

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MARWOOD CHURCH OF ENGLAND VC INFANT SCHOOL**

Great Ayton, Middlesbrough

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121495

Headteacher: Mrs V Smith

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Walker  
21045

Dates of inspection: 6 - 8 November 2001

Inspection number: 195890

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 school  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 7  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Low Green  
Great Ayton  
Middlesbrough

Postcode: TS9 6NN

Telephone number: 01642 722389

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend P Peverell

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Marwood is a smaller than average Church of England infant school situated in the village of Great Ayton, on the outskirts of Teesside. Most of the pupils are drawn from the village, which comprises mainly privately owned homes and some local authority built housing. There are currently 60 pupils on the school's roll. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils from homes where adults have benefited from higher education is twice the national average. There are no pupils for whom English is a second language. There is a wide spread of attainment although the majority of pupils attain higher than average scores on assessments when they start school. There are five pupils on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs, which is well below average nationally; no pupils have statements of special educational need.

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

This is a very good school where pupils achieve well and attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of teaching is very good and this enables the pupils to make very good progress. The school is exceptionally well led and managed by the headteacher, with the strong support of staff and governors. The school gives good value for money; the well above average costs of educating pupils in this small school are offset by the high quality of education provided.

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

- Standards are high, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics and religious education and pupils achieve well in these subjects.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership, with the support of a very capable governing body.
- There is a very caring ethos in the school, underpinned by Christian values. Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes, personal development and relationships are all very positive.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Links with parents are very good. Parents are very well informed and the school encourages them to be fully involved in their children's education.

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

The provision for outdoor physical play in the foundation stage.

*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 very good improvement since the last inspection in June 1997. In response to the key issues raised:

- the provision for ICT has improved considerably and impacted favourably on standards through training to enhance the teachers' skills and confidence, through a review of the curriculum to introduce more opportunities for pupils to develop skills, through the introduction of pupils' folders of work as a record of progress and through regular assessments;
- there have been adjustments to the curriculum in writing to provide even more challenge and breadth, resulting in improved standards; the National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented;

- cultural provision has been enhanced through the planned inclusion of more multi-cultural experiences in the curriculum; the purchase of artefacts and resources has supported this well;
- the headteacher's workload has been reduced to more manageable proportions providing time for managerial tasks ; and
- the school management plan is of excellent quality and it now projects over a three-year period.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	A*	A*	A	A
writing	A*	A*	A*	A*
mathematics	A	A	B	C

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

In writing, the school's results in National Curriculum tests and assessments have been consistently very high since 1997, both nationally and in comparison with similar schools, placing the school's performance in the highest five per cent in the country. Results in reading too have been very high for the past four years and compared favourably with similar schools. Although they dropped slightly in 2001, they are still well above average. In mathematics, results have been well above average both nationally and in comparison with similar schools since 1998, though not quite as high as in reading and writing. In mathematics in 2001, results have fallen back a little to above, rather than well above, average. Results in mathematics are about average when compared to similar schools. In tests in reading and writing in 2001, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was significantly better than average nationally. Data should be treated with caution, however, because of the small size of the group concerned, in which just one pupil can account for a large percentage of the total. The school is committed to maintaining and even bettering these standards. Challenging targets set with the local education authority have been exceeded in reading, writing and mathematics in 2001. The school is well set to exceed the targets set for next year. Standards in science are also very high and have been so over time. Inspection findings match the standards attained in the 2001 tests and assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Pupils are doing well in all subjects, but there is a particular strength in religious education, where pupils exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and make considerable gains in their knowledge and understanding of the subject.

