

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Devizes

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126488

Headteacher: Mr B Hickey

Reporting inspector: Dr Eric Peagam

14943

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 4th June 2003

Inspection number: 248786

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 5 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: St Joseph's Place
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Wiltshire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr K Maidment

Date of previous inspection: 23rd February 1988

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is an average sized primary school, which provides education for girls and boys from 5 to 11, located in the market town of Devizes. The school is at, or near capacity for most of the time and there regularly are more pupils applying to attend the school than it can accommodate. At the time of the inspection there were 228 pupils on roll with slightly more girls than boys. Pupils have a full range of levels of attainment on entry, but overall attainment is in line with that found nationally. Pupils largely come from favourable economic backgrounds and there is a below average proportion (three per cent) currently eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages (six per cent) is broadly average, with a very low proportion for whom English is not the language used at home. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average at four per cent and the number of pupils with statements is also below average at one per cent. There is a stable staff and the headteacher has been continuously in post since before the previous inspection

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Joseph's is a highly effective school that achieves very high standards in a wide range of subjects and rightly enjoys the esteem of its parents and the wider community. Attainment on entry is in line with the national average but is well above average by the time pupils leave. Pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science, measured in national tests, is consistently very high and the school builds very well on the attainments that pupils arrive with. The school has a very clear set of aims, which are very effectively addressed through very good curriculum provision and very good teaching that enable pupils with a wide range of needs and abilities to make very good progress and achieve very well. The school is very well led and managed, with a clear unity of purpose that ensures that implementation of policies is coherent and consistently focuses on the child as the most important member of the school community. When these achievements are set against the relatively low levels of funding, the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school achieves very good standards and adds value well through the progress pupils make.
- A high quality school-wide teaching and learning policy is consistently implemented and leads to very good teaching and learning.
- Very good relationships with parents and the community contribute directly and indirectly to pupils' learning very well.
- The school makes very good arrangements to support pupils' well-being and personal development, promoting a very caring environment which reflects in pupils' excellent attitudes.
- Excellent leadership supported by very high quality management enables the school to continue to improve on its already very high standards.

What could be improved

No shortcomings were identified in the standards, quality or efficiency of the school. The governors have identified areas for further development in the school development plan and the inspectors agree that these will further improve the effectiveness of the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the previous inspection in February 1998, the school's standards, climate for learning, quality of education and management were found to be very good. A few minor issues were raised, mainly concerned with ensuring that standards were uniformly high across subjects

and more influential roles for subject leaders. Those points have all been addressed well; the school has maintained its previous high standards and, on the evidence of the Government's school improvement index, has improved standards at a faster than average rate. In addition, the school has been pro-active in working to achieve further improvement. Approaches to literacy and numeracy have been revised to reflect national strategies and the approach to teaching and learning has been closely reviewed. The school now has an agreed teaching and learning policy that is consistently followed and provides for strategies such as the 'brain gym' consisting of activities to stimulate brain activity and aid concentration and structures to promote 'emotional literacy'. The school has made great strides in the provision and use of information and communication technology (ICT), through staff training and organised mutual support as well as providing each teacher with a laptop computer. All pupils have weekly access to a new ICT suite, including Internet access and the school website is effectively used to disseminate information about the school. Significant improvements have been made to the building to create integrated accommodation and this is reflected in increased access by infants to the facilities in the main building. Overall, therefore, the school has made good improvement from an already very high starting point.

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	B
mathematics	B	A	A	B
science	B	A	B	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The school consistently achieves high or very high standards in comparison with all schools in Year 6. In comparison with schools in similar socio-economic contexts, a similar pattern is seen. Pupils arrive in the school with the full range of attainment, but with the average level being in line with that found nationally. The school builds on this base very well so that by the end of Year 2, a significant proportion of pupils attain levels higher than the national benchmark (National Curriculum level 2). A similar pattern is seen in Year 6 with a higher than average number of pupils attaining above the expected level (National Curriculum level 4). With a relatively small yearly cohort, fluctuations from year to year mean that year-on-year comparisons cannot be fully relied upon. Although in 2002, standards in science fell below the levels generally achieved, over a five-year period the trend in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is rising in line with or faster than those nationally. Pupil-tracking records show that attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 represents positive value added. When pupils' results in the different subjects are taken together, in each of the previous four years, the school's results have been well above average and above average for similar schools, reflecting consistent attainment across the subjects. Boys and girls achieve equally well overall and there are no marked gender differences in the extent to which national averages are exceeded, although boys have done better than girls in mathematics over the previous three years.

