

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. CLARE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Fagley

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 107325

Headteacher: Mrs. M Clough

Reporting inspector: Mrs. J E Platt  
11565

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 192626

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.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Fagley Road  
Fagley  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire

Postcode: BD2 3JD

Telephone number: 01274 637841

Fax number: 01274 637841

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. R Willis

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
11565	Mrs. J E Platt	Registered inspector
9974	Mr. D Singh	Lay inspector
30590	Mr. P Tuttle	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Education Services

Strathblane House  
Ashfield Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 1BB

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>10</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>19</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Clare's Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average school situated on the outskirts of Bradford. The area it serves is economically and socially slightly less favoured than the overall picture nationally. Currently, 160 boys and girls are on roll, aged from 4 to 11. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average (28 per cent). Two pupils speak English as an additional language but they are not in the early stages of learning the language. About 20 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and this is broadly average. The range of difficulties includes specific learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Three pupils have formal statements of need. Children start school with a wide range of abilities, though the general level is below average.

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

This is a happy and effective school. Teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall. Examples of good teaching were seen in most classes. More challenging teaching was seen in pupils' final year and as a result, pupils' achievements grow as they move through the school. By the time they leave school, pupils reach high standards in mathematics and in English and science standards are in line with the level required for their age. The headteacher provides purposeful leadership and has a clear vision for further improvements. The school provides sound value for money.

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

- Standards at 11 are above average in mathematics.
- The headteacher demonstrates strong leadership. She is supported effectively by staff and governors who combine to create a caring ethos that supports learning.
- Teaching is never less than satisfactory and the management of pupils is impressive.
- Provision for moral development is very good. This leads to good behaviour and relationships and pupils try hard with their work.
- The school makes good efforts to involve parents in the life of the school. Communication is regular and informative and parents have a positive impact on their children's learning.

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

- Although standards in English are satisfactory, pupils' skills in writing could be higher.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in other subjects.
- The use of assessment to set individual targets and to track the progress of pupils as they move through the school.
- The use of staff who support pupils with special educational needs and those requiring extra reading support to ensure these pupils have full access to the curriculum.
- Pupils' attendance, which is below the national average for primary schools.

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

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

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in March 1997. The strengths have been maintained. Standards have improved in mathematics. Most of the areas of concern highlighted in the previous inspection have been dealt with fully. Teachers have had opportunities to share good practice, teaching has improved and no lessons seen were less than satisfactory. New planning guidelines have been put in place and these give closer attention to teaching skills and refer to new terminology to be introduced. Consequently, pupils' skills have increased and the continuity of learning as pupils move from class to class has improved. Standards in ICT have improved as a result of the use of the new ICT suite. Assessment procedures are in place and the school is developing the use of assessment information. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

## 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	E	D	B	A	well above average    A above average        B average                 C below average         D well below average    E
Mathematics	E	D	A	A	
Science	E	D	A	A	

These are very good test results and show that by the time pupils leave school they have achieved more than the level expected. In mathematics and science results were well above the national average and in English were above the national average. When compared to schools with a similar intake the results were well above average for all three subjects. This group of pupils included more than the usual number of higher attaining pupils. Trends over time show a fluctuating pattern, which is typical of a small school. Overall, the trend has been broadly in line with that found nationally. Pupils' work seen in Year 6 during the inspection shows that standards are not as high. This does not represent a fall in standards, but reflects the differences in ability between the separate year groups. In mathematics, standards are above average, and in English and science standards are in line with the national average. Standards in writing, although satisfactory, are weaker than other aspects of English, and in particular the higher attaining pupils are underachieving. Considering pupils' low level of attainment when they start school, overall standards reflect good achievement for the vast majority of pupils. The school has set realistic targets based on the assessment of the present group of pupils. With the consistently good teaching in Year 6 the school is on line to achieve these targets.

