

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CE (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thornbury

LEA area: South Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 109263

Headteacher: Mr Richard Larter

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian McCutcheon
2420

Dates of inspection: 4 – 5 March 2002

Inspection number: 197543

Short 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 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Road
Thornbury
Bristol
South Gloucestershire
Postcode: BS35 1HJ

Telephone number: 01454 866760

Fax number: 01454 866762

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Shirley Holloway

Date of previous inspection: 23 September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
2420	B McCutcheon	Registered inspector
1333	E Forster	Lay inspector
3860	S Wellsted	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

OASIS
Waterstone Cottages
Naunton
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL54 3AS

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

There are 227 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, while the percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is average. There are four pupils with statements of special educational need. Only two pupils speak English as an additional language and they are not at an early stage of language acquisition. On entry to the school, a significant proportion of children demonstrate standards which are above average, including in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical understanding.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. It is well led by the headteacher and benefits from an effective governing body and a committed, able staff. The quality of teaching is high and pupils make mainly good, and sometimes very good, progress in English and mathematics as a result. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good and the attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good. Overall, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, as a result of effective teaching.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and manages the school well.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Strong links are established with parents, and they have a high regard for the school.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support and enhance pupils' learning.
- Music is well promoted across the school and older pupils achieve high standards in singing.

What could be improved

- In the younger half of the school, some pupils need to make better progress in writing.

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 progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the last OFSTED inspection. The indoor learning environment for the youngest children has been improved; and planning and assessment procedures for the reception class are now appropriately based on national guidance for this age group. The analysis of assessment information, which needed improvement when the school was last inspected, is rigorously undertaken. It is used effectively to inform teachers' planning and provides valuable evidence of the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils. The inconsistencies in teaching which were observed in 1997 have been eradicated and the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was consistently good or better. A very well equipped computer suite was opened at the beginning of the current school year.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A*	A
Science	A	A*	A*	A

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

The table shows the results of the 2001 Year 6 statutory tests in English were well above the national average and those achieved by similar schools. The school's performance in mathematics in 2001 was very high in comparison with the national average and well above that of similar schools. In the previous two years, the school's results for English and mathematics were well above average when compared with all schools. Inspection findings indicate that most pupils achieve very well in both subjects and demonstrate standards which are higher than those expected nationally at age 11. However, although the overall 2001 Year 2 statutory test results for writing were above average, the school has identified the need for some younger pupils to make better progress in developing their writing skills. This is confirmed by inspection findings which show that these pupils could do better in some aspects of writing.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They are very keen to learn, work hard and take pride in their achievements. Many enjoy the many activities provided for them outside lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are very well behaved at all times. They are polite, helpful friendly and considerate. They move around school in an orderly way and take care of the environment.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils relate well to one another and to all adults at the school. They work together constructively, and their respect for others is evident in their caring behaviour and in their ability to understand others' viewpoints. They enjoy the many opportunities they are given to take responsibility and undertake their duties conscientiously. Older pupils set a good example and are particularly caring in their attitudes towards younger children.
Attendance	Very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Very 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 a strength of the school. In all lessons observed, the teaching was good or better; and this represents an improvement since the last OFSTED inspection when this judgement applied to seven out of every ten lessons.

In the reception class, effective teaching enables children to make a good start at the school in relation to both their academic and personal development. The teacher and nursery nurse have a good understanding of the learning needs of young children and, as a consequence, children progress well as a result of carefully planned teaching.

In Years 1 and 2, teaching is mainly good and sometimes very good; while in Years 3 to 6 it is never less than good and, overall, is very good. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from high quality teaching with three out of four lessons judged to be excellent. As a result, pupils make mainly good, and sometimes very good, progress in their learning in both English and mathematics. Teachers are making effective use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and their planning is thorough and effective. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught, across the school, and make good progress in their learning. They benefit not only from the skills of teachers but also from the good support they receive from the school's conscientious and able teaching assistants. All lessons are characterised by positive relationships, an orderly atmosphere in classrooms, clear explanations and good use of questioning. As a result, pupils are attentive, concentrate well and work hard.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Children in the reception class benefit from a curriculum which is well matched to their learning needs. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 includes a broad range of worthwhile activities and meets statutory requirements. Sufficient time is allocated for literacy and numeracy, and this time is used well. Music is well promoted across the school and provision for ICT is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare has a high priority. Pupils develop good self-esteem and a pride in their school.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has very good leadership and management skills. He is conscientious, provides a clear sense of direction for the school and analyses its performance rigorously. He has high expectations of pupils' achievements. The headteacher effectively co-ordinates science across the school and delegates other responsibilities wisely. The subject managers for English and mathematics have a good overview of these subjects and fulfil their roles well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very committed and make a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. They are well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development through a range of appropriate committees and through their links with subject managers and individual classes. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school development plan is comprehensive and well organised and time is appropriately allocated for the evaluation of completed initiatives. The results of statutory and non-statutory tests are analysed thoroughly, and samples of pupils' completed work are checked to identify areas for improvement. The headteacher observes and evaluates the quality of teaching, and provides staff with helpful feedback which benefits their professional development.
The strategic use of resources	The finance committee provides good support and the school budget is analysed rigorously. Financial planning is carefully linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan. The governors apply the principles of best value well and, overall, the school makes very good use of its resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
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<p>The vast majority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• believe the school has high expectations for work and behaviour;• believe the teaching is good and that pupils make good progress;• believe their children enjoy school;• believe the school helps pupils to develop responsible attitudes.	<p>A minority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• would like different amounts of homework;• would like to have more information about the progress their children are making.
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Inspection findings fully support parents' positive views about the school. Homework is well planned and amounts set are broadly in line with national guidelines. Parents receive termly information about their children's progress which is the norm in most primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, as a result of effective teaching.