The school sets annual targets for pupils in Year 6, which are usually met. In 2002, the school aimed to have 90 per cent of pupils attaining level 4 in English and 87 per cent in mathematics. These targets were met in mathematics but missed in English (by one or two pupils). Higher targets set for 2003 are expected to be met. In lessons seen, standards in literacy and numeracy were very high, reflecting the school's test results. Pupils achieve very well; while the overall level of attainment on entry is average, it is well above average by the time pupils are tested in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, also achieve very well and many are enabled to reach the expected standard in the national tests. There is no difference in achievement between pupils from minority ethnic heritages and those from white united kingdom backgrounds. In other subjects, where pupils' work could be examined, standards were also high, particularly in ICT and design and technology, where they were previously lower.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent: pupils are highly committed to the school and appreciate the quality of their experience. After they have left, they speak with affection of their time there.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: although not all pupils arrive with well-established patterns of good behaviour, by the time they have been in school a while, behaviour is excellent.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent: pupils develop very good independence skills, take responsibility willingly and well. Relationships are a particular strength of the school and there is very good racial harmony.
Attendance	Very good: attendance is regularly very high and, for the great majority, punctuality is consistently very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching is very good overall. It was at least very good in over a half of lessons seen, almost always at least good and never unsatisfactory. It is excellent at times. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is a significant strength of the school and this is reflected in pupils' learning in these areas. Teachers have very high expectations and consistently implement the agreed policy for teaching and learning. Planning carefully addresses the needs of all pupils, including the highest attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Learning support assistants and volunteers, including parents, make a good contribution to the overall quality of teaching. Teachers know their pupils very well and this knowledge is used very effectively to match the work to their needs and leads to high quality oral work through carefully targeted questioning and prompting. They constantly assess pupils' learning within lessons and, in the best lessons, support pupils very well in assisting them to assess their own work and identify the next steps in their learning. As a result, pupils learn very well. As they move through the school,

their increasingly committed attitudes ensure that they are highly productive and realistic in setting themselves challenging targets.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. All aspects of the Reception class Curriculum and subjects of the National Curriculum are well provided for. There is very effective planning across subjects and the curriculum is significantly enriched by visits and visitors. Extra-curricular activities also extend learning opportunities well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: for pupils with general learning difficulties, the support provided is very effective in enabling them to work successfully in class. Provision for those with statements is very good and enables them to be included in all class activities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: although there is no additional support provided to the school, pupils whose language at home is not English are enabled to work successfully alongside their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent: the school is highly successful in promoting pupils' personal development and the structures and ethos of the school ensure excellent spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for cultural development is very good and prepares pupils effectively for life in a multicultural society. The school is highly inclusive and the pupils contribute very well to this by their attitudes.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school sets high standards of care for itself and meets these very well. Pupils' academic and personal development is very well assessed and monitored. Pupils are very well supported and the contribution this makes to their happiness in school contributes very well to their learning as well as their very positive attitudes. The care taken by the school to provide a high quality environment, including excellent indoor and outdoor accommodation and facilities reflects the school's commitment to its pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent: The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and a style of management that allows those around him to be equally effective. Financial management is significantly enhanced by the excellent work of the Bursar.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well: statutory requirements are met and the governors exercise very good oversight of the work of the school. They report the work of the school very accurately, but the school prospectus does not convey the vibrancy of the school in its presentation.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: The school uses internal and external data very well to evaluate its performance and has identified its strengths and areas for development very well. Having evaluated, the governors then use the information to plan progress very effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: The budget is very efficiently planned and managed and the governors plan very well to meet their financial obligations. School development planning consistently addresses the school's educational objectives. The principles of Best Value are reflected very well in the way that the school compares its performance and consults with parents, pupils and the parish. The governors are constantly looking for new ways of improving performance and competitive tendering plays a significant part in purchasing.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which their children like school • The good progress their children are making • The high quality of teaching • The expectations the school has for their children • Their confidence in approaching the school • The way in which the school helps their child to mature • The quality of the leadership and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The balance of homework • Information about their child's progress

The inspection confirmed the very high opinion parents had of the school. On the issue of homework, those who were unhappy were about equally divided between those who thought there was too little and those who felt there was too much. The school has a very clear policy that sets out the amount and nature of homework for each age group and this is being followed. The school has very good formal and informal systems for reporting on progress and, although a number of parents would like more, they all felt able to make a judgement about their child's progress on the basis of the information they receive.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school achieves very good standards across the curriculum and adds value well through the progress pupils make.

1. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils were reported to be entering the school with above average attainment and making good progress in almost all subjects to attain at above average levels in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards were less high, although still in line with expectations in art and design, design and technology and ICT. Since that time, careful development planning and attention to curriculum and teaching have resulted in good improvement so that, although standards on entry are now average overall, pupils attain at levels well above average in many subjects by the time they leave the school.

2. The relatively small numbers of pupils in any one year group means that year-on-year comparisons and comparisons with the results of other schools need to be treated with caution. Over the past five years, for example, fluctuations have been too small for them to have reliable statistical significance. Overall, standards have been rising at a rate that is in line with or greater than that seen nationally. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science taken together, over the last four years, pupils have consistently attained at levels well above those seen nationally. This is in spite of some fluctuation in science results, which were lower at times, but still remained above average overall.

3. When results in these subjects are compared with those for schools judged similar, that is, those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the results in 2002 are still above average overall, although those in science are in line with the average. However, when more localised data is used and the school's results are compared with neighbouring schools and those within the local education authority, results are consistently above average.

4. Over the same period, there has been improvement in results by the end of Year 2, which in 2002 were well above the national average in all subjects and above the average for similar schools in reading and writing, being in line with it in mathematics. These results show a consistent pattern in that, while the school has an average number of pupils reaching the national benchmarks (National Curriculum level 2 by age seven and level 4 by age eleven), the proportion of pupils exceeding these levels is greater than that found nationally. For example, nearly a half of pupils in Year 6 have attained National Curriculum level 5 in all subjects over the previous five years. This, in turn, reflects the school's commitment to enabling pupils with all levels on attainment on entry to achieve at the highest possible level.

5. The school sets high annual targets for achievement in national tests in Year 6, which are usually met or, if not, the school ensures that the reasons for this are established through analysis of the results and looking at the performance of individual pupils. For example in 2002, the school aimed to have 90 per cent of pupils attaining level 4 in English and 87 per cent in mathematics. These targets were met in mathematics but just missed in English. The school is confident that the explanation for this lay to some extent in pupil mobility but also to external factors adversely affecting individual pupils. Higher targets set for 2003 are expected to be met. However, the fact that a single pupil represents over three percentage points can have a significant effect on the results of tests taken on a single day. More reliable is the method the school uses for tracking pupils that shows that pupils generally achieve above the levels predicted by nationally validated systems.

6. The analysis of data from assessment on entry and subsequent testing shows that the school adds value by achieving greater than predicted progress between entry and Year 2 and again, between Year 2 and Year 6. These results have contributed to the selection of the school as one of the top 200 primary schools by a national newspaper and an above average improvement score in the Government's school improvement index.

7. During the inspection, both in lessons and in work examined, there was ample evidence to indicate that these standards are also reflected in the non-core (foundation) subjects. In particular, equally high standards were seen in art and design, design and technology and ICT, which had previously been lower, as in those subjects where standards had been previously high. By Year 6, pupils produce work of a good standard when using watercolour to paint landscapes, tie-dyeing to produce fabric designs, paper sculptures and three-dimensional work in clay. In design and technology, pupils show confidence and very good skills in combining their knowledge of structures and mechanisms to design and build a moving toy using a range of methods to provide and transmit power. In ICT, pupils demonstrate very good levels of understanding of control technology when working with the staff from St Augustine's, using a range of switches controlled by instructions given to a program on a laptop computer to operate, for example, a set of traffic lights.

8. High standards are also seen in other areas of pupils' attainments as reflected in the success many achieve in grade examinations as a result of learning to play musical instruments. Representatives of the school compete very successfully in drama and music festivals for example at Bath or in the Devizes Eisteddfod. Pupils gain certificates recording high standards of performance in swimming while netball and football teams win numerous tournaments every year.

9. A high quality school-wide teaching and learning policy is consistently implemented and leads to very good teaching and learning.

10. When the school was previously inspected, teaching was a significant strength of the school. It was good overall, as it was in the great majority of lessons, very good in a quarter and never unsatisfactory. Although there were some differences in the amount of very good teaching between year groups, the overall pattern of good teaching was seen across all classes. Within this pattern, some minor shortcomings were identified relating to stretching high-attaining pupils and variability in the quality of marking.