In 2000, the results of national tests for seven-year-olds were considerably lower than in previous years. In reading, results were well below the average of all and similar schools. Results in mathematics were poor and fell into the lowest 5 per cent nationally. Pupils performed better in writing. Results were in line with the national average and above average when compared to schools with a similar intake. This group of pupils had had their learning disturbed in Year 2 by staffing changes and these results are not typical of standards in the school. Staffing in Year 2 is now more stable and standards are improving. Currently, standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils are achieving well enough but there is underachievement of higher attaining pupils. The school's performance in teachers' assessments for science in 2000 was close to the national average and current standards reflect this.

Standards and achievements in ICT are satisfactory although the school lacks resources for pupils to practise their skills in other subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. They enjoy school and are eager to take part in all activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good at all times. Pupils accept responsibility for their own behaviour and know what is acceptable in the school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good and leads to good relationships throughout the school. Pupils treat adults and each other considerately.

Attendance	Attendance is below the national average.
------------	---

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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 and learning is satisfactory. Teaching was good in 47 per cent of lessons seen and satisfactory in the rest. The best teaching seen was in Year 6 and pupils achieve much in their final year in school.

The teaching of mathematics is good and teachers are confident delivering the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are lively with a good range of practical activities that makes these lessons fun, and learning is good. Numeracy skills are effectively promoted in other lessons. Teaching of English is satisfactory. Teachers are confident in teaching reading. In the reception class and Years 1 and 2 good attention is given to teaching letters and sounds. As a result pupils learn to read quickly. Writing is not taught as effectively and pupils do not transfer the skills taught in literacy lessons to other activities.

Throughout the school the key strength in teaching is the strong management of behaviour so pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers plan lessons carefully. They are clear about what pupils are to learn and share the outcomes with them so they are aware of the focus of the lesson. In the best lessons teachers return to the outcomes at the end and check on pupils' learning. The strengths in Year 6 are the fast pace and high expectations and pupils are eager to learn and try hard to improve. Throughout the school most lessons include a good balance of activities but occasionally a lack of variety leads to pupils getting restless and their interest wanes. Weaknesses in a few lessons include a lack of pace and insufficient challenge. This leads to the learning needs of the higher attaining pupils not always being met and they do not achieve as well as they could. The learning needs of pupils with special educational needs are well met in class and they make satisfactory progress. However, occasionally a lack of communication between teachers and support staff means that when pupils are withdrawn for additional help, tasks do not build on previous learning. This hampers pupils' learning in these lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A good range of experiences are provided for children in the reception class. There is a good balance of subjects in the rest of the school. The school has a limited number of after school activities to extend the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Effective help is provided in class. A lack of joint planning between teachers and support staff leads to activities not building on previous learning in sessions when pupils are withdrawn from class. Pupils are not always included in the conclusion of the literacy hour and so miss the overall evaluation of the lesson.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils learning through English as an additional language are confident speakers of English. When a need arises they are supported effectively by staff and fellow pupils.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The Christian ethos in the school permeates all its work. Provision for moral and social development is a strength in the school. The school promotes a climate where pupils are encouraged to understand right from wrong and take responsibility for their own actions. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school with procedures for child protection securely in place. Procedures for assessing attainment are in place, but the use of the information to set individual targets and track the progress of pupils is in the early stages of development.

All statutory requirements of the curriculum are met. However, the school's organisation for ten week's extra reading leads to pupils taking part, missing aspects of the National Curriculum.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and direction for the school. The senior management team effectively supports her and all are committed to raising standards in the school. The aims of the school are reflected clearly in its daily life.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very supportive of the school. The business of the governing body is carried out efficiently and this ensures all statutory requirements are fulfilled.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is improving its methods of evaluating its performance. Findings from assessments are used to check on the school's overall performance and prompt action is taken to address any perceived weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good. The school has made difficult decisions to ensure a balanced budget. The principles of best value are applied and careful deliberation is given to all major spending.

