

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH OF  
ENGLAND AIDED JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Brentwood

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115179

Headteacher: Mr J R Knightbridge MEd

Reporting inspector: Mrs Janet Gill  
18706

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 247543

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sawyers Hall Lane Brentwood Essex
Postcode:	CM15 9BX
Telephone number:	(01277) 223651
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Canon R B White
Date of previous inspection:	9 <sup>th</sup> February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Thomas of Canterbury CE Junior School is situated near the town of Brentwood in Essex. As at the time of the last inspection the school draws from a wide area beyond the immediate vicinity of the school. Most pupils are from favoured backgrounds and enter the school with above average attainment, although there are a number from council or housing association homes. The ethnicity of the majority of pupils is white and no pupil requires support in learning to speak English. The school is much bigger than most primary schools and about the same size as at the time of the last inspection. There are 305 pupils on roll with an equal number of boys and girls. The school is popular and generally oversubscribed. There are ten classes in total with two classes each of Years 3, 4, 5, 6 and two mixed classes with Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average at four per cent. Around five per cent of pupils have been identified with special educational needs. Most pupils in this group have moderate learning difficulties; there are no pupils who have a statement for their specific needs.

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

**This is a very effective school.** Standards are well above average by the time the pupils are 11 and they make very good progress. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and very strong management means that teaching is also very good. This results in a stimulating environment where children have very positive attitudes to learning and there are excellent relationships. Everyone connected with the school - parents, pupils, staff and governors - work together effectively as members of the school team. Every child is fully included in all aspects of the life and work of the school and this is a strength. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Pupils make very good progress and reach well above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, the very good teamwork of the staff and the very good support of governors ensure high standards and continuing improvement.
- Teaching is very good. Teachers always expect the most from their pupils and make work interesting and challenging.
- Pupils' work is planned extremely well and their progress is monitored very well. This helps teachers to identify pupils' needs and ensure that work is carefully matched to their prior ability.
- The excellent care and very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes significantly to pupils' personal development, their very good behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and to excellent relationships with each other and adults.

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

- There are no features that require significant improvement.

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

The school has made considerable improvement since its previous inspection in February 1998 and shows a continued and strong commitment to improve still further. By the end of Year 6 pupils continue to reach well above average standards in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching, which was a strength at the last inspection, has improved still further. The key issues for action identified in the last report have been addressed very well. There have been significant improvements in assessment, including rigorous analysis of data and pupil tracking. Its use has been instrumental in addressing the needs of all pupils, which has helped them make very good progress. The scheme of work for music is now very good, as are other schemes and provides excellent guidance to teachers about what should be taught and when. The degree to which the programmes for every subject are clearly defined is a key factor in providing comprehensive coverage and ensuring that skills and knowledge are built incrementally. Parents receive full details in all subjects in reports and targets in core subjects. The school development plan has been improved; it very strongly links with school priorities and finances. The desire to

succeed and ensure pupils achieve their very best means that the school is very well placed to maintain its current high standards and improve still further.

## 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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	B
Science	A*	A	A	A

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

Standards are well above average by the time the pupils leave at 11. They make very good progress across the school. When considered in relation to similar schools (those with a similar percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals) standards are well above average in English and science and above average attainment in mathematics. However, the data indicates that the grade is extremely close to being well above average in mathematics. The school's targets are realistic and achievable because they are based on detailed analysis and tracking of performance data. High targets in English were exceeded last year and met in mathematics. Standards have remained consistently high in English, mathematics and science for the 11-year-olds over the last few years. Pupils throughout the school reach above average standards in information and communication technology because of the school's improved provision.