11. Since that time, the school has carried out a full review of teaching practices and, as a result of school-wide discussions, a new policy for teaching and learning has been adopted with a view to ensuring consistency both in the quality of teaching and the extent to which it reflects the aims of the school. The policy is securely based in the understanding that effective teaching is based on a clear view of the learning process and the different learning styles shown by individuals at different times of their lives.

12. Within the policy is a recognition that pupils learn best when they are self-motivated and confident, since learning requires the active involvement of the learner and that relationships and early school experiences significantly influence learning. The dynamic nature of the learning process, involving exploration, practice mastery and application provides a context within which mistakes are part of that learning process. In lessons, pupils as young as six, show confidence in identifying their own mistakes and recite 'a mistake is an opportunity to learn' with conviction.

13. This understanding of learning patterns leads on to an agreed structure for lessons that seeks to position intended learning securely between what has been covered and what is to be achieved later. Intended outcomes, which are presented as part of the bigger picture

are shared at the beginning of each lesson and reviewed at the end. Targets, both individual and class, form an important part of the structure for learning and pupils play an increasingly active part in setting and reviewing them.

14. An important part of the policy is the commitment to developing pupils' skills in social interactions in a secure and supportive environment. Skilful questioning enables pupils to test and demonstrate their learning in the context of relationships that encourage them to 'have a go' and in which all responses, including incorrect answers are valued. At the same time, the teaching of good listening skills from the Early Years onwards enables pupils to learn effectively from the teacher and each other, through remembering the answers to questions.

15. The impact of this focus on teaching has been to improve the overall standard of teaching from good to very good. During the inspection, of the 18 lessons seen, nearly all were at least good and over a half were very good. On occasion, teaching was excellent. This pattern confirms that recorded in the headteacher's monitoring file as a result of internal monitoring and local education authority visits as well as observations reported by governors on regular visits and parents when they have visited the school on open mornings. As a result of wider recognition of the overall quality of teaching, teachers from other schools visit to observe the staff at work.

16. Planning carefully addresses the needs of all pupils, including the highest attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Learning support assistants and volunteers, including parents, make a good contribution to the overall quality of teaching through supporting individuals and groups as well as making their own specialist expertise available.

17. Parents are very happy with the standard of teaching. The questionnaire shows 100 per cent satisfaction, with 63 per cent of parents being very satisfied. This was confirmed in the meeting, where, unusually, there was no suggestion about differential quality in different parts of the school. Teachers' expectations of pupils are reported to be high by 98 per cent of parents, but in the meeting, parents were at pains to stress that these were shared expectations that were not seen as placing undue pressure on pupils. Parents believe that pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and that this is a strength of the school.

18. The inspection confirmed that relationships between staff and children are very positive and the classrooms have a very good working atmosphere that encourages children to take responsibility for their learning and where teachers produce very well paced lessons in very well managed classrooms.

19. In lessons throughout the school, teachers show commitment to the school-wide approach to different learning styles for pupils who learn best by seeing, hearing or doing; that is visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning. Classrooms are set up to provide vibrant and stimulating displays with attractive collections of books and other stimulating information sources, together with groups of 'key' words and 'power' words to help pupils who are essentially visual learners in recognising and remembering them. Within lessons, teachers make good use of overhead projector transparencies as visual aids and pupils focus very well on these.

20. Very good use is made of paired and group discussion and debate as well as visiting speakers to support pupils' auditory learning. Teachers' commitment to auditory approaches leads to high quality oral work through carefully targeted questioning and prompting. Practical activities, including modelling, active drama and visits are well planned and used to support kinaesthetic learning. Particularly good use is made of 'brain gym' activities at the beginning

of lessons or at strategic points within them. In a very good Year 3 mathematics lesson, the teacher combined these approaches very well, asking questions while writing on an overhead transparency. Pupils were clearly confident with this approach and gave answers readily. The classroom assistant monitored responses and helped pupils giving wrong answers to identify their mistakes. Both the teacher and the classroom assistant pointed out that they too make mistakes and are grateful for correction so that there is no embarrassment for pupils. In a drama lesson, pupils explored the feelings of citizens in wartime as they acted out their response to various scenarios relating to the 'Blitz' as part of a topic in history on the Second World War.

21. Within this agreed pattern of teaching, teachers show very good levels of subject knowledge and skills that ensure that they are able to confidently plan and deliver lessons in all subjects of the National Curriculum. The school has a very good performance management structure that ensures that teachers' professional development needs are identified and effectively met. Teachers of the youngest children have worked to improve their phase-related skills through successful involvement with the Effective Early Years Action Research project in conjunction with the University of Worcester.

