

INSPECTION REPORT

SALCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Salcombe

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113405

Headteacher: Sue Stanton

Reporting inspector: Geoff Burgess
OIN: 23708

Dates of inspection: 26th to 29th June 2000

Inspection number: 182733

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Onslow Road
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Devon

Postcode: TQ8 8AG

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Elizabeth Rowse

Date of previous inspection: February 1995

Information about the inspection team

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Geoff Burgess	Registered inspector	Mathematics	Results & achievements
		Information Technology	Teaching & learning
		Religious Education	Attendance
		Physical Education	Leadership & management
		Music: SEN	School improvement
Glynis Tyrrell	Lay inspector		Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development
			Personal welfare & care
			Partnership with parents
Anne Pratt	Team inspector	Science: Under fives	Learning opportunities
		Art	Attitudes, values & personal development
		Design Technology	
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		English	Assessment & academic monitoring
		Geography; History	Strategic use of resources
			Adequacy of resources

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Salcombe Primary School serves a wide spectrum of families of mainly British heritage, mostly living in the small coastal town. A good deal of employment in the area is seasonal being based on tourism and about a tenth of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils on roll is currently 104 but the number starting each year can be very variable. More than a quarter of pupils are on the special needs register of whom seven, an unusually high number, have statements of special need. Attainment on entry is usually similar to that found in most schools but with the small numbers involved, any one year can be better or worse.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, very well led and managed, which has improved greatly over the past few years. Sound teaching and very good provision for pupils' personal development is helping them to steadily achieve more and develop as responsible and positive citizens. With its varied but generally average intake and moderate levels of funding, it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good and sometimes very good teaching in Key Stage 2 is helping pupils to make good progress and steadily achieve higher standards
- Pupils' moral and social development have a very high priority. They behave very well, take more responsibility as they get older and relate very well to each other
- Staff take good care to ensure that their pupils are safe and happy and able to do their best by carefully monitoring their progress and development.
- Pupils with special needs, some very special, are well catered for & they make good progress
- It works well with parents and the community in the best interests of the children
- The head and staff have worked extremely hard and very well to bring the school into the twenty-first century with its improved buildings, improving standards and growing reputation.

What could be improved

- Pupils do not achieve as well in Key Stage 1 as they do in Key Stage 2 with fewer younger pupils than expected reaching above average levels in national testing.
- Younger boys and girls have few opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning
- New curriculum planning arrangements are not underpinned by clear guidelines and structures to ensure that all subjects involved are given sufficient time to cover all that is necessary

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Very little changed in the years following the last report in February 1995 until the appointment of the present head. Since then, with the considerable help of the staff, she has put in place measures which have seen substantial and very effective development in all the many areas listed for improvement, as well as in several others not identified at the time. The school did not undertake national testing in 1994 but standards were said to be average. In the last three years school leavers have achieved above average results in English each year and average and above in mathematics and science apart from a 'blip' to below average in mathematics last year. While standards this year will not be as good, the pupils concerned have made good progress from a low base over the last three years. Overall improvement is good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	B	A	B	B	well above average A
mathematics	C	A	D	D	above average B
science	B	C	C	C	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The overall trend in results has been broadly in line with the national picture but English results have been consistently above the rising national average and mathematics results have gone from well above to slightly below average each year. While the trend of results for seven-year-olds in writing and mathematics has been above average, reading test results have gone from well above to below average in the last three years. The present year six had the worst reading, writing and mathematics results for the school in Key Stage 1 since testing began but with good teaching and hard work, results this year should be only a little below the national average. Science standards are again above the national average. The standards of seven-year-olds reading, writing and mathematics are broadly similar to most schools but with fewer achieving higher grades than usual. Standards in other subjects are generally appropriate for the ages of the pupils concerned with art and religious education strengths. Improvements in provision for information technology have resulted in pupils achieving expected standards in Key Stage 1 but it will take a little time for this to feed through to appropriate standards in the older classes. Pupils who need extra help with their learning, several with very special needs, are making good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Boys and girls enjoy coming to school and joining in the many activities it has to offer. They usually work hard, do their best and take a pride in their achievements. Most are very willing to share their thoughts, ideas and experiences in class discussions and follow up school work at home.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	With a few exceptions, behaviour is very good and this makes a strong contribution to learning. Pupils understand school and class rules and the impact of what they do and teachers rarely have to take up time sorting things out. Playtimes and lunchtimes are calm, sociable occasions with little need for adults to intervene.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good and this is a key factor in the happy, relaxed feel of the school. Most pupils act in mature and sensible ways and older pupils are very happy to take on responsibilities when they are offered but younger pupils have fewer opportunities.
Attendance	Attendance is on the low side but it is affected by the need for parents who work in the tourist trade to take their holidays in term time. Other than this, school is a very positive experience and lateness and absence are unusual.