When pupils start the school there is a spread of attainment and most, though not all, have higher than average skills in early literacy and numeracy skills, speaking and listening. They make very good progress in the foundation stage and subsequently in Years 1 and 2 and they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. This is because of challenging lessons and careful assessments that track progress rigorously.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are well motivated, independent and keen to learn.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils are attentive and persevere with their work. They know and apply the school rules, working and playing together amicably.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are mature and sensible, relating well to each other. There are very good relationships.
Attendance	Good. It is above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	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.*

The teaching in the school is very good overall and it is a major contributory factor to the high standards and quality of education provided by the school. There were examples of very good teaching in all classes. No lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Teachers work together as a team and make lessons enjoyable through interesting activities. The teachers' planning and preparation is very thorough indeed and this leads to lessons that run smoothly and are well paced. A common strength is the very secure knowledge of the teachers, particularly in literacy and numeracy. These aspects are taught with confidence and skill and there is a consistent approach in all classes. There is an expectation of high standards of behaviour and work and pupils respond to this readily. The school gets the best out of pupils of all levels of attainment by meeting their needs very well through the careful curriculum planning. Pupils who experience difficulties with learning are supported well as are higher attaining pupils who are challenged and stimulated by their work.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. The school provides a very well-organised curriculum. It is carefully planned to ensure that learning builds sequentially on past experiences for the development of skills and knowledge. It is varied, relevant to the pupils' lives and enriched by additional activities such as visits to places of interest. The provision for outdoor play in the foundation stage is inadequate.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers provide very good support through their planning and carefully modified tasks so that these pupils achieve regular success.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The school's ethos promotes social, moral and cultural development very well. Spiritual development is fostered very effectively through the curriculum for religious education and the popular worship sessions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There is a caring 'family' atmosphere which parents value highly. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are very good.

There are very good links with parents and the school provides them with a wide range of information so that they know what is going on and how well their children are progressing.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED



<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher has built a very effective team spirit among staff and governors and has a clear view of how the school needs to develop. There is a shared commitment to raising standards and providing the best for the children.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors provide strong support by working effectively with the headteacher, fulfilling their responsibilities conscientiously and giving their time generously in the service of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There is a strong shared commitment to continual self-evaluation. The school's performance in national tests is rigorously monitored. Teaching and the curriculum are under continual review with a view to improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school is committed to obtaining the best value for money. Financial planning is targeted carefully to support proposed developments and resources are used judiciously.

The school is housed in the original Victorian schoolhouse, which has undergone extension and refurbishment in recent years. Nevertheless, it is cramped and presents considerable organisational difficulties for staff, which they overcome effectively. In particular, the absence of a hall limits the provision for physical education and there is no designated area for outdoor physical play in the foundation stage.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations.</li> <li>• The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• They would be comfortable to come to the school with questions or a problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minority of parents would like to see more activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

The very positive views of the parents are wholeheartedly endorsed by inspection findings. Inspectors consider that the range of activities the school provides outside lessons is satisfactory and typical for a small infant school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**The school achieves high standards, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics, science and religious education and pupils achieve well.**

1 Children start at the school with a wide range of experiences since most have previously attended pre-school playgroups and nurseries. Assessments made on children in the current reception class soon after they started school indicate that most have better than average skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. The personal and social skills of a significant number are below what is expected for their age. The children get off to a very good start in the foundation stage and make very good progress in all the areas of learning, with the exception of physical development, through very good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Their progress in physical development is hampered to some extent by the lack of provision for large scale outdoor play. They settle quickly into school routines and develop very good attitudes to work, which lay effective foundations for future learning and enable them to achieve very well, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

2 The majority of children start school with well-developed speech. As they progress through the school, they benefit from many opportunities to build on this good start and a high proportion of pupils in the school are articulate speakers for their age, who can express their ideas with confidence. This enables them to give thoughtful responses in discussions, such as in a worship session when they were able to express their feelings about the bright lights of fireworks. Many of the pupils have clear diction, articulate sounds accurately and can speak in relatively complex sentences. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on the use of correct subject-specific vocabulary and pupils use this as a matter of course when discussing their work. One bright pupil making an electric circuit in a science lesson in Year 2, for instance, was able to explain lucidly that electricity comes from the battery and travels through the metal wires when the circuit is complete. Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection spoke enthusiastically of the high standards of performance in concerts and productions in which all pupils are encouraged to participate.