Pupils enter from the infant school with standards that are generally above average. Inspection evidence indicates that current standards in Year 6 continue to be well above average in English, mathematics and science. All pupils are progressing very well. There are very high expectations that pupils of all capabilities will make speedy progress and achieve highly. This is because of the very good teaching and highly inclusive curriculum that ensures everyone is consistently set challenging work. Throughout the school pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress and reach high standards for their capabilities. Higher achieving and gifted and talented pupils also make very good progress, as evident in the high percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in all tests.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good attitudes to their work help pupils to learn easily and this supports the very good progress they make.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	As a result of very positive behaviour management and an exciting school day, pupils behave very well both in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The caring ethos of the school helps pupils to relate exceptionally well to each other and to adults. Pupils develop confidence and self-esteem as well as learning to help each other and work well together.
Attendance	Very good - above the national average. Procedures regarding attendance monitoring have improved. Pupils arrive eagerly on time each morning.

All these factors contribute to the very good achievement and progress that pupils make.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Years 3 - 6</b>
Quality of teaching	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.*

At the last inspection teaching was highlighted as a strength of the school. It has improved, with an increased percentage of very good lessons, making sure that pupils' progress at all ages, is speedy and effective. This holds good for pupils of all capabilities including higher, average and lower attainers, as well as those pupils with special educational needs. All teaching and learning was at least good with over half being very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. High quality teaching was observed throughout the school.

High quality teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, enables pupils to make very good progress. Teachers have very good knowledge of these subjects. Pupils are grouped for their lessons by ability for English and mathematics; this means tasks are pitched at the right levels so that all the pupils are challenged and extended in their work. Whole school procedures for planning are excellent and extremely thorough and the pupils' progress is very carefully tracked; this ensures that all pupils are fully included in the lessons. Successful teaching, which results in very good learning, is based on the good pace and enthusiasm of the teacher, excellent relationships and high quality behaviour management. Teachers successfully stimulate pupils' interest. They have high expectations of the standards that the pupils can achieve and motivate them to do their best. Pupils work hard, showing interest and concentration; they enjoy being at school and try their best.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. There is strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, as well as providing a varied and rich curriculum for everyone to share. There is considerable enrichment through visits to places of educational interest, links with the local community and the extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Procedures for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are very effective. Pupils have very good access to the curriculum and are very well supported, particularly in literacy and numeracy, enabling them to meet their individual targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall. The school's strong connection with the Church promotes pupils' spiritual development very well and encourages very good moral and social values. Pupils co-operate very well together and enjoy taking on responsibility. Right and wrong are securely understood and children are familiar with their own culture and gaining an insight into others. However, not enough attention is given to raising pupils' awareness of the multicultural Britain in which they live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. The school is a very caring and supportive community in which pupils are happy and secure. Staff know the pupils extremely well and they are always well cared for. Their progress and attainment are carefully tracked and this is one of the reasons that they do so well.

Parents are full partners in the education of their children; they work very effectively with the teachers and staff to ensure that standards remain high. Many are actively involved in the life of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, his deputy and the staff form a very effective team and have a joint commitment to promoting high standards in all areas of school life. Everyone, including governors, works very well under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. They are very positive in relation to their roles and responsibilities and have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school analyses the results of annual tests carefully to ensure that high standards are maintained. Teaching and learning are monitored very effectively. The school knows exactly what to do to continue its very good improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school's resources are used exceptionally well and funds are always sharply targeted to maintain high standards and effective teaching and learning.

'Best value' principles are followed exceedingly well when determining spending priorities. The school is careful not to become complacent; it compares itself against others and challenges its own effectiveness. The school gives very good value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents have very favourable views of the school's work.</li> <li>Excellent behaviour of the pupils and the very high quality teaching.</li> <li>High expectations the school has for their children.</li> <li>The very good partnership between home and school ensures that parents are comfortable approaching the school with any concerns.</li> <li>The very good academic progress of their children along with increased maturity and responsibility.</li> <li>The very high quality leadership and management.</li> <li>Interesting range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some concerns about the amount of homework assigned.</li> </ul>

