this school year. Examples of previously-completed written work showed that last year the pupils in Year 2 had very good skills in recording information in their own words. Teachers' planning showed that the juniors have covered all areas of the science curriculum thoroughly. The examples of pupils' work seen during the inspection had high standards of presentation, with good quality notes.

### **Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and set them challenging work that they enjoy doing.**

10. Most parents feel that the teaching is good and that their children are encouraged to do well, although some concerns were raised about undemanding teaching of pupils in Year 3. The inspection found that teaching is good overall. It was satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed during the inspection, and good for the youngest and older pupils, but other evidence showed that there were weaknesses in teaching in Year 3 during the last school year.

11. The teaching of the children in the foundation stage (reception year) and those in Year 1 is good. Children enter the school in the term before their fifth birthday, and join a class with Year 1 pupils. Four children had done so in the term of the inspection. The planned work was adapted for their needs, which had been assessed well. For instance, in a mathematics lesson, two of the children worked with a teaching assistant on counting up to 20 and back again because they needed to consolidate their knowledge of these numbers. The other two children worked with those in Year 1 on sequencing numbers and simple addition, including using coins to make up amounts of money. They made good gains in learning to use mathematical language such as 'greater than' and 'less than'. The Year 1 pupils used this vocabulary confidently in the mathematical games played during the lesson. In literacy hour lessons, phonics are taught well, for example by exploring rhyming words. When reading with the class, the teacher gave the reception children and Year 1 pupils good opportunities to infer meaning and predict what would happen next. The class enjoyed the activities, and joined in enthusiastically. Other strengths in the teaching were the fast pace of the activities, the variety of strategies used to gain and keep pupils' attention during the lesson, and the teacher's focus on extending pupils' vocabulary and self-expression.

12. The teaching of the pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 is also good, and sometimes very good. The teachers plan carefully, setting clear objectives for pupils' learning. They explained these objectives clearly at the outset, and so the pupils were clear about what was expected of them. This helped to create a positive ethos in which high achievement was encouraged. In whole-class discussions, the teachers taught and used specialist terminology to extend pupils' vocabulary, giving them opportunities to use it orally and in writing. When the teaching was very good, concepts were explained clearly with good examples, enabling the pupils to understand them. This helped the younger pupils, who listened attentively but volunteered fewer responses than the older ones. The teachers were alert to pupils' different needs, and met them skilfully. For example, they sometimes addressed questions to groups within the class. This meant that all felt included in the discussions, which challenged the older and higher-attaining pupils and gave

support to the younger and lower-attaining pupils. The questions were open-ended and made the class work hard, for example to think of reasons why instructional texts have certain features of layout and punctuation. In mathematics lessons, teachers placed strong emphasis on pupils sharing their strategies and methods, to develop their understanding and skills. The teachers used a wide variety of methods to present the content of the lessons, involving pupils and keeping their interest. The lessons in which the teaching was good or very good also had a fast pace, giving all in the class plenty to do in the time available, and occasional lapses in attention were dealt with firmly and quickly. Pupils were given much praise for their successes, and a review of what had been achieved by the end of the lesson often introduced new ideas which were to be explored in the next lesson.

13. Other strengths observed in teaching were the use of homework to build on what had been taught and to prepare for the next lesson, and the links teachers made between subjects. At the meeting before the inspection and in their questionnaire responses, some parents raised a concern about pupils having only one evening to complete some homework, and about some of the work being too easy. The tasks set during the inspection were worthwhile, and often helped pupils to make good progress because they linked one lesson to the next. This meant that they needed to be done that evening. However, previously-completed work showed that some pupils in Years 2 and 3 have been set tasks that were too easy, often based on worksheets.

14. The links between subjects are a strength in teaching throughout the school. Staff have worked hard to develop this aspect of the curriculum. Displays of art work showed that many links have been made between art and other subjects, including English, mathematics, music and history. During the inspection, a very successful link was made between design and technology and ICT lessons. The school attributes the rise in standards in mathematics to the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, which has helped teachers to provide challenging work that the pupils enjoy doing.

15. All teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort. Nevertheless, some of the teaching that was satisfactory overall had weaknesses as well as strengths. Usually, this was because the teachers had not identified precisely enough what they expected pupils to learn and did not ensure that the work challenged all in the class. The pace of these lessons was sometimes rather slow, and pupils became restless as they wanted to get on with more demanding work. Occasionally, teachers had difficulty managing a few pupils' behaviour, and did not use the positive strategies that generally characterised the successful teaching. However, the teaching assistants were often deployed well to work with groups of pupils, and did so effectively. They stimulated pupils' interest through asking probing questions, and managed their behaviour firmly and effectively.

16. The small size of the classrooms places constraints on the range of teaching strategies that can be used, although the overall standards attained in English and mathematics have not been significantly affected by the limitations in the accommodation. This is because the teachers are skilled in making the best use of the space available. Pupils are sometimes uncomfortable, however. For example, in several lessons it was difficult for all in the class to see what was displayed on the overhead projector. The school has well-advanced plans to alter the internal layout of the school building, to increase the classroom space.

