

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHRIST CHURCH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cheltenham

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115745

Headteacher: Miss Janie Fentem

Reporting inspector: Mr Fred Riches  
23235

Dates of inspection: 11 - 13 March 2002

Inspection number: 195796

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 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Malvern Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire

Postcode: GL50 2NR

Telephone number: 01242 523392

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Francis O'Meara

Date of previous inspection: 28 April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **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>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>20</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Christ Church Primary School has 218 pupils on roll aged four to eleven years with an even balance of boys and girls. It serves the local Lansdown, St Mark's and St Peter's areas of Cheltenham and is fully subscribed. Children live mainly in owner-occupied homes. Their attainment on entry to the school is wide ranging, but slightly above average overall. Almost all pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage, with just under three per cent from various minority ethnic backgrounds. One pupil speaks English as an additional language and is at an early stage of learning. The school has a designated Language Centre for children with speech and language difficulties, who come from a wider area. Currently eight pupils with statements of special educational need are served by this facility and one other pupil has a statement. There are 64 pupils on the school's register of special educational need, representing 29.4 per cent of the number on roll, which is above average. Just under eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well below the average.

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

Christ Church is an excellent school with many strengths. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve very successfully. This is a direct result of very good teaching, planning and assessment, outstanding leadership and excellent teamwork. The school provides excellent value for money.

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

- Standards are high and pupils of all abilities achieve very successfully;
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are excellent, as a result of the school's caring ethos and provision;
- The headteacher shows outstanding vision and leadership, while highly efficient management stems from effective teamwork by a committed staff and governing body;
- Teaching is very good, based on thorough planning and assessment, and promotes very effective learning.

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

- This is an excellent school. It has its own well-conceived agenda for development. The inspection finds no significant weaknesses.

*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 excellent improvement since its last inspection in April 1997. Standards, which were already high, have risen still further. Both leadership and the quality of teaching were good then and are now even more effective. The school accommodation has changed out of all recognition. Staff make extremely efficient use of the accommodation, grounds and resources. The school has thoroughly addressed the key issues from the last inspection. Previous weaknesses have become current strengths:

- the school now evaluates pupils' performance rigorously to determine planning priorities;
- higher attainers are now fully challenged;
- thorough planning now underpins successful teaching;
- procedures for monitoring teaching and learning, and for checking pupils' progress in all subjects, are now both efficient and effective;
- the school has extended daily teaching time and uses it very well.

## 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	C	A	A	C
Science	C	A	B	C

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

*Similar schools in this table are those with fewer than 8% of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

The school has maintained high standards in English and raised standards in mathematics and science overall at age eleven since 1999. It is doing extremely well to achieve results in mathematics and science comparable to those of similar schools, where there is usually a smaller proportion of pupils with special educational needs. To achieve results in English that are well above similar schools' results is an outstanding performance. Grades take into account the achievements of all pupils. In 2001 this included four pupils with statements of special educational need. In the current Year 6, standards are above average in a year group which was achieving below average results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998. This year group has made very good progress through Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the very small number from ethnic minorities, are achieving very well. The school has set challenging targets for attainment in literacy and numeracy in summer 2002 and is on course to meet them. The school ensures that gifted and talented pupils fulfil their potential. For example, 65 per cent of pupils reached level 5 in English at age eleven in 2001. This ranked within the top five per cent of schools nationally. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen faster than nationally since 1998. In 2001, standards in reading and writing were in the top five per cent of all schools and well above those of similar schools. Standards in mathematics were well above those achieved nationally and by similar schools. Teachers' assessments also showed pupils' attainment in science to be well above the national average and in line with that of similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 at age seven was well above the national average in all three core subjects, further evidence of the school ensuring that gifted and talented pupils do as well as they can. Children reach above average standards overall by the end of the reception year. Standards at age seven in the current year continue to be high. A selection of work observed across the school's broad curriculum shows pupils of all ages in general attaining high standards.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils show enthusiasm in their lessons, concentrate well and take care in their recording and presentation.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. In lessons, around the school, and in the playground during break and lunchtimes, pupils behave extremely well.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils relate really well to each other and adults, follow their own class rules, contribute to the school council and house system, taking on responsibilities willingly and showing initiative where required.
Attendance	Very good. Well above average with no unauthorised absence.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very 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.*