(a) English

1. The school builds successfully on the good communication skills most children bring with them when they enter the reception class. Year by year, teachers work hard to ensure that pupils of all abilities achieve their potential. In 2001, the school's Year 6 results were well above the national average and those of similar schools. Nevertheless, the school remains vigilant in its efforts to raise standards further, particularly in writing.
2. Children in the reception class make good progress in communication, language and literacy. They listen attentively and sustain concentration well, quickly learning to recognise the ways in which the addition of a word or a particular turn of phrase can affect or change meaning. For example, while the teacher marks the dinner register, they learn to grasp the precise meaning of 'How many more sandwiches are there than dinners today?' In specific language sessions, and in other activities, the teacher and the nursery nurse 'model' language well seizing every opportunity to develop children's vocabulary and helping them express their ideas clearly.
3. Initial literacy is taught effectively and the reception teacher clearly communicates her own love of reading. She shows children how books 'work' and how authors write, and she demonstrates the skills involved in reading aloud clearly, audibly and expressively. The teaching of phonics is secure, and as a result, the children are soon able to decode words when they read and build words as they write. Stories, such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar,' and other kinds of text are used well to show children how what they read can become an effective model for their own writing. Routine skills such as letter formation and handwriting are taught effectively. By the time children move into the Year 1 class, all, or almost all have successfully reached the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, and many children are already working in the early stages of the National Curriculum.
4. In the lessons seen, the teaching of English to pupils between the ages of five and 11 was mainly very good. As a result of this effective teaching, standards overall are high in speaking and listening, in reading, handwriting and in the presentation of work. The highest attaining pupils generally achieve standards which are well above average for their age in all aspects of writing, and most pupils make good progress overall in writing in relation to their starting points and capabilities. The effective teaching which results in such high standards overall is characterised by teachers' secure knowledge of what pupils need to learn, by their general enthusiasm for the subject, and by their high expectations for what pupils should achieve. All teachers prepare their lessons well and plan work which challenges pupils of differing abilities. Lessons are well organised, time used efficiently and resources selected with care.
5. Teachers' questioning skills are generally good. They make sure that pupils think for themselves and apply what they have been taught, encouraging pupils towards independence whilst providing relevant means of support. For example, pupils are encouraged to use dictionaries and thesauri to help with the development of vocabulary and spelling, and are shown how to write for different purposes through

the use of model texts. Often, they are given 'writing frames' or very focused instructions and guidance from teachers to help them with the general structure and organisation of their writing. For example, in an excellent lesson seen in Year 5, the teacher helped pupils to determine the characteristic features of a text giving a scientific explanation and then to plan, write and refine an explanatory text of their own. Their success was achieved not as a result of 'being told', but rather because the teacher, through skilful questioning, made pupils think for themselves, then apply what they had learned. Challenging teaching of this kind was a feature of all the best lessons seen. Pupils are encouraged to consider, for example, how authors choose and use language to create specific effects such as building tension in a story or constructing a balanced argument in discursive writing. The modelling of reading and writing by teachers is also a strength. Discussion between teachers and pupils is the catalyst in this process too, and is the means by which pupils are empowered, both as readers and writers. Throughout their time in the school, pupils are introduced to increasingly varied and demanding texts, taught how to understand and analyse them, and given the skills to write similar texts of their own.