3 The results of national assessment tasks in reading have been consistently very high from 1997 until 2000, placing the school in the top five per cent nationally. In 2001, the results were slightly lower, though still well above the national average and in comparison with similar schools. Care should be taken in analysing data since the effect of just one pupil in a small year group such as this can be considerable. Not only has the school achieved consistently very good results in reading year on year, but the proportion reaching the higher level is consistently very high. Challenging targets agreed with the local education authority for this year have been met comfortably. The school rightly places an emphasis on the development of reading and the progress and attainment of every pupil is monitored carefully. Pupils benefit from the very well structured organisation of reading material so that they read books that are well matched to their reading ability and interests. Books are taken home regularly and changed frequently so that pupils are reading books that are fresh to them and this successfully maintains their interest. There is no doubt that the very high level of parental support at home has a huge impact on the standards in the school. Most pupils rapidly learn the sounds letters make and how to blend them together to build up unfamiliar words. These skills are then reinforced consistently throughout the school, as the teachers are skilled at weaving elements of reading into lessons in every subject. Pupils are encouraged to be expressive readers and they take pleasure in reading aloud.

4 In writing, pupils attain consistently high standards and achieve well. The school is constantly seeking ways to improve further on their achievements and this in part explains how staff have managed to sustain their success in national tests and assessments year on year. Pupils use their skills in writing for a broad range of purposes and this is a feature that has developed well since the previous inspection, when there was not enough attention to extended writing in every

year group. The quality of presentation of work is generally very high. There are effective strategies used in all classes to encourage pupils to take pride in their work. Letter formation is increasingly neat and accurate as pupils grow older and their skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar become more secure. They are supported well in their early attempts at writing because teachers use a wide range of aids and resources that encourage pupils to be independent and confident to 'have a go'. The work in pupils' books reveals an extensive range of written tasks for many purposes to motivate and challenge. They range from factual accounts, to stories, to party invitations, to delightful poetry. Pupils use vocabulary creatively in their work and record stories and events imaginatively. One pupil, for example, wrote about fireworks that...'go whizzing up, they erupt and look like stars and rockets explode like a rainbow'.

5 Those pupils who experience difficulties with writing are supported patiently by adults and they make very good progress in acquiring basic skills. They work at tasks that are carefully modified to match individual needs and this enables them to make very good gains in catching up with their peers. Even if they struggle with spelling and sentence construction, they have the confidence to try hard because they know they will be encouraged rather than admonished if they make a mistake. As a result of the additional help they receive, most of these pupils successfully attain the expected level for their age by the end of Year 2. The brightest pupils achieve well because the level of challenge in the work is appropriate for them and the teachers' expectations of them are high.

6 In national tests in 2001 in mathematics, standards were not quite as high as in reading and writing, though they were still above average. The results were average in comparison with similar schools. This is partly because the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was not quite as high as in reading and writing. Scrutiny of pupils' current and past work indicates that standards are above average and pupils in the current Year 2 class are well on course to meet their targets in 2002 tests and assessments. Throughout the course of a year, all pupils cover an extensive range of work carefully matched to the national numeracy guidelines. Presentation is of a high standard and pupils' learning in Year 1 is built upon effectively in Year 2. The pupils are achieving very well because of the quality of the teaching they receive, the richness of the curriculum, their very positive attitudes to learning and the reliable support from home.

7 In science, results of assessments in 2001 were very high when compared to the national average and similar schools; the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level, however, was about average. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop their knowledge and skills through well-chosen practical activities and they record their findings carefully. Pupils in Year 2, for example, worked productively in groups to successfully complete an electrical circuit. They drew careful diagrams of this in their books, labelling all the components accurately. Higher attainers were then challenged to extend their knowledge by incorporating a switch, which they managed to do successfully with some help. In a very good lesson in Year 1, pupils demonstrated their knowledge of sound well by accurately categorising and recording the sounds made by a variety of musical instruments. They made very good progress in learning to record their data.

8 Samples of the pupils' work in science indicate that although an extensive range of topics is covered during the year, there is less evidence of pupils applying their skills to solve problems. There are less opportunities for pupils to understand the importance of a fair test or how to form and test out hypotheses, since most of the work they tackle is directed by the teachers. The school is aware of this shortcoming and modifications have been made to the curriculum. There have also been two recent events focusing on the practical application of scientific skills. The successful 'Forces' circus workshop enabled pupils to draw conclusions from their experiments. So, for example, by rolling marbles down slopes, they discovered for themselves that the marble travelled further the steeper the gradient of the slope. The fruits of these improvements can be seen in the results of national assessments in 2001, where standards in the school in this aspect were very high.

