

St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109327
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	309962
Inspection date	6 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Nick Green HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1053
6th form	446
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Lucas
Headteacher	Elisabeth Gilpin
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2004
School address	Somerset Square Bristol BS1 6RT
Telephone number	0117 3772100
Fax number	0117 3772101

Age group	11–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than average. It has been a specialist humanities school since 2004 and this is reflected strongly in many aspects of the school's curriculum and in its positive contributions to the community. The majority of students are White British; a larger proportion than average are from mixed race and minority ethnic families. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is well below average though the socio-economic background of students is varied and a significant minority come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and disabilities and the number with a formal statement of special educational needs are well below average. Students' attainment on entry to the school is generally above average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'A Christian Community Committed to Excellence' is the school's mission and in many respects it is well on the way to achieving this. The quality of the education provided in both the whole school and the sixth form is good with outstanding features. Underpinning the impressive rate at which the school is improving is outstanding leadership and management at all levels driven by the clear vision and direction of the headteacher. This is focused firmly on raising achievement by improving the curriculum and teaching, and enabling students to thrive in a safe and caring environment. The school has very rigorous systems for reviewing its work and evaluates its performance comprehensibly and accurately. This leads to clear and precise identification of priorities for development. Improvements this year in students' progress, in approaches to teaching and learning and in academic guidance show that the school has outstanding capacity for further growth and improvement. Standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 have been steadily rising over the last four years. Results were well above average in 2006 but students' progress is even better this year and standards are now very high. In the sixth form, they are above average. In relation to students' starting points when they enter the school or the sixth form, this represents good achievement at all stages. The school is not complacent, however, and has appropriately introduced well devised initiatives to help improve performance in mathematics in Year 9, for example. The imaginative and highly effective strategies developed in humanities for teaching and learning and GCSE revision are key factors in this improving picture. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and complimentary about all aspects of the school, commenting in letters to inspectors on the 'intellectual rigour within the leadership team', on the way the 'teachers strive to help all children reach their full potential' and that 'the school seems to find a way to make each child feel valued whatever their talents'. The school's strong Christian ethos and core values have a tangible beneficial impact and, coupled with excellent care, support and guidance for all students, ensure that their personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students very much enjoy school, are well behaved and adopt very healthy lifestyles. They have a strong sense of belonging to the school which makes them feel immensely safe. Many make significant contributions to the local community and the school's specialist status has had a particular impact in this respect, particularly through music, a wide range of humanities-based activities and charitable events. Teaching and learning are good across the school and outstanding in a number of subjects. Academic progress is monitored extensively and students are set challenging targets. In the best lessons, teachers plan thoroughly, identify clear learning objectives, provide articulate explanations and use questioning highly effectively. Tasks set for students are well devised and stimulating. However, these features are not consistently evident in all lessons. Assessment is used very well to identify students' current performance and to inform them how to improve. The curriculum for Years 7 to 11 is good and includes excellent enrichment activities, though the range of vocational courses offered is limited. The curriculum is outstanding in the sixth form because of the wide range of courses offered and the quality of activities which enrich it. There is a high participation rate in the wealth of musical, sport and other subject-related activities provided by the school. These make a valuable contribution to students' enjoyment and achievement and enhance their personal and spiritual development.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The strength of the sixth form is in many respects due to the outstanding way it is led and managed, evident in the drive for continuing success in all areas. Standards are above average and the students make good progress, although there is some variation between subjects. Retention rates are high. The school offers an outstanding range of curriculum choices and enrichment activities, effectively meeting the needs of AS and A2 students. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that the students' progress towards their targets in subjects is carefully monitored and intervention is timely and effective when causes for concern are identified. Teaching is good, with an increasing emphasis on developing students as independent learners. Tutors and learning mentors support students very well and there is excellent support for other aspects of personal development like attendance and study skills. As a result, students' personal development is outstanding and they make a strong contribution to the school and local community. Relationships between students and teachers are excellent. Students find staff approachable and generous with their time. Students are very well prepared for their future choices.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise students' achievement and standards by ensuring all teachers use consistently the highly effective teaching and learning strategies and stimulating content already evident in the best lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards in Year 9 and Year 11 at the end of the last academic year were well above average. The upward trend in national test results and GCSE examination of recent years continued and the number of students gaining five A*-C GCSE grades including English and mathematics rose considerably. The school attained or exceeded most of its specialist school targets in Years 9 and 11 and the sixth form. No groups of students underperformed though achievement was higher in English and science than in mathematics in Year 9. Current standards in both Year 9 and 11 have improved further since last year, particularly in mathematics in Year 9. The students' progress is at least good and is even better this year than last. Students with learning difficulties and the most gifted and talented are given well matched support and challenge to enable them to reach their potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' outstanding personal development and well-being are firmly underpinned by the school's emphasis on Christian values and are reflected in their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students of all ages enjoy school immensely and are proud to belong to the school's diverse community. As a result, attendance is good. Their awareness of a healthy lifestyle is outstanding. They engage enthusiastically in physical activities, although sixth form students would like more opportunities for sport. Students welcome the recent