Pupils make a substantial contribution to the life of the school by their very good behaviour, cheerful dispositions and interest in their work. Everyone in the school community shares a common pride in what they have achieved together and pupils are taking increasing responsibility for decisions that affect them and their younger schoolmates as they get older.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

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

Almost all teaching is at least satisfactory with nearly a half better in a range of subjects, mostly in Key Stage 2. Teaching in the foundation class is satisfactory and the two remaining four-year-olds have a rich environment and appropriate activities provided. In the rest of Key Stage 1, teaching is generally satisfactory but time is not always used to the best advantage and older, higher attainers are not being stretched. Over two thirds of teaching in Key Stage 2 is at least good with more than a fifth very good. Better teaching is well planned and prepared with interesting and challenging activities. Lessons are full of purpose and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. This was particularly evident in very good science and religious education lessons. Classroom assistants helping pupils who find learning or conforming difficult make a good contribution to their progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a suitably balanced range of subjects with literacy and numeracy well represented, much enhanced by a very good range of activities in addition to lessons. New planning arrangements give teachers the scope to work in depth on subjects such as history and geography but the school is aware that care needs to be taken to ensure that all subjects are given equal emphasis. With a well-established personal, social and health programme, the quality and range of learning opportunities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Great strides have been made in this area since the new coordinator took over. She has set up comprehensive and very effective systems for identifying, evaluating and supporting pupils who find learning or conforming difficult with well organised supporting paperwork. All staff and parents are closely involved and support staff make an important contribution in helping those who need it. Overall provision is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Staff make very good provision for pupils' personal development notably in its arrangements for the development of their social skills and attitudes and moral awareness. Curricular provision for pupils to appreciate their own cultural heritage, learn about and value cultural diversity and reflect on their feelings and life, are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils and ensures that they are safe, happy and not at risk. Teachers and other staff know the children very well and work closely with parents to ensure that any concerns are quickly sorted out. Good assessment procedures help teachers to monitor progress and suitable personal and academic records are kept to keep a track of significant trends or events.

Parents are very appreciative of the work of the school and especially the improvements made in the past three years. They feel comfortable in their formal and informal dealings with staff and make a good contribution to their children's learning. The general information provided by the school for parents is very good but elements of written reports can be confusing.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	With the considerable help of largely the same staff team, the headteacher has transformed the school physically and professionally from the poorly cared for and run institution it had become. Parents no longer take their children to other schools and its reputation is growing in the town and outside. All staff have become effective and influential leaders in their own right and management procedures are clear and effective. Leadership and management are very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Most governors are fairly new to the job and three further replacement governors will be joining the governing body in September. However, they are all very supportive, aware of what needs to be done and keen for the school to succeed. Structures and procedures are being established and business is conducted efficiently but, inevitably, it will take the 'new' governing body a little while to become fully effective.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring is another area that has been dramatically improved recently. Curriculum leaders have time to observe classroom practice and are responsible for auditing planning in their subjects. Assessment procedures allow each child's progress in the basics to be tracked every half-term and the information is being used increasingly to evaluate teaching and the curriculum. Statutory and other tests are being used to check on the schools perceptions and by working with other schools, staff can ensure that their assessments are valid. The school has good arrangements for evaluating its performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school has little room for manoeuvre with its budget but improvements in development planning mean that where it has choice, funds are spent on what staff and governors agree is important. Substantial very effective improvements have been made to the accommodation and the grounds at minimal cost. These have made much better use of the available space, improved conditions and increased the scope for teachers to work in a variety of ways. Good use is made of all staff & effective procedures have been introduced to help them look at their work and become even more effective. A generally good supply of teaching resources is effectively stored and well used.

