

# INSPECTION REPORT

**STOKE BISHOP CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bristol

LEA area: City of Bristol

Unique reference number: 109149

Headteacher: Mrs Philippa Hepworth

Lead inspector: Mr C R Phillips

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 258038

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	306
School address:	Cedar Park Stoke Bishop Bristol
Postcode:	BS9 1BW
Telephone number:	(0117) 377 2173
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr George Smith
Date of previous inspection:	29 <sup>th</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a primary school of above average size, which occupies a pleasant suburban site. It draws pupils from a fairly wide area and a broad range of backgrounds, with a greater proportion now coming from an area of mainly rented and much priority housing. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, who have a range of learning, behavioural and physical needs, is well below average. However, the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need has increased significantly because of recent changes in the local education authority's policy on inclusion. The pupils currently on roll represent a range of ethnic groups, but 85 per cent are of white-British origin. It has a significant proportion of pupils whose home language is not English, but none is currently in the early stages of language acquisition. Levels of attainment on entry are lower than at the time of the last inspection and are now broadly in line with those expected nationally. They represent a wider spread of ability than at that time. The school faces particular difficulties because of the significant numbers of pupils who leave before the end of their primary education because of continuing concerns about secondary provision in the area. The school achieved Investor in People status in 1997, with a successful review in 2003. It received School Achievement Awards in 2000 and 2001.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15941	Colin Phillips	Lead inspector	Science Geography History Religious education
1165	Peter Dannheisser	Lay inspector	
10611	Martin James	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language
18340	Madeline Phillips	Team inspector	English Art and design The Foundation Stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. It is very well led by the headteacher, who is supported by a strong staff team. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and is often very good. The standards pupils attain by the time they leave the school are clearly above average, and pupils throughout the school do well in terms of their individual abilities. The school is taking effective steps to maintain high standards, in spite of changes in its intake and the loss of older pupils. It offers a rich experience for all pupils and is fully inclusive. It provides **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection, and are currently well above average for pupils in Year 2 and above average in Year 6, in spite of the loss of older pupils.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership, supported by a good staff team, and the school is very well managed.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and is often very good, so all pupils are encouraged to achieve the best they can and show very good attitudes.
- The school is fully inclusive, has a strong ethos of care, and its work on values and the way pupils are consulted are exemplary.
- The school provides a wide range of creative and aesthetic activities and many opportunities to enrich the pupils' experience within and beyond the school day.
- Parents have a very positive view of the school and support it well.

The school **has improved well** since its last inspection, with standards achieved in national tests showing significant improvement overall since that time. Although there were no key issues at the time of the last inspection, the school has addressed very successfully the various minor issues identified then.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The pupils' **achievements are good** overall when compared with the levels at which they enter the school. However, the overall standards attained by the oldest pupils in the school are clearly being affected by the loss of pupils to other schools towards the end of their primary education because of parents' continuing concerns about secondary education in the area. By the time children leave reception, almost all achieve the goals that are expected at this age in all areas of learning, and a significant number are above that level. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are well above the national average in reading, mathematics and science, and are above average in writing. Standards in Year 6 are well above average in science, and above average in English and mathematics.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	C	C	B
mathematics	A	A	C	C
science	A	A	B	A

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Significant improvement after the last inspection meant that by the end of Year 6 pupils have been attaining levels well above the national average in each of the core subjects. This had begun to dip in 2002 in English and, by a small amount, in the other subjects, principally because of a reduction in the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5. The key factor in this was the loss of potentially higher

attaining pupils referred to above. The effects of this were more evident in mathematics and science in 2003, although the position in English remained the same. When compared with similar schools, however, science was still well above average, English above average, and mathematics in line with the average. Important changes have been made to teaching and grouping arrangements for English and mathematics to help ensure improvement in the numbers of pupils reaching the higher grade and in the performance of all pupils, and early indications are that these are beginning to have the desired effect. Standards attained at the age of seven in 2003 were well above the national average in writing and mathematics, and above average in reading. Standards in science were also high. These results confirmed the significant upward trend at this age in each of the subjects since the last inspection.

The pupils' personal qualities are **very good** overall, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils show **very good** attitudes and behaviour is **good**. The pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average, although a few parents have difficulty in getting their children to school on time.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** and has many very good features. Teaching is **good** overall and is often very good. As a result, pupils of all attainment levels and groups learn well.

The curriculum is lively and interesting, and is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors, and by an impressive array of extra-curricular activities. The school cares very well for its pupils and has a very effective partnership with its parents.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is very good and that of other key staff is good. The school is very well managed and has a clear sense of direction. The governing body supports the school very effectively. The school's efforts to address the effects on its results caused by the loss of older pupils are beginning to be successful.

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

Parents have a high opinion of the school and the job it is doing, although a minority feel they are not sufficiently informed about their child's progress. Pupils are also positive about school life, and have many opportunities to make their views known. The inspection team believes that, although some aspects of annual reports might be improved, the arrangements for keeping parents informed are good overall.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

No major areas for improvement were identified.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards in science are well above the national average, and are above average overall in English and mathematics.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading, mathematics and science.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 are currently above average in English and mathematics, and well above average in science, in spite of the loss of older pupils.
- Standards achieved by the time children leave the reception class are broadly in line with the expected goals for each of the areas of learning.
- Pupils throughout the school are achieving well in terms of their own capabilities.
- Pupils achieve well in creative subjects such as art and design and music, and in physical education.

#### Commentary

1. The figures in the table below indicate that in the national tests standards at the age of seven in 2003 were above the national average in reading, and well above the average in writing and mathematics. In science, teachers' assessments indicated that overall standards were very high. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was very high in writing, and well above average in reading, mathematics and science. Comparisons with similar schools show standards were well above average in mathematics, above average in reading, and in line with the average for writing. Inspection findings indicate standards in Year 2 are currently well above national expectations in reading, mathematics and science, and above the level expected in writing, confirming the significant improvement that has taken place in each of the subjects since the time of the last inspection.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.2 (15.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.2 (18.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (27.4)	27.4 (27.4)
mathematics	26.6 (28.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.9 (30.1)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The figures for those pupils who were 11 in 2003 indicate that standards were broadly in line with the national average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was above average in English and science, and average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, overall results were well above average in science, above average in English and average in mathematics. Inspection



findings indicate that standards for pupils currently in Year 6 are clearly above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Results for pupils of this age have also improved significantly since the last inspection, although the high levels being achieved two or three years ago have not been maintained recently, particularly in English and mathematics, as the full effect of the loss of pupils has become evident.

