

## INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. MARY'S & ST. JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Pocklington

York

LEA area: East Riding of Yorkshire.

Unique reference number: 118035

Headteacher: Mrs. J. Firth

Reporting inspector: Mr. Brian Aldridge  
17454

Dates of inspection: 09 – 10 October 2000

Inspection number: 225162

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Maxwell Road  
Pocklington  
York

Postcode: YO42 2HE

Telephone number: 01759 303287

Fax number: 01759 303287

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr.A.McNicholas

Date of previous inspection: 6 November 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Brian Aldridge – 17454	Registered inspector
Patricia Willman – 14178	Lay inspector
Sean O’Toole – 20891	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

SES

6 Star Corner  
Barby  
Rugby  
Warwickshire  
CV23 8UD

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St.Mary's and St.Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average of all primary schools. It draws its pupils from well-established, mainly owner-occupied residential areas of Pocklington and villages within the parish of St.Mary's and St.Joseph's Roman Catholic Church. It is popular with parents; the number on roll has increased since the last inspection and is now 93, 46 girls and 47 boys. At the time of the inspection 21 pupils were under six years of age. There are no pupils of minority ethnic heritage. Five pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, including one pupil with a statement. About five per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is lower than the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year and is average overall.

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

This is a good and improving school in which standards are above average, with particular strengths in reading and mathematics. Teaching is good throughout the school and children's attitudes are very positive. The headteacher and governors lead an effective school very well and have a clear idea of how it can improve. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Attainment is above average with particular strengths in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and consistently promotes very good behaviour and attitudes.
- The school is led very effectively.

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

- Standards of writing are below average.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since the last inspection in November 1995 attainment in general has improved, the quality of teaching has risen and the leadership and management of the school have improved dramatically. The standard of pupils' written work has not improved sufficiently, though there are promising signs that the school's efforts to improve writing are beginning to have an effect in the early years of the school. The key issues identified in the last report have been tackled well. The governing body is now fully involved in the work of the school, attainment in information and communication technology has risen and is now average, good quality records of pupils' progress are maintained and an appropriate amount of time is given to science.

### **STANDARDS**

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	B	C	D
Mathematics	A*	A	A*	A*
Science	A*	A	B	B

  

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

Standards in mathematics are particularly high; the school's performance places it in the top five per cent of all schools and of similar schools. Standards in writing are weak. Generally, the trend in attainment has been broadly in line with the national trend and the school has exceeded its targets for the past two years. The challenging teaching of mathematics in the upper years of the school brings about consistently high levels of performance. Inspectors found that eleven-year-olds attain average standards in English overall; attainment in reading is well above average and in writing below average. Seven-year-olds attain average standards in English and above average standards in mathematics. Progress is good for pupils under six and is particularly good in English since the introduction of a programme of sound and spelling development. The school recognises that standards in writing are not high enough and is working hard to improve them.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good.
Attendance	Good.

Pupils are very well mannered and are very keen to work. They settle to their tasks quickly and without needing to be supervised directly by their teachers. They behave very well at all times and are open and eager to talk about their learning.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good. Seven lessons in ten are at least good and of these a fifth are very good or better. All teaching is at least satisfactory. The quality of teaching in mathematics and reading is good and in writing generally satisfactory. The skills of numeracy are taught well and at times very well. The teaching of writing in the lower years is better than in other parts of the school as the new procedures adopted by the school have taken effect sooner in this class. The school meets the needs of all pupils well, although higher attaining pupils need to be offered more challenges when writing. Pupils learn well; in mathematics they successfully apply their learning to new situations. They concentrate well, work hard and, when teachers ask them to judge how well they have done at the end of lessons, they have a clear understanding of what they should do to further improve their work.

## **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good with improving features in the area of writing.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare.

The school has improved the information and communication technology curriculum since the last inspection and now offers pupils a full range of opportunities in this subject. Extra-curricular activities are very good and include a full range of sporting activities as well as clubs for pupils to help themselves with their schoolwork. The whole school community including teachers, governors and parents, help with these activities.

All members of staff know pupils very well and take a considerable interest in their welfare and in how well they do academically. The school is a caring and yet demanding place of learning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good and very effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good.
The strategic use of resources	Very good.

The headteacher has led the school very well to this stage of development. Parents and governors testify to the high quality of her leadership and the extent of her contribution. Curriculum leaders follow her example and are reflective and concerned to strive for improvement. Governors too, take their full part in leading the school, and their level headed and stimulating contributions to school improvement are welcomed by all staff. The school applies the principles of best value well.