The head has made an outstanding contribution to making the school the success it is today. She is well aware of what still needs to be done and with the continued hard work of the staff and the ever-increasing effectiveness of the governing body, there is every reason to believe it will continue to thrive.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy going to school • Teaching is good and their children are expected to work hard and do their best • The school is helping pupils to grow up sensibly and behaviour is good • The staff are very approachable and it is easy to resolve any concerns • The school is well led and managed • There are plenty of things for children to do in addition to lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistencies in what their children are given to do at home

Inspectors are happy to agree with parents positive views and feel that, though the way homework is organised is much better, there are still inconsistencies.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Attainment in English, mathematics and science for eleven-year-olds was judged to be 'average' at the last inspection in 1995. Since then the overall trend of results in national testing has been broadly in line with most schools but with very different profiles in each subject. English results have been consistently above average matching the national improvement. In mathematics, results have alternated between well above and below average which is where they were in 1999. Science results fell from well above to just above most schools before improving in line with a general improvement last year. The attainments of seven-year-olds in mathematics and writing also improved so that last year they were above and well above average respectively. However, reading standards went down over the same period and were below average in 1999. The picture was similar in both key stages when comparisons were made with like schools except that reading in Key Stage 1 came out as well below average. With small year groups, significant trends within the results could not be established but girls have done much better than boys in Key Stage 1 while inexplicably, the reverse was the case in Key Stage 2. However, inspectors could not identify any unusual differences between the progress of girls and boys during the inspection.

2. Baseline assessment indicates that the attainment profile of four-year-olds when they start school is similar to that found in most schools but with annual variations due to the impact of individuals on the small year groups. Boys and girls make sound progress and by the time they are five many are already working on the National Curriculum. They continue making generally sound progress in year one with older pupils within the age group benefiting from working with year two in literacy and numeracy. Speaking and listening skills are good.

3. Most pupils in year two are currently making satisfactory progress and achieving standards which should be close to the national average in this year's statutory tests in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in each subject, fewer seven-year-olds than might be expected are achieving higher than average standards. Good progress is being made in the core subjects through Key Stage 2 so that pupils of all abilities are achieving well in each year group. The present year six contains several pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties. As a group, they achieved the worst school Key Stage 1 results in reading, writing and mathematics since national testing began. It is to the great credit of the teachers involved that current standards in English and mathematics are much improved and should not be far below average this year. Science is a strength throughout the school and standards are above average.

4. Pupils' achievements in design technology, geography, history, physical education and music are generally appropriate for the ages of the pupils concerned. The quality of its work in art and religious education are a feature of the school, especially in the older classes, and standards are better than in most schools. With improved provision, standards in information technology are rising but are still below what is expected in Key Stage 2. The progress of pupils who find learning difficult is good overall. Good work by learning support assistants ensures that pupils with general learning difficulties make good progress towards their learning targets. Pupils with very specific needs are well supported and their achievements are impressive.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. Pupils' attitudes to learning, values and personal development are good and parents are very pleased with the way in which the school promotes and values all these aspects of their children's development. Boys and girls enjoy coming to school and work hard and do their best in lessons. Occasionally, however, when tasks fail to motivate pupils or when they are kept waiting unnecessarily for resources or teacher instruction, they lose interest and concentration.