Inspectors fully endorse the positive views expressed by the parents. Pupils are learning very well in the positive and stimulating environment that the school is providing. Inspectors disagree with the concerns that some parents raised about homework. They considered that the school's arrangements for homework are good and contribute effectively to pupils' achievement and personal development.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Pupils make very good progress and reach well above average standards in English, mathematics and science.**

1. Achieving and maintaining high standards is one of the strengths of the school. When the pupils join the school in Year 3, mainly from the adjoining infant school, their standards are generally above average for their age. When they leave St Thomas of Canterbury, aged 11, many of them achieve well above average standards in the main subjects of English, mathematics and science. Data from the 2002 National Curriculum tests show that the percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 was impressive in all three subjects and well above that expected nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that the present pupils in Year 6 are achieving similarly high standards in English, mathematics and science. As the pupils move through the school their learning is well ahead. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Previous learning experiences are built on and developed in every class through effective setting arrangements, so that progress is consistently good or better.
- Staff work together as a team extremely well and their teaching has many strengths.
- The pupils' progress and achievements are tracked and charted at regular intervals and information gleaned from the data acted upon very effectively.

All of this means that gaps in pupils' learning are quickly identified and tackled so that learning does not slow down.

2. Pupils of all abilities have their needs met very well, which helps them make very good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Eleven-year-olds in the support group (lower attaining pupils) are adept at reading quite difficult texts, such as stories by Roald Dahl. They describe the characters and plot with understanding. The majority of the group reaches average standards in reading. Imaginative, lively teaching challenged the higher attaining pupils very effectively in a lesson on Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare. Interesting activities helped them make particularly good progress in their understanding of the play. Pupils read the text with very good expression although particularly difficult as it was unfamiliar language. They clearly explained the plot of the play, from the dilemma through to the resolution – this illustrated that speaking and listening skills are very well developed. Pupils were moved on rapidly to work in groups to prepare a short sequence of the events leading up to the death of Mercutio. The teacher very skilfully encouraged pupils to think about each character and how they might react. The result – pupils took on specific roles with great excitement and worked collaboratively towards a convincing scene. Particularly good learning took place in speaking, listening and reading.

3. Teachers are very successful in promoting pupils' literacy skills in other subjects, such as in history and science. For example, Year 6 pupils have very positive attitudes, they try their best and present their work on Britain since the 1930s very well; they used a contents page, labelled diagrams and successfully presented facts in the form of comic strips and posters.

4. In mathematics, by the time pupils are 11, higher attainers successfully use all four rules of number when working with bigger numbers up to and including those with six digits. Mental strategies are well taught to all pupils and they are offered interesting and challenging activities. Oral and mental mathematics are enjoyed and pupils are quick to respond accurately to their teachers' questions employing good mental strategies. Higher attaining pupils quickly worked out and systematically and accurately recorded the balance remaining from £100, when adding and subtracting amounts. Pupils are encouraged to articulate their mathematical thinking and use a variety of methods to work out their calculations; this is a strength of the teaching. For example, pupils work together to form pentominoes from squares, quickly establishing rules to create the shapes.

5. Pupils of all capabilities successfully use their numeracy skills to support work in other subjects. There were many examples throughout the school. These included work in science, for example,

monitoring temperature changes and creating graphs, repeating patterns in art and design and work involving investigative skills in information and communication technology (ICT), in relation to shape problems.

6. Science is enjoyed and the pupils are keen, interested and achieve very well. They enthusiastically take part in science investigations, such as the Year 4 pupils finding out whether or not substances are soluble. A very well prepared lesson based on building pupils' skills and knowledge methodically and a very good emphasis on scientific vocabulary meant pupils made very good gains in their learning. Older pupils at the upper end of the school were investigating thermal insulation and the properties of various materials. The design of a fair test to keep ice cream in insulated conditions drew thoughtful contributions from the pupils. They clearly understood about 'fair testing' and were aware of the need to isolate each variable and could offer an accurate rationale for the results. One of the main reasons why standards are high in science is that the vast majority of pupils are working at average and above levels; there is very little lower attainment.