6. Although the overall 2001 Year 2 national test results for writing were above the national average, a careful analysis undertaken by the school indicates scope for improving the writing skills of some younger pupils. This has been confirmed by on-going teacher assessment of the writing of the current cohort of Year 2 pupils. Inspection findings show that some younger pupils, mainly of average and lower attainment, could do better in some aspects of writing. Various sensible measures designed to raise standards further have already been introduced. However, teachers now need to address some recognised areas of weaknesses more rigorously.
7. The thorough, ongoing assessment of pupils' work in the various aspects of English, the rigorous analysis of test results and the setting of targets for groups and individuals also make a strong contribution to pupils' progress and attainment. Most pupils are very well informed about what they need to do next in order to improve, and are therefore partners with their teachers in the learning process.
8. All teachers extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of language beyond literacy sessions. Pupils are routinely introduced to specialist language used to convey meaning precisely in other subjects. They are also taught to read, understand and write scientific reports or historical accounts, for example, just as surely as they are taught to write stories which engage the reader.
9. Overall, there is a high level of consistency in teachers' planning, methods and use of assessment, and this, too, plays a crucial role in helping pupils to build systematically and effectively on their prior attainment week by week and year by year.
10. For those pupils who take a little longer than most to develop particular skills, effective additional support is given at various stages through special educational needs support and through various intervention programmes. Not least, the very many parents who work in partnership with the school, particularly through their support for reading, also make a most valuable contribution to pupils' progress and to the standards achieved.

Mathematics

11. On entry to the school, the mathematical understanding of most children is above average. However, for the last five years, the results of the statutory tests in Year 6 have been high and this reflects the good progress pupils make in the subject. The 2001 results were very high in comparison with the national average and well above average in comparison with similar schools. The vast majority of pupils reached the expected level and 64 per cent exceeded this standard. Inspection findings confirm the good progress made by pupils, across the school, in mathematics. Overall, current standards are above average, with a significant proportion of pupils demonstrating high achievement.
12. In the reception class, children make good progress through the 'stepping stones' of mathematical development as outlined in the national guidance for these young children. By the time they reach Year 1, they are becoming familiar with the format of National Curriculum numeracy lessons; and most attain standards that are at least in line with, and often above, those expected for their age. The class teacher effectively uses daily activities to promote and consolidate children's mathematical understanding and vocabulary. In a lesson observed, for example, they counted 'heads' during registration to see how many children were present and then calculated together that four must be absent as only 20 were at school. One child then chose a 'mat' in the shape of a hexagon and, through the use of skilful questioning, the teacher promoted discussion about the properties of different shapes. After sorting and identifying coins placed on the mat, some children then effectively consolidated their learning by using these in role play as they purchased fruit and vegetables from the class shop.
13. In the reception class, good use is made of number rhymes and songs to consolidate and extend children's counting skills and also of books which are familiar to them such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. For example, some children investigate ways of dividing six caterpillars between two leaves while others, with the support of a helpful adult, discuss the size and shape of different fruits as they sort these into sets using different criteria. Another group makes good progress in learning to 'match' and 'sequence' as they sort 'days of the week' cards and match these to the fruit eaten by the caterpillar each day.
14. In Year 1, pupils make good progress when developing their numeracy skills and their understanding of money. In a lesson observed, the teacher successfully helped pupils to consolidate their knowledge of coins up to £1, to make various amounts using the smallest number of coins and to give change. Good teaching also enabled pupils to extend their understanding of the 'largest' number and to use this knowledge as a strategy to help add together more than one number. In Year 2, pupils successfully build on their growing understanding of number and place value and, as a consequence, are able to solve more complex problems. In a lesson observed, pupils achieved well as they confidently added together four two-digit numbers to calculate the total cost of their 'money monsters'. Individual children were able to describe their methods of calculation to the class and probing questions from the teacher helped all pupils to identify which of these might be quicker or easier for them. More able pupils were able to work with differently priced 'monster' parts and to accurately calculate the change from £2.
15. Older pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to make good progress in mathematics. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, a small group of less confident mathematicians made very good progress when withdrawn for additional

support from a special educational needs teacher, who works closely with the class teacher. These pupils consolidated their knowledge and understanding of number bonds to 20. They also gained confidence in counting forwards and backwards in different steps, recognising number patterns, and in adding together two two-digit numbers. In a Year 4 lesson, effective teaching enabled pupils to use their knowledge of multiplying by ten to help them to multiply by nine. These pupils have a good understanding of place value and quickly recognised that $15 \times 9 = (15 \times 10) - 15 = 150 - 15 = 135$. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate very good mental calculation skills. In the lessons observed, Year 5 pupils could quickly answer questions such as 'What is $\frac{3}{8}$ of a kilogram?', 'One per cent of a kilogram?' or '0.4 of a kilogram?' They could also calculate the combined weight of a number of products or find the difference in weight between some of them. In Year 6, pupils rapidly provide the answers to problems like 500×700 , 4000×9 , 80% of 180 or 0.4 of 50. Year 5 pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of measures and are able to make accurate readings from scales; while Year 6 pupils have a good grasp of the language of graphs and confidently solve problems when handling data.