### 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>The school is approachable and promotes a positive partnership with parents.</li> <li>Management of the school is good.</li> <li>The children's behaviour is good.</li> <li>Communications with parents are good and they are kept well informed.</li> <li>Teaching is good and children are expected to work hard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The range and number of activities provided outside the classroom.</li> </ul>

Parents have very positive views about the school. Inspectors agree with these views and that the school works hard to promote good relationships with parents. The view of the inspection team is that the range of extra-curricular activities is limited and part of the reason for this is the small number of teachers in the school. The headteacher has plans to extend these activities in the near future by making effective use of additional funding.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Standards at 11 are above average in mathematics.**

- 1 The school's 2000 results for eleven year olds in mathematics were impressive and earned the school national recognition for good achievement. The results were well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. A third of the pupils exceeded the national average and this reflects a significant achievement. This group of pupils included a higher than usual number of higher attaining pupils, and standards in the present Year 6 are not quite as high. However, standards remain above average, with the great majority reaching the national average. This does not indicate a drop in standards but reflects the differing abilities of the year groups. From a low starting point when pupils enter the school these high standards show good achievement, and very good achievement for the pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. Since 1998, standards have risen and the school is well placed to reach the targets that have been set for 2001.
- 2 The school's results at the age of seven in the national tests in 2000 were well below both the national average and the average for schools with similar intakes. These results fell into the lowest 5 per cent in the country. Staffing changes disturbed the learning of this cohort and these results are not typical of the school. The work of the present Year 2 indicates an improvement and standards are average.
- 3 In the reception class, children are introduced to number in a variety of ways and children recognise numbers to 10. Pupils match coins to numbers on a dice and are confident counting on to reach a required number. Pupils add on successfully but there was little evidence that they understand subtraction. Pupils are less secure writing numerals. Although many are making good progress they are not yet reaching the early learning goal for their age.<sup>1</sup>
- 4 Throughout the school the emphasis on practical activities captures pupils' enthusiasm for mathematics and this has a significant impact on the good learning seen in lessons. In a Year 1 lesson pupils enjoyed a 'round the world' game which challenged them to guess the correct number. They quickly grasped the idea and used their skills in number to calculate the answer. These skills are built on in Year 2 and pupils accurately work with larger numbers. For example, they count on from 98 into three digit numbers. The imaginative use of cards and a number line made up by pupils demonstrated the formation of numbers over 100. This is effective teaching and as a result pupils understand that 134 is made up of 100, 30 and 4. Teachers use mathematical terminology correctly so pupils are confident explaining their activities. In Year 3 they talk confidently about 'angles' and explain ' a right angle is a corner' and recognise it is a quarter turn. In response to good teaching in Year 6 the pace of learning increases and much is achieved in this year. The teacher challenges pupils to explain their mental calculations and as a result pupils learn from each other. Mathematical terminology increases and pupils understand 'partitioning' and 'multiples'. The brisk pace keeps the pupils on their toes as they calculate percentages of money spent when buying clothes. Higher attaining pupils

---

<sup>1</sup> Early Learning Goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Reception class.

work with numbers to 1000 and a review of their books shows a growing understanding of probability when using die.

- 5 Teachers successfully promote numeracy skills in other lessons. This was seen in a science lesson in Year 6 when pupils had to measure the distance between their torch and image when investigating the changing size of shadows. Results were presented on a graph.

**The headteacher demonstrates strong leadership. She is supported effectively by staff and governors who combine to create a caring atmosphere that supports learning.**