6. Children in the reception class are secure and happy and have excellent relationships with the teacher and the other children. Behaviour in and around the school is very good. Playtimes and lunchtimes are calm, happy occasions and no incidence of oppressive behaviour was observed. Pupils are polite and courteous, opening doors for adults and greeting people cheerily. They know school and classroom rules well and take care to abide by them. Pupils' personal development is good. They respect one another's ideas and beliefs, listening carefully to ideas and suggestions from others. All relationships are very good. Adults' and children's great concern and care for one another was well demonstrated when a pupil was in need of comfort and help in a games lesson and a classmate gently and sensitively gave support and comfort.

7. Older boys and girls especially, are very good at taking responsibility for tasks around the school and have extensive lists of things to do to help. Younger pupils have some responsibility for class jobs. A playtime shop, successfully run twice a week by a child who finds learning difficult, gives him and others involved a great sense of responsibility and self esteem. However, while older pupils are well able to organise themselves and their work, pupils in Key Stage 1 are often too dependent on the teacher and do not take responsibility for aspects of classroom life such as setting up tasks and activities and selecting resources. Pupils throughout the school are very proud of their efforts to raise money for a wide range of charities and organisations and pupils are keen to show off the many certificates that the school has received for their work in this area. Overall this aspect is good. Higher than average absence rates stem mainly from the need for several families who work in the tourist industry to take their holidays outside school holidays. Other than this, attendance and punctuality are good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

8. Nearly all teaching throughout the school is at least satisfactory with 37 per cent good and 11 per cent very good. This represents satisfactory teaching overall and is an improvement since the last report when many aspects of teaching including lack of purpose, group organisation and inappropriate teaching methods were criticised. An important factor in this is the contribution made by pupils to their own learning in most lessons through their good behaviour, effort and enthusiasm for what they are learning.

9. Although the quality of teaching is generally associated with the skill of the teacher involved, the good implementation of the literacy strategy has had a beneficial effect on the teaching of literacy skills throughout the school. Other good teaching is found where standards are highest. Two of the three science lessons observed were very good, as was one of the religious education lessons, and both art lessons observed were good.

10. A third of teaching in the reception class is good with the rest satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned and prepared and a good range of activities is provided to take account of the needs of the younger children in the mixed age class. However, with little classroom support, those boys and girls not working with the teacher do not get as much out of their activities as they would if an adult were available to prompt and encourage them to talk about their work. The teacher has lots of enthusiasm and energy and has created a rich classroom environment but sometimes small details of organisation and preparation are missed, which stops otherwise good lessons from being as effective as possible.

11. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall with a little good teaching and one unsatisfactory lesson. Better teaching was exemplified by a good art lesson where pupils were asked to look closely at natural materials collected on a trip. All resources and equipment were well prepared and the teacher used good knowledge of art to set a challenging task and help pupils to improve their work as they went along by observing in ever-greater detail and by using various grades of pencil for shading. However, in a less successful mathematics lesson, lack of preparation and a failure to explain clearly enough what was required led to several pupils having to wait for equipment or the help of the teacher before they could get on. The pace of learning suffered enough for pupils to take much longer to complete the task than was planned.

12. Almost a half of teaching is good in Key Stage 2 with nearly another quarter, involving science and religious education lessons, very good. A major feature of work in these subjects is the pace and rigour which comes from well-matched work, well prepared and organised activities and resources and pupils who know what is expected and are confident of their own abilities. This was clear in a very good religious education lesson which required year three and four pupils to say what an observer would have written about various miracles or parables. Very positive and confident pupils were able to discuss with some maturity the detail and meaning of the stories. The teacher's very clear and well-constructed explanation ensured that every child understood the task and had enough information to get on unaided, so that she could question and prompt each group in turn.