16. Overall, the teaching of mathematics is a strength in the school and is reflected in pupils' good achievement in the subject. All teachers are making effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy and they are particularly well informed in Years 5 and 6. Mathematics lessons are carefully planned and individual lessons form part of coherent sequences which develop pupils' skills and understanding in key aspects of the subject. The learning objectives of lessons are clearly identified in the planning and teachers ensure that their classes are made fully aware, at the beginning of lessons, of what they are expected to learn. Good use is generally made of time at the end of lessons for pupils to discuss what they have learned, and for teachers to check their understanding and skills. Most lessons begin at a brisk pace with teachers asking well judged questions to develop pupils' mental calculation skills. Teachers explain the tasks to be carried out in the main activity very clearly and, throughout their lessons, motivate pupils well. Pupils listen very attentively to their teachers, concentrate on their tasks and try very hard to meet the expectations which are set for them. In the most successful lessons, pupils are working at the edge of their current capabilities, and the good support and guidance they receive enable them to make very significant gains in their learning. This is particularly evident in Years 5 and 6. Teachers introduce and reinforce appropriate mathematical vocabulary, use pupils' mistakes as teaching points and ask skilful questions to probe pupils' understanding. Most ensure that pupils use ICT well to support their learning in mathematics, and all manage their classes very effectively. The needs of all pupils are addressed well and teaching assistants make a particularly valuable contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and manages the school well.

17. The headteacher, who was appointed from January 2000, has very good leadership and management skills. He is conscientious, provides the school with a clear sense of direction and has high expectations for pupils' achievements. The headteacher promotes teamwork among staff and has created a shared commitment to school improvement. For example, he initiated and managed the school's successful bid to achieve the Basic Skills Quality Mark recognising that this would not only celebrate the achievements of the school but would also involve and unite staff, governors, parents and pupils. Questionnaire returns indicate that the vast majority of parents consider the school to be well led and managed.

18. The headteacher uses a good range of effective monitoring procedures to evaluate the school's performance, including the rigorous analysis of statutory and non-statutory test results, the scrutiny of teachers' planning and of pupils' completed work and lesson observations. His lesson observations identify strengths and areas for improvement and provide teachers with valuable feedback which benefits their professional development. Some joint observations have been made with governors and this good practice helps to keep the governing body well informed about the workings of the school. The thorough analysis of test results means that pupils' standards and progress are tracked carefully through the school, and the specific needs of individuals and groups can be identified and addressed effectively. Overall, the headteacher's monitoring procedures provide him with a good overview of the school's achievements, and he uses the information gathered to raise standards further.
19. The headteacher delegates responsibility wisely and there are systematic and planned opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor their subjects across the school. As a consequence, the work of the subject managers for English, mathematics and science makes a very positive impact on raising and maintaining high standards in these subjects. The good work of the deputy headteacher has been recognised by the local education authority who have acquired her services, on a temporary basis, to act as a literacy consultant. In her absence, the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator has been appointed as 'acting' deputy headteacher. She is an experienced and capable teacher and is providing good support for the management of the school.

The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

20. The school values each pupil and its vision statements strongly emphasise the importance of their personal development as well as their academic achievement. As a consequence, pupils' spiritual development is very well promoted. Being a voluntary aided school means that strong links are established with the clergy and congregation of the nearby St Mary's Church. Pupils regularly attend services in the church and the clergy frequently lead school assemblies. The whole school gathers daily for a short act of Christian teaching and worship and these 'family' occasions make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. They are very calm and peaceful and are used skilfully, by the headteacher and others who lead them, to promote pupils' spiritual development and a sense of awe and wonder about the world. For example, the headteacher effectively links pupils' responses to 'If I had one wish' with the temptations offered to Jesus during his time in the wilderness; while the deputy headteacher emphasises the importance of prayer and forgiveness through the inspiring story of Bishop Tutu. Carefully selected hymns promote values such as love, hope, trust, truth, forgiveness and sharing and are sung by pupils in an enthusiastic but reverential way. Their singing has a spiritual quality and there is a strong feeling of unison that embraces all pupils from the very youngest to those in Year 6. In lessons and in personal, social and health education, pupils are encouraged to acknowledge and express their own feelings and thoughts, and to respond to the feelings of others. For example, some of the youngest pupils reflect on why they think they are special and what qualities they have which are appreciated by others. Throughout the school, pupils are taught to consider the deeper meanings of life and to acknowledge and celebrate spiritual feelings which are inspired by the beauty of the world and the wonders of nature.
21. The school provides very strong moral guidance for its pupils. All staff set a good example by understanding and valuing pupils as individuals; and the values they