- 6 The headteacher provides purposeful leadership and has been effective in raising standards in the school. She has been determined to maintain a focus on the caring ethos as well as move the school forward in line with new national initiatives. This can be seen in the school's ICT suite and teachers' growing confidence in this subject. The headteacher keeps a close eye on all development in the school and has justifiably earned the respect of all.
- 7 Staff with management responsibilities have been effective in putting new planning guidelines in place. This action has successfully resolved many of the concerns from the previous inspection. However, staff have limited opportunity to check on teaching and learning in other classes and so are unable to check that planning is becoming practice in the school. The deputy headteacher supports the headteacher with a responsibility for overseeing the curriculum. This has been most effective in maintaining a curriculum that meets all statutory requirements and also has a focus on numeracy and literacy.
- 8 The governors are very supportive of the school. They carry out their duties in an organised manner and all statutory requirements are met. Recently, governors have had to make difficult decisions to ensure a more secure financial future for the school. This involved a potential teacher redundancy and the governors managed this very efficiently. Governors now keep a close eye on the budget and apply the principles of best value in all major spending. They check that any major purchases are clearly linked to priorities in the school's development plan. This plan is a collaborative document that clearly identifies areas of improvement for the school. These areas are most appropriate for the school, including raising standards in writing and further development of ICT and assessment procedures. In the past the governors have reviewed the draft school development plan but are now becoming more involved in the strategic planning process. They are acutely aware of future problems if numbers in the school decline any more and have started to consider ways to raise awareness of the school in the locality.
- 9 The arrangements for monitoring and developing teaching are satisfactory. Currently, observations of teaching are carried out by the headteacher and deputy and have led to improvement in teaching, particularly in management and organisation of lessons. Few governors have observed lessons and where this has been done it has been on an informal basis. The focus has been on numeracy and literacy, and in other subjects the opportunities to monitor teaching are underdeveloped. Procedures to monitor standards are in place and the school makes effective use of assessment data to check its overall performance. This was effective in analysing the dip in test results at the end of Year 2 in the national tests in 2000. Prompt action was taken to address the needs of this group of pupils. The

curriculum was adjusted and regular testing carried out to check that they were improving. Current standards suggest these pupils are rapidly closing the gap and are on target to meet the level expected for their age. Throughout the school insufficient use is made of assessment data to track the progress of groups of pupils or to set individual attainment targets for pupils.

### **Teaching is never less than satisfactory and the management of pupils is impressive**

- 10 All of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. In 47 per cent of lessons seen teaching was good and it was satisfactory in the rest. Teaching seen was strongest in Year 6 and this led to a faster pace of learning in this year.
- 11 There are many strengths in the teaching. The most positive feature is the management of pupils. Good relationships are evident in all classes and discipline is positive and fair. Teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour procedures and as a result pupils have a clear understanding of what is acceptable behaviour. Teachers make effective use of the system of rewards and pupils try hard to maintain a record of 'smiley faces'. This leads to learning taking place in an orderly atmosphere. It also means teachers can be adventurous in their teaching, knowing that order can be retained. For example, in Year 2, pupils make funny faces as part of the story and then attention is promptly regained as the teacher moves on to the next part.
- 12 Another positive feature of teaching is planning that outlines clearly what is to be taught. Teachers often share this with pupils so they have a good understanding of the focus of the lesson. This practice is developed further in the best lessons when teachers return to the learning outcomes at the end of the lesson. This was effective in a literacy lesson in Year 6 when pupils were writing explanatory texts. In the conclusion the teacher returned to the features of this text and checked them with pupils. This effectively consolidated their learning.
- 13 Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. In Year 6 the teacher's good subject knowledge and her enjoyment in teaching mathematics created an enthusiasm to tackle calculating the percentage of different amounts of money. A weakness in the last inspection was teaching skills and the use of correct terminology. This is no longer the case. New planning guidelines identify the skills to be taught and teachers include terminology in their planning. The attractive art on display in the school is a testimony to the range of artistic skills now being taught.
- 14 Pupils are taught basic skills effectively. Teachers are confident implementing the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. Letters and sounds are taught thoroughly and pupils learn to read quickly. Good teaching of numeracy skills is having a significant impact and is resulting in high standards in mathematics.
- 15 Teachers have good questioning skills, which they use effectively to encourage pupils to recall previous learning. In the best lessons teachers use a variety of activities that capture pupils' interest and this enhances learning. This was effective in the reception class in literacy when pupils enjoyed finding the correct letter from their letter fans and using the magnetic letters to write simple words. Another example of imaginative teaching is the use of 'story sacks' in which staff have assembled artefacts to illustrate and support the contents of a reading book. This is effective in stimulating the interest of young readers in a story.