3. Children who enter the school in the reception classes show levels of attainment broadly in line with national expectations. This picture has changed since the last inspection, with recent year groups representing a wider range of capabilities and an increased proportion of pupils whose attainment on entry is below average. By the time they leave the reception class, most are at least in line with the goals expected for each of the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage of education.
4. The school's own careful tracking of the progress pupils make shows that those who are in the school throughout their primary school career do well in achieving the standards they do. It also confirms that the school's overall figures for 11-year-olds are affected significantly by the departure of potentially higher attaining pupils before the end of Key Stage 2. The school has put in place a number of measures, including changes in arrangements for teaching groups, to increase the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5. Early indications are that these measures are proving successful in challenging the higher attainers, as well as other groups, and the school is confident that it should meet its targets for performance in 2004. Inspection evidence agrees with that available from the school's monitoring procedures that pupils of differing ethnic and other groups, and of all levels of capability, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.
5. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected nationally and are improving as a result of the enhanced facilities for the subject. Standards in religious education are above the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus. There are many opportunities for pupils to achieve well in other subjects, and the sampling of these during the inspection indicates standards are above expectations. The pupils do particularly well in creative subjects, such as art and music, which shows, for instance, in the quality of artwork around the school and the large number of confident musicians.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes are **very good** and behaviour is **good**. The pupils' personal development is very good, with their spiritual, social, moral and cultural awareness very strong features. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good and the school makes very good efforts to maintain these.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The warm and caring ethos of the school permeates all activities, helping to promote the very good relationships, attitudes and self-confidence that are such strong features of the school.
- The very good role models and high expectations of the staff ensure that pupils are clear about the difference between right and wrong and behave well.
- Pupils' personal development is very good because of the consistent emphasis on agreed values in all aspects of the school's life.

### **Commentary**

6. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good, as they were during the last inspection. Most pupils are well behaved and respond very well to the caring ethos of the school. Pupils are often given opportunities to work independently, in groups or in pairs, and they collaborate well, sharing and valuing ideas and concentrating well on the task. Pupils say they enjoy school, and they are proud members of the school community. When they are asked to talk about ideas or to participate in improvised drama, the other pupils listen well and

show their appreciation. They show pride when their own achievements are recognised in the monthly celebration assemblies and genuine pleasure at the achievements of others.

7. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall, and most pupils behave very well. Staff work very well together as a team to reinforce good behaviour. They deal quickly and effectively with any hints of inappropriate behaviour that occur. Although pupils and parents report that there have been limited incidents of bullying, there is every indication that this has not been a major issue because of successful action the school has taken. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection. Pupils with emotional or learning difficulties are well supported in class and do not usually disrupt the work of others, although there are indications that the progress of a significant minority has been affected by the poor behaviour of one or two pupils in the recent past.
8. Pupils appreciate the huge range of extra-curricular activities, in which over 80 per cent take part in the school year. There are waiting lists for most clubs. Work produced in clubs such as those for pottery and art is amongst the many lovely displays of pupils' efforts which are respected and enjoyed by the whole school
9. Pupils' relationships with adults and each other are very good, which has a positive impact on their learning. Pupils are happy and secure, and enjoy school life in an atmosphere where all are valued. Boys and girls and pupils from different heritages mix well at playtime and lunchtime, and pupils with special educational needs take a full and active part in all aspects of school. There have been a few incidents of racist name-calling, which have been addressed well by the school.
10. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong which is promoted from a very early age. They benefit from the very good role models provided by the adults. Pupils are not simply reacting to a series of rewards and sanctions. They have taken part in creating a list of 'school values' that are explored in great detail, displayed prominently in class and around the school, and often referred to by staff and pupils. These all represent positive attitudes, with 'love of learning' at the top of the list. In the school's words, these all 'reinforce the school's Christian ethos'. Pupils celebrate these values at the monthly 'parade of excellence'. This regular highlight of the school's life underlines the importance of achievements from spelling to smiling, from 'having a go' to writing 'a good spooky poem'. Pupils radiate excitement and genuine interest on these occasions.
11. Pupils are given many opportunities to encourage the development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. All, for instance, are able to benefit from residential visits in Years 2 and 6, and pupils throughout the school respond very well to the many opportunities provided for them to take responsibility. Prefects are given roles within the school, such as helping younger pupils when the weather is too bad for them to play outside, and pupils in all classes are encouraged to take charge of aspects of the daily routine. A group of 'play pals' enjoy their roles as support for pupils who are on their own in the playground. Pupils are expected in all school activities to be honest, trustworthy and polite. They are also encouraged to be reflective and to be aware of the spiritual dimension of life through assemblies, their work in creative subjects, and as they delight in discovery and learning. These opportunities are handled sensitively by teachers, as when pupils were asked during a registration period to write a list of 'what makes me happy' and the teacher used the suggestions to affirm and support choices such as 'friends' and 'my brother'.
12. Pupils are provided with a curriculum that promotes a very good understanding of culture in subjects such as history, art and design, music and English. Pupils' understanding of different cultures is promoted through their religious education, in which they learn about the major world faiths. There have also been several visiting artists, dance groups and musicians, and pupils participate in performances. Good use is made of visits to the church and other places of interest, such as museums and historic sites. Many very effective displays of pupils' work encourage their awareness of being part of a multi-cultural society.

These displays are often interactive, inviting pupils to make a contribution or to answer questions. This is clearly a school in which pupils are encouraged to be aware of the wealth and variety of creativity and enthusiasm of people throughout the world.

## Attendance

13. Attendance is consistently above the national average and there are very few unauthorised absences. Registration is completed efficiently and promptly, but a few pupils arrive late. Careful records and analyses help the school maintain the good attendance and rewards are given to pupils for high attendance. The school works closely with educational welfare officers and follows up any unexplained absences on the same day.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
271	1	0
11	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
9	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** and has many strong features. Teaching and learning are good and often better, and the school makes very good use of opportunities to enrich the curriculum through the use of visits and visitors and a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities. It cares very well for pupils, listens to them very well, and has established a very good partnership with parents.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall, and frequently very good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall, and pupils throughout the school learn well.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
- The work being done in helping the pupils to develop their thinking skills is having a positive impact and is encouraging all pupils to learn independently.
- Pupils of all levels of attainment and groups are fully involved in all learning experiences and achieve well, although the progress of some pupils has been inconsistent in the past.
- The systems the school has in place for assessment, including the regular use of pupils' self-assessment and the way the school uses the information are very good.
- The quality of marking is good, and in subjects such as English and science provides consistent guidance to pupils about how they can improve their work.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	10 (26%)	21 (54%)	7 (18%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

14. These figures present a positive picture of the quality of teaching, with nearly a third of lessons seen during the inspection judged to be very good or excellent. The overall standard has been at least maintained when compared with that seen in the last inspection, even though at the time of the present inspection there were several temporary teachers. The figures confirm the parents' opinion that teaching is good, as well as the positive views the pupils have of their teachers.
15. Staff development is linked directly to the school's priorities of improving teaching and learning. As a result of training, teachers are helping pupils to develop valuable thinking skills and concentration, and impressive and challenging work occurs in several classes. In classes for younger pupils, careful questioning guides them to explain their mathematical thinking about, for instance, the ordering of numbers when one is missing. By doing so, pupils develop their understanding of important concepts. Similarly, groups of pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked collaboratively to solve problems and gave stunning answers when asked to define 'good thinking'. Very good use is made of the skills pupils have acquired when they produce 'mind maps' as a way of reviewing what they have learned.
16. From their time in the reception class, pupils are taught how to be increasingly independent in their learning. This is generally reinforced well in each class, although there are still times when, particularly as pupils are working in groups, adults direct activities too much, and do not leave sufficient scope for pupils to practise and develop their own skills. By Year 6, however, almost all pupils are self-motivated and show increasing maturity in the way they take responsibility for organising aspects of their own learning.
17. The standard of teaching in each age group of the school is good. This is because the teachers in all classes work hard to meet the needs of each pupil, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. They plan work together thoroughly in their year teams, and work as a whole staff to be consistent in their high expectations for both work and behaviour. There were occasional examples where the quality and presentation of pupils' work in English, mathematics and some other areas had not been of the usual high standard. This was attributable in each case to some disruption of learning, such as the use of temporary teachers, but was not evident during the inspection. The pupils are usually sure what is expected of them, and explanations are clear. There are very good relationships between adults and children in each class, helping to

ensure high self-esteem and good achievement. All of the teachers organise lessons well and use interesting and stimulating approaches that encourage the pupils to try hard and do well. Teachers ask questions very precisely in order to check and develop the pupils' learning. Because of the teachers' knowledge of the pupils, the questioning involves and interests pupils of all abilities. The pupils' responses are handled effectively, developing speaking and listening skills well as they challenge pupils with further questions.