promote firmly establish high expectations for moral behaviour and attitudes. Good behaviour, thoughtfulness and kindness are promoted consistently by all staff from the time children are admitted into the reception class. Pupils are taught to respect themselves, to value and respect others, and to consider, always, the impact of their actions on others. Teachers appropriately emphasise the importance of individual and collective responsibility, and good behaviour is promoted through positive means. Pupils are made fully aware of what is right and wrong and are involved actively in promoting high standards of behaviour, for example, by devising their own class rules. Through their work and through fund raising activities, for example for local charities and for the remote rural settlement of Bufumbo in Uganda, they develop their knowledge and understanding of those less fortunate than themselves and learn how to care for others.

22. The promotion of pupils' social development is very good and the ethos of the school strongly promotes equality and citizenship. Pupils are made aware of the balance that needs to exist between rights and responsibilities and, as a consequence, each pupil in the school accepts responsibility for at least one task. They are encouraged to undertake duties within their own classrooms and, older pupils in particular, assume wider responsibilities within the school. For example, they prepare the hall for worship or for physical education activities, ensure that the music is played at the appropriate time; and keep the school libraries in good order. Pupils are encouraged to be helpful towards younger children, for example, Year 6 pupils make individual links with a 'new' reception pupil before they start at the school. They ensure that they are happy at breaktimes during their first half-term and this very successful strategy is popular with both pupils and parents. Through the school council, pupils are provided with opportunities to contribute to the quality of life in the school when they are given the responsibility for deliberating, with interested adults, on changes which might benefit the school as a whole. Co-operation and collaboration are encouraged through planned opportunities for paired work and group work during lessons, while extra-curricular activities and educational visits provide further opportunities for pupils to interact within larger groups. Assembly themes are chosen with care to foster social values, inclusion and a sense of corporate identity.
23. Very good provision is made for pupils' cultural development, including the raising of multicultural awareness. The school is aware that it is a predominately white European community within a much more culturally diverse society. Appropriate emphasis is therefore given to reflecting this diversity in as many ways as possible. Currently the school is taking a lead role in an international children's culture project with schools in Sweden and Italy, and older pupils are learning Italian. Pupils' cultural development is also well promoted through the curriculum. For example, in geography they learn about life in India through their studies of the village of Chembakolli; while in art and design pupils create their own designs based on Indian art or aboriginal drawings. Literacy lessons acquaint pupils with the work of well-known children's authors and poets, and a love of reading is strongly promoted. School drama productions such as 'Mary Poppins' contribute to both social and cultural development, while religious education lessons and times of corporate worship serve to remind pupils of their religious and cultural heritage and about the beliefs and traditions of others. For example, pupils learn about the Hindu celebration of Diwali and can compare this with the importance of 'light' as a symbol for Christians and Jews.
24. Local schools 'cluster' activities, visitors and well-planned visits also make a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development. In addition, the school provides a very good range of after school activities including football, rugby, cricket, netball,

athletics, swimming, three choirs, four recorder groups, story club and drama club. There are also opportunities for pupils to participate in community led activities, for example, local drama productions, swimming and speaking competitions, Thornbury Eistedfodd, Thornbury in Bloom and local rugby, football and athletics tournaments.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good.

25. Pupils of all abilities come willingly to school, are attentive and work hard. They enjoy learning, try at all times to apply what they have been taught, and make every effort to meet their teachers' high expectations in terms of behaviour and academic performance. Good work habits and routines are well established, but pupils are not merely diligent and compliant. On the contrary, they are often excited by the prospect of learning something new or of being given a special assignment. For example, children in reception gasp in eager anticipation when told they are to produce books of their own using the computer, while pupils in Year 5 clearly relish the many challenges they are presented with during lessons in numeracy and literacy. This strong engagement with learning has a very positive impact on pupils' work, and, ultimately, on the standards they achieve. Whatever their abilities, pupils set themselves high standards. When asked about their experience of school, pupils report many different enthusiasms, some related to subjects, some to the many clubs and other enrichment activities provided.
26. Pupils behave very well at all times. They move around the school in an orderly way, abide by the rules and codes of conduct drawn up to guide them, and show great respect for their teachers and their peers. They are polite and courteous and, without being prompted, they hold open doors, stand aside, or ask if they can help in any way. In assemblies, they respond sensitively to the social and moral teaching implicit in the stories they are told. There is sincerity in their actions and demeanour when they pray or reflect on moral themes, and their singing has a spiritual quality which is at times almost tangible. When pupils in Year 6 write poems about Faith, it is clear that their writing is strongly influenced by Christian teachings and that the strong moral values they hold are closely linked to their developing spirituality. During lessons, pupils of all ages are attentive and hard working. They can be trusted to work independently of the teacher when necessary, to share resources fairly, and to co-operate with one another. At play, they are sociable and friendly, always ready to include or protect younger children or those who need a friend. There is no evidence of bullying.
27. Relationships are very good indeed. Pupils chat companionably and form easy alliances with friends of different ages in the playground and at lunch-time. In lessons, they support one another quietly and unobtrusively as they work, and they are always ready to recognise, and respond to, others' particular needs. For example, they give warm support to pupils with special educational needs; equally, they accept the need of an able pupil to work quietly on his own. The links forged between pupils in Year 6 and children in the reception class are genuine and long-lasting. It is not at all unusual, for example, to see an older pupil with his or her 'protégé' engaged in earnest conversation in the playground or over lunch. When required to collaborate to achieve a shared goal, pupils behave with great maturity. For example, when the advanced recorder group or the various choirs rehearse for a music festival, pupils' shared commitment is impressive and their performance as a 'team' is wholly professional.
28. Pupils of all ages undertake routine classroom jobs willingly and reliably. Older pupils carry out their various duties within the wider school sensibly and with pride. For