- 16 In a few lessons this variety of teaching approaches was not evident and pupils spent too long sitting on the mat listening or waiting for their turn to carry out an activity. This led to some restlessness and loss of interest.
- 17 In the best lessons, particularly in Year 6, teachers set tasks that challenge pupils and they strive to complete the tasks set. This was a weakness in other lessons where tasks were finished too quickly or the task was too easy. For example, in science in Year 2, many pupils found the task of putting pictures of trees in the correct order easy. Other tasks in the same lesson were far more interesting using plants to identify similarities and difference in plants, and pupils were eager to carry out this task and their learning was good.

**Provision for moral development is very good. This leads to good behaviour and relationships and pupils try hard with their work**

- 18 Provision for moral development is very good. The school promotes positive moral values in all of its work. The school's aim 'to guide children towards becoming confident and competent individuals and through experience of the Gospel values see the importance of becoming socially responsible and caring members of the community' is fulfilled in practice in the school. The focus of discipline procedures is justice and fairness, and teachers rigorously apply these procedures. The school encourages pupils to take ownership of their own behaviour from an early age. In the reception class the teacher said 'I'll close my eyes and count to three and see if you have got back to your places.' This gave the children the chance to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, which they did very effectively. These young children have a clear understanding about what is acceptable in their school. Teachers throughout the school take time to talk through difficulties with pupils so that they begin to appreciate another point of view. The school's behaviour system emphasises high expectations of behaviour and places the responsibility clearly on the shoulders of the individual. For example, all pupils have a behaviour record card and teachers allocate smiley or frowning faces according to how pupils behave in lessons. For pupils who find it more difficult to maintain good behaviour the same positive procedures are taken a step further. In a Year 2 lesson, two pupils have additional large charts on which they stick their smiley and frowning faces so that it provides a clear visual record of their behaviour. The pupils remove the different faces at the start of the day and this reflects the school's focus on care and forgiveness. This way they know that each day gives them a fresh start and a chance to improve. Older pupils are encouraged to consider global issues and how the way people behave affects the lives of others. In line with the school's Christian ethos the school's foyer has an attractive display showing difficult choices everyone faces in their lives and enabling pupils to see the correct response. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of others and support both local and national charities. During Lent pupils organise small events such as bun sales and a non-uniform day to raise funds for Catholic Care. This year pupils painted red noses and sold buns for 'Red Nose Day.' Overall the promotion of pupils' moral development enables pupils to become mature and sensible.

**The school makes good efforts to involve parents in the life of the school. Communication is regular and informative and parents have a positive impact on their children's learning**

- 19 The views of the parents who attended the meeting before the inspection and of those who returned questionnaires were extremely positive. They were unanimous in their opinions that behaviour is good, they are kept well informed, management is good and they would feel comfortable approaching the school with any concerns. Inspectors agree with these positive views. A number of parents expressed concern over the limited number of after school activities. The inspectors consider that the number of activities is restricted because the school has few teachers to support them. The school has plans to extend these activities in the near future using additional funding.
- 20 The quality of information provided to parents is good. Effective procedures are in place to welcome new children to the school. The reception class has a parents' notice board that is crammed full of current information. It tells parents what topics are being covered and the title of the book being used that week. Formal meetings for parents to talk with class teachers are held twice a year and attendance is good. Parents feel confident popping in to chat with teachers or the headteacher if they have a concern. They were consulted on the home school agreement and 96 per cent of parents signed the agreement. An excellent response.
- 21 The annual reports to parents include all the required information but do not set targets for improvement or tell parents how they can help their children to improve. Parents of children with special educational needs are invited to all meetings and kept fully up-to-date with the support their children receive and the progress they are making.
- 22 Parents are encouraged to get involved in school and several help by listening to readers or offering an extra pair of hands in design and technology and art lessons. The school has a small but hard working Parents' Association, which organises fundraising events that are very well supported.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Although standards in English are satisfactory, pupils' skills in writing could be higher**