13. Older Key Stage 2 pupils looking at the way muscles, bones and ligaments work together, explored how and why muscles work in pairs. With several potentially difficult pupils in the class, the teacher made sure that everything was well prepared and managed and that she kept up a brisk, purposeful pace during the lesson. The objectives of the lesson and the tasks involved were very clearly explained and any signs of inappropriate behaviour quickly dealt with. By using a good mixture of explanation, question and answer, a short original task using elastic bands to mimic muscles and a drawn record, she kept everyone on task and learning.

14. Learning support assistants make a good contribution in the area of special needs. They have good working relationships with teachers and the pupils in their charge and constitute an important teaching resource. The children involved work hard for their helpers and enjoy the chance to ask questions they would not ask in a class situation. A very good example of this involved an older pupil developing his ability to work with real money to help him run the shop he is responsible for at breaktimes.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

15. The taught curriculum and the whole area of curriculum planning have improved hugely since the last inspection much to the credit of the staff responsible. Under fives work is suitably planned in the nationally agreed areas of learning for young children. It is generally relevant to their needs and interests with an appropriate emphasis on practical activities. In the rest of the school, the National Curriculum and religious education are suitably covered with literacy, numeracy and science well represented. Over the past two years the school has worked hard to improve the quality and range of the curriculum and to develop its curricular planning. All subjects now have good policies and schemes of work in place, based on national guidelines. The school has a two-year rolling programme of meaningful and relevant topics. Foundation subjects are taught in various blocks of time and while this ensures that pupils can concentrate on one subject over a reasonable period, the approach still needs some refining and reviewing to ensure consistent progress and coverage in all subjects, throughout both key stages.

16. Social and personal development is very well promoted through the curriculum and effectively taught through a very comprehensive programme of personal, social and moral education. The school has a suitably planned programme of sex education and drugs awareness. Planned times are provided for pupils to sit quietly with their teacher and discuss issues and concerns which affect them and their lives. Religious education and acts of worship make a good contribution to this area of their learning. However, there is scope to give younger pupils more opportunity to take more responsibility for their own learning through making choices and decisions for themselves. Boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum which is very well organised to meet the needs of those children who find learning difficult. Individual plans for their learning, with clear achievable targets, are carefully drawn up and regularly reviewed.

17. The school provides an extremely wide range of extra-curricular opportunities for Key Stage 2 pupils. They play football and netball in regular matches against other schools and have taken part in a local swimming gala. The school has also invited sporting experts to visit to pass on their knowledge and skills. Older pupils are offered cycling proficiency training and take sailing courses

through a local cruising club. They are also given the opportunity to take part in residential visits and have been involved in environmental activities in connection with local bird life and care of the coastline. Instrumental tuition is offered on a wide range of musical instruments and pupils have taken part in local music and drama festivals. Numerous other after-school clubs include chess, ceramics, other arts and crafts, cookery, Tai Kwando and computing.

18. It was noted at the time of the last inspection that links with the community were very limited and the school has worked extremely hard recently to improve this situation. They are now very good. Beneficial links have been established with the local parish church and members of other neighbourhood churches take regular assemblies at the school. Recent refurbishment was carried out as part of a community initiative and the school now feels it is a focal point within a closely-knit community. Links have been forged with local art groups through regular exhibitions and pupils have benefited from connections with a local ornithologist and author. The school works closely with outside agencies and has taken part in many local and national competitions and has received several awards. A weather station provides data to the national Weather Data Bank and pupils have raised money for many local and national charities. The school has now forged good links with other institutions such as pre-school groups and local secondary schools and is part of the local Academic Council. Recognising that it is too small to benefit from initiatives such as collecting tokens for school equipment organised by supermarket chains, pupils have been encouraged to bring tokens into school so that they can be passed on to other local schools. Links with the local and wider community are now judged to be very good and it is hoped that recent connection to the Internet will result in more global links to enrich pupils' learning even further.