example, they help in the dining room by serving water, clearing and cleaning tables, sweeping up and tidying things away; they man the library and keep it tidy; and they set up the hall for assembly. Members of the school council take their responsibilities very seriously. They are proud of what they have helped to achieve, and conscientious about representing their classmates fairly. The quality of the school environment also testifies to pupils' caring attitudes. For example, the pupils worked hard to establish a memorial garden in memory of Princess Diana, while the area of land between the two buildings has also been transformed by their designs. In all their endeavours, pupils show themselves to be developing as worthwhile, conscientious and caring citizens. They care for one another, value others' views and opinions, care for the environment and show great respect for different cultures, languages and beliefs.

Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.

29. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and make good progress. By the time they are 11, many of these pupils are able to achieve the expected standard for their age in English, mathematics and science in the national tests (SATs). The more able pupils achieve high standards in the SATs as a result of effective teaching.
30. Support for pupils with special educational needs is well organised and is particularly effective in helping them to make good progress in lessons and to reach the specific targets set for them in literacy and numeracy in their individual education plans. The support teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), teaching assistants and class teachers all play their part in helping these pupils to build on their strengths and to address weaknesses in their performance. Class teachers plan their lessons meticulously. They make sure that the tasks set for group work match the capabilities and learning needs of pupils of differing abilities. During lessons in literacy and numeracy, these pupils are also often given additional adult support in the form of teaching assistants or special educational needs teachers. Occasionally, pupils are withdrawn from parts of such lessons to work with support staff on particular aspects of the programme where they need specific help. At the same time, great care is taken to ensure that these pupils are not denied access to the full range of opportunities identified in the National Curriculum.
31. All staff involved in the support of pupils with special educational needs are well trained for their roles and are very well briefed about what pupils are intended to learn. They monitor pupils' progress in relation to the tasks set, and frequently produce written notes and assessments of progress which are used to good advantage by the class teachers when they, in their turn, plan future work for the pupils. The targets in pupils' individual education plans are well defined, challenging, but achievable, and address all identified needs, including, when appropriate, those which are not specifically academic. The learning objectives set are short term, and targets are reviewed at very regular intervals. When appropriate, pupils are also made aware of their targets and are involved in reviews of their progress. Parents are informed at the earliest opportunity when children's needs are identified. Many parents play an important part in helping their children to achieve their targets by supporting the school's endeavours at home, for example, through the home-school reading partnership.
32. In its efforts to meet the wide range of special educational needs presented by pupils, the school benefits from a variety of sources of expertise. These include, amongst others, the educational psychology service and various members of the local education authority pupil inclusion support service who advise staff about ways of

supporting pupils with specific learning difficulties, hearing impairment, physical disabilities, autism, and other learning needs associated with pupils' emotional and behavioural difficulties. The SENCO and staff of the school benefit from the advice, support and training offered by such staff. When appropriate, staff from these agencies are also directly involved in helping teachers to plan work for specific pupils. Paired reading, supported by adult volunteers who come into school to read with pupils with special educational needs, also makes a valuable contribution to pupils' progress and attainment.