9 There is a particular strength in the school's provision for religious education. The standards achieved and pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding far exceed those typically

seen in primary schools. Pupils achieve well in the subject because, over the course of a year, they learn about a wide range of topics, which embrace other faiths such as Judaism, as well as Christianity. The teachers make the topics relevant to the pupils by encouraging them to make connections with their own lives. Thus, when reflecting on their own birthday celebrations, pupils were able to broaden their understanding to wider issues of baptism and new birth. Through the use of religious artefacts, pupils were able to consider the events that take place in Jewish families at Hanukkah. They responded to questions in a mature and thoughtful way, making good reference to their prior knowledge of objects that are used in Jewish celebrations, such as a Menorah. Parents at the meeting remarked very favourably about the levels of knowledge displayed by their children and their interest in the subject. The volume of work in pupils' books accumulated over a year is testimony to the breadth of the curriculum and the very good level of teacher knowledge. The way in which pupils record and explain beliefs and traditions in other faiths and relate them to their own lives indicates their good levels of understanding.

### **The headteacher provides excellent leadership, with the support of a very capable governing body.**

10 The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are excellent; they are the cornerstone of the school's good work and achievements. At the time of the previous inspection, when the headteacher was newly appointed, the leadership and management of the school was judged to be most effective. Since then there has been considerable improvement in the management systems, policies and planning and the strong team spirit that existed at that time among staff has strengthened further. Standards in the school have been maintained and continue to improve. There is a shared commitment to raising standards even higher through self-evaluation and to providing the best for the children. Plans are translated into action effectively and efficiently.

11 One of the key skills of the headteacher is her ability to create a very effective partnership between staff, governors and parents. Parents value the way in which they are regularly informed and consulted. Governors are encouraged to take a full part in the management of the school. The headteacher is approachable and open in the way in which she deals with people, valuing their contributions and welcoming suggestions for improvement. The vast majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire considered the school to be well led and managed.

12 The contribution made by the governors is significant in supporting the headteacher and monitoring the work of the school. Governors are generous with their time and bring their considerable corporate expertise to meetings so that issues are discussed fully. They are very well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school for which they are responsible. The governing body has become increasingly proactive since the last inspection. There are now seven separate committees in place to oversee specific areas of the school. This means that time is used to best advantage at the full meetings of the governors because discussion can focus on matters of general interest, while the committees cover more specific detail. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when there was no committee structure in place.

13 Governors with particular responsibilities, such as for literacy and numeracy, are well informed about their areas. They visit the school to see curriculum changes in action, take interest in curricular planning and hold discussions with the co-ordinators. Governors are also actively involved in formulating the school development plan and supplementary action plans. The chair of governors is a welcome and frequent visitor to the school. As well as meeting with the headteacher regularly to discuss management of the school, he leads the school in regular acts of worship. Governors are rigorous in their analysis of the school's results in National Curriculum tests and assessments, making careful comparisons of the school's performance in relation to similar schools and noting the percentage improvements. Assessment made on children when they start school provides useful data from which to make predictions, set targets and make comparisons with other schools. The school has achieved very high standards in writing consistently for the past five years, yet staff constantly seek new ways in which to improve. To this end, literacy is featured

regularly in the school improvement plan. The current plan includes several strategies to sustain standards in writing and appropriately involves the contribution of the governor with a special interest in literacy.

14 There is strength in the quality of the school systems and policies, all of which are under regular review. Of particular note is the high quality of the curricular planning, which is meticulous in providing clear guidance to teachers about what to teach and how to go about it. Each topic is carefully thought out with precise learning objectives, challenging tasks for pupils and the key vocabulary to be taught. This clear guidance ensures a consistency in the teaching throughout the school. The system for monitoring the school is at an early stage but is already having an impact on standards by highlighting areas for improvement. The monitoring is simple and realistic, pragmatically relying on procedures that take account of the headteacher's class commitment. Over the course of a year, all co-ordinators are involved in the monitoring of teaching, learning, curricular planning and pupils' work. This process is an important part of the school's self-evaluation and contributes effectively to performance management.