19. Many of the above initiatives contribute to the very good provision that the school makes for pupils' personal development. Moral and social awareness are very successfully promoted through a range of planned opportunities and through the generally positive atmosphere at the school. Pupils are made very aware of the difference between right and wrong. The school behaviour policy ensures that they clearly know what is expected of them and are aware of school rules. Moral and social issues are discussed during personal, social and health education lessons as part of a whole-school programme. Even the youngest pupils consider the question of use and misuse of medicines as a preparation for education about drugs as they grow older. Pupils learn to take responsibility through membership of the School Council and enjoy undertaking jobs when asked. The wide range of after school clubs and contact with outside organisations gives pupils very good opportunities for social interaction and an awareness of other people's circumstances and feelings. The encouragement to collect supermarket tokens for other schools, mentioned earlier, conveys a positive attitude towards others.

20. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development and pupils benefit from good opportunities to study and appreciate their own and other cultures. Pupils' spiritual awareness is being developed through opportunities for reflection during lessons, in assemblies and through an appreciation of the natural world. Visits from representatives of different local churches provide examples of various different ways of expressing values and beliefs. Good provision for pupils' cultural development is made through art, music and drama and they are introduced to an appreciation of other faiths and cultures through religious education lessons and appropriate references across the curriculum. The school makes good use of the local area to help pupils understand their own heritage.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

21. Pastoral support for pupils is good. Staff know pupils well and the school takes care to provide a safe, secure and happy atmosphere for learning. Most parents feel that their children are happy at school. Specific weekly staff meetings are held to discuss any particular concerns class teachers may have about personal issues which may be affecting individual pupils, and personal, social and health lessons are also used to explore related topics. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for throughout the school.

22. The school takes a responsible attitude to matters of health, safety and security and detailed written policies are backed up by efficient practise. Regular fire drills are carried out and emergency equipment is regularly checked and maintained. Accident books are completed efficiently and a recent audit identified particular hazards in relation to the school buildings and site. The headteacher is the designated person with special responsibility for child protection issues. She has received training in this area and keeps other members of staff informed of appropriate procedures during the staff meetings mentioned earlier.

23. Attendance registers are completed regularly and efficiently with consistent and recognisable codes. A system of telephone calls to pupils' homes is used on the first day of absence if the absence has not been explained. The school does its best to promote the importance of regular attendance but has been unable to combat the problem of high numbers of parents taking pupils on family holidays during term time due to the seasonal nature of much of the local employment.

24. Procedures to promote good behaviour are working effectively. Pupils are very aware of what are considered to be acceptable standards of behaviour and those pupils with particular behavioural problems are well supported by additional members of staff in the classroom. The great majority of parents feel that the school promotes positive attitudes and values and is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

25. The school has worked hard over the last two years to put together good provision for the assessment of pupils' work and the monitoring of their progress. On a day-to-day level, all work is marked and the marking conventions used are generally consistent throughout the school. Teachers' comments correct and encourage but are more effective in Key Stage 2 where they often require a response designed to take the pupil's work forward. As a result of the marking and observation of work, targets are set for individual pupils and these are regularly reviewed and updated. This ensures that teachers know how pupils' attainments stand and that they are encouraged continually to develop their skills and knowledge. Reading records kept for each pupil contain their reviews of the books they have read. Even the youngest pupils make simple comments about their books.

26. Teachers make regular assessments, based on National Curriculum levels, of a piece of each pupil's work in the core subjects. The local academic council portfolio of pupils' work, already assessed to National Curriculum Levels is used by teachers to cross-reference their own assessments. These are recorded on separate sheets for boys and girls of each year group. In addition, every pupil's reading age is checked, using a standardised test twice yearly and recorded in the same way. This not only allows for a running record of individual pupils' attainments but also tracks the progress of whole classes or year groups in these important subjects. These records, along with national testing results and the teachers' own observations have already been invaluable in detecting subjects and areas in which the school needs to channel extra resources to ensure pupils' progress and improve standards.