33. Where necessary, special equipment is provided to help pupils with special educational needs, and the school building is also suitably equipped with ramps and other facilities for the disabled. The SENCO is very effective in her management and co-ordination of special educational needs provision. She works closely with class teachers and support staff to make sure that pupils' progress is monitored and that any relevant findings are used to inform teaching. Support staff and teaching assistants are also effective in their role. They are deployed well and make a significant contribution to pupils' good progress throughout the school.
34. The work set by teachers for higher attaining, more able pupils is mainly appropriately challenging and is often intellectually demanding, particularly in Years 5 and 6. All teachers have high expectations for what these pupils should achieve in relation to the tasks set. With very rare exceptions, pupils rise to the challenges and to their teachers' high aspirations. Their own commitment to learning and their teachers' efforts on their behalf are reflected in the high standards they achieve, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics.

Strong links are established with parents, and they have a high regard for the school.

35. Parents have very positive views about the school and a firm sense of identity with its community. They value the caring ethos, founded on Christian principles, and are keen to support the school and their children's learning. Parents are kept well informed about the curriculum through meetings for all year groups at the start of each school year. These provide a good forum not only for the 'new' class teacher to explain what will be taught, and to advise parents about homework expectations, but also to give parents an opportunity to meet them informally. Parents feel that this two-way communication is maintained throughout the year by effective use of home/school record books and by the availability of staff to discuss any issue that might be giving cause for concern. The school provides brief written reports about pupils' progress before consultation evenings in the autumn and spring terms, which provide parents with information about targets for improvement. The annual report, issued towards the end of the school year, appropriately identifies pupils' strengths and areas for improvement. Overall, this good practice makes the vast majority of parents feel well informed and contributes to the strength of the partnership.
36. The school strongly encourages parents to become involved in school activities and values the support they provide. Parents welcome the opportunity to join in collective worship each term; and many regularly help in classrooms or share their expertise in particular curriculum areas. Others play a valuable part in helping maintain the buildings and improving the outdoor facilities. The flourishing School Association raises significant funds for additional resources and to support projects such as the conversion of a classroom into a well-equipped computer suite. Parents and representatives from the School Association are included on the school council and this gives them a true sense of ownership and the opportunity to be involved in proposals for improvements. These successful strategies build up a sense of trust in

the school and foster a shared commitment to support and improve the education for their children.

Good use is made of information and communication technology to support and enhance pupils' learning.

37. At the beginning of the current school year, a new computer suite was opened consisting of 15 workstations connected to the Internet, printers and a scanner. The school is also networked enabling all staff and pupils to have access to a variety of programs to support learning. Insufficient ICT lessons were observed during the inspection to make a secure, overall, judgement about the quality of teaching and the standards which pupils achieve. However, evidence from lessons seen, from teachers' planning and from a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that good use is being made of ICT to support and enhance pupils' work across the curriculum.
38. In a lesson seen in the reception class, for example, the teacher made good use of a short period of time to introduce the children to a simple data-handling program so that they could record their favourite fruits. In Year 1, pupils have created texts using fonts of different colours and sizes, used a word bank to construct sentences and have experimented with simple drawing programs. In Year 2, pupils use their growing ICT skills to create complex patterns by repeating shapes they have drawn; and a data-handling program to illustrate their investigations about forces, as part of their work in science. These pupils also demonstrate good word-processing skills in geography when writing about island homes; and can edit and improve texts they have written, for example, after listening to the story 'Oops!' They improve their understanding of control technology when writing a list of commands for the school's floor robot and of 'flood fill' techniques as they create their own pictures inspired by the work of Mondrian.
39. As part of their work in music, Year 3 pupils learn that technology can be used to control sounds as they create their own melodies; while in geography, these pupils use different font styles and colours to illustrate their writing about the city of Florence. In Year 4, pupils develop their ICT 'cutting' and 'pasting' skills when using this technique to design their own duvet and bedroom fabrics, experiment with font styles and learn to 'centre' text as they publish their own class rules. In Year 5, pupils observe traffic light sequences as part of their homework tasks. In a lesson seen, they then effectively develop their understanding of control technology, and of how ICT is used in everyday life, as they devise their own procedures to control traffic lights. When appropriate, some literacy and numeracy lessons take place in the ICT suite. During the inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils made good progress when using the computers to draft, re-draft and edit texts in order to create a balanced written argument, as part of their work in literacy. Classroom computers were also used effectively during some lessons seen, for example, in Years 4 and 5 to support the development of pupils' numeracy skills.
40. The co-ordinator has formulated a very good development plan for the subject. This provides a clear three year overview of planned developments in ICT and detailed action plans for the current school year.

Music is well promoted across the school and older pupils achieve high standards in singing.

41. Music has a high profile in the school and is enriched by the opportunity for individual tuition in a range of instruments, recorder lessons and the school's orchestra and choirs. There are also opportunities for pupils to take part in musical performances and to enter competitions. Due to the short length of the inspection, it was not possible to observe enough teaching to make overall judgements about pupils'

standards or the quality of teaching in music. However, evidence from pupils' singing in collective worship shows that, overall, their singing skills are very good. Older pupils, who sing in the school's choirs, achieve high standards.