18. Teachers are well supported by the learning support assistants and other adults who work in each class supporting individuals and groups of pupils successfully as they build their literacy, numeracy and other skills. Work is carefully matched to the needs of different groups of pupils, and the learning support assistants are particularly successful at developing skills and building up good relationships with those pupils who need extra support because of learning difficulties.
19. The arrangements for assessment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are very good throughout the school. In the reception classes, the adults note the learning which takes place when children work, and are developing good systems to monitor this progress over time. In the foundation subjects, pupils' overall learning is assessed carefully and regularly. To do this, teachers evaluate what the class as a whole has learned, as well as identifying the progress made by higher and lower attaining pupils. Many opportunities are used to encourage pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers. For instance, in an art lesson in Years 3 and 4, the pupils' questions to assess achievement were a valuable part of the end of the lesson summary. These supplemented the checks on learning undertaken by the teacher throughout the lesson. A valuable feature of many lessons is the brief review activity by which pupils show with hand signals whether they feel they have grasped or are uncertain about the main points of the lesson.
20. The use of specific targets that are understood by the pupils has developed well in English and has been introduced recently in mathematics, and is having a positive impact on how well the pupils achieve. The quality of marking is good overall. It is very good in English, where it is usually linked to specific criteria, providing pupils with a clear idea about how they are getting on and points to ways in which they might improve their work. Very good examples were also seen in science of marking that prompted pupils to move further in their own thinking about the work they were doing. The school tracks and records the progress pupils make very well, to provide a clear picture of how well individuals and groups of pupils are doing, and to ensure that work is planned so that each pupil makes the necessary progress.

## The curriculum

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6 is **good**. Extra-curricular provision is **very good** and the quality of the accommodation and learning resources is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall provision for children in the reception classes and other year groups is good.
- The school makes good provision for the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects.
- The use made of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects of the curriculum is generally good.
- The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The enrichment produced through extra-curricular activities and educational visits is very good.
- The accommodation has been enhanced significantly since the last inspection, but there are still one or two shortcomings.

## **Commentary**

21. The indoor and outdoor curriculum for the reception classes is planned carefully to meet the needs of all of the children. It is stimulating and interesting. The curriculum for the rest of the school, which meets statutory requirements, is also broad and balanced. It is based on good planning for all subjects. The school makes good provision for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across all subjects. Full opportunities are provided for work in art and design, design and technology, music, physical education, geography and history, and a rich and varied curriculum is the result.
22. The school involves all pupils in the complete range of subjects and activities, making full allowance for the needs of different pupils. This ensures that all have equality of opportunity, encouraging them to achieve as well as they can. There is a strong commitment, for instance, to include pupils with special educational needs fully into the life and work of the school, including extra-curricular activities, and the overall provision for them is good. The special needs co-ordinator works hard to ensure that these pupils have full access to the curriculum. Individual education plans provide useful detail and targets in them are broken down carefully into small, achievable steps so that the plans can be used easily as daily working documents. Care is taken to ensure that the work provided for these pupils is closely suited to their needs. Clear procedures are in place for the identification and assessment of pupils, and the Code of Practice has been implemented carefully and effectively.
23. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including such varied activities as art, choir, sewing, dance, football, netball, sign-language and many more. The school welcomes many visitors, including writers, local clergy, artists and the local Member of Parliament, as well as drama and music groups. A wide range of educational visits is arranged and good use is also made of the local area and of the school grounds. Annual residential visits take place for pupils in Years 2 and 6. These activities make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal and social development, as well as enhancing their understanding and skills in different curriculum subjects.
24. The school accommodation is generally spacious and attractive. It is very well-maintained and welcoming and its appearance is greatly enhanced by the extensive and interesting displays of pupils' work. The front entrance of the school is currently being modified to improve access and to provide a quiet seating area and a striking water feature. Colourful banners of pupils' work are displayed. Classrooms are airy and bright, providing a pleasant working environment. The accommodation has been enhanced considerably by the addition of permanent classrooms and a computer suite, but there is little extra space for small group or individual work. The library areas are situated in a corridor and although they provide adequate space, they are not an ideal environment for pupils to undertake research activities. A covered area is planned for outdoor play in reception. The current staff accommodation is barely adequate to accommodate all members of staff at the same time. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now of good quality, neatly and safely stored and readily available to staff and to pupils when appropriate. The school is well staffed by a dedicated and well-informed group of teachers and support staff. They complement each other well in providing a varied and interesting curriculum for their pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school and its pupils are very well looked after. The governors and staff play a full part in checking and ensuring the health, safety and security of pupils and adults in the school. Pupils feel well cared for and appropriate staff are trained well in first aid. Children are helped to settle in reception gradually. The school is also sensitive to the pastoral needs of those pupils who join in later years. Pupils know how well they are doing and know what they need to work at to improve.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' views are sought, and their active and informed involvement is encouraged in many aspects of school life.
- The quality of support given to pupils is very good, with the result that pupils enjoy good relationships with each other and with the adults in school.
- Arrangements for new pupils starting at the school are very good.
- Health and safety matters are given priority and staff and governors participate in regular school safety audits.

## Commentary

25. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are very good. A child welfare item at each weekly staff meeting briefs all staff about pupils who may need careful observation and help. First aid is provided by staff with appropriate training. Those who need to know are well aware of any pupil's medical requirements. Equipment is checked and tested regularly, and safe practice is promoted well in lessons. Staff representatives and governors carry out regular formal and recorded audits of health, safety and security, to reinforce the health and safety culture throughout the school and on any journeys away from school. Under the leadership of the site manager, who plays an important part in the life of the school, the buildings are very well looked after.
26. Child protection procedures meet requirements and the school exercises its responsibilities with vigilance and care. The school is aware of its responsibilities towards pupils who are not home-based although at present there are no such pupils at the school.
27. New arrangements for children starting at the school are proving very effective. Home visits and other procedures start the work of developing good and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. These relationships give pupils the confidence to seek support and guidance when they have concerns about their work, or a personal problem, or when they want to share a success or news of something special. Pupils who join the school after reception are allotted 'buddies' to help them to settle in. Transfer arrangements when pupils move on to secondary education are also good, although this is particularly difficult when pupils go to such a wide range of schools.
28. Pupils are given targets in some subjects and their work is often marked in such a way that they know what they should do to make further progress. They are also involved in the assessment of their own progress in many areas, looking carefully at their own work and that of others. Older pupils develop an appropriately self-critical approach to what they are doing. In addition to the teaching staff, learning support assistants and a learning mentor provide a valuable resource for any pupil with a need to sort out problems. Each class teacher is asked to consider whether any pupils should be identified as needing mentoring support. Pupils are supported well in the playground by staff who are trained in behaviour support and able to lead play. The care and support given to pupils with special educational needs throughout the school are good.
29. Children in the reception classes are encouraged to plan the first part of their day, often with a parent, using a picture board of activities. This means that from an early age they are given some responsibility over what they are learning which helps to build their enthusiasm and commitment. This approach to learning is then continued well throughout the school.
30. The school seeks pupils' views very successfully through an impressive series of meetings held by class councils and the school council. Elected pupils discuss a range of issues and the outcomes of their recommendations are displayed prominently on their notice board. The system is exemplary because pupils throughout the school can take part in the process, ensuring that staff are very aware of pupils' views. Pupils raise funds through sponsored events and vote about how those funds should be used; this year there was a tie between