22. Teachers know their pupils very well and this knowledge is used very effectively to match the work to their needs. They constantly assess pupils' learning within lessons and, in the best lessons, support pupils very well in assisting them to assess their own work and identify the next steps in their learning. As a result of the successful implementation of the school's approach to teaching, pupils learn well overall and very well in most lessons. As they move through the school, their increasing confidence in their own ability to learn and their committed attitudes ensure that they are highly productive and realistic in setting themselves challenging targets across a range of subjects.

Very good relationships with parents and the community contribute directly and indirectly to pupils' learning very well.

23. The previous inspection found that the partnership between home and school was a strength of the school. There was very good communication and information was very detailed. As a result, the level of participation by parents in school and family events was very high and parents contributed well during the school day. At the same time, the strong links with the community were well used to enhance the curriculum and other experiences offered to pupils through the impact of visits and visitors and these were further strengthened through the very effective links with other schools and institutions.

24. The school has worked effectively to improve on these already good relationships and the success of this is reflected in the very high regard parents have for the school and their level of involvement with it. Evidence of this is seen in the high level of response to the pre-inspection questionnaire (around 75 per cent) and the significant number (48) who attended the parents meeting. This high level of response enables the results to be regarded with confidence as an indication of parental views. The questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the great majority of aspects of the school's work, in many cases indicating that over 90 per cent of parents were happy or very happy and there was very little evidence of strong concerns about any issues. Where there was concern, as over homework, additional comments indicated that parents were about equally divided on whether there was too little or too much. A larger than usual number of letters was received detailing the reasons why particular parents felt so positively about the school. These included a number who indicated that the school's positive and well-organised approach to homework enabled them to be very constructively involved in their children's education, with a considerable benefit to the standards they achieve.

25. The results of the questionnaire were underlined and amplified at the meeting where, again, parents were strongly supportive of the school and, although some parents felt they would like more information about progress, they all agreed they had enough information to be confident their children were making good progress. Parents reported that the home/school agreement was a good representation of what parents and school could expect from each other and that it worked well in practice.

26. The school makes communication with parents a priority and succeeds in keeping them well informed. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are detailed and informative, although the somewhat drab presentation does not reflect the vibrant nature of the school itself. Parents receive regular written reports on the achievement and progress of their children as well as their attendance. Other information, including newsletters, is provided at intervals throughout the year in both written and electronic form on the website. Termly curriculum plans are displayed for all classes and these are effectively augmented by curriculum information sheets, while for new entrants, pre-school information packs ensure that parents are well informed about the school. Effective systems are in place to enable parents to raise issues. For example, the headteacher ensures he is visible and accessible at the end of the school day. Parents are normally seen immediately if they have a concern, although no parents at the meeting reported any concerns.

27. In addition to written communication, the school makes parents welcome and enables them to experience partnership in action in a number of ways. In addition to the 'open-door' policy in operation, open mornings are arranged to enable parents to observe teaching and learning. Information evenings on subjects such as "Helping Your Child to Learn" attract a good number of parents and this response is also seen in attendance in assemblies and at school Masses. At a recent 'mothers' day' assembly, over 100 parents attended and Christmas plays and concerts take place over three or four days to accommodate the large numbers (up to 500) who wish to attend. Attendance at parents' evenings is also very high at between 95 and 100 per cent.

28. There is a very effective parent/staff association that assists the school well through fundraising (up to £8,000 in a year) and participates in a number of joint initiatives, including the Parent/Staff Running Club and the annual whole-school visit to Sandbanks. The money raised through parents' activities is very effectively used to extend opportunities available to pupils through curriculum enrichment and supporting extra-curricular activities such as the annual residential visit open to all pupils in Year 5/6 and subsidised visits to museums for all pupils. These activities have both a direct and an indirect impact on pupils' academic and social learning.