- 23 The results of national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 in writing were average when compared to all schools and above average when compared to similar schools. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 results in English were above the national average and well above average when compared to schools with similar intakes.
- 24 Work seen during the inspection was satisfactory and similar to the national test results for pupils at the end of Year 2. Standards seen at the end of Year 6 were broadly average. This does not reflect a drop in standards but relates to the differing abilities in the cohort. With a small school results vary from year to year because of the low number of pupils in the classes. In 2000 the Year 6 class included a higher proportion of pupils identified as being higher attainers. From a low starting base on entry to school the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. However, pupils are not as confident in their writing skills as they are in speaking, listening and reading, and few pupils exceed the national average.

- 25 In the reception class the small group of higher attaining pupils reach the early learning goal<sup>2</sup> and are starting to write independently. Other pupils write their own names confidently but have not yet reached the level of writing simple regular words correctly. The teacher includes a range of interesting activities to teach letters and their sounds, and as a result, pupils understand letters represent different sounds. They are making great efforts to apply this knowledge to their writing. For example, one child asked to write 'can' knew 'c' but was unsure of how to write 'n'. Letter formation is satisfactory for many letters but 'a' causes a problem for many, and upper and lower case letters are mixed up in words.
- 26 By the end of Year 2, pupils are more confident writers. Overall standards are satisfactory and the vast majority of pupils are achieving the expected level. Teachers continue to emphasise letters and sounds so that spellings improve. Pupils are happy attempting new words for example writing, 'mesige' for 'message'. For pupils starting school with limited skills this represents good achievement. Lower attaining pupils also spell commonly used words correctly but still mix upper and lower case letters in their writing. Most understand the use of capital letters and full stops but are not yet using them correctly in their independent writing. Teachers provide an interesting range of activities so that pupils understand that writing changes for different purposes. For example, pupils write instructions that show they understand it is important to put these in the correct order. However, the use of a sheet with lines and numbers for the instructions gives too much support for the higher attaining pupils, who could have been further challenged by deciding on their own organisation for the task. Teachers do not always grasp every opportunity to extend pupils' writing in other subjects. For example, in science in Year 2 when pupils cut and pasted labels and the chance to record their findings was missed. A weakness in writing is the lack of imaginative vocabulary. This links partly to a weaker aspect of teaching for example, when pupils are taught new ideas such as synonyms but it is not made clear how these can be used to improve their own writing. Vocabulary improves in their poetry, which is word-processed and shows an understanding of rhyme.
- 27 By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with the national average. Most pupils reach the required level for their age but currently few pupils exceed this level. A review of work shows expectations of pupils' writing skills are not always high enough in Years 3 to 5, and teachers' marking of work does not make it clear to pupils what they have to do to improve. The introduction of individual attainment targets is starting to improve this situation as pupils have a better idea of how to make their work better. The best teaching seen was in Year 6, where teacher expectations are higher, and much is achieved in this year. The teacher explains the focus of the lesson and returns to this in the conclusion to check all pupils have understood the new learning. As a result, new learning builds successfully on previous work. Pupils write stories using paragraphs to structure their ideas. Many understand the drafting process but in practice do not give sufficient thought to using the process to develop their ideas imaginatively or in a precise and organised way. This was the difficulty in Year 6 when pupils were writing an explanation of the water cycle. Many lost the point of this style of writing as they concentrated on the facts. The vast majority of pupils have a neat joined-up script for final presentation of work. Spelling skills are satisfactory and most have a good knowledge of common spelling patterns. Errors often link to spoken language as in 'wif' and

---

<sup>2</sup> Early Learning Goal is the expectation for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage

'juring.' This problem also hampers a few pupils' writing skills as they rely heavily on their spoken vocabulary. This leads to work lacking in imaginative and interesting language. Most pupils use punctuation correctly and write in a style that matches its purpose. Formal letter writing is well organised and suitable language is used.