Two thirds of the eighteen lessons observed were of very high quality, including three that were outstanding. Teaching in almost all of the remaining third of lessons was good. None was less than satisfactory. Most of the teaching observed was in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). In each of these subjects, teaching is of very good quality and includes some examples of excellence in English and mathematics. Teachers' very good knowledge of the literacy and numeracy strategies and their thorough preparation and planning underpin high quality classroom practice. They consistently ensure that pupils grasp the point of the lesson by outlining the main aim at the outset. Pupils are eager to learn because they have excellent relationships with their teachers and assistants and recognise the school's high expectations of everyone's behaviour and attitude to work. In all lessons, the level of challenge is very closely matched to individual pupils' needs and abilities. Teachers brief assistants, support teachers and adult volunteers very well, so that all offer positive encouragement and support to the groups concerned. Very good teaching of communication, language and literacy, particularly in the context of pupils' personal, social and emotional development, gives pupils a positive start to school life in the reception class. In the context of this very strong picture, the teaching pace slackens occasionally in numeracy lessons that are too long, with the result that pupils' focus drifts a little. Overall, however, pupils of all abilities learn very successfully because they respond to the school's ethos and their teacher's clear expectations. They regularly review their learning at the close of each lesson to see whether they have met its aims. Class organisation and management are almost invariably of the highest quality and teachers make very good, regular use of homework to promote and consolidate pupils' learning. The school checks to ensure that boys and girls do equally well. Gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs achieve successfully, as teachers assess, plan and group pupils effectively. Pupils in the Language Centre achieve very well both in mainstream classes and in small group sessions.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. Broad, balanced, relevant and highly stimulating. Meets all statutory requirements. Carefully planned links between subjects and thoughtful sequencing of work.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. Detailed planning for each pupil. Close links with parents and thorough organisation benefit pupils both in mainstream classes and those attached to the Language Centre.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The one pupil who speaks English as an additional language receives excellent, caring and encouraging support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. This strength stems from the school's Christian ethos. Times for reflection and discussion, including thoughtful attention to world faiths, contribute to spiritual and cultural development. Democratic school council activities and agreed class rules exemplify the strong provision for moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	It gives excellent levels of care. Child protection, first aid and health and safety procedures all in place and applied fastidiously.

The school works very well in partnership with the large majority of parents. A few are not sufficiently clear about the school's systems to have full confidence in the partnership.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher has given the school a clear educational direction. She has shown vision in her development of the accommodation and environment and drive when developing the school's monitoring, planning and assessment procedures. Staff with management responsibilities contribute highly effectively through outstanding teamwork.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body makes an excellent contribution to the school's success. Governors strike an effective balance between asking astute questions and showing highly supportive interest in fulfilling their strategic planning and monitoring roles.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The headteacher involves all staff and governors fully, in addition to canvassing the views of parents and pupils, when reviewing the school's strengths and weaknesses. Decisions on areas for action in all aspects of the school's life and work stem from careful analysis of previous performance.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The decision to employ a highly efficient administrative team has freed headteacher, teachers and education support staff to focus on planning, teaching, assessing and setting targets. The school applies the principles of best value in a thoroughly businesslike manner. It makes excellent use of all staff, accommodation and resources. Contingency funds are earmarked for building and grounds development.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The inspection team received 120 questionnaire replies; 25 parents attended the meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 99 per cent of those replying to the questionnaire feel comfortable approaching the school;</li> <li>• 96 per cent feel their children like school, that the school expects their children to work hard and is helping them become mature;</li> <li>• 95 per cent feel their children are making good progress;</li> <li>• 94 per cent feel teaching and behaviour are good;</li> <li>• 91 per cent feel leadership and management are good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 per cent feel the school does not work sufficiently closely with them;</li> <li>• 17 per cent feel the school does not provide an interesting range of additional activities;</li> <li>• A small number think their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home and feel insufficiently well informed about their children's progress;</li> <li>• A few parents of more able children are not sure whether the school has consistent strategies to extend them.</li> </ul>

The inspection wholeheartedly supports the positive views expressed by the large majority of parents. The inspection team looked particularly thoroughly at the areas where a few parents expressed discontent. Inspectors found these concerns to be unjustified in every respect. The school has very good procedures for communicating with parents about their children's progress, homework and the curriculum. Its provision for additional activities is also very good. It has excellent procedures for ensuring that gifted and talented pupils fulfil their potential. Sections in the commentary enlarge on these findings.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Standards are high and pupils of all abilities achieve very successfully**

##### ***Statistical proof***

###### *Children's attainment on entry to the school*

1 In common with schools throughout the country, Christ Church assesses the abilities of children on entry to the school using the local baseline assessment procedures. This shows that while attainment on entry varies a little from year to year, it is slightly above average overall.