29. However, it is in terms of the direct involvement of parents in the school that the very good relationships have the greatest impact. As is the case with many schools, parents come into school to help with a variety of tasks, including supporting basic literacy and numeracy skills, but, at St. Josephs, this role is extended. The school makes very effective use of the specialist skills of parents to augment and extend the expertise among the staff and, in a number of settings, parents and teachers work very effectively in partnership within the classroom. An example of this was the excellent Year 6 lesson in science, where a parent (whose children have now moved on) provided the resources and teaching to enable pupils to learn very effectively about electrical circuits and to construct specialised circuits to carry out specified tasks including making a 'steady-hand' game. The combined effect of the teacher's classroom management skills and the expertise of the parent ensured that pupils had a very enjoyable and profitable time, which, far from being a one-off activity, was one of a series of lessons that continue throughout the year. In another Year 6 lesson, pupils were making very good progress in developing techniques for making masks as a result of the help of a parent whose previous experience of working with children enabled her to teach and

support these skills very effectively. At the same time, a parent/governor was providing a very effective context for pupils to develop design and technology skills, following a nationally recognised scheme of work so that their understanding of structures and mechanisms was significantly enhanced. Elsewhere, pupils who had previously experienced difficulty with aspects of mathematics had made good progress through a programme devised by another parent, which she used when working with small groups and, as a result, they show confidence in their knowledge and use of multiplication tables.

30. In other subjects and classes, parents contribute their skills and knowledge in a range of ways to extend pupils' learning. A parent with specialist art skills is making a significant contribution to standards in Year 3 while a Japanese parent comes into school to share aspects of Japanese culture, including cooking, with pupils. Governors, many of whom are parents, come into school to work in classrooms and to talk about their particular fields of knowledge, providing additional breadth to the curriculum

31. The school prides itself on being a community school and has very effective links with the community that, in turn, contribute to pupils' progress. The close links with the parish church enable pupils of all religious denominations (and none) to experience and understand the importance of the spiritual dimension to their lives. The very good links with the pre-school playgroup that is accommodated on the school site ensures a smooth transition to school for children who are already familiar with the setting. The fact that the 'West Wilts Strings' group is enabled to use the school on a weekly basis provides well for pupils learning to play and offers them an opportunity to make contacts that will continue beyond primary school. The sports partnership with Kennet District Council enables pupils to develop their physical and sporting skills through involvement with a wide range of initiatives. This dimension is also very well supported by the close links the school has with local clubs and organisations in which the pupils and their families are encouraged to become involved as well as having coaches working in school and children being invited to attend club sessions.

32. Links with other schools are also important in enabling pupils to make good progress, not only as a result of secure transition arrangements designed to sustain the momentum of their learning into secondary school, but also through specific subject related partnerships. Standards in ICT are being very effectively developed as a result of regular teaching and access to equipment provided by staff from St. Augustine's College as a result of a successful technology partnership bid. The sports partnership with Kingdown School provides access to specialist sports coaching in tennis, rugby, basketball, cricket, netball, soccer, swimming and gymnastics. This makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved in physical education in the school.

The school makes very good arrangements to support pupils' well-being and personal development, promoting a very caring environment which reflects in pupils' excellent attitudes.

33. The school was previously found to be making good provision for pupils' welfare and guidance supported by individual knowledge of pupils and a good programme for personal, social and health education. Arrangements to support health and safety and to ensure that bullying did not occur were also good. Since that time, the school has continually sought to improve its provision for pupils' physical, social and emotional well-being and has done so very successfully. Staff and governors work hard and successfully to ensure that the school's mission statement is reflected in its work.

34. As a result, the school makes very good provision in all the areas related to pupils' development in terms of monitoring, supporting and protecting them from harm. There is very good awareness of, and effective policies in place to promote good behaviour, identify and eradicate bullying, promote social and moral understanding, including citizenship and racial harmony through personal, health and social education and to support good practice for meeting pupils' special educational needs. Positive behaviour is recognised and celebrated at assemblies, through inclusion in the 'Gold Book' and the award of certificates as well as through classroom recognition of the week's 'special person'.

35. The school has very effective links with the pre-school provision and with secondary schools to ensure that transition is well supported and as stress-free as possible. Punctuality, attendance and behaviour are supervised closely and any developing issues are very effectively addressed. The school council provides a very useful way for the school to be alerted to pupils' wishes and concerns. As a result of deliberations, a number of initiatives have been introduced, including positive playtime rules, a 'buddy' system, the purchase of equipment and the long term planning for the development of outside areas. Pupils are given very good opportunities to examine and comment on their own progress in target setting and end of topic discussions and the end of year feedback they give to staff. However, the school is not content simply to meet its obligations to provide a safe learning environment, but is committed to developing very good practice to support and monitor pupils' emotional development

36. This commitment extends to every area of the school's work and is encapsulated in the policy to support emotional literacy and its belief in 'the power of love rather than the love of power' as its driving force. The philosophy is encapsulated in the concept of 'feel good = learn good'. The school's commitment to, and success in, raising standards 'in a humane way', ensures that learning is enjoyable for pupils, teachers and parents, which reduces stress and creates a climate of success based on self-confidence.