'more books' and 'more plants', so they decided to spend half on each. Pupils contributed to the provision of a 'gazebo' and are justly proud of their achievement. Pupils are also asked to contribute their views to their end of year reports and there are regular surveys of pupils' opinions.

31. Many pupils are involved in other responsibilities around the school and in class, such as being house captains or prefects, and this helps them develop further ownership of their school and their sense of social awareness. Helped by a learning support assistant, the pupils have produced a magazine of their own, appropriately called 'Live Wire'.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Parents have **positive** views of the school and the education that it provides. The partnership between school and home is **very good** and links with other schools and with the community are **good**. These play a positive role in supporting pupils' learning at school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are happy with the many opportunities the school provides for their children.
- The parent teacher association supports the work of the school very well.
- Reports to parents about their children's progress provide useful information, although more could be written about their children's attainment compared with national norms.
- Parents are given general information about what their children will be learning, but this does not always include sufficient detail about ways in which parents might help at home.
- Links with other schools enrich the provision for all pupils.

### **Commentary**

32. The positive views of parents reflect overall satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision. A minority of parents expressed some concerns about a specific behaviour issue, which has now been resolved after much hard work by the school. A significant number of parents feel they do not have sufficient information about the progress their child is making, but the proportion of parents with this concern has reduced considerably since the school responded to an earlier survey of parents' opinions. Newsletters and general information provided to parents are good. The annual reports on pupils' progress show how well the teachers know their pupils, informing parents about the work that pupils have completed and their attitudes. The reports provide parents with some targets or guidance as to what their children need to do to progress to the next stage of their learning in the core areas of the curriculum. However, they do not indicate clearly how well pupils are doing compared to the expected national norms for the age, although this may be discussed at parents' evenings. Both parents and pupils are given an opportunity to respond to the reports in writing. The inspection team believes that the arrangements for providing information about progress are good overall.
33. Parents find the staff very approachable and willing to address any issues. The school involves parents of pupils with special educational needs fully in the educational planning of their children. Useful visits are made to newly-enrolled reception children in their homes. Most parents support their children well at home by sharing books with them and helping them with their homework. There are home/school books that ask for comments from parents although these are used more by parents and teachers of younger pupils. A parent teacher association has raised considerable funds to provide additional resources and learning opportunities for pupils. Its activities help to reinforce a strong sense of community. Several parent volunteers come into school to help with reading and provide support in classrooms, and many give their time and skills to assist with school trips.



34. Links with the community and a wide range of visits and visitors provide good enrichment of the curriculum. They support pupils' personal and social development, as well as widening their experiences and giving them opportunities to learn about the needs of others. There are now good links with the church. The parent teacher association receives some financial support from local businesses, but the school has not developed further business links. The school has a valuable partnership agreement with the University of the West of England to support initial teacher training.
35. Links with other schools are good. In particular, there are useful links with the main schools to which most pupils transfer. Pupils in Year 6 work on transfer units, which help to ensure continuity as pupils enter the secondary phase. However, the parents' biggest concern continues to be their dissatisfaction with local secondary provision, and its obvious effect on this school. Children come from many nurseries and playgroups. The school maintains contact with these and visits children there, as well as in their homes. This gives the school important information about new pupils and their individual needs.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The leadership of the headteacher is very good and that of other key staff is good. Management is very good overall. The governance of the school is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides a very clear lead and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior staff.
- The staff work very well together as a team.
- The school's planning for development is of high quality and all aspects of the school's life are monitored and evaluated with great care.
- The governors are very well informed about the school and are fully committed to its continuing development.
- Changes in the nature of its intake and the loss of older pupils because of continuing uncertainty about secondary provision in the area present significant difficulties to the school as it tries to maintain high standards, but it is tackling them well.

### **Commentary**

36. The school is very well managed, mainly because of the tone that is set by the headteacher. She provides understanding but firm leadership and helps to ensure the ethos of care that is based on the values that are at the heart of the school. In a comparatively short time as headteacher of this school, she has developed a clear vision for the school, yet a style of management that encourages all members of the school community to know that they have an important contribution to make in the direction it takes. She has developed an atmosphere in which pupils, parents, governors and staff are enabled to take responsibility for the accomplishment of the school's agreed and stated values. The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior managers. The school is, therefore, very well led, has a clear educational direction and is thoroughly inclusive in its provision for all pupils. Its very good management is based on quiet efficiency and meticulous planning.
37. The teaching staff has changed almost completely since the last inspection. This has brought together a group of teachers, classroom assistants and other support staff with a broad range of experience, who have bonded well into a strong team. A number of classes have faced some disruption through staff absence or change, but the use of temporary teachers is well managed and there are only occasional indications that the progress of some pupils has been affected. All staff are fully committed to providing a rich experience for

all the pupils in their care. The role of the subject co-ordinators has developed well since the last inspection, and other key management roles are carried out well.

38. This is a self-evaluating school. This is typified by the school's development plan, which is a practical and exemplary document, focused clearly on the raising of standards. It provides specific detail about the agreed priorities, with indications of costing and clear criteria by which success can be measured. The school's thorough arrangements for performance management and for staff development are clearly linked to the plan. As a result, it is proving very effective in helping the school to meet its goals. Responsibility for the approval of the plan lies clearly with the governing body, and governors and staff are involved fully in monitoring its progress and in its subsequent evaluation. There is an appropriate system of consultation during the preparation of the plan. With the support of the plan, every aspect of the life of the school is monitored and evaluated to ensure constant improvement.
39. The members of the school's governing body are very well informed about all aspects of school life, and clearly feel they have an important part to play in shaping its present and its future. They are kept up-to-date regularly about the standards being achieved and the progress made by pupils. They provide very good support for the headteacher and staff, and are firmly committed to the continuing development of the school. They discharge their duties effectively through a system of committees. Each governor has a valuable link with a particular subject or aspect of the school, ensuring regular contact with its daily life.
40. As it strives to maintain high standards, the school faces two key difficulties. Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in the nature of its intake and the secondary school situation has meant further loss of older and potentially higher attaining pupils. Although these are factors beyond the school's control, it is endeavouring by careful management to minimise their effect. Its thorough monitoring has identified areas of need, and important changes have been made to the ways in which teaching groups are organised for key parts of each day. This has enabled a reduction in the size of some teaching groups. As a result of these changes, work is more carefully targeted to ensure that all pupils are challenged at an appropriate level to achieve the best they can. It is too soon to be completely confident about the success of these measures, but early indications are that they are beginning to achieve their goals. Typically, the school is monitoring them very carefully.
41. The quality of financial planning is very good. The school manages its budget very well and spending is related clearly to the raising of educational standards. Careful records of expenditure are maintained. The minor issues raised at the time of the last audit have been addressed. The governors and headteacher monitor the school's financial position very carefully and are supported very well by the school administrators, who play a key part in the smooth running of the school. The governors and staff are well aware of the need to ensure best value and to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of spending decisions. A larger than usual budget surplus had accrued, particularly because of the need for careful management at a time when building improvements were being completed. This surplus has now enabled the school to reorganise and reduce the size of some teaching groups, as a result of a small enhancement in staffing, and is a direct way of continuing its drive for high standards.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	650,638	Balance from previous year	40,291
Total expenditure	635,632	Balance carried forward to the next	55,297
Expenditure per pupil	2,037		



## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

42. The Foundation Stage is managed well by the two reception teachers and is led well by the teacher co-ordinating the learning of the children from four to seven years of age in the school. There is, therefore, good continuity between these years, and the Foundation Stage provides well for each child. Learning is enjoyable. The children enter the reception classes with attainment that is broadly average overall, though it varies year by year, and includes a very wide range of abilities and needs. A significant minority of pupils have above average attainment, particularly in speaking and listening skills, but an increasing number are below average. The teachers have the confidence of parents and build on the good work done at home. Because of their careful planning and enthusiastic approach, they make the classroom an exciting and happy place for children, so the children soon settle and feel secure. The progress of all groups is generally good and their attitudes are very good. They show enthusiasm and enjoyment and are eager to follow the rules set positively but discreetly in each class. The children know what is expected of them and respond well. They achieve well because the teaching in the areas of learning overall is good, with very good teaching for mathematical development, and because they have good relationships with those who teach them. The teachers and others working in the Foundation Stage are a strong team who support and extend the children's learning well, encouraging their natural curiosity and eagerness. They provide a good balance of activities; some with a specific learning focus and others where the adults observe and note the learning that takes place as the children work and consolidate. Systems for monitoring the children's progress are developing well, helping to ensure that suitable activities take place to develop the children's skills best. The curriculum is well balanced, is often stimulating and challenging, and is structured to meet the needs of each child. There is enjoyment in teaching and much delight in learning.
43. Since the last inspection, the high quality of teaching has been maintained. The children's introduction to school has improved substantially and now includes useful home visits. Parents are becoming more involved in their children's learning. Facilities and resources for play outdoors have been improved, with a covered area planned for the near future.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teachers and other adults have good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and of the curriculum necessary for them to achieve well.
- All work together in a way that ensures high standards and expectations for all children.
- The parents are happy and confident to work with the school, and the children know this.
- The children achieve well because they enjoy what they are doing, are usually fully involved in it and are trusted to be independent.
- Teaching, and consequently what children learn, is generally good.

#### **Commentary**

44. Most children meet the goals for early learning by the time they leave reception, and a significant number do so before that. All achieve well. The teachers and other adults value each child, so the children learn to value one another. The classroom environment is friendly and full of activity, within a structure that is explained and shown to the children. The expectations of all the adults are realistically high. The fact that these are usually achieved is because the adults know each child well, are sensitive to their needs and consistent in the

way they treat them. The adults enjoy the day in the classroom as much as the children and their approach to keeping rules in class is pleasant. For instance, music is played for tidying up, and, without any other signal, the classroom is tidied and children are seated ready for the next activity. The children usually concentrate and become confident quickly because of carefully planned activities, with support when needed and much praise. They plan and initiate activities and show responsibility for themselves, others and their environment, because the teachers encourage and expect this. Examples were seen of children working well quite independently, but there were times, when working in groups, that children were a little too directed in their work. There is a happy atmosphere in the class in the mornings when parents and carers bring their children in. Parents know they are welcome and they chat easily to the teachers and other adults, often watching or helping their child register and plan their first activity of the day.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children achieve well in terms of the levels at which they enter the school.
- Most children reach at least the goals expected in speaking and listening by the time they leave reception and many are above that level.
- The adults provide very good role models for language.
- The teaching of reading, which involves parents, is well organised, and the children achieve well.
- Good work habits are being taught, but at times adults direct group activities a little too much.

### **Commentary**

45. Teaching and learning are good overall and the children achieve well. By the end of reception, most have usually met the expected goals, although this varies from year to year. A significant minority meet the goals before the end of the year and the school provides well for those children. The teachers and others are clear and specific when they speak and explain well. They are expressive when talking or reading stories, so the children listen well. The teachers' questioning is good, leading children to think, for instance, about a story of Jesus and then explain their thinking and talk about their own experiences. A few ask their own questions. Most children are confident speakers and use their language appropriately as, for example nursery rhyme characters or when explaining about a picture they have just painted. Good work habits are set by the careful and regular practise of letter shapes, and successful strategies are used with pupils with special educational needs and others to reinforce learning. Occasionally, however, adults offer too much direction in activities. A significant minority of children already know many sounds, are building their own words and have good ideas of what they want to say. They are forming letters increasingly well. The teaching of reading is very good. The teachers spend time with one or two children at a time, developing their skills sensitively, and the records they make are precise and linked to specific skills. All enjoy books and are developing skills and understanding in their use. Many know key words and some less familiar ones. Later in the year, the children benefit from a slightly larger group and helpful interaction. The interest shown, and time spent, by their parents and carers is an important factor in how well they do and the school harnesses this to good effect.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good and the children show good, and sometimes very good, achievement.
- The adults are skilled and knowledgeable and use many different ways of looking at number, space and other concepts.
- They spend much quality time in exploring mathematical concepts with the children in practical ways and teach skills well.
- The adults question carefully and encourage the children to explain their mathematical thinking.
- Teaching is precise and suited to each child, and each shows good attitudes to learning.

### **Commentary**

46. Teachers are knowledgeable and confident, aiming work at the level the children require, so that all children achieve at least well. The standards of most are usually at least at the level expected when they reach the end of their time in reception, with many often above that. This varies, however, and there are sometimes fewer children who exceed the expected goals, because they find the words to explain the position of objects and how they can solve simple problems difficult, particularly the idea of 'taking away'.
47. The adults encourage learning through very carefully planned and stimulating activities, such as when Max the cuddly toy hid some plastic triangles around the room, for which the children had to hunt. The teacher knew exactly what learning was intended and looked for this. So, on return to the carpet, in pairs and with their triangles, or triangular shaped wedges of toy cake, each child showed the correct shape and explained the colour, and a few were able to note the number of corners. The children have many opportunities to talk to an adult about their work and their contributions are handled well, enabling the learning of both the least and the most able to be extended. The teachers have high expectations and encourage good work habits and so children, for instance, count carefully and estimate results regularly. The children are eager and excited by mathematical activities and are becoming confident in their developing concepts and in how to explain their thinking.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