###### *Standards in national tests at age seven*

2 Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics are gauged by the results of national tests taken by all seven-year-olds. The school's performance in these tests in 2001 was among the top five per cent nationally in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. Each school is also compared with a band of 'similar schools'. This band is determined by the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. At Christ Church, 7.3 per cent of pupils take free school meals, so the school falls just within the highest socio-economic band (0 - 8%). The school's catchment area is quite mixed and the school community includes children from a range of social backgrounds. In a comparison with schools whose catchment areas are mainly more affluent than that of Christ Church, the school's performance in the most recent national tests for seven-year-olds was well above the average in reading, writing and mathematics.

###### *Standards in national tests at age eleven*

3 Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science are measured in the same way by the national testing procedures. The most recent results for eleven-year-olds show the school performing well above the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Pupils do much better than their peers in similar schools in English and their results in mathematics and science are in line with those schools in the highest socio-economic band.

###### *Do higher attainers achieve as well as they should?*

4 A few parents with children of high ability expressed concern either at the inspection parents' meeting or in letters accompanying questionnaire replies about the school's capacity and strategies used to extend their children.

5 The statistical evidence from the most recent set of tests shows that the school is highly successful in its provision for more able pupils. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 or above at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading and in writing was in the top five per cent of all schools in 2001. The proportion reaching this high level of knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics and science was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils at Christ Church reaching higher levels was well above that of similar schools in every single aspect of English, mathematics and science.

###### *What do results of tests at age eleven show?*

6 In 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds, 65 per cent of Christ Church pupils reached the higher level 5 or above in English at the end of Key Stage 2. This puts the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally for the proportion of pupils exceeding the standard expected in English at age eleven. The school's performance is well above that of similar schools, falling only just short of being in the top five per cent. In mathematics, the school's proportion of level 5 achievers was well above the national average and above that of similar

schools. In science, an above average proportion of pupils at Christ Church reached the higher level 5 and this proportion was in line with that of similar schools.

7 Whilst individual parents may always feel that their own child might be capable of a higher level with additional individual support, the statistics from national tests in 2001 offer conclusive proof that gifted and talented pupils at Christ Church are achieving successfully.

*What do the school's own tracking systems show?*

8 Termly writing assessments, annotated by staff to gauge National Curriculum levels and decide on future areas of focus, show teachers keeping close track on pupils' progress. Each pupil has three individual literacy and three individual numeracy targets as well as additional ability group targets. These are set for either half a term or a term. Staff assess pupils' progress very carefully against National Curriculum levels, in order to challenge and support them fully.

9 Inspectors requested particularly detailed information on the current Year 6, as statistical evidence showed that this year group was achieving below average in 1998 at the end of Key Stage 1. The headteacher produced a thorough analysis of the progress of every pupil in reading, writing, mathematics and science, also showing changes in the nature of the year group as several pupils have entered or left the school during the past four years. The school's records show clearly that all pupils who were at the school in 1998 and are in the current Year 6 have made very good progress. A few, moving for example from level 1 to level 4, have clearly made excellent progress. These pupils showed well below average attainment at age seven and have learned extremely successfully over the past four years in order to reach the standard expected for an eleven-year-old. The list of strategies used to address the possible underachievement identified four years ago, together with the frank evaluations of which strategies were effective and which were not, is highly impressive. The school's procedures for checking pupils' progress and teachers' use of assessment information, in collaboration with the headteacher and key stage co-ordinators, are excellent. A year group of below average ability in 1998 now shows above average ability, bordering on well above average in English and mathematics.

10 Christ Church tracks and analyses the progress of specific groups of pupils, in order to check that all are doing as well as they should. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils from ethnic minorities, including the few in the recent past who have been learning English as an additional language, also achieve very well. The school's inclusive philosophy ensures successful achievement through measures taken to boost pupils' self esteem and to involve everyone in recognition of their role as a member of the school community.

***What does observational evidence from the inspection show?***

11 Inspection observations confirm that pupils of all abilities achieve very well during their time at Christ Church. A high proportion of the oldest pupils are already working beyond the levels expected of most eleven-year-olds.

12 Work by pupils with special educational needs (including those attached to the Language Centre), together with teachers' records, show that these pupils are very well supported and make very good progress towards their learning targets. The school works closely in partnership with parents to ensure that pupils understand their targets and gain a sense of personal achievement as they work towards them. Language Centre staff make effective use of the 'social use of language programme' (SULP). This also has been particularly advantageous to a small number of pupils in mainstream classes with emotional and behavioural needs. Sessions have helped them explain their emotions and build their self-esteem by coming to terms with their feelings of hurt and anger, for example.