27. As yet, teachers do not make formal assessments of work in the foundation subjects, but this is an issue towards which they are currently working. Each teacher monitors pupils' social development and maturity and keeps informal records, information from which forms an important part of the annual report to parents. Each term, pupils choose samples of work as being representative of their best. They record their own assessment of these pieces which are then filed together to form the basis of a record of achievement. Pupils with special educational needs are identified using the school's assessment information and individual education plans are developed for each pupil. Good assessment procedures for pupils with special needs are used effectively in monitoring and revising the set targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

28. Parents are very supportive of the school. Of those who attended the parents' meeting or completed questionnaires the vast majority are pleased with the standards of teaching. They feel that the school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best. A small minority feels that the school could do more to work closely with parents although the vast majority are comfortable to approach the school with questions or problems. A significant minority are unhappy with levels and quality of homework although opinions vary as to whether the amount is too little or too much.

29. Levels of written information for parents are good. They receive a calendar of events at the beginning of each term and weekly newsletters. Other information is posted on noticeboards and an appropriate home/school agreement is in place. Almost all parents feel that they are well informed about how their children are getting on at school. Annual reports are unusual in that they take the form of a booklet which follows each pupil through the school in a praiseworthy attempt to keep parents informed of progress from year to year. They contain detailed curriculum information and useful sections on personal and social development with the opportunity for both parents and pupils to add their comments. However, there is some lack of clarity as to what the curriculum information means. The additional comments from class teachers are sometimes brief and many of the targets set apply to personal rather than academic development. Parents have good opportunities to meet with staff to discuss their children's progress.

30. Some parents help in the classroom and on trips and parent governors provide a useful contact point at regular workshops. An active parent teachers and friends association helps to organise fundraising and social events, working hard alongside the local church to organise a successful and mutually beneficial summer fete. They have raised considerable amounts of money for the school and helped with the community funded redecoration and remodelling work

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

31. The leadership and management of the school are very good. When the present head took over, the school it was at a low point in its history brought about by a lack of leadership and purpose and inadequate management. It had a poor reputation locally and further abroad and Salcombe children were going to other schools out of the town. This was reflected in the state of the buildings which, because the metal cladding was in need of painting, became known locally as the 'rust-bucket'. All this has changed thanks mainly to the hard work and determination of the head who has put in place policies and procedures that have built professional expertise, self-confidence and the reputation of the school. Through her efforts the physical and professional environment has been greatly enhanced and a positive ethos focussing on high standards and improvement has been built up.

32. An important factor in this has been the way the leadership roles of other members of staff have been built up in order that they can make their own contribution to the development of the school. This was an issue at the last inspection and is now a strength. Curriculum and other leaders are now powerful influences for good in their areas of responsibility which is beginning to have a noticeable effect on standards in these areas. A good example of this is in special needs where, from virtually nothing, the coordinator has built up systems, procedures and ways of working which ensure that every child in need of help is identified and supported.

33. The governing body has not traditionally been involved in taking an active strategic role in decision making or in monitoring the school's work. Governors were too reliant on the previous head for information and so not sufficiently aware of the appropriateness of decisions made. This was noted in the last inspection report. With several new members and a new chair, the governing body is in a transitional state. However, it is already clear that, individually and as a group, they have the best interests of the school at heart and are prepared and have the capacity to fulfil the role the school requires of them. Appropriate structures and procedures are in place and business is being conducted efficiently and well.

34. Planning for improvement was an issue in 1995 and at the time the present head took over was at best, ineffective. With the very full agenda she inherited, the impact of actions already taken is obvious. As it becomes more manageable and staff and governors more used to the process, the school development plan has itself developed into a practical and useful management tool. Current priorities are appropriate and focussed on standards and provision and ways of building on the process are constantly being looked at.

35. The school exists on a very tight budget that has little margin for creativity. However, the Headteacher has used imagination and initiative in managing it to good effect. Teaching staff and Governors are all involved in the creation of the development plan in which the areas for development are appropriately costed and sources of funding are identified.