- 28 The school has identified writing as a priority in the school's action plan and has specific steps planned to raise standards.

### **The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in other subjects**

- 29 Since the last inspection the school has put significant emphasis on developing ICT. Staff and the governing body made a decision to install an ICT suite so that pupils could be taught basic skills as a whole class.

- 30 Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are typical of those seen in most schools. Planning shows the curriculum is fully covered. Pupils in Year 2 have learnt to control the movements of a programmable toy by planning and entering procedures. Pupils have satisfactory word processing skills. In Year 3 the teacher successfully taught pupils the skills of locating information. They have used databases on birds and their characteristics. The great majority of pupils record data onto their databases and amend their ideas successfully. In Year 5, pupils use a database to correct intentional errors. Pupils accurately select and amend data from a range of sources. They access information and at the end of the session save their work and close down their programs. Discussions with pupils reveal they appreciate the value of ICT in the wider world. Pupils with special educational needs use ICT to improve their literacy skills. They are confident following the program's instructions and using the mouse to select answers. Pupils in Year 6 use spreadsheets to handle data and produce a frequency table after investigations with playing cards. They use the Internet to research information for their history topic on Ancient Egypt. They send e-mails to another school. Most pupils are quickly making up for lost ground in previous years. The lack of resources in Years 3 to 6 means opportunities are missed to help pupils gain greater keyboard skills or to use word processing and data handling skills as part of work on other subjects, especially in daily literacy and mathematics lessons. Although computers are available in the classrooms for Years 1 and 2 these were not seen in use during the inspection and opportunities to extend ICT skills were missed.

- 31 Since the last inspection the school has come a long way in raising standards in ICT. Teachers are updating their knowledge and good teaching was seen in the ICT suite. Teachers are now confident teaching the basic skills. The school is not complacent and a clear plan of action is in place to further raise standards.

### **The use of assessment to set individual targets and to track the progress of pupils as they move through the school**

- 32 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. As pupils start school an assessment is carried out and information used effectively to plan a curriculum that matches the needs of the children. Throughout the school a series of tests are used to gain information about pupils' progress in English and mathematics. This information is used effectively by the school to identify and correct weaknesses. For example, the current Year 3 pupils did not perform well in the national tests in 2000. To resolve

this weakness the pupils followed Year 2 National Curriculum to revise and consolidate their learning before moving on to Year 3 work. Progress was checked by retesting the pupils and most are now working at a level more appropriate for their age. Information collected from assessment is used to monitor for any gender differences and to compare the school's performance with other schools nationally and locally. Insufficient use is made of assessment information to track the progress of specific groups of pupils or to set individual targets for pupils. There is evidence the school has made a start on this in English and a few pupils could explain their target was, for example to improve their handwriting. By using assessment information in this way pupils know what they have to do to improve and it leads to skills being developed and consolidated as pupils move through the school. Currently, the school lacks a formal system to monitor the progress made by pupils learning through English as an additional language. This means teachers are not always aware if these pupils have any difficulties as they move through the school. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are more effective. These pupils have good individual educational plans and teachers monitor progress towards their identified targets.

- 33 Assessment is an area identified for development, and procedures are already in place to move the school forward in setting individual attainment targets in English and mathematics.