15 As at the time of the previous inspection, the budget is managed very efficiently and effectively. Governors are fully involved in the strategic management and financial planning of the school, taking careful account of priorities in the school improvement plan. Governors remain committed to maintaining small class sizes, a factor which is valued by parents and undoubtedly contributes to the high standards in the school. Stable numbers on roll have affected the budget favourably in recent years and governors have earmarked appropriate funds to maintain the generous staffing ratio. In addition, through judicious financial management over several years governors have accrued sufficient funding to finance the building of an extension to the school building. Work is due to start on this project in the near future. When the building work is completed it has the potential to significantly improve the quality of life in the school by providing extra space for teaching and learning. The last financial audit upgraded the school from 'satisfactory' to 'good' following the successful implementation of all recommendations. Good attention is given to obtaining the best value. For example, the school is involved in a 'group buying' scheme for the provision of basic services and facilities. Major spending decisions give appropriate consideration to consultation to obtain the best value and the school is well aware of its performance in comparison with other schools. The costs of educating pupils in the school are very high, but this is offset by the standards achieved and the quality of education the school provides.

16 School administration and financial control are very efficient, ensuring that staff can concentrate on their teaching. There are effective systems to deal with the day-to-day management of the budget and the clerical assistant provides a friendly and welcoming first point of contact for parents and visitors.

17 The strategic planning by the headteacher and governors is excellent and this gives a very good steer to developments. The headteacher's clear vision of what needs to be done is extremely well documented in the school improvement plan, which now projects forward for three years. This was an issue from the previous inspection that has been remedied well. The plan is coherent, detailed and ambitious, but not unrealistic. Priorities for improvement have arisen from careful audit and consultation and each is supported by a separate detailed action plan. Specific action plans for each area of development give clear information about funding, time scales, monitoring and personnel involved. There are also clear indications of how each development will be monitored and evaluated. The school management plan features a careful analysis of the cost effectiveness of each innovation, together with a judgement on whether or not good value for money has been achieved. The current year's planning provides plenty of detail to enable plans to be translated into action. Since the provision for information and communication technology has been identified as an ongoing area of development, it continues to be addressed in the action planning and integrated into all areas of the curriculum and this accounts for the improvement in provision.

18 The school is housed in a Victorian school house which, whilst providing adequate accommodation for the delivery of the curriculum, has several drawbacks. Through thoughtful

organisation, staff manage the limitations of the space very well indeed. However, there are times when pupils are required to sit on the floor in a small space for lengthy periods because the demands of the literacy and numeracy hours are such that it is impracticable for the teachers sharing the one room to address their classes simultaneously. Most pupils respond sensibly, though occasionally those few pupils who find it difficult to sit still for long periods become restless. The absence of a grassed area or school hall limits the provision for physical education. There is no school hall and classes have to walk some distance to the nearby church hall in all weathers for their lessons, which reduces the amount of time for teaching. There is no provision for outdoor physical play for children in the foundation stage to develop their muscles and physical co-ordination.

**There is a very caring ethos in the school, underpinned by Christian values. Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes, personal development and relationships are all very positive.**

19 Parents at the meeting were unanimous that their children are happy in the school and were enthusiastic about the Christian values the school promotes. They like the 'family atmosphere' that prevails.

20 Throughout the school, pupils have very positive attitudes to their work, which are reflected in the high standards achieved. Even the youngest children in the foundation stage rapidly adapt to school routines. They listen attentively to their teacher and are learning to refrain from calling out during discussions. They move to different activities in their classroom sensibly and are beginning to show very good signs of independence; for example, children who have only been in school for half a term now confidently use their 'Have a Go Bear' book to try out spellings for the first time.

21 Most pupils in the school are remarkably mature in the way they sensibly negotiate the restricted space in the building. Most of the pupils settle to their work willingly and work hard, sometimes for relatively long periods of time, until they complete their task. The attitudes of pupils who find learning more difficult are also very good because of the support they are given and the success they enjoy from activities planned to match their abilities.