## 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>• Children like coming to school.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable approaching the school.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well managed.</li> <li>• The school provides an interesting range of activities, including out of school experiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small minority of parents think that information about how well their children are doing could be improved.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agree with parents' supportive comments. The reports about pupils' progress are good and the school has plans to improve them further.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Attainment is above average with particular strengths in reading and mathematics.**

1. Attainment in reading is well above average. Pupils are carefully taught how to read for enjoyment and how to use their reading skills for research. They learn the important skills of skimming and scanning text to enable them to read quickly and find important information. Pupils capably use a range of methods to find the meaning of words; they are skilled at using pictures and the meaning of sentences to read and understand new words. Even low attainers correct themselves when it becomes clear that what they have read does not make sense. Pupils enjoy books and are fluent and expressive readers. They talk about the authors they enjoy and they know about illustrators and publishers.
2. Pupils' understanding of how to use a library and CD-ROM based information is very good. They know how books are coded and stored in libraries and how to use an index, contents and glossary. Pupils as young as six years old understand how to use a library efficiently and effectively and are skilled researchers. They use their reading skills well when working in other subjects, for example, when researching topics in history and when using the Internet and CD-ROMs. Parents told the inspection team that their children are fascinated by their reading books. Teachers keep good records of progress in reading and help maintain good rates of progress by carefully matching books to pupils' needs.
3. Attainment in mathematics is well above average. Children in the foundation stage receive a good start, which helps them to find mathematics fun. Learning through songs and number rhymes and being encouraged to find the patterns in numbers and shapes helps children learn effectively. When they make hats they learn that the sequence of actions is important and this provides a good foundation when they come to learn how to calculate with numbers and symbols.
4. The fun and enjoyment pupils share with their teachers when working in mathematics is a significant factor on the subject's success and is a most significant factor in the good and at times very good rates of progress. For example, in Year 6 the teacher used a very good range of resources to demonstrate the relationship between fractions. In this challenging lesson pupils quickly understood the points the teacher was making about equivalent fractions and how to convert improper fractions to mixed numbers and back again. They remember their important number facts very well and this helps them to solve mental arithmetic problems quickly and accurately. All of the pupils in this class, even low attaining pupils, achieved the national average in this lesson. Pupils have good levels of understanding about how to display information and how to use graphs to help them explain what they have found. The rate of progress in Years 3 and 4 is not as rapid for high attaining pupils and in a lesson on two- and three-dimensional shape the work was not challenging enough for high attaining pupils.

#### **Teaching is good and consistently promotes very good behaviour and attitudes.**

5. The quality of teaching is good. Seven out of ten lessons are at least good of which a fifth are very good or better. All teaching is at least satisfactory. There are no differences between the year groups although there are differences between the quality of teaching in mathematics and English. The quality of teaching in mathematics and

reading is good and in writing generally satisfactory. The skills of numeracy are taught well and at times very well. What marks mathematical teaching is the sense of fun and enjoyment conveyed during lessons. They are also brisk and businesslike and teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy model well. They encourage pupils to practice their mental mathematics skills and use these skills very effectively when working in other areas of mathematics. For example, when eleven-year-olds display the information they have collected, pupils divide in proportion the 360 degrees of a circle, to draw pie charts. They conduct investigations in number, shapes and measures and probability. Teachers plan well so that all aspects of the subject are covered and that each group of pupils, whatever their levels of attainment, are usually presented with suitable levels of challenge and inspiration.

6. The quality of the teaching of reading is so high that it encourages the well above average levels of attainment described in the previous section. Teachers' records are of good quality. They cover all of the areas of the curriculum and are maintained regularly. These records and the analyses of tests help teachers to plan work and have brought about changes in the way reading is taught to young pupils. This is already having a positive impact on pupils' writing in the foundation stage and Year 1. Spelling is more assured in this year group and pupils set to writing with confidence.
7. The school meets the needs of all pupils well, although higher attaining pupils need to be offered more challenges when writing. Pupils generally learn well as they successfully apply their knowledge, skills and understanding to new situations. They concentrate well, work hard and, when teachers ask them to judge how well they have done at the end of lessons, they have a clear understanding of what they should do to further improve their work. Pupils' attitudes to learning and school generally are very positive. They like coming to school, trust their teachers and work very well together. In each lesson pupils were observed helping each other, acting in a considerate manner to their teachers and peers and managing their work well. As soon as they begin school, they learn to start work quickly, find their own resources and listen very carefully to their teachers.