13 In this short inspection, the team chose to take a particularly close look at pupils' writing in order to assess the effectiveness of the school's provision. A few examples of pupils' work from each year group will help clarify the breadth and depth of study undertaken, which results in the high standards reached by gifted and talented pupils and the very good achievement by all pupils.

14 Pupils in Year 6 write for a wide range of purposes. They use excerpts from Samuel Pepys' Diary to pick out old-fashioned words and discover modern equivalents. They create a script based on an argument erupting at a school disco, fitting comments to characters. They use the Internet to access information about famous Greeks and record it in their own words. When planning a section of a science fiction story, they listen to music to fit the mood, read extracts from H G Wells' War of the Worlds', set their series of ideas into paragraphs and write in the first person. Pupils understand how to use flashbacks within a story to give the reader added information. They take 'Colonel Fazackerley' by Charles Causley as an example for their own narrative poems, debunking characters by the device of unexpected reaction.

15 The adventurous use of vocabulary and phrasing is a highlight of pupils' original writing, shown clearly in the context of science fiction examples:

'It was just a cool mist that I saw first. Then something stirred within the shadows' ...  
'a sudden chill came over me' ...  
'I craned my neck to get a better view' ...  
'one slimy mass of black smoke came billowing out, with a noise, one might say, like the hissing of a snake' ...  
'ungovernable terror gripped me' ...  
'I swear I could see a galaxy drifting in its eyes'.

16 Further excellent examples of writing, from Year 5 pupils, include poems after the manner of Robert Louis Stevenson, such as 'From a motorbike' and fables following those of Aesop, among which 'The Kind King' shows an excellently crafted tale with the moral 'As you sow, so shall you reap'. In the Year 5 lesson observed, pupils investigated the difference between literal and figurative language in order to recognise simile and metaphor in the narrative poems used. Pupils in Year 4 composed their own story endings to 'The Snow Queen', which they read fluently and with expression. They develop their handwriting and spelling through regular practice and understand and use grammatical terms well. They make good use of their writing skills in research on history and geography projects and in writing up scientific experiments, most recently on temperature and forces. In the literacy lesson observed in Year 4, pupils made very good use of their comprehension skills to discover how hot air balloons function, before writing their own explanatory paragraphs. Year 3 pupils created portraits of characters in an attempt to describe their behaviour and characteristics. During the seventh of a series of ten lessons on fables, they showed very good understanding of the nature of a fable. Lower attainers used adjectives effectively to describe the lion and the fox. Pupils of average ability used adjectives thoughtfully to show what the two animals were thinking. Higher attainers wrote a news story warning other animals about the lion, again focusing on the use of powerful adjectives.

17 Year 2 pupils already write enthusiastically for a range of audiences and purposes. They sequence instructions, compose prayers and poems and write lists, labels and letters. They enjoy developing the different matching ingredients of a story. In the Year 2 lesson observed, pupils used very adventurous vocabulary to conjure up the scene for a story set in the jungle. Following their teacher's imaginative questioning during the magic carpet ride, higher attainers in particular wrote with a high degree of fluency as they employed their five senses to describe various aspects of the scene they could picture. Under their teacher's guidance, they structured their writing clearly and logically. They are used to writing in sentences and

are already beginning to write in paragraphs. Their writing is joined and neat and their spelling is accurate. Most pupils in Year 1 are already writing in sentences and spelling common words correctly. Their handwriting shows careful letter formation and many are beginning to use interesting words in books they have made retelling the tales of Cinderella and Little Red Hen, for instance.

18 Pupils clearly benefit greatly from the high quality of teaching and planning in literacy lessons and in the additional very well structured guided reading sessions that take place daily. Pupils' handwriting, spelling, punctuation and knowledge of grammar are all very good. They learn the skills of writing in stimulating contexts. They know the audience or the purpose when they write and they learn how to organise their writing for the different purposes. The high standards and very good achievement stem from stimulating, imaginative teaching, thoroughly planned lessons and careful, analytical assessments. Teachers and assistants challenge and support all pupils extremely well.