changes to provide healthier food for them and most take advantage of it. They are emphatic about how safe they feel in school, and have great confidence in staff and other students to help them resolve any issues when they occur, including bullying and racism. Attitudes to learning are very positive and behaviour in classrooms and around school is good. Students make an outstanding contribution to the school community by taking advantage of the many opportunities which are available to them to take responsibility. The school council is well regarded as effectively making a difference to their lives. This effective development of personal qualities and the acquisition of good basic skills prepare students effectively for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good and a significant minority of lessons are outstanding. Teachers usually plan thoroughly and share the learning objectives of lessons fully with students. A variety of interesting tasks are used to keep students working at a lively pace. Teachers provide articulate explanations and use skilful questioning to check and develop students' knowledge and understanding. In most lessons, students are active and encouraged to work independently. Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide effective support. The highly effective features of the best lessons have yet to be employed consistently but are developing rapidly across all subjects. The use of assessment for learning is evident in most lessons; it effectively informs students how well they are doing and gives them clear guidance on how to improve their work. The school's rigorous assessment and tracking system ensures any underperformance is identified early and suitable intervention provided to help students meet the challenging targets they are set.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum in Years 7 to 11 is broad and balanced; it matches the needs and interests of students and contributes to their good progress. The popularity of the school's specialist status is reflected in the high and rising number of students opting to take geography and history GCSE in addition to the compulsory study of a full GCSE in religious education. Nine out of ten students also study a modern foreign language. The school is currently reviewing the curriculum to further reflect its values and is proposing to develop a wider choice of vocational courses. The school provides students with a wide variety of enrichment activities. Many students are involved in music through, for example, a gospel choir and classical orchestra. There are numerous sports and subject clubs. The school's specialist status in humanities has had a significant impact in the way it has developed and shared good practice in planning and resourcing schemes of work and lessons. Close links have been established with a range of partner schools and community groups. Recent collaboration between history students and the city records office in staging a 'Bristol in the Blitz' event for local residents developed students' understanding of history and forged strong links between the young and old. As one parent wrote, 'We feel the school has a good sense of the "pulse" of the community.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

All staff show high levels of commitment to students' care, guidance and support. Students' academic progress is monitored well and their targets are regularly reviewed and discussed with them. The way in which students are prepared for GCSE examinations is outstanding. The excellent revision materials, one-to-one mentoring, revision conferences and a student-friendly website, all developed by humanities, are contributing to raising standards. In addition, alternative learning pathways are provided for disaffected students or those who prefer more workrelated learning, involving college placements and work experience. The learning mentor and a range of external professionals provide very high quality support for vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Students returning from long-term illness and those experiencing significant personal difficulties are offered reduced timetables and effective arrangements are put in place to keep them engaged. The school tailors learning support programmes to the needs of individual students very well; as one parent wrote, 'I feel in this school every child matters.' The pastoral system of vertical groups for Years 8 to 11 provides a supportive family environment and all siblings are placed in the same group. Daily tutor worship enables students to feel valued. Child protection requirements and procedures are in place, and the safeguarding of students is robust.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

At a time of expanding student numbers, a changing intake including more students from disadvantaged backgrounds and considerable changes in both personnel and roles in the senior leadership team, the quality of leadership and management has remained very high. While in post less than two years, the headteacher has initiated and created a new and strong vision for the school and effectively restructured the senior leadership team to meet the changed needs of the school. In conjunction with these proficient colleagues, she has managed changes highly effectively and created a common sense of purpose among all staff, particularly the heads of faculties, which is moving the school swiftly towards excellence. This is reflected in the meticulous and successful way the key issues raised in the last inspection report have been addressed. The recent developments in teaching and learning strategies and academic guidance are already having a significant beneficial impact this year, as indicated by the students' improved progress. The governors set the school clear direction and provide highly effective challenge and support. Self-evaluation at all levels, including that by governors, is outstanding. Systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's performance are undertaken and used highly effectively to meet the challenging targets the school sets itself. Thorough, regular observation of lessons by leaders and managers provides an accurate evaluation of all teachers' performance. The analysis and use of assessment data to identify those students who are underachieving and identify action to improve their performance are outstanding. The senior leaders' promotion of equality of opportunity and combating discrimination are central to the school's ethos and enable all students to succeed. The school's resources are deployed well. Accommodation and facilities, particularly for humanities, have improved since the last

inspection and the poor quality of some accommodation is managed well to ensure that it does not adversely restrict students' progress.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 June 2007 Dear Students Inspection of St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School, Bristol, BS1 6RT Thank you for the help you provided to me and my colleague when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting those of you we had discussions with and we learned a great deal from your comments. The quality of the education provided in both the whole school and the sixth form is good with outstanding features and we think the school is moving rapidly towards being excellent. The standard of students' work in Year 9 and 11 has been well above average for several years and above average in the sixth form. Students' progress and achievement have been consistently good. Your current progress indicates that you are poised to achieve even better results this year. There is still room for some students to raise their performance in mathematics and the school is introducing well devised initiatives to help them do this. The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes outstanding. Your teachers plan well and use effective strategies to help you learn. The school's strong Christian ethos and its specialist humanities status have a significant beneficial impact on your personal development and well-being, which are outstanding. You clearly very much enjoy school, have a sense of belonging and feel especially safe. In your roles as representatives on the school council and through the contributions you make to the community, your personal qualities are developed very well. The quality of the care, guidance and support you receive is outstanding. Your teachers are highly committed to your welfare and ensuring every student is enabled to succeed. The curriculum you receive in Years 7 to 11 is good and meets your needs and interests well. In the sixth form, there is an outstanding range of curriculum choices and enrichment activities. The headteacher and senior teachers' clear vision, strong direction and ability to manage change and bring about improvement underpin the school's success. The leadership and management of the whole school and the sixth form are outstanding. To raise achievement and standards further, we have suggested that the highly effective teaching and learning strategies and stimulating content evident in the best lessons should be used more consistently by all teachers. You can also help by striving to do your very best in this year's tests and examinations. Best wishes with your studies. Nick Green Her Majesty's Inspector