### **The school is led very effectively**

8. The headteacher leads and manages the work of the school very well. Members of staff, governors and parents attest to her skills and attributes and say that she is responsible for the improvements made since the last inspection. She has a clear sense of direction and sets about making changes in a quiet and sensitive, yet resilient, manner. She understands the need to make an accurate assessment of all the school's work and conveys her findings to governors in well-written and informative accounts. The headteacher is a very good leader and staff members and governors are happy to follow her example in continually seeking improvements to standards of attainment and curriculum provision.
9. The analysis of the school's work, assessment results and monitoring of teaching and learning are very good. The headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators make regular visits to classrooms and report back to teachers and governors on the changes that should be made to teaching and the curriculum. It was these procedures that led to the new programmes for teaching how sounds form words. School improvement generally is managed very well. Parents and pupils are asked to complete questionnaires about how they would wish to see their school developed. The governors and teaching staff take account of these views and design a programme for improvement that is pertinent and exacting.

10. The governing body has instituted structures and thorough systems to enable members to review the school's work and advise teachers and the headteacher about priorities for action. There are close working partnerships between the committees, and these groups of governors and staff work closely together to ensure financial and human resources are well matched to areas for development. The school has carried forward a substantial proportion of its budget. However, the headteacher has managed the school from a budget deficit four years ago to the present position in which all of the accrued funds are earmarked for improvements to the school's internal fabric and fencing and to maintain the present staff structure. The headteacher, curriculum coordinators and governors have collectively ensured that all of the key issues identified at the last inspection have been dealt with effectively. The headteacher's leadership is largely responsible for improvement in attainment and the excellent working relationships.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Standards of writing are below average.**

11. The school is aware that the quality of pupils' writing should be improved and has recently started a programme of teaching foundation stage children how to combine letters to make the sounds used in English. This is proving to be very effective and is already showing good results in children's reading, spelling and writing. When asked to write accounts of how their seedlings had developed in a dark cupboard, pupils in Year 1, who have been taught in this manner, immediately set to work, writing complex sentences which describe their findings very well. Handwriting throughout the school is just about average and pupils do not develop a consistent, flowing style.
12. In other parts of the school pupils write readily and at times effectively, using appropriate forms of language, for example when describing their scientific experiments and writing reports and factual accounts. However, the quality of their creative work, their imaginative writing and their use of figures of speech to enhance their work is below average. Writing skills are not as well developed as pupils' reading and listening skills. Too often written work has a stilted quality and pupils do not readily use the models provided by their teachers. Models of poetry and stories are not always of sufficiently high quality and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use their speaking skills. This means that they do not acquire the language skills that help them to explain their ideas with fluency. At times pupils' speaking skills are limited and this too hinders the development of expressive language and limits the quality of the explanations they give for their ideas.
13. Teachers have instituted a series of improvements to the curriculum and teaching in order to improve the quality of writing. These are proving effective. However, teachers do not yet set pupils, particularly those who are higher attainers, tasks that inspire and challenge them.

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

In order to improve the quality and education and standards of attainment the governors, headteacher and staff should:

**\*Improve the standards of writing at both key stages by:**

- providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length;
- developing the quality and range of language and vocabulary through drama and role play experiences;
- inspiring and challenging pupils to be more imaginative in their responses in writing lessons;
- developing a fluent joined script at an early age;
- seeking opportunities for teachers to observe models of the teaching of writing and for further training;
- developing sharp targets for pupils to support written work.

\* The school is aware of this issue and has already identified it in its development plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	14
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
7	7	57	29	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)	93
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	6
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	5
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1\*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	3	11	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above				
	Girls	9	8	11
	Total	12	11	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (100)	79 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above				
	Girls	9	11	11
	Total	12	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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
	1999	4	9	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above				
	Total	10	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (71)	92 (79)	92 (93)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above				
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (64)	77 (79)	77 (79)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

*\* Data is not included where the number of boys, girls or children in a year is ten or less*



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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	85
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	23

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82

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

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	219855
Total expenditure	192199
Expenditure per pupil	1922
Balance brought forward from previous year	16489
Balance carried forward to next year	44145

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	97
Number of questionnaires returned	48

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	15	2	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	65	29	0	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	23	2	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	35	8	0	2
The teaching is good.	77	17	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	19	10	0	13
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	21	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	29	8	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	71	23	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	29	0	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	81	13	4	0	2