### **Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are excellent, as a result of the school's caring ethos and provision**

19 Pupils throughout the school show very positive attitudes to school. They know the school's expectations and clearly enjoy school. They show enthusiasm in their lessons, responding very positively to the interesting way teachers present the work. They are particularly well focused because their teachers all let them know what it is that they are setting out to achieve within each lesson. The staff have earned pupils' respect through the commitment they show in their planning, and teaching. Pupils recognise that teachers and support staff know them well and value them as individuals. The school motto, 'Always be kind', stands as an eternal value, accepted by all as an integral part of the school's Christian ethos.

20 The youngest children quickly sense the caring nature of the school, as staff ensure positive personal, social and emotional development through careful attention to this area of learning in the reception class. The excellent foundation stage portfolio, composed by the class teacher, outlines the purpose of each of the six areas of learning and explains the use of a range of strategies to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding in each. A focus on children's personal development lies at the heart of each of the other five areas of learning. Children are deriving particular benefit and enjoyment from the recent introduction of 'Jolly Phonics' and the use of 'tricky words' as they develop their communication, language and literacy skills. Children's enjoyment of early mathematical activities provides a secure foundation for later learning as they sing number rhymes, play mathematical games in the hall and use 'Amazing Maths' programs on the computer. Another booklet created by the class teacher, 'Learning through Play', takes the principles of the new national Foundation Stage curriculum and translates it into a series of structured activities with a purpose. Role play, for instance, figures large in the planned activities, offering children regular opportunity to re-enact real life experiences, express their feelings and make choices, collaborating with others and becoming aware of different cultures and lifestyles. Photographs of children playing out their roles in the pet shop, the train and in a classroom 'pond area' show children fully involved in learning through play. The opportunities for outdoor play are limited by the situation of the school and the siting of the reception class, but the school makes every effort to overcome the lack of a defined outdoor area by using the hall and school grounds imaginatively. Staff and children use carefully chosen equipment very well to ensure good physical development and plenty of opportunity for creative development. They design and paint masks, make and play musical instruments, mix paint for class wall displays and their own individual pictures. Both indoors and outdoors, children use construction equipment, as they explore and experiment, building their knowledge and understanding of the world by creating rockets, farms, animal cages and castles. Children enjoy early scientific

investigation and recording as they plant beans in jars and watch them grow alongside an enormous bean plant that crawls across the classroom walls to the Giant's castle, where outline giant and Jack remind the class of their enjoyment of this story. The celebration of Chinese New Year, the acting out of a baptism in the classroom and the singing from memory of 'Whoops-a-daisy Angel' songs in the Christmas play offer further examples of the school's excellent early provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Visits, to the Cotswold Farm Park for example, add further to the wealth of experiences enjoyed by children during their first year at Christ Church.

21 Pupils in all classes participate in creating class rules and share readily in the various organisational duties. The creation of a school council has taken pupils' personal development a stage further. The chair and secretary of the council, from Year 6, and the vice-chair and vice-secretary, from Year 5, spoke to an inspector about their roles and the work of the council. The way in which the council has been conceived and introduced has given pupils a real sense of ownership. The school representatives show a mature understanding of their role, accepting the need for the headteacher to be the ultimate arbiter, but able to put forward democratic proposals for improving or enriching school life. In addition to the two class representatives, an observer per class from Year 2 to Year 6 attends the regular council meetings, which follow a pre-agreed agenda and are minuted. Teachers ensure time for each class to hear about proceedings and for pupils to contribute to the decision-making process and the next agenda. Aspects covered include participation in fundraising activities for charities, a plan for burying a millennium capsule, schoolwear, playground markings and planting in the school grounds. Through class discussion and council feedback, the staff also gained valuable feedback from pupils on their response to the newly implemented behaviour policy. The whole process offers excellent opportunity for pupils to show initiative and develop a sense of responsible citizenship within the setting of the school community. When asked to list the good points about their school, the immediate response was 'Everyone gets on well', followed by 'the teachers are enthusiastic'.

22 It is the thoughtful planning for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for the care and welfare of pupils that lies behind the excellent attitudes and behaviour shown. Pupils catch the caring atmosphere of the school from the staff. Display boards recognising pupils' good behaviour and work near the main exit to the playground offer all pupils and visitors the opportunity to recognise and celebrate current achievement. Every classroom celebrates pupils' achievements through careful display of work in all subjects. Display boards and tables also show well-organised systems for classroom monitors for routine tasks, housepoints gained and 'good effort' tables. An eye-catching display of work on Jewish sacred texts in Year 6 and a corridor display of 'beautiful names for God' by Year 5 pupils exemplify the school's commitment to encouraging respect for the beliefs and values of all. From its own strongly held Christian principles and values, the school is confident to encourage pupils to develop enquiring minds when looking at other faiths and cultures. Collective acts of worship provide regular opportunity for the school to share a sense of community, as pupils reflect on the themes presented and receive certificates for their achievements.