48. Although it was not possible to see sufficient teaching for this area to make an overall judgement, it is clear that there are many interesting activities to help the children to gain good scientific ideas and an understanding of the past and of their place in the world. The adults build up this knowledge by first hand experience, such as visits and activities, to stimulate the children to show curiosity and to ask questions, wherever possible. Parents help their children to bring the past alive by bringing old objects into school. The children's understanding of different cultures and beliefs is enriched as they learn more about the community of which they are a part. Children are at ease with technology such as the computer, the overhead projector and an electronic keyboard.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

49. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards, but from observation of play outside and from the school's photographs of children at play, it is clear that the school provides good opportunities indoors and outdoors. Outdoor facilities and resources for physical development have improved substantially and there are stimulating opportunities, such as dance and the use of wheeled toys outside. The children use physical education apparatus to climb over, under and through in a variety of ways to develop their skills. Their

manipulative skills are developed well through cutting, sticking and gluing activities. The number who do not find it easy to hold and use a pencil, crayon or scissors with control when they first enter the school varies considerably from year to year.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

50. It is clear from the work seen and from the teacher's plans that provision in creative development is good, although an overall judgement on teaching and learning in this area cannot be made. The children use the regular and varied opportunities for art and design work well, to design and make, role play and experience dance and music. In one session, children designed and made colourful paper plate spiders and used their own ideas of how to attach legs to them. Artwork on display is colourful, showing a wide use of techniques and media and was of high quality. Pupils show a good use of colour in their work and much care. There is originality and creativity in their picture-making.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now above average overall, with a significant proportion of pupils reaching higher levels.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, and sometimes very good, and work is very well assessed.
- Handwriting and the presentation of work are generally good, although the work of some pupils is not of such a high standard.
- Standards of reading are high, but there have been insufficient opportunities for pupils to use an organised library to develop skills.
- The co-ordination of English is good, identifying clear priorities for the subject.

#### **Commentary**

51. Standards in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2003 were above average in reading and well above average for writing, with high numbers achieving Level 3 in both. In the tests for 11-year-olds, results overall for English were in line with the national average, and the proportion attaining Level 5 was above average. Although recent performance has been lower than that of three years ago, all of these results represent improvement on those at the time of the last inspection.
52. The school emphasises well the development of skills in speaking and listening in lessons and throughout the school. Standards are above those expected at both seven and 11. Almost all Year 2 pupils are confident to listen and respond to the ideas of others in class discussions. Each, for instance, contributes a reason as to how the author lets her readers know Dogger, a favourite cuddly toy, is loved. Some are able to explore the ideas involved. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are clear in describing events and giving their opinions. Some pupils develop their ideas particularly well, building on the contributions of others.
53. Pupils achieve well in reading. Standards for the present Year 2 pupils are well above average, with a significant minority of pupils attaining the higher levels. Most of the Year 2 pupils are fairly fluent and beginning to be expressive readers, using punctuation to help in this. All enjoy and understand a wide range of books and discuss the text, although show limited experience of using books to find out information. Skilled support from teachers and assistants has helped less confident pupils to achieve well, using effective strategies for

reading words they do not know. The present Year 6 pupils are also well above the level expected, with more than a third reaching the higher level. All are fluent, accurate and usually expressive as they read a range of literature. Many use the text well to describe ideas and characters and state opinions, some with depth and perception, and a few do so with support. Most are able to retrieve information, although for some this is not yet fully developed. Pupils use non-fiction texts to find out about Tudor criminals and make regular use of the Internet in school for research. There has been no effective library provision in school until recently to assist the development of research skills in subjects such as geography and history. This is now being remedied, book stock is much improved and newly created library areas are in use.

54. Most pupils attain well in writing at seven and 11, and standards this year are above those expected. Current progress for Year 2 pupils is good, but there are indications that the work of a significant number of pupils has been affected previously by the poor behaviour of a few. By Year 6, most pupils write in a joined, fluent and legible style. However, because of slower progress in the past, some pupils in Years 4 and 5 are having to re-establish good work habits. Most of the oldest pupils use a good range of punctuation within sentences, with many developing their spelling of words based on regular patterns. Most sustain and develop their ideas thoughtfully and many write in complex sentences, grouping interesting ideas into paragraphs. A few use words precisely and imaginatively to achieve a desired effect, such as, 'On the ragged, tall, spooky ridge of the cliffs a cold and lonely sheep wandered.' Most of the Year 2 pupils are beginning to use punctuation and to spell words for themselves, with many showing skill. They are all able to write instructions and show a clear sequence in their story writing. Many use words to connect sentences, such as 'at last', 'next' and 'when', some with ease. About half of the Year 2 pupils are already at least at the level expected by the end of the year. Work completed previously by a few pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed some untidiness, with letters not formed carefully.
55. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. All teachers are enthusiastic and work hard to motivate and challenge their pupils, which they do successfully. Attitudes are improving and those older pupils, particularly boys, who were formerly less interested in literature and their own writing, are now better motivated. In each lesson, pupils are eager, apply themselves very well, work hard and are justifiably proud of their achievements. They often show appreciation of literature and are able to 'put themselves into the place of others. The teachers match the work successfully to the needs of individual pupils so that those with particular needs, those with English as an additional language and higher attaining pupils all achieve at least well. The teachers expect much from their pupils and most lessons show this in their pace and in high quality questioning that challenges and develops learning very effectively. All staff use resources and a range of methods, including drama, effectively to support learning, as when Year 6 pupils took part in a 'Conscience Alley' activity, where they posed as Macbeth's agonised mind to dramatise his good and bad thoughts. The teachers check on learning throughout lessons and use the information gained to develop it further. They all mark work thoroughly. Written comments show the pupils how they can improve and targets are a useful guide to pupils. The pupils, particularly the older ones, evaluate their own work and sometimes that of others, very well. Work at home provides good support for work in school.
56. Improvement is evident in Year 6 because of better provision for the older pupils, who now work in groups according to age and not in mixed age groups as before. The planned objectives for learning are now more specific to the needs of the group and more motivating texts are being taught. Because of the use of an additional teacher to teach English, the groups are smaller and attention to individuals is increased. The younger pupils are working in groups according to prior attainment, with flexibility to move within groups when progress shows this necessary.
57. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of English in the school and plays a significant role in improving standards. Several useful initiatives, introduced recently, are beginning to have a



positive impact on learning and are being closely monitored. The co-ordinator monitors well by teaching several year groups and checking other teaching and learning, planning and work completed. Since the last inspection, standards have improved and the quality of teaching has been maintained. The assessment of learning, particularly that by the pupils themselves, has developed well, and the library and resources are being improved.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

58. Pupils write for a variety of purposes and for different audiences. They use their writing skills well in science, religious education, geography, and, for instance, in history when writing a play-script about Roman baths and an amphitheatre, following a visit to Caerleon. There are numerous opportunities in the school for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. For instance, the members of class and school councils, representative of most year groups, sustain impressive discussions.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average at Year 2 and above average at Year 6; based on their prior attainment, all pupils are achieving well.
- Significant improvements have taken place in results in national tests in both key stages since the time of the last inspection, in spite of the recent dips in performance by Year 6 pupils.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The attitudes and behaviour shown by pupils are good.
- The role of the co-ordinator in raising standards is good.