22 Behaviour is generally good. There is a clear policy to promote good behaviour; it is effective because it is known well to both pupils and parents and applied consistently by all staff, including the lunchtime supervisors. Pupils are well aware of the 'Golden Rules' and aspire to keep them in order to gain rewards of stickers and stars. Teachers frequently refer to them when giving gentle reminders to pupils whose behaviour does not conform to expectations. There are clear sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. There have never been any exclusions. One or two of the pupils find it difficult to be attentive and sustain interest, especially during comparatively lengthy and demanding sessions when they have to remain seated on the carpet. As a result, they are sometimes restless and do not always rise to the high expectations of behaviour, although they respond rapidly to the teachers' admonishments.

23 Pupils' personal development is very good. From the start of their time in school they are taught to be independent and to form positive relationships with each other when working and playing. Teachers help to promote respectful relationships successfully through the warm and courteous manner in which they talk to the pupils. This continues throughout the lunchtime, when supervisory staff also have a very good rapport with the pupils. They take time to teach the correct way to use a knife and fork and encourage pupils to try to eat their food. Good manners are actively encouraged.

24 The progress made by pupils is carefully assessed and monitored, starting with the assessments that are administered to children in the reception class in their first term. Information from these assessments is used effectively to target those who need additional support and those

whose attainment is higher than average. Teachers carefully record pupils' experiences and achievements and the information is handed on from teacher to teacher as a point of reference and to enable teachers to plan effectively.

25 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. There are very good opportunities for pupils to reflect in the effective worship sessions. During these sessions, pupils are encouraged to think carefully about spiritual and moral issues and to make connections with their own lives. In one such session led by the vicar, pupils heard a story about the death of a pet and were able to relate this to the idea that a soul makes us all individual. The matter was handled very sensitively and led pupils to a greater understanding of the difficult concept of death. The special nature of the worship is emphasised thoughtfully by the use of a symbol such as a lit candle as an affirmation that the whole school is meeting together. Well-chosen music sets the scene and the singing of hymns together is joyful and enthusiastic.

26 Moral and social development is promoted well through the behaviour policy, which sets clear boundaries, and this is reinforced during lessons as appropriate. Pupils are expected to work and play together without disagreements and to resolve any difficulties in a friendly way. The school continues to make good use of music, literature, artists and the local environment to promote cultural awareness. The pupils go to the village churches as part of their studies in religious education and also for celebrations such as harvest and at Easter time. Shortcomings in the provision for cultural development highlighted in the previous inspection have been remedied. Curriculum planning now takes better account of the need for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures and this is now planned for in a more systematic way.

### **The quality of teaching is very good.**

27 The quality of teaching is very good overall. There is very good teaching in all classes; during the inspection over half the lessons were judged to be very good. One lesson was satisfactory. No lessons were unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when the proportion of very good lessons was lower. As a result of the very good teaching, there are high standards of work in the school and pupils make good progress, achieving as well as they can. Responses to the parents' questionnaire indicate that parents are very happy indeed with the standard of teaching in the school.

28 Teaching in the foundation stage is generally very good. The teacher creates a purposeful working atmosphere and deals with children in a gentle and sensitive manner, which encourages confidence. Activities are well planned and the deployment of the classroom assistant is effective in enabling all children to benefit from adult support when they are working. This helps to increase their vocabulary, reinforces the purpose of the lesson and gives the children confidence.

29 A strength in the teaching is the consistent approach adopted in all classes. Although teachers have their individual styles and strategies that are relevant to their particular year groups, there is a common approach to key areas such as planning, the management of pupils' behaviour, presentation of work and assessment. As a result of a consistent approach, the same points are reinforced in every class as pupils move through the school. All teachers have a similar gentle rapport with the pupils, leading to a calm and productive working atmosphere in every class. This encouraging approach creates a climate where contributions are valued and pupils know it is 'safe' to make a mistake. The teachers have the same high expectations of their pupils who respond by giving of their best and concentrating well, sometimes for relatively long periods of time for their age. Explanations in all classes are clear and unhurried, enabling pupils to absorb new knowledge and understand the tasks they are to do. Learning objectives are made explicit right at the start of the lesson so that all pupils know what is expected of them and they are re-visited at the end of the lesson as teachers assess what has been learned. All staff apply the school systems for assessment and planning in the same way. The results of this consistency are that pupils know the expectations and routines of the school well, and staff monitor and track the progress of pupils

effectively.