23 Staff, governors and parents organise and run a considerable array of additional activities. As in most primary schools, these are mainly for older pupils. The caretaker helps run the football club and assists with athletics and swimming. In the way he carries out his duties, he shows the care he feels for the community and the environment. The lunchtime supervisors are also mainly teaching assistants, and therefore know the pupils well in their learning situation. Some run and supervise Kidzone, offering child care facilities after school. Other club activities, which have helped develop pupils' gifts and talents and encouraged their social development over the past two years, include football, rugby, netball, racket skills, squash, athletics, modern dance, country dancing, knitting, sewing, choir, orchestra,

recorders, French, German and ICT.

**The headteacher shows outstanding vision and leadership, while highly efficient management stems from effective teamwork by a committed staff and governing body**

24 The school's success stems from the quality of leadership and management exercised over the past few years, particularly during the building alterations, which have transformed the school. What is now apparent is the strength of teamwork among all staff and governors. This stems from the vision and drive of the headteacher, supported by an astute governing body and efficient administrative team, and until his recent career move, by an effective deputy headteacher. The headteacher's personal commitment to the school has won that of all teachers, assistants, caretaker and other staff associated with the school. Being a part of the vision and watching the standards rise as the building transformation takes place has been a rewarding experience for all.

25 The headteacher's strong, democratic leadership, clarity of vision and sense of purpose give the school a clear educational direction. Photographs of the school's building alterations chart the transformation of an old, well-loved but increasingly impractical, high-ceilinged Victorian building into a collection of good-sized, well-lit classrooms on two levels, retaining the character and features, for instance, of the original, slanted ceiling in the upper floor library. The carpeted corridors, decorated currently with a display of art by a local artist and used as a stimulus for pupils' work throughout the school, offer a warm, cared-for atmosphere. The outdoor areas, previously barren playgrounds, are beginning to take shape as an integral part of the fresh learning environment, carefully created to stimulate opportunities for play and learning. Pupils are fully involved in current grounds developments through school council deliberations.

26 The school's improvement planning strategies have been based on a thorough analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, considered within the context of the school's aims and vision. Thorough monitoring of the previous year's achievements precedes decision-making. The headteacher presents governors with a full analysis of the statistics showing the school's performance in relation to national and similar schools. The school also uses information from surveys of parents in determining its priorities. The four priorities for the current year are:

- to raise attainment in writing throughout the school;
- to raise attainment in mental arithmetic in Key Stage 2;
- to improve provision of ICT through literacy and numeracy;
- to improve systems of reporting pupil progress and performance to parents.

Staff use these priorities to create detailed plans of action. The action to improve writing standards, for instance, includes set targets and specific action to achieve those targets for each year group. The plans show the cost of the action, how, when and by whom it is to be carried out and how it will be evaluated. The school sets criteria for measuring the success of the action taken, also asking 'what will be different in the school if the priorities are achieved'. The plans are well conceived, manageable and focused.

27 Procedures for monitoring standards of work, pupils' progress, teachers' planning and classroom practice are thoroughly developed and performance management procedures are fully in place. Teachers receive constructive feedback from the headteacher and key stage co-ordinators. Staff with management responsibilities carry out their roles with outstanding commitment and skill. The portfolios for English at each key stage, for mathematics throughout the school, for the foundation stage and for several other National Curriculum subjects offer an invaluable resource for in-service training and review. They would also serve as a useful basis for sharing the school's good practice with parents. The portfolios show:

- the school's recognition of strengths and weaknesses in previous inspection findings, reviews by the school and local education authority advisers;
- samples of pupils' work at each National Curriculum level;
- samples of the rigorous annual, half-termly and weekly planning systems;
- samples of the computerised assessment system devised by staff at the school under the guidance of the previous deputy headteacher;
- photographs of pupils at their studies.

These portfolios represent the outcome of considerable commitment and care by teachers. They show exceptionally high quality reflection on current classroom practice.