**The use of staff who support pupils with special educational needs and those requiring extra reading support to ensure these pupils have full access to the curriculum**

- 34 Currently, the school operates a system to support pupils with special educational needs in class and by withdrawal. The impact on pupils' learning in these sessions is variable. The best practice was seen when teachers had planned carefully with support staff. This led to tasks in the withdrawal sessions being linked to what was happening in the early part of the lesson. For example, in Year 2 the support assistant used the same text, and through effective questioning successfully expanded pupils' understanding. They then benefited from intensive support as they wrote about their family. Other sessions were less effective as tasks did not build on the introduction to the lesson. This was a problem in Year 4 when pupils left the literacy hour just as the class was starting the writing task. In the withdrawal activity the pupils carried out different tasks and the skills the teacher had introduced were not developed. In another lesson the pupil had been enjoying sharing a rap poem with his classmates and in the withdrawal session a different poem was used. This hampers pupils' progress and as they do not always return for the conclusion of the literacy hour they also miss the opportunity to share with others their efforts or to be part of the final discussion checking and consolidating new learning. Other aspects of these sessions are more effective as they are linked to the pupils' individual education plans and include specific practice in spelling and reading comprehension. On other occasions, pupils regularly miss important parts of other lessons when they are taking part in the school's ten-week extra reading programme. The positive impact of the extra reading is not in question. However, the school's organisation means, for example, pupils in Year 6 regularly miss parts of science lessons and then find it difficult to catch up when they return to class. When pupils with special educational needs are supported in class this is effective as adults give them sensitive support and check they are fully included in all activities. A particular strength is the help given to pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. All staff are patient and consistently follow the school's

discipline procedures and take time to explain how the pupils' behaviour is affecting others. This method enables pupils to learn how to improve their behaviour.

### **Pupil's attendance, which is below the national average for primary schools**

35 The school does much to promote good attendance. The school prospectus makes it very clear what procedure parents have to follow if their children are absent. It also emphasises the importance of good attendance, pointing out that even short breaks in attendance may have a detrimental effect on the children's education. The school has a Parental Involvement Officer based at the school who works closely with parents who are having difficulty in getting their children to school or arriving on time. The Education Social Worker is also involved with the school if it is felt a family would benefit from a visit. In spite of all of these initiatives attendance remains below the national average. A few pupils who have low levels of attendance overshadow the school's efforts. The problem is made worse by some parents who take holidays in term time or condone absences. Currently, the school does not have a reward system for attendance. In the past this has worked effectively to improve punctuality and pupils tried hard to arrive at school on time.

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

To improve further the quality of education the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards in writing by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects;
  - further develop the skills of planning and drafting work
  - having higher expectations of pupils' work.(writing is a priority on the school's development plan)
- (2) Further raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by making more use of the computers available in classrooms and providing resources so that pupils can practise the skills taught in their lessons in the ICT suite. (ICT is a priority on the school's development plan)
- (3) Further extend the use of assessment to track more closely the performance of all pupils including those learning through English as an additional language. Use this information to produce individual improvement targets for pupils.
- (4) Monitor more closely the effectiveness of support for pupils with special educational needs and check that they receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum.
- (5) Raise attendance further by developing strategies which enable the school to reduce authorised absence.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

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

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	0%	47%	53%	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

	Nursery	YR – Y6
<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>		
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	160
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	45
<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	33
<b>English as an additional language</b>	Nursery	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	N/A	2
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	Nursery	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	N/A	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	N/A	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	10	13	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	*	*	*
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	57 (86)	83 (90)	70 (93)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	13	15	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	57 (90)	65 (93)	91 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

\* data not included as number of boys and girls is 10 or less

### 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	12	9	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	15	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (67)	86 (70)	86 (78)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	18	19	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (59)	90 (70)	95 (70)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

• data not included as number of boys and girls is 10 or less

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	4
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	131
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*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)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	23

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

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	180

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	363,254
Total expenditure	347,657
Expenditure per pupil	2,173
Balance brought forward from previous year	- 3,679
Balance carried forward to next year	11,918

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	100
Number of questionnaires returned	49

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	43	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	33	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	51	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	47	2	4	2
The teaching is good.	67	31	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	57	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	31	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	24	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	51	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	45	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	35	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	33	22	6	8