### **Pupils are keen to learn, responsible and behave well.**

17. Pupils of all ages enjoy school, as their parents commented in the questionnaire. This is reflected in the attendance rates being well above the national average. Pupils enthusiastically join in lessons and other activities, including lunchtime and after-school clubs. They take pride in their work, as the standard of presentation of their written work showed. They are keen to learn and respond very positively to the school's high expectations and praise. Their attitudes contribute to the school having a happy ethos in which pupils feel secure and valued.

18. Most pupils' behaviour is very good, in lessons and at other times of the day. They move about the school quietly and sensibly, for instance when going to and from assemblies. Their behaviour in the dining hall is very good indeed. In the playground, which is smaller than is

needed, their play is lively but not too boisterous. For instance, the older boys are aware of the dangers to other pupils of energetic ball games, and so keep to the area marked for football. A few pupils, mainly boys, sometimes behave in a silly way in lessons. This usually happens when the teaching does not challenge them sufficiently and the pace of the lesson is too slow. However, they all know and accept the school's rules, and they comply with what is expected of them when dealt with firmly and fairly.

19. Pupils of all ages are sensible, co-operative and helpful. This enables them to work very well in small groups, and to cope with the constraints of the small classrooms. Their well-developed social skills and awareness of others' needs and feelings helps their learning. For instance, they listen to each other with interest and respect in class discussion, and help each other when they find the work difficult. Pupils of all ages get on very well together, and sort out any arguments quickly.

20. The pupils respond very positively to the many opportunities they are given to take responsibility and use their initiative. They are keen to be monitors, such as to look after the school pond. Their response to the opportunities provided by the house system are excellent. The Year 6 pupils take their roles very seriously, such as to collect and count up house points, and to escort younger pupils to and from the weekly meeting. The house captains chaired their house meetings very confidently. The other pupils were keenly involved in the events, which included sharing good work, setting a target for the next week, and giving information on fundraising for charity. They listened attentively to a reading, and joined in a prayer led by the house captain.

**The school's ethos is very positive: the pupils are cared for well, and are encouraged to do their best.**

21. The school has a strong sense of community. In accordance with its aims, it provides a positive, happy and caring environment in which pupils can develop self-esteem, confidence and maturity, within a Christian context. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to become aware of their own and others' needs and feelings, and to value everyone's contribution.

22. The system of rewards and sanctions promotes positive attitudes, hard work and success. Each classroom has the class rules on display, and teachers make it clear that they expect pupils to behave well and to try hard. Most teachers are quick to praise pupils when they do well, which encourages and motivates them. Assemblies promote pupils' moral and social development very strongly, through themes such as working together, and dealing with personal feelings.

23. Staff promote pupils' self-esteem and confidence in a variety of ways, the most notable of which is the house system. This provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop mature attitudes, a sense of responsibility, and an awareness of the school as a community. The Year 6 pupils take the lead in house affairs, very successfully. All pupils have a good range of other opportunities to help staff and to use their initiative, for example by being monitors.

24. The school has developed a close relationship with parents, and this contributes much to the positive ethos and care for pupils, both academically and in their personal development. Staff welcome parents' comments and suggestions, and parents reported that any concerns are dealt with well. The school has an excellent system for informing parents about how well their children are doing. Brief reports are sent home each month, and so parents are quickly alerted to any concerns. In addition, a more detailed report is sent annually, and parents are invited to consultation evenings. Other meetings provide parents with good information on how aspects of the curriculum are taught. Some parents provide valuable assistance during the school day, by helping in lessons. Parents also give good support to their children's learning at home.

25. The school has recently introduced a system of individual target setting. This is much liked by pupils and their parents. Staff feel that it has helped pupils to concentrate on the next steps in their learning, and so contributed to the rising standards. The targets set for the older pupils are good as they are precise, and are reviewed and revised regularly. The targets set for some of the younger pupils are too general, however, as are some of the targets in the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless, as teachers know the pupils' needs

well, they generally adapt their teaching appropriately and ensure that those who need it are given additional support. The teaching assistants provide skilled support, and contribute much to the welfare and academic success of these pupils.

### **Good leadership and management have enabled the school to improve**

26. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, as well as maintaining the strengths that were identified then. This has happened as a result of the headteacher's purposeful leadership and management of the school. She has a clear vision for the school and its development, and is strongly focused on ensuring that pupils achieve their potential academically within a caring, Catholic community. She has ensured that staff work well together as a team, drawing on their strengths and providing good support as necessary. For example, she has set up a good system of monitoring the quality of teaching, with regular observations and constructive feedback to teachers. These measures are helping to improve the quality of teaching. The headteacher has also made good use of assessment data, including from national testing, to identify where standards could be raised and to set targets. This has helped teachers to maintain a rising trend in results in the assessments at the end of the infants and juniors. The deputy headteacher gives her able assistance, and provides a very good role model in her teaching. The introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has been managed well. The school development plan is thorough and detailed. It provides a good basis for planning for future improvements to the quality of education provided.