28 Governors show a thorough understanding of the school's work. Under the thoughtful guidance of the chair, they play a full part in shaping the direction of the school. Their annual report to parents is an accessible, informative, comprehensive and attractively presented document. It gives a full picture of the life of the school. Several governors play an active role in the school and all link with a teacher to discover more about a particular subject. Individual governors regularly provide the curriculum committee with a summary of information gained from visits to the school and discussions with subject leaders. Governing body procedures are efficient, with committee structures in place to ensure effective monitoring of the curriculum and standards, alongside careful monitoring of the budget and financial planning.

29 In this latter aspect of their work, governors and headteacher are greatly assisted by the school's finance administrator and school secretary. The school's deployment of administrative staff is a model of management efficiency and effectiveness. These staff use their expertise to remove the administrative burden usually carried by headteachers and other teaching staff with management responsibilities. Budget monitoring and planning advice is undertaken and offered by staff with expertise and releases the headteacher and other staff to focus on educational planning, assessment and monitoring. External initiatives are extremely well managed. The level of staff absence through illness is very low. The school's decision to spend more on administrative staffing than most schools is a good example of its readiness to think and act innovatively. As a result of the expertise and the time allocated to staff to present information for governors to weigh financial priorities and spending decisions, the school's application of the principles of best value is excellent. The school makes highly effective use of new technology, from a transparent assessment system developed in the school and used by all teachers to the highly competent use of spreadsheets and word processing by office staff.

### **Teaching is very good, based on thorough planning and assessment, and promotes very effective learning**

30 Of 18 lessons observed, three were excellent, nine were very good, five were good and one was satisfactory. Teaching and learning are very good overall and at each individual key stage. This shows huge improvement on the findings of the previous inspection in 1997, when teaching was unsatisfactory in 15 per cent of lessons observed. The monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and key stage co-ordinators, together with constructive feedback, ensure that all teachers are well supported. The rigorous development of planning and assessment, which are also closely monitored, has also contributed positively to raising the quality of teaching. Highly skilled teachers observe and model lessons to support both newly qualified and more experienced staff in developing effective class management and teaching strategies, especially in literacy and numeracy. All staff have benefited from the expertise of the former deputy headteacher in developing a high level of proficiency in ICT through regular in-service training sessions.

31 For the foundation stage and for Key Stages 1 and 2 of the National Curriculum, the



school provides a broad, balanced, relevant and highly stimulating curriculum, which meets all statutory requirements. Teachers make it relevant to their pupils by arranging visits and visitors and by carefully planning links between subjects. The precise use of language in all subjects is a significant strength in carefully planned sequences of lessons.

32 In this short inspection, the chosen focus subjects were English and ICT. The team also looked closely at the level of challenge set by teachers in mathematics and at a small sample of other subjects. Teaching is of very good quality in all three of the main subjects seen and good or better in all other subjects observed. Teachers show very good, and in some cases, excellent knowledge of the subject matter for each lesson. Thorough preparation of well-chosen resources, careful organisation of working groups and focused planning underpin high quality classroom practice. All teachers introduce each lesson by sharing the main learning objectives with the class. Older pupils write the objective in their exercise books. This routine focuses all pupils' minds from the outset and teachers' introductory explanations and subsequent instruction and questioning has a sense of purpose because the objective is at the forefront of their minds. Pupils show eager involvement in their learning. Their relationships with their teachers and assistants are excellent overall. They recognise the school's high expectations of everyone's behaviour and attitude to work.

33 What marked out excellence in the three lessons cited were:

- in an English lesson, pupils were completely engrossed in their magic carpet ride to the jungle. As a result of their teacher's lively, imaginative questioning and prompting through dramatic role-play, they used a range of vivid, descriptive vocabulary to describe the setting, using each of their five senses in turn. After modelling how to describe a scene in written form, the teacher set four carefully planned tasks, one for each ability group, and deployed other adults in the room to ensure maximum support;
- in a mathematics lesson, the brisk pace, focused questioning and precise use of mathematical terminology challenged higher and average attainers and extended their thinking fully when investigating factors and powers;
- in a design and technology lesson, the teacher's consistent use of specific vocabulary encouraged equally precise use of language by pupils during an extremely well organised sequence of lessons using cams to design and create a moving toy.