**The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, the very good teamwork of the staff and the very good support from governors ensure high standards and continued improvement.**

7. The headteacher is an outstanding leader as well as being an extremely effective and efficient manager. He has an extremely clear vision of what the school must do to support pupils' academic and personal development and to help them to achieve high standards. This is the basis of the mission statement - 'Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community'. The excellent teamwork between the headteacher and the deputy, very strongly supported by the governing body, all staff and parents, has a very strong impact on the pupils' achievements.
8. The many strengths from the previous inspection have not only been maintained but they have been significantly improved. The issues identified in the last inspection report have been thoroughly tackled:  
-
  - There are now excellent assessment systems, including pupils' tracking in place.
  - The scheme of work for music, like other areas of the curriculum, is very well planned and there is clear progression in the different subjects as the pupils move through the school.
  - The school development plan is very good and links effectively with identified priorities and finance. The headteacher, senior management team, co-ordinators and governors systematically monitor initiatives and adjust future action as necessary.
  - Comments about reports have been very effectively addressed; they now contain very clear, detailed information about the pupils.
9. Governors are very well informed about all aspects of school life and they make a significant contribution to the overall effectiveness of the school. They are very well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have an extremely strong commitment to maintain the excellent ethos and high standards in their popular, successful school.
10. The headteacher and his team make the very best use of all the data that is available about the school's performance. They use this information to inform their future plans and to monitor what is happening within the school. Teaching and learning are monitored very effectively and the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. In this school the team spirit is very strong and everyone is immensely proud of their school. Everyone shares information about their pupils and the curriculum, so that learning is very effective. They also guide and support each other in their teaching and this is a strength because any weaknesses are quickly spotted and overcome.
11. Excellent financial management and planning ensure the budget is spent wisely. Governors are fully aware of the 'best value' principles, which are always applied before any spending decisions are taken and there are very strong links to the priorities in the school development plan. For example, very effective use is made of support teachers who teach each morning. Setting arrangements in English and mathematics mean that there are three groups made from two classes in each year group. This means that pupils are taught in ability groups where their needs are very successfully addressed – hence very good progress, which leads to high standards. Governors and senior managers have worked hard to improve the accommodation and recent building includes new classrooms, a library and computing suite which has significantly enhanced the current accommodation in the school. In

addition standards have risen in ICT, which are now above average. This is because all pupils have ample time to practise their computer skills in the suite and effectively use them in other subjects.

**Teaching is very good. Teachers always expect the most from their pupils and make work interesting and challenging.**

12. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be a strength of the school. It remains a strength, with an increased percentage of good and very good lessons. Throughout the school pupils are challenged by their activities and their learning and understanding are extended very well.
13. There are many strengths to the teaching with some outstanding features. They include:
  - Teachers know their pupils extremely well, have excellent relationships and very high expectations about the achievements of their pupils.
  - The curriculum is rich and teachers know how to deliver the National Curriculum and National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very effectively.
  - Planning is excellent. Lessons have clear objectives and these are shared with the pupils. This helps them to know what they are expected to learn in the lesson.
  - Pupils of all abilities have interesting and challenging work set for them.

Teachers successfully combine all of these strategies, making sure that learning is effective and meaningful for all the pupils.