30 Teachers are very good at choosing appropriate methods to make learning interesting for pupils. In most lessons there is a good variety of tasks and a balance between explanation by the teacher and activity by pupils. In a very effective lesson in Year 1, the teacher made good use of a stick puppet to encourage pupils to listen carefully. This had the effect of discouraging pupils from calling out inappropriately and encouraging a high level of participation.

31 Teachers are particularly good at providing just the right type of work for all pupils in the class because they have a good knowledge of their individual needs. Activities are carefully structured so that the brightest pupils are challenged well. In a mathematics lesson on number patterns, for example, higher attaining pupils were given a more demanding set of numbers with which to work. Pupils who need extra help are often given additional adult support by classroom assistants, who work very productively with groups and individuals. Tasks are often carefully modified to link with their individual education plans. This enables them to achieve success and builds on their learning systematically.

32 Literacy and numeracy are taught very well in all classes and this leads to the high standards achieved. Teachers have very secure skills in teaching reading, writing and mathematics effectively in such a way as to hold the concentration of the majority of pupils, sometimes for lengthy periods of time. Teachers use resources well to encourage pupils to be independent and to promote high standards. For example, when the pupils in Year 2 were learning how to compose a letter, they readily used the 'Super Sentences' cards to prompt them about things to remember when composing their work. As a result, their work was well structured and accurate. A good range of resources is used effectively to promote learning. Fans of numbers are used very effectively in the daily lessons in mathematics. They enable all pupils to participate actively in lessons and teachers to assess at a glance which pupils have understood a particular concept and where further explanation is needed. Pupils are encouraged to take a pride in their work and there are clear routines for pupils to follow that successfully bring about neatness. For example, pupils in Year 2 are required to complete a planning sheet before they embark on a written task, and this helps them to clarify their ideas before formally committing them to paper. The use of writing guide lines enables pupils to produce neat handwriting that is uniform in size, with a clear demarcation between upper and lower case letters and those which are tall or hang below the line. There are plenty of reference points around the classrooms to assist pupils with the mechanics of spelling. Older pupils are encouraged to use dictionaries so that they become less dependent on the teacher to provide spellings. The youngest pupils get into good writing habits through the use of their 'Have a go Bear' books, which promote confidence in using their letter sounds to make a first attempt at recording unfamiliar words.

33 The management of pupils' behaviour is consistent in all classes. All staff make frequent references to the 'Golden Rules' when behaviour falls short of expectations, so that pupils in all classes are aware of the parameters. Although most lessons are very well paced to hold the interest of the pupils, there are occasions when the pupils are required to sit in a restricted space for lengthy periods because of the limitations posed by the building. When this happens, some pupils find it difficult to sit still and become restless and fidgety. They respond immediately to the teacher's gentle reminders to sit still however, and because this is done in an unobtrusive way, it does not detract from the focus of the lesson.

**Links with parents are very good. The parents are well informed and the school encourages them to be fully involved in their children's education.**

34 The school successfully maintains very effective links with the parents and this has a very positive impact on the standards and the quality of life in the school. The school has a very open attitude to parents who are encouraged to be fully involved in their child's education. There is a commitment to involving parents in decision making, where appropriate, and to forming an effective



partnership. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire said they felt well informed about their child's progress and agreed that the school works closely with parents. These views were upheld strongly at the pre-inspection meeting, when parents spoke very favourably of the partnership and range of information available to them.

35 One of the main strengths of the link with parents is the quality and range of information that is available to them. There are regular informative newsletters, which keep parents up to date with events in both the school and village. Back copies are thoughtfully made available in the entrance to the school. The parents' notice board provides a further source of information about the school and community as well as information about wider issues such as the appeals for several charities. In response to comments in the previous report, the school now issues half- termly curricular statements informing parents of work to be undertaken in each class. Parents welcome these statements as they offer them a good opportunity to support at home the work going on in school. There is very good information to parents about homework and how they can help their child at home. This high level of parental support is especially beneficial with reading and undoubtedly contributes to the standards achieved.