34 The school's agreed lesson planning systems and teachers' well-developed use of assessment information ensure that work is matched very closely to individual pupils' needs and abilities. Class teachers liaise very closely with assistants, other support teachers and adult volunteers. They ensure that all adults in the classroom know the aim of the lesson and their roles within it very well, so that all offer highly focused support and encouragement to their assigned groups. An example of this excellent teamwork was in a reception class lesson, where three staff promoted children's communication skills in the context of a lesson on personal, social and emotional development. Another was in the Year 2 literacy lesson setting jungle scenes. This high quality of teamwork stems from thorough planning and organisation. The school has worked through a series of planning systems over the past few years. Teachers now use highly effective systems, basing lesson planning on half-termly plans drawn from annual plans. They use carefully thought-out formats to avoid any unnecessary repetition or re-writing. The teaching and learning objectives for each subject in each class are planned in advance for each week of the following half term or term. Teachers then use the overall objectives for the week in their weekly and daily lesson planning, in order to organise activities and resources for ability and friendship groups and to allocate staffing support. They make excellent use of agreed, manageable assessment systems to check pupils' progress and adjust lessons in the light of findings.

35 All teachers have developed their ICT skills through training sessions organised under the guidance of the previous deputy headteacher. They make excellent use of the manageable

and easily accessible computerised assessment recording systems to check that each pupil is making the progress expected each term. The quality of teaching in ICT has improved significantly as a result of the training and the improvement in facilities. Pupils work very successfully, usually in collaborative pairs, in the ICT suite. The whole school is currently focusing on using pupils' ICT skills in the context of other subjects, planning a range of uses of ICT to support their learning. Year 2 pupils, for instance, search for information on a CD-ROM in connection with their history and geography topics. The teacher's very good knowledge of the system and the software ensured a brisk pace through questioning, instruction and short, specific tasks. Pupils search confidently for information on London, Paris and Sydney, recognising hyperlinks and using them to refine their information searches. Year 3 pupils learn the benefits of using a computer database against paper-and-pencil methods in mathematics. In the lesson observed the teacher taught the class how to convert information to bar charts. Pupils understood the task and the time limits, focusing well to complete the task and explain what they had achieved. Year 4 pupils recorded the results of a science investigation into the way heat is conducted by different materials. The teacher's planning, explanation and questioning showed her confident subject knowledge and pupils learned very successfully because they knew their teacher's expectations and understood that they had a limited period to focus and tackle the recording task. Year 6 pupils used the computer suite to support their learning in geography. The teacher had prepared example spreadsheets to support her explanation of the task. As a result of her highly efficient preparation and use of time, pupils were able to access information about world temperatures on a web site, open a spreadsheet, enter information, work with several windows open and create graphs.

36 One area for attention in this otherwise very positive picture is the length of numeracy lessons for pupils in Key Stage 1. Year 1 pupils, for example, spent too much time as a whole class sitting on the carpet in one lesson observed. The pace of the lesson was not brisk enough, as pupils took turns answering the teacher's questions and lost focus as they answered individually but then waited inactively after their turn, rather than being involved.

37 Pupils of all abilities learn very successfully throughout the school because they respond to the school's ethos and their teacher's clear expectations. Teachers ensure that pupils regularly review their learning at the close of each lesson. They discuss what they have learned and check that they have met the learning intentions shared at the outset. Class organisation and management are almost invariably of the highest quality and teachers make very good, regular use of homework to promote and consolidate pupils' learning. Boys and girls do equally well. Higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs achieve equally successfully in line with their abilities, as teachers make excellent use of assessment information in their planning and grouping. Pupils in the Language Centre achieve very well both when in mainstream classes and when given small group teaching and support.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

38 This is an excellent school with no significant weaknesses. Its own improvement plan is very well conceived and this inspection has no additional points to offer.

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

39 In order to build on its many strengths, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- continue to implement the school's own improvement plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	9	5	1	0	0	0
Percentage	17	50	28	6	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 five percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	218
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	64

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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	17	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	17
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	30	30	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (94)	97 (91)	100 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	16
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	29	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (97)	94 (97)	97 (88)
	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	15	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	14
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	28	26	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (100)	84 (85)	97 (92)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	14
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	28	26	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (65)	84 (81)	97 (81)
	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	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	211
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*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)	9.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.2
Average class size	31.1

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	181

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.5
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

*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	2001
	£
Total income	463503
Total expenditure	461256
Expenditure per pupil	2096
Balance brought forward from previous year	41124
Balance carried forward to next year	43371

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	218
Number of questionnaires returned	120

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	45	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	53	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	44	3	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	48	15	0	3
The teaching is good.	49	45	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	48	11	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	33	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	40	18	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	28	3	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	43	2	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	52	14	3	8

*Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number and may therefore not total exactly 100.*

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents were particularly appreciative of the commitment and hard work of the headteacher and staff to minimise disruption during the recent building works. A few parents of more able children raised concerns about whether the school was extending their children sufficiently.