14. Teachers work hard to provide a learning environment that is both interesting and challenging for the pupils. Lessons move forward at a good pace and no time is wasted. A good example occurred in a music lesson in a Year 3 class. The brisk pace meant that a great deal was covered in the lesson; pupils were consolidating musical skills as well as moving on to new work. By the end of the lesson the class had created, improved and performed a three-part composition. They were all most attentive and watched the teacher carefully as she conducted each part; this helped them perform together successfully. Her very good use of praise made the pupils feel confident to 'have a go' and everyone worked very hard throughout the lesson, thoroughly enjoying the experience. The very positive relationships in the class contributed strongly to enhancing progress and speeding up learning. The pupils achieved very well. Teachers use resources very well to enhance the learning environment. For example, the very good use of artefacts in a Year 5 lesson significantly contributed to the success of the lesson. In addition, speaking and listening skills were effectively promoted, as pupils enthusiastically discussed artefacts from around the 1930s and compared them with the modern equivalent.
15. Teachers are effective and imaginative in using the excellent school schemes of work to teach skills and knowledge to their pupils. The skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing and number work are taught effectively in the literacy and numeracy sessions. Pupils are confident at using their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. There were many examples, such as charting temperature changes in a science investigation or writing extended reports as part of work in history.
16. Teachers have good expertise in ICT and good attention is given to improving pupils' skills in the computer suite each week. These skills are effectively used to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as well as being used well across the curriculum. This has contributed to the above average standards pupils reach by Year 6. For example, in a Year 6 lesson virtually all pupils worked at the average Level 4, with some achieving higher standards. The teaching assistant effectively supported the few who needed help. Pupils display very good attitudes, they enjoy the subject and working with one another. They behave sensibly and sustain concentration. All pupils strive to achieve the desired outcome and interact well with each other and with staff. They talk about their work with animation and enthusiasm, explaining clearly how they were creating their multimedia presentation, whether it was about Britain since the 1930s or activities undertaken in the recent residential visit.
17. Teaching assistants successfully work alongside teachers. For example, in ICT lessons in Years 4 and 6, there was good use of a teaching assistant to operate the computer linked to a projector. This allowed the teacher to focus on explanations and interaction with pupils whilst the teaching assistant entered agreed instructions, text and amendments. Pupils with special educational needs and lower

attaining pupils are given extra support every morning in literacy and numeracy lessons and on occasions in other subjects in the afternoons. This enables them to progress at the same rate as their classmates. For example, in science in Years 3 and 5, the teaching assistant ensured pupils requiring extra support were fully involved in the lesson, which contributed effectively to pupils' achievement in the lesson. Boys and girls of all ages, backgrounds and capabilities, are fully included in every aspect of teaching and learning at St Thomas of Canterbury School. Their needs are met successfully because classrooms are orderly places to learn and to work. Lessons are interesting and challenging and because of this the pupils are keen and very eager to learn.

18. Teachers use homework well to support and extend learning that has taken place in the classroom. There were many examples in the different classes, including reading, spellings and mathematics. In addition homework is set to support topic work, for example in the lower school recently pupils completed work on the Egyptians and electricity and in the upper school, work was set on famous Victorians and food diaries. A few parents were concerned about perceived differences in the quality and quantity of the homework that is given to different classes and year groups. Inspectors found that the current arrangements for homework are effective for the age and capabilities of the pupils at St Thomas of Canterbury.

**Pupils' work is planned extremely well and their progress is monitored very effectively. This helps teachers to identify pupils' needs and ensure that work is carefully matched to their prior ability.**