27. The governing body is very supportive of the school, its staff and pupils. It is also very effective, and has used its expertise to help the school whenever possible. Governors are well informed, and are strongly committed to the school maintaining its positive, catholic ethos. They visit the school regularly, both to help and for more formal monitoring activities. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and have done their best to see that improvements are made. For example, the governing body has had concerns about the limitations of the accommodation for some time, and has explored ways of improving it. Plans are well advanced for altering the internal layout of the building, to enlarge the teaching areas, with the assistance of a grant.

28. The school budget is managed carefully, and financial controls are tight. The school considers carefully whether it is getting value for money when decisions on expenditure are made. The views of the parents have been sought, for example through questionnaires, to help the staff meet their wishes for their children's education.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

#### **Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), which are lower than they should be because pupils have not learned about and used computers often enough.**

29. Standards in ICT are lower than they should be because of the difficulties the school has had in covering the National Curriculum requirements. These difficulties have been caused by two factors: the school had out-of-date computers, and staff lacked the expertise to teach the subject effectively. However, both difficulties have recently been resolved. The school has upgraded its hardware. The new computers are well specified, although they are not yet fully networked. They have been grouped into two areas, one for the infants' use and the other for the juniors. This is a good arrangement. It has enabled the school to introduce the teaching of ICT skills to groups of pupils, including sometimes to the whole class. Also, teachers occasionally plan for small groups of pupils to use the computers as part of their work in other subjects such as English. A computer club has been introduced for Year 6 pupils, and meets once a week, further broadening the opportunities now provided.

30. Training in ICT has been provided for teachers, to develop their skills, and this has enabled them to use the new hardware and software successfully. Timetabled teaching of ICT has been introduced, and is proving successful in raising pupils' knowledge and skills quickly. During the inspection, two lessons were observed, both for pupils in the juniors. One introduced pupils to

spreadsheets, and the other lesson demonstrated techniques for correcting word processed work, including the use of a spell checker. Both teachers had planned a good sequence of activities that linked to pupils' prior learning and made the ICT work relevant to their needs. This interested the pupils, and helped them to understand new concepts quickly. The teachers gave clear explanations, and taught pupils the relevant specialist terminology. The pupils made rapid progress in their understanding, as was shown by the way they answered questions about what to do should they wish to correct a word-processed text or find out how much multiples of an item cost. In another lesson, pupils in the infants were shown how to use the flood fill command to add colour in a computer art program, and several then made their own pictures. The computer club experimented with editing photographs of themselves or other pupils, enthusiastically discovering how to create special effects.

31. These observations showed that pupils of all ages are keen to use computers and are learning quickly. The teaching in the sessions observed was generally good, and pupils achieved well in relation to their prior attainment. The younger pupils had good skills with the mouse, and used the menu bars confidently to select colours and to access the 'Undo' command when they made a mistake with adding colour to the picture. Many older pupils have used computers at home, and so already have good familiarity with how to carry out operations such as printing and saving. They were confident, particularly in how they used the mouse and menu bars. However, several pupils in Year 6 who were asked to make up and type headlines, as part of an English lesson, typed slowly as they were unfamiliar with the keyboard. They made good progress in learning how to format their texts as they worked co-operatively and tried hard, although they found the task difficult.

32. Until recently pupils have done too little work in ICT, and have had too few opportunities for using computers in other subjects. The school was aware that National Curriculum requirements were not being met. As an interim measure, the pupils in Year 5 were taught ICT skills during a residential visit. This was arranged to give them some experience in the various areas of the subject, and was successful although limited in its scope. The good provision seen during the inspection is new, as was indicated by all the lessons being introductory sessions. The samples of pupils' previously-completed work did not include ICT work within English or mathematics, and only a few examples of word processing and computer art were seen in classroom displays. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards at the end of Year 2, but the evidence indicates that at the end of Year 6 standards are below expectations and that pupils of all ages have done less well than they should. Nevertheless, they are now making good progress because of the improved facilities and teaching, and so the school is already well placed to correct the weakness identified by the inspection.

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

To raise standards in ICT, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- ensure that pupils are taught all the elements of the National Curriculum for ICT and have more opportunities to use computers in their learning in other subjects. The school has already started to do this.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	36	43	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	127
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	11	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	22	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (91)	100 (91)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	20	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (91)	95 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	8	6	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	13	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (90)	93 (95)	100 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	13	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (90)	93 (95)	100 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

\* Boys' and girls' results are not reported separately because the school had few boys and girls.

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	116
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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

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

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

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26

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

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	236,876
Total expenditure	234,260
Expenditure per pupil	1,816
Balance brought forward from previous year	-368
Balance carried forward to next year	2,248

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	127
Number of questionnaires returned	71

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	53	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	28	65	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	49	8	4	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	54	16	3	4
The teaching is good.	51	48	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	46	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	39	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	34	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	54	10	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	52	46	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	35	8	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	46	11	3	1

### Other issues raised by parents

Several parents raised concerns that the work given to pupils in Year 3 is too easy.