#### **Commentary**

59. The trend in results for Year 2 pupils has continued to be markedly upward since the previous inspection, to a point where they are consistently well above the national average. Results for Year 6 pupils also showed significant improvement to a similarly high standard until the last two years. Since then, they have declined until they are now broadly in line with the national average and well below the school's own targets. The reasons for this decline have been analysed thoroughly in the school, and a key factor is clearly the loss of older pupils and a consequent reduction in the proportion attaining Level 5. The steps the school has taken to address this appear to be having the desired effect, and standards for the oldest pupils this year are above the national average. Those for younger pupils will again be well above average.
60. Pupils throughout the school are confident in handling number. Teachers make good allowance for this during the introductory session in each lesson, and this has clearly benefited pupils' learning. Younger pupils tackle addition and subtraction confidently, and their secure knowledge of the multiplication facts relating to 2, 5 and 10 allows them to undertake a range of multiplication and division exercises successfully. Pupils in Year 6 reduce a fraction to its lowest form readily, and they work confidently with co-ordinates in all four quadrants to produce various two-dimensional shapes. Pupils in Year 2 measure with a range of standard and non-standard measures, and the oldest pupils name various metric and imperial measures, carrying out appropriate conversion tasks to find their equivalents. Pupils throughout the school tackle suitable and often challenging practical and problem solving activities. A small number of older pupils find problems difficult, especially when more than one step is involved. Teachers make very good use of mathematical language in lessons, to try to help pupils overcome this.

61. Lessons are very carefully planned and resourced. Teachers make very good use of assessment to ensure that all pupils receive work that is suited to their particular needs. This is used especially well in Years 3 to 6, where pupils are placed in different teaching groups for lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, pupils are kept busy and suitable help is provided both by teachers and learning support assistants. As a result, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good gains in their overall mathematical knowledge and understanding. Teachers also make good use of homework to give pupils further opportunities to practise their skills.
62. Pupils throughout the school clearly enjoy their work, the mental activities in particular. They settle to their written and practical tasks with interest and enthusiasm, working well with other pupils when required, and they make good attempts to find answers and provide solutions. Most pupils take great care with the presentation of work in their books. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and most provide helpful and encouraging advice to help them improve their work further. The quality of assessment in the subject helps to ensure that work is well matched to the needs of all pupils, and the use of targets is beginning to provide further useful guidance to pupils about the progress they are making.
63. The co-ordinator plays a significant role in maintaining high standards and her leadership is good. She identified the causes of the lower standards produced at the end of Year 6 in 2003, and has also recognised that some pupils find problem solving activities comparatively difficult. Both issues have been very suitably addressed. She monitors regularly the work being produced by pupils, and on occasions observes lessons to see the standards being achieved.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. The skills of numeracy are taught very successfully in mathematics lessons. Teachers also make good provision for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as science and design and technology, and pupils apply them well.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection, and are now well above the national average, and pupils of all attainment levels achieve well.
- The investigative element of the subject is very well developed throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good and often better, and the teachers are very well supported by the subject co-ordinator.

#### **Commentary**

65. The period since the last inspection has seen impressive improvement in science. This shows, for instance, in the standards attained by pupils in national tests and assessments. The results for Year 6 pupils available at the time of the last inspection were well below the national average. They improved remarkably in each of the two years that followed, to a level well above the national average. This has been maintained since then, although the 2003 results were not quite as high overall because of a slight dip in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5. Inspection findings indicate that the standards being achieved currently by the oldest pupils in the school are clearly above average and, because of the proven effectiveness of the school's revision programme, standards are expected to be well above average by the time they leave the school. The teachers' assessments of the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 have also maintained a significant upward trend and are always now well above the national average, with almost all pupils attaining the level

expected nationally at this age. Boys and girls in both key stages attain similar results. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is above and usually well above the national average for older pupils and is well above average for the younger ones.

66. The improvement is most marked in the pupils' understanding of the investigative element of the subject, which was identified as a weaker aspect of the subject before. Pupils of all ages are taught how to set up and conduct investigations that will help them not only to learn about materials or forces, for instance, but also about what it means to be a scientist. So, as pupils in Years 1 and 2, all wearing their 'scientist' badges, begin their investigation into sound, they are able to offer sensible ideas about how they can be sure their testing is fair. They then observe carefully what is happening in the well-planned group activities and record their findings with care. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they show a very good understanding of the scientific process, planning their own investigations, framing hypotheses, using a range of recording methods and establishing clear conclusions from the evidence they have gathered. As they go through the school, pupils develop a very good understanding of the other elements of the science curriculum. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, showed good levels of knowledge of the related movements of the sun, moon and earth in a lively and active lesson.
67. Several factors have contributed to the improvement. The curriculum is very well planned, following a scheme of work developed in the school, has clear links to other subjects, uses topics that are relevant to the pupils and is based throughout on practical activities. As a result, the pupils are very well motivated and pupils of all attainment levels and groups do well according to their own capabilities. For instance, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language receive well-targeted support to enable them to play a full part in all learning activities and to make good progress. The teaching of science is good and often very good. The teachers show good knowledge and understanding of the subject and all are confident in the use of the investigative approach. They are prompted by a very effective co-ordinator and make very good use of resources such as the school grounds and the pond area, which was created by members of the very popular science club. The drive and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator have helped to give the subject a much higher profile in the school and to maintain high standards.
68. Assessment procedures are very good, with much use of pupils' self-assessment as they review the work they have done. The marking of work is regular and thorough, and usually provides useful indications of how pupils can progress in their learning. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' numeracy and literacy skills through the recording of observations and the writing up of investigations. Good use is made of information and communication technology, and the co-ordinator is keen to extend the range of ways in which findings are presented.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally for pupils at the age of seven and 11 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
- The use made of ICT in a number of other subjects of the curriculum is good.
- Teachers are still developing their skills in teaching in the ICT suite.
- Pupils generally show good attitudes to the subject.
- The role played by the co-ordinator is good.

### **Commentary**

69. Pupils' skills in all aspects of information and communication technology are broadly in line with national expectations, with a significant minority who are clearly above that level, which

is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. They are able to produce appropriate text on a variety of topics, with, for example, younger pupils writing about themselves, and older pupils writing poems, introducing variation in both the size and font of their work. Suitable artwork is produced confidently, such as that of animals produced by pupils in Years 1 and 2, and patterns from other cultures by pupils in Years 3 and 4. Relevant modelling activities are undertaken, and whilst younger pupils follow instructions in adventure games, older pupils produce spreadsheets relating to planning a holiday. Pupils generally have a secure understanding of control technology, and the oldest pupils in the school develop a range of skills further in producing multi-media presentations about Red Nose Day.

70. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and they provide a good array of resources in the ICT suite. Good use is made of learning support assistants to support and help pupils. This enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve satisfactorily. However, teachers are still developing their skills in using the suite. In one lesson, the teacher grouped the pupils around a computer and provided clear and careful demonstration and explanation of the work to be tackled. In other lessons, the teachers either relied on oral instruction, without demonstration, or did not ensure that pupils could all see the screen. As a result, a number of pupils did not always find it easy to understand and carry out the routines required. Some time was lost whilst these pupils received individual attention.
71. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are generally good. They usually listen carefully to their teachers, although some pay less attention when they find the instructions hard to follow. However, they show good concentration when working with computers. They work well with their partners, taking turns readily and helping each other. They enjoy the work, behave well and, when they are sure what they need to do, are very keen to accomplish the task given to them. They handle all forms of equipment with great care.
72. The co-ordinator is currently abroad on an exchange visit, but has contributed well in helping other staff members to improve their ICT skills. He has provided advice, has had some opportunity to support his colleagues in lessons, and sees his next task as supporting them in developing their strategies for using the ICT suite. Examples of pupils' work have been gathered to illustrate the standards being achieved. Further, his good leadership has helped in the improvement of accommodation, resources and assessment since the last inspection.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

73. Teachers are becoming increasingly confident in their use of ICT in the classroom, and they make good use of it in their teaching of a number of subjects, such as mathematics, science, history and geography.

### **HUMANITIES**

Religious education was inspected individually and is reported below. It was not possible to undertake detailed reviews of geography and history, but it is clear that both subjects are in good standing in the school. Two lessons were seen in history, linked to the visit made to Caerleon by pupils in Years 3 and 4 on the second day of the inspection. Both lessons were taught very well and pupils achieved very well because the work was relevant, interesting and directly related to their first-hand experience of the previous day. One lesson was also seen in geography for pupils in Years 5 and 6, who were preparing for their field study of the Rivers Avon and Trym. This was also taught well and provided good opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility in organising their own learning. The sampling of completed work from all year groups confirmed that pupils throughout the school do well in both subjects, reaching standards that are at least in line with national expectations.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the time pupils leave the school are above the level expected.
- The pupils are encouraged continually to relate what they are learning to their own experience.
- The pupils' religious education is broader than at the time of the last inspection because of the introduction of a well-planned programme of learning based firmly on the locally agreed syllabus.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good, but more could be done to record the progress pupils make.

### Commentary

74. By the time they are seven, pupils' knowledge and understanding are at least in line with the level required by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. They are above that level by the time pupils are 11. This means that most develop a good understanding of the religious traditions of Christianity and the other main religions in this country, appreciate what it means to take a religion seriously and make an increasingly thoughtful response to the ideas and practices they are encountering. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well. Those pupils whose mother tongue is not English achieve at similar levels to their peers.
75. Although it was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection, it is clear from a range of other evidence, such as completed work from all year groups, that the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. Pupils are introduced to topics in interesting and lively ways and, in accordance with the agreed syllabus, they now encounter a wider range of religious beliefs and practices than was the case at the time of the last inspection. Most classes in the school are taught by their own class teachers, who are generally confident in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Pupils in the three classes in Years 5 and 6 are all taught by the same teacher, and benefit from a common experience based on good subject knowledge and a lively approach to learning. In a class of pupils from Years 5 and 6, for instance, a very effective lesson provided a refreshingly new look at the Nativity Story, making imaginative use of a data projector to show photographs of a recent performance in the school by drama students. All teachers are well supported by the subject co-ordinator. Work completed in books and in colourful displays around the school confirms that pupils do well and enjoy the subject. They also develop a good awareness of, and respect for, each other's views and opinions. There are limited opportunities for them to experience directly aspects of the religions they study by means of visits, but good use is made of video material and artefacts, and of other resources available from a diocesan resource centre.
76. The key to the success of the subject is the way in which pupils are encouraged in all the topics they study to see the relevance of what they are learning to their own feelings and experiences. As pupils looked again at the Nativity Story, for instance, they were encouraged to discuss in pairs what their reaction might have been as shepherds, and then to prepare their own role-plays based on the feelings they had explored. They had previously encountered some of the fascinating links between religion and art, with many opportunities to express their own ideas. Similarly, pupils in Years 3 and 4, in their study of Judaism, enjoyed learning about Shabbat and the festival of Hanukkah, and reacted thoughtfully to the question of how they might bring light into the world. This theme of light also linked well with their current science topic, as an illustration of the cross-curricular links that are established. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 looked at the Hindu festival of Diwali, enjoying the story of Rama and Sita. Their work on special people in religion also linked well to the work they do in history.
77. The subject makes a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development, particularly in terms of their spiritual, moral and cultural awareness. It also supports the development of

pupils' literacy skills through many opportunities for speaking, listening and writing. The teachers are supported by a well-planned scheme of work and by a knowledgeable and effective co-ordinator. Assessment procedures are satisfactory at present but now that an appropriate allocation of time for the subject is assured, the next priority has been identified as the need to develop a more specific system to assess the progress individual pupils are making.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

78. During the inspection, two lessons were seen in art and design, but only single lessons were seen in design and technology, physical education and music. Standards of the work being produced are clearly above the levels expected nationally, and the school is in the process of applying for national recognition by means of ArtsMark and ActiveMark. The curriculum for these subjects is clearly rich and varied. It is enhanced significantly by extra-curricular activities. Pupils are proud of what they create in, for example, the pottery club, and there are colourful examples of work created by the art club, such as the current portrayal of how the art deco movement was influenced by African art. Teaching in each of the subjects is of a generally high standard, and very good use is made of a teacher with particular skills in art and design. The pupils achieve very well, showing creativity and care in their work and reflecting the interest and enthusiasm of their teachers.
79. In art and design, pupils have produced a wide range of paintings, sketches and three-dimensional work, using a good variety of media. They look carefully at their work to see how they might improve it. Standards of artwork throughout the school are consistently high and are typified by the detailed and carefully produced observational drawings undertaken in Years 3, 4 and 5, and in the moving figures made by the oldest pupils.
80. In design and technology, younger pupils have produced effective models of playground equipment, those in Years 3 and 4 have made useful money containers, whilst the oldest pupils are currently designing and making slippers. The detail produced by these pupils, in carefully adding stitching and pattern to their products, is of a good standard.
81. In the music lesson seen in Year 3, pupils showed good composing skills, particularly in providing written notation for others to follow. The singing heard in the school shows that pupils have good control of rhythm, pitch and dynamics, as well as the ability to produce good diction.
82. In physical education, pupils showed good control and co-ordination in carrying out various dance movements to music in a lesson seen in Year 1, copying the actions of penguins and polar bears successfully. Although pupils only have swimming lessons in Years 5 and 6, almost all can swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6, with many swimming significantly further distances.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

83. The work on values that has been undertaken in the school is exemplary in the way it has involved all members of the school community and most notably the pupils themselves, in identifying what they regard as really important in the life of the school. The maturity with which pupils of all ages talk about these key ideas and then seek to employ the values in their daily practice in the school is remarkable. Values are promoted through the school's daily acts of collective worship and through the programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE – or PuSHME, as the pupils know it). This provision is very good and very well co-ordinated, and there is clear evidence throughout this report that the school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop positive and responsible attitudes. The pupils' sense of citizenship is encouraged through the excellent organisation of class and school councils, in which elected pupils run meetings and make decisions that have a real impact on their lives at school. The school council meets regularly under the care of a teacher and a learning

support assistant. Decisions made there are fed back to class councils and issues are raised at both levels. The school has developed this means of involving pupils further than most other primary schools, and all pupils are involved in real consultation. Councils include pupils from Year 2 and above, but younger pupils are also asked for their views.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2



The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*