37. Teachers' belief in the importance of the promotion of emotional literacy is evident throughout the school. Pupils are enabled to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express their emotions. 'Circle time' is used very effectively to explore pupils' concerns and feelings and these are treated with great sensitivity and respect. Pupils are given very good support in developing the vocabulary to express and describe feelings through oral and written activities. In an infant class, pupils reflect on the feelings of the Apostles at the time of Pentecost and go on to represent their own feelings in abstract art form. Year 3 pupils, taking part in a drama activity are encouraged to identify the emotion produced by hearing the sound of the air-raid siren for the first time. In Year 6, pupils are enabled to show if their feelings have been hurt at playtime while the rest of the class close their eyes to provide privacy. They accept group responsibility for each other's feelings and are not resentful when a pupil reports hurt feelings and the class do not get their reward 'stars'.

38. The school has as a central tenet that the child is the most important member of the school community and sets great store by pupils being happy, as this is at the core of their family-style approach. The headteacher observes that 'Children have the right to smile and it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that work can be fun'. During the inspection pupils were clearly comfortable and at ease with one another and their teachers. This confirms the evidence from parents and local education authority advisers. Staff contribute very well to pupils' happiness by their sensitivity and awareness of pupils' feelings. For example, when a pupil arrived late to assembly and was disorientated by not being able to join her class, a member of staff spotted this very quickly and moved unobtrusively to comfort and reassure her.

39. Parents confirm the success of the school's approach and report that they are very happy with the personal guidance and the level of support and care the school provides. Parents whose children have special educational needs feel the school works hard to identify and meet these needs, although additional funding is difficult to achieve. Supportive attention to the specific needs of sick or disabled pupils enables them to feel normal and to learn equally well with their classmates. The parents feel strongly that this highly inclusive community spirit reflects the 'love for each other', which is at the core of Christian behaviour. One parent expressed it as 'Children are on a journey; parents guide them for the first four-five years and these are the people to take them on from there'.

40. The success of this approach is reflected in the excellent attitudes pupils display towards the school, their work and each other. Attendance is regularly very high; at around 97 per cent it is well above the national average for primary schools with no unauthorised absence and, for the great majority, punctuality is consistently very good.

41. Behaviour overall is very good; although not all pupils arrive with well-established patterns of good behaviour, by the time they have been in school a while, behaviour is excellent. This pattern, observed during the inspection, confirms what was found by local education authority school evaluation visits over recent years and the reports of parents and governors who visit regularly as well as other visitors who are struck by the happy working atmosphere. Behaviour in the playground is very good, pupils play very well together in a spirit of harmony which is well supported by the range of activities available and the care taken to provide a very pleasant environment that offers pupils a choice of physical activities or the opportunity to reflect quietly.

42. Personal development is excellent: pupils develop very positive attitudes in independent working and show relate very well to each other when working collaboratively in pairs or groups. They willingly take responsibility for ensuring that classroom and school tasks are carried out well. In 'circle time' activities they show considerable confidence and demonstrate a very positive attitude. Older pupils support younger ones in a variety of ways: through the lunchtime arrangements, through reading together and through engagement in practical play activities. Relationships are a particular strength of the school and provide the context for much of the very high levels of success the school achieves in terms not only of pupils' personal development but also the high standards pupils achieve.

Excellent leadership supported by very high quality management enables the school to continue to improve on its already very high standards.

43. The previous inspection found leadership and management to be very good, based on the excellent leadership of the well-respected headteacher and the enviable range of expertise brought to bear by the governors. Monitoring, planning and evaluating the quality of pupils' work was developing well, but arrangements for co-ordinators to monitor or support teaching were less well developed. The governors, headteacher and staff have continued to show commitment to improvement and, in the intervening period, management systems and structures have been further developed to provide, in particular, very effective self-evaluation procedures that enable school development planning to be even more effective.

44. Leadership continues to be excellent, not only through the inspirational impact of the headteacher, but also the committed and active leadership role of the governing body. This is underpinned by the excellent relationship between headteacher, governors, parents, staff and pupils and the relaxed and open, but focussed leadership style.

45. Governors set a clear direction for the school, which is articulated in the detailed mission statement and reflects very well the committed Christian ethos they seek to achieve.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and a quiet and self-effacing style of management that allows those around him to be equally effective. As a result, all staff in leadership roles, whether in terms of phase or subject are highly effective in ensuring that the high standards the school seeks to achieve are reflected in their area of responsibility.