19. The school is very effective in promoting pupils' intellectual and personal development because of the rich curriculum, which is characterised by the very good range, depth and quality of the curriculum across all subjects. A number of features contribute to the school's success in this area:
  - There is a very rich curriculum with excellent planning in place.
  - The cross-curricular elements are particularly strong without any loss of subject individuality.
  - There is considerable enrichment of extra-curricular activities.
  - Teachers are adept at tracking pupils' progress. Gaps are quickly identified and support provided.
20. The degree to which the programmes for every subject are very clearly defined is a key factor in providing comprehensive coverage and ensuring that skills and knowledge are built incrementally. For example, in physical education, pupils made good progress in developing cricket and ball skills in a Year 5 lesson and developed their movement skills in Year 3. The programmes for each subject provide excellent guidance to teachers about what should be taught and when. They are constantly evaluated and refined as the school seeks to improve its curricular provision.
21. Very good thought is given to developing links between subjects. For example, in science, literacy skills are used effectively to enable pupils to use a good reporting style when writing up their investigations, taking notes or carefully labelling diagrams. The use of ICT is used to enhance pupils' literacy skills, for example to create a play script based on the story of Kensuke's Kingdom. ICT is also used very effectively to enable Year 6 pupils to work more quickly in mathematics and to organise their work relating to symmetry, reflection and rotation. Literacy and numeracy receive substantial times each day, which they use to very good effect; this has not led to any imbalance in the curriculum. In this way the school has maintained a very broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant and accessible to all pupils. The curriculum has been very skilfully planned to ensure there is a consistently strong emphasis on pupils developing skills and applying them.
22. Teachers' planning is excellent and makes a significant contribution to consistently good teaching. It is based effectively on whole school procedures. Learning objectives are clearly stated and shared with pupils, leading to a range of activities that are levelled against National Curriculum levels. Planning challenges and extends the work of higher, average and lower attaining pupils. Pupils work in different groups according to their ability and teachers are adept at pitching work at the right levels for them. Progress is always good and frequently better. To ensure consistency between classes within year groups, teachers meet weekly to evaluate the week's work and go over planning for the following week. Curriculum co-ordinators have an important role in these meetings, as they offer support and guidance to their colleagues about suitable strategies and resources. Very good teamwork, such as planning together, is a particularly strong feature of the school.

23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The way the curriculum is organised and delivered ensures that pupils make at least good progress and they achieve very well against their individual targets.
24. There is considerable enrichment through visits to places of educational interest, links with the local community and the extensive range of extra-curricular activities. A wide range of sporting, musical and other clubs is made possible through the considerable efforts of staff, parents and members of the community. The clubs are very well attended and enjoyed by the pupils and contribute to standards achieved in sports and music. During the inspection the rounders team achieved another victory for the school and parents commented that music was a considerable strength of the school. This was evident from the quality of singing during two choir practices; one was led by one of the teachers and the other by the choirmaster from the church.
25. The quality of the school's assessment procedures for assessing pupils' progress and achievement are excellent and the analysis of the information gained is impressive and has improved significantly since the last inspection. The headteacher effectively shares the information with staff and governors. This leads to very good use being made of the data to analyse the effectiveness with which the curriculum is delivered. Strengths and weaknesses in the programmes are identified and the achievement of groups and individuals meticulously analysed. Careful and accurate records are kept of each pupil to enable the school to track and analyse pupils' progress.
26. Excellent assessment procedures are evident in English, mathematics and science. This contributes towards the high standards achieved because the headteacher and teachers are adept at tracking pupils' progress. Gaps are quickly identified and support provided. The assessments for the foundation subjects are relatively new but are sharply focused and provide a manageable instrument for teachers to monitor achievement. These assessments ensure that teachers gain accurate information about each pupil's strengths and weaknesses across the key areas of the curriculum. This material covers both pupils' knowledge and skills and it is used effectively to inform teaching strategies and curricular revision.

**The excellent care and very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes significantly to pupils' personal development, their very good behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and to excellent relationships with each other and adults.**

27. The mission statement - 'Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community' is strongly promoted by the headteacher and successfully met. The school provides a high quality education recognising and respecting the needs of each individual. The school's procedures for ensuring the pupils' welfare are excellent. It is very effective in providing a safe and caring environment where pupils are valued and known well by the staff. As a result of the school's actions, pupils feel relaxed and secure and are therefore able to achieve their best. Parents were very pleased with these aspects of the school's work and commented that the *'Christian ethos was very strong within the school.....where children are taught and encouraged to be caring..... and a positive attitude to learning is encouraged'*. Several key factors make a very effective contribution to the personal development of pupils and have a significant impact on the excellent relationships in the school:
  - There is a shared sense of community based on Christian beliefs and values.
  - There are very high expectations that the pupils will behave well, demonstrating a consideration and tolerance for each other and for different points of view.
  - The school is extremely effective in providing a safe and caring environment.
  - Overall there is very good provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
28. The school provides very good support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The headteacher, teachers and the vicar of the local church give pupils very good opportunities to understand and reflect on human feelings and emotions, whether it is in lessons or during assembly. For example, Year 6 pupils produced empathetic writing in their history topic that vividly described the journey and feelings of an evacuee – *'eventually we did get there...we got forced off the train and abandoned on the platform'*. The headteacher sets an excellent example in the way he promotes