42. In 'worship', pupils sing confidently and tunefully with clear diction and secure control of pitch; and they know when to sing louder or more quietly. They concentrate well and, because these whole-school gatherings make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development, their singing has a reverential quality, which adds to the sense of occasion. Through the close links that exist with the church, pupils also have regular opportunities to demonstrate their musical skills in a wider setting, for example, in various religious festivals held in the church throughout the year. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting expressed their delight in the involvement of all pupils, and the standards achieved, in school concerts.
43. The standards of singing achieved by pupils in the Junior and Chamber Choirs are very high. They are treated as 'musicians' and have clear purpose to improve their skills, for example, for the local Eistedfodd. These pupils sing with enthusiasm and commitment obviously enjoying their own individual contributions but also the pleasure of singing in unison. Through practice, mainly in their own time after school, pupils refine their skills to enable them to sing more accurately, expressively and with improved communication. Older pupils achieve particularly well when singing songs in parts, successfully maintaining their parts independently of those taken by other groups, and the quality of their singing is impressive. In addition, pupils readily identify with the lyrics of carefully chosen songs such as 'We can make the difference' or 'The future is now' and, as a consequence, their singing powerfully reflects these sentiments.
44. Both the music co-ordinator and the Year 5 teacher provide skilful teaching in music which raises pupils' standards and strongly promotes the subject throughout the school. They use their knowledge, skills and understanding confidently to demonstrate and to work with pupils, solving technical problems and developing high quality music making. For example, the co-ordinator uses her guitar effectively while teaching singing to the youngest children in the reception class and, as a consequence, they respond with interest and enthusiasm. She also enables the most able recorder group to achieve high standards during a lunch time practice and another group to perform very competently when playing in front of the whole school during collective worship. The Year 5 teacher works with the school choirs, supported by one of the Year 2 teachers who manages an Infant Choir. She is very enthusiastic, has high expectations of choir members and has excellent relationships with pupils. She provides them with ways to refine their performances, based on appraisal of the quality of their work and clearly motivates pupils to give of their best at all times.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?

In the younger half of the school, some pupils need to make better progress in writing.

45. Inspection evidence shows that, while teachers work very hard to help pupils of all abilities to develop their writing, they do not always intervene rigorously enough during lessons, or in their marking, to help some pupils to overcome grammatical, structural and stylistic weaknesses in their work. For example, some younger pupils use a very narrow range of connectives and are not yet able to combine ideas successfully within complex sentences. Sometimes they do not organise language and ideas in the 'best' order to express their thoughts clearly; or do not fully understand when the use of standard English is required in their writing, for example, when writing a formal letter. In some circumstances, pupils alter the tenses of verbs as they develop a piece of writing, changing, for example, from the past tense to the present tense without reason. In some of their writing, there is a lack of agreement between subject and verb, as in 'we was', for example. Some of the average and lower attaining writers do not carefully read what they are writing and therefore 'lose the thread'. They may, for example, miss out words, forget to include information which the reader needs in order to make sense of their writing, or lose cohesion in a piece of writing as a whole. Weaknesses such as these are very natural at this stage of pupils' development as writers and in no way diminish other, very significant accomplishments. With help, higher attaining pupils quickly overcome such problems. However, evidence suggests that teachers need to intervene more frequently to help some pupils to recognise and address such weaknesses in their own work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. The school should address the following issues in its action plan:
- ensure that feedback to pupils, and the marking of their written work, helps them to address weaknesses in grammar, structure and style and to make language choices appropriate to the intended purposes and audiences of their writing;
 - maintain vigilance about these aspects of pupils' work irrespective of whether or not they are referred to in the stated learning objectives for lessons.

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	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	7	4	0	0	0	0
Percentage	21	50	29	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	227
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	39

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

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	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.01

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	23	13	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	20	20
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	34	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (94)	92 (91)	92 (91)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	20
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	33	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (94)	92 (91)	92 (91)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	22	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	10
	Girls	20	19	22
	Total	29	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (92)	88 (92)	97 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	n/a (83)	n/a (89)	n/a (92)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	227
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)	9.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	32.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	149.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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	2000/2001
	£
Total income	458,720
Total expenditure	462,288
Expenditure per pupil	1,984
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,142
Balance carried forward to next year	21,574

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	227
Number of questionnaires returned	102

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	24	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	58	37	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	38	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	43	15	2	0
The teaching is good.	59	38	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	50	11	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	36	11	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	46	10	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	41	44	6	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	38	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	39	11	0	4