36 The school has capitalised on the enthusiasm of parents by involving them in the management of pupils' behaviour. Parents indicated at the meeting that they are well aware of the rules and procedures in the clear school policy and they help to reinforce at home the school rules, which provide a clear framework for behaviour in the school. This creates a consistent approach between school and home and strengthens the secure and caring ethos.

37 Throughout the year, there are numerous opportunities for parents to find out how well their children are doing at school through regular open evenings and parents' meetings. These meetings are very well attended. The school has held successful curriculum evenings where staff demonstrate to parents developments in the field of education that affect their children. One such meeting was held recently at the request of parents to inform them of progress in information and communication technology. Annual reports are informative, painting a very clear picture of pupils' progress in all subjects of the National Curriculum, in religious education and in the foundation stage. They give useful information about what pupils can do, what they find difficult and what they need to improve. There are clear targets for improvement and very good information about their personal development. Parents have the opportunity to add their own comments and many do, often commenting that they feel the report is an accurate assessment of their child. Parents are welcomed into school to help in classes and this enhances the teaching by providing additional support for individual pupils, relieving staff of routine tasks and freeing them to concentrate on teaching and learning.

38 The school is aware that many of the parents have specific skills and expertise and where possible they make use of these to benefit the pupils. For example, parents have been involved in the construction and maintenance of the attractive Millennium Garden and a parent who is a potter worked with pupils to make clay tiles for it. The thriving Parent, Teachers and Friends Association is very supportive and provides additional funds to benefit all pupils as well as helping to strengthen the school community with popular social events. One parent summed up the general views about Marwood at the meeting by saying, 'It is the best start you can give your children'. The staff of the school, in turn, value the support they are given by parents.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The provision for outdoor physical play in the Foundation Stage is inadequate.**

39 The curriculum in the reception class is well planned to make an effective link between the early learning goals for the foundation stage and the National Curriculum. The exception to this is the provision for outdoor play in the foundation stage, which is inadequate and does not fully follow national guidance. Although the school makes satisfactory provision for children to take part in

physical education lessons in the classroom and nearby church hall, this does not compensate for the lack of opportunities for children to engage in regular and frequent physical activity and large-scale movement outdoors. The children miss out on activities such as climbing, balancing, controlling and steering wheeled toys, which help to develop muscle control, balance and co-ordination. Such activities are an important part of their physical development. The lack of provision inhibits some aspects of the social, imaginative and physical development of the youngest children.

40 The school building limits the possibilities for outdoor play to some extent as there is no direct access from the classroom to the playground and this makes the supervision of the children problematic, although there is a classroom assistant working in the reception class for much of the time. The school is aware of this limitation and has taken appropriate steps to provide alternative experiences outdoors, such as walks in the local area for the children, but these activities do not compensate for the lack of provision to enable them to achieve the early learning goal.

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

- Make better provision for outdoor physical play in the foundation stage, so that the pupils' experiences in this area are of the same high quality as in all the other areas.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	10
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	4	1	0	0	0
Percentage	0	50	40	10	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 ten percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		60
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		5

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	6	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	19	20	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (87)	100 (93)	95 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	20	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (93)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

NB When there are fewer than ten pupils in each group their number is omitted from the table so that individual pupils are not identified.

### 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	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	20

#### Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

<b>Number of pupils per FTE adult</b>	<b>11</b>
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### Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	150,000
Total expenditure	147,237
Expenditure per pupil	2,779
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,445
Balance carried forward to next year	18,408

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

#### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	60
Number of questionnaires returned	37
Percentage returned	62

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	28	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	35	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	63	34	3	0	0
The teaching is good.	78	19	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	40	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	27	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	16	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	73	24	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	84	14	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	22	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	37	11	0	6

### **Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

The very positive views of the parents are wholeheartedly endorsed by inspection findings. Inspectors consider that the range of activities the school provides outside of lessons is satisfactory and typical for a small infant school.