pupils' all round development in all aspects of school life. He is very proud of the school and leads the school extremely effectively in ensuring that all pupils are valued and respected and their needs met. These factors make a very effective contribution to the personal development of pupils and have a significant impact on the excellent relationships and very good behaviour in and around the school.

29. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake responsibility for themselves and others. This is reflected in the very positive attitudes, self-discipline and keen interest shown by pupils in all aspects of school life. Attitudes are very good and relationships between all members of the school community are excellent. This is due to the strong ethos and high expectations from the headteacher and all staff. Older pupils develop into self-assured and mature individuals who use their initiative well and willingly carry out a very wide range of responsibilities. Pupils enjoy being involved in the school council and older pupils guide younger ones to help in charitable and other fund-raising events, such as the forthcoming summer fair. Pupils respond very well to the encouragement given by teachers and work with enthusiasm and concentration in lessons. They listen very well to instructions, understand the tasks they are doing and complete them enthusiastically. They are very keen to answer questions and contribute to discussions. Pupils clearly demonstrate their enjoyment of school life, including extra-curricular activities and are eager and keen to come to school.
30. The school has an excellent ethos of encouraging pupils to think about and care for others; this is evident in the way everyone shows great respect for others, their feelings and beliefs. Parents commented in the meeting prior to the inspection that grouping pupils for English and mathematics was done with great sensitivity. Pupils in the support groups strive to do well because they are in a positive working environment and know that their work is valued. This helps them to achieve very well. All pupils work and play harmoniously together and live up to the high expectations that all adults hold. Staff are very consistent in their approach towards the children and ensure that shared policies, such as the behaviour policy is fair and implemented with sensitivity.
31. Pupils are familiar with their own culture and are gaining an insight into others, an improvement since the previous inspection. Displays reflect a good awareness of British and Western art and design, literature and history, for example pupils study Shakespeare, the Tudors and artists such as Monet and Andy Warhol. Good use is made of the locality for study links to geography and multicultural education is promoted through religious education and literature. Recently the school has included amongst its visitors an African drummer and Indian dancers. However, not enough attention is given to raising pupils' awareness of the multicultural Britain in which they live. There are too few examples of other cultures being represented positively in photographs, art and displays around the school. There is an acknowledgement that there needs to be a better balance of activities across the year to develop pupils' cultural awareness more effectively.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

32. St Thomas of Canterbury CE School is a very effective school. The headteacher is extremely proactive and involves governors, staff and pupils in his excellent procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. Based on information and data gathered, effective and efficient action is taken; consequently there are no features that require significant improvement.

## 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	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	10	8	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	56	44	0	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	305
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

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 2 (Year 6)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	40	36	76

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	37	31	40
	Girls	35	33	35
	Total	72	64	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (89)	84 (86)	99 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	33	35
	Girls	34	32	34
	Total	65	65	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (84)	86 (89)	91 (90)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	249	3	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	31	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 - Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.72
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	30.5

#### **Education support staff: Y3 - Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	102

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2002 - 2003
	£
Total income	712,925
Total expenditure	696,879
Expenditure per pupil	2,255
Balance brought forward from previous year	672
Balance carried forward to next year	16,718

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
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	305
Number of questionnaires returned	107

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	34	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	34	5	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	43	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	45	17	1	0
The teaching is good.	68	30	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	41	10	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	32	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	28	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	44	48	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	66	28	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	28	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	36	5	0	2