46. The quality of leadership is very well recognised by parents and the wider community, including the local education authority, which uses his skills to provide mentoring for other headteachers.

47. Governors carry out their responsibilities to the school very well; statutory requirements are met and the governors exercise very good oversight of the work of the school. Having set the tone through leadership, they then contribute very actively to the efficient running of the school in a variety of ways. Each class has a pair of governors attached to it and these governors work for and in the class to enhance the provision made through staffing and other arrangements. The very good knowledge they gain is very useful in helping the governing body as a whole to have a good grasp of the work of the school. In turn, they report the work of the school very accurately in the annual report to parents and the prospectus, although this does not convey the vibrancy of the school in its presentation and fails to communicate the enthusiasm for and pride in the school they clearly feel.

48. There are very good systems for evaluating and monitoring the work of the school and determining the content of the school development plan. The school uses internal and external data very well to evaluate its performance; the headteacher supplies the governors with very good information about pupils' attainment and progress, including an analysis of the value added. There is a governor with responsibility for interpreting and reporting the comparative data supplied by Ofsted and other external sources. All members of the school community have opportunity to contribute to identifying its areas of success and those needing improvement. As a result, the school has identified its strengths and areas for development very well. Having evaluated, the governors then use the information to plan progress very effectively through setting targets in the school development plan, which are then implemented and rigorously monitored.

49. There are very good arrangements in place to monitor the implementation and outcomes of school policies. Performance management systems ensure that, through regular monitoring of teaching and its results, the school is able to identify the training needs of staff and the resources required to move the school forward. The high quality of procedures for involving and supporting staff has been recognised through the granting of the *Investors in People* award. Management structures are significantly enhanced by the fact that all staff and governors accept responsibilities and support the aims of the school, seeing themselves as stakeholders committed to doing their best for the benefit of the pupils.

50. Financial management continues to be very good and spending is monitored very well, with good links between the school development plan and the budget. The budget is very efficiently planned and managed and the governors plan very well to meet their financial obligations including those that fall outside the delegated or devolved funding from the local education authority for an aided school. Financial management is significantly enhanced by the excellent work of the Bursar. This not only has the effect of bringing high levels of financial expertise to bear, but also releases the headteacher to concentrate on the curriculum. As a result, the school has been able to carry through a substantial building and refurbishment programme while remaining focused on raising standards. The amount carried forward is very low, but there is good planning to ensure that all the school's obligations can be met. The principles of best value are reflected very well in the way that the school compares its performance and consults with parents, pupils and the parish. The governors are constantly

looking for new ways of improving performance and competitive tendering plays a significant part in purchasing.

51. The governors' commitment to continuous improvement is reflected not only in the structures for addressing standards of achievement but also in terms of the high standards they seek to achieve in providing a stimulating and attractive environment. The minor issue of waterlogging of the grassed area found by the last inspection has been addressed by the provision of a high quality artificial play surface and a number of play structures and quiet areas have been created around the grounds to increase the choice pupils have at playtimes, to the great benefit of their social development. The recent high quality link area joining the two buildings has been very well planned and executed and adds significantly to the ethos and the concept of a single school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

52. No shortcomings were identified in the standards, quality or efficiency of the school. The governors have identified areas for further development in the school development plan and the inspectors agree that these will further improve the effectiveness of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. The governors and headteacher should maintain the commitment to high standards and implement the minor and ongoing improvements identified in the current school development plan

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	10	7	1	0	0	0
Percentage	5	53	37	5	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 four percentage points

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	228
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	17	15	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	15	15	14
	Total	29	30	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (88)	94 (91)	91 (88)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	15
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	30	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (94)	91 (88)	94 (85)
	National	85 (84)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	17	16	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	16
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	28	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (94)	88 (94)	97 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	15	17
	Girls	11	15	16
	Total	21	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (97)	91 (97)	100 (100)
	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**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	180	0	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	2	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	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	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: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	104

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	465 761
Total expenditure	473 690
Expenditure per pupil	2 078
Balance brought forward from previous year	8 113
Balance carried forward to next year	184

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	228
Number of questionnaires returned	176

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	32	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	34	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	71	28	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	38	14	2	1
The teaching is good.	63	37	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	48	11	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	24	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	54	38	7	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	76	23	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	34	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	42	7	1	4