36. Good use of information technology is made by the school administrator in raising orders, paying accounts and keeping suitable checks on the day-to-day transactions. She regularly interrogates the computer data to provide informative reports for the Headteacher and Governors to carry out their monitoring roles. The Governors have responded to the most recent school audit by adopting an effective new policy for financial procedures. The auditor's other recommendations have also been satisfactorily carried out. Most goods and services come from the local authority's in-house suppliers and, therefore, represent the best value they can secure, and the school also exercise effective policies to ensure best value.

37. Recently, the priority for disposable funds has been the refurbishment and decoration of parts of the school. As no help was forthcoming from the local authority, the school had to seek alternative funding and successfully called on parents to raise money and provide practical help with this work. This resulted in a great deal of work being done, representing extremely good value. The Headteacher and governors are currently developing appropriate procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of spending decisions.

38. Current staffing levels mean that the headteacher has to teach a class for three days each week. This is not an ideal situation, bearing in mind the rapidly developing demands on each of her roles. However, she carries them out with distinction and provides a model of good teaching. Teachers take on the role of senior teacher on a rota basis. The school has sufficient teachers to cope with the numbers and ages of pupils but the small teaching staff dictates that each member must lead several subjects. In practice this means that at any given time, each coordinator is developing one priority subject and leaving the others fallow. Despite this, they work well together and succeed in taking the school forward. Appraisal procedures are effective in identifying individual and school development needs and as performance management begins to take effect, teachers will be in a position to respond to their own targets for development. Learning support assistants work effectively with pupils with special needs. They relate well with their charges and exhibit skill and initiative in their role, which is to teach, not just to oversee. Financial limitations on the school prohibit the use of support assistants in the wider field on a regular basis.

39. The three-level accommodation, previously small, cramped and unsatisfactory, has been transformed beyond recognition. Staff, parents and governors have combined to refurbish and re-decorate most of it, creating new, brighter, more spacious classroom areas, much more appropriately suited to the demands of the curriculum. The hall is a satisfactory space for use for physical education and other class activities, assemblies and dining. Deficiencies in the fabric of the buildings – such as gradually rotting window frames – will have to be addressed, but well-maintained decoration and appropriate use of display areas makes the building attractive and welcoming. Outside the school, imagination and care has been used to make hard and grassed areas into attractive play and learning environments. Surface markings, picnic tables, slide and play-houses enliven the playground, and the grass area has a combination of mown space and wild meadow with interesting paths and corners for pupils to explore. This, with created habitats such as a pond, and bird boxes, provides natural habitat for small wildlife. The whole is neatly kept and provides pleasant surroundings for the school. During the inspection, gentle breezes drifted across the site, but its position suggests that, in inclement weather, it can be violently exposed. Ramps and a lift have been added to the building, providing wheelchair access to all levels.

40. The school's learning resources, including those for under fives and for pupils with special educational needs, are generally satisfactory. Resources for English and mathematics are good following the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies, as are resources for art. Loans of objects and topic book collections enhance the school's resources for subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Physical education and music have an adequate range of resources, but some are in need of maintenance or replacement when funds permit. A satisfactory numbers of fiction books are kept in each of the classrooms and the small non-fiction and junior fiction library is stocked with an appropriate range of, on the whole, well-maintained books. Each classroom has at least two computers.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41. To raise academic standards to match the high personal standards of its pupils and reap the benefit of the many improvements made in the past three years, the governors, headteacher and staff of Salcombe School should:

- 1) Bring the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 up to the good levels observed in the older classes and so improve pupils' achievements by:
 - asking more of, and providing work which stretches, all younger pupils but especially older and more able pupils in the two Key Stage 1 mixed age classes (Paragraphs 3, 52, 57 & 60)
 - making the most of every minute, cutting down on waiting time and setting tighter targets for getting things done (Paragraphs 5, 10, 11, 55, 75 & 82)
- 2) Give five, six and seven-year-olds more opportunity to make choices, manage their own work and contribute to the running of their classroom (Paragraphs 7, 16 & 43)
- 3) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the new planning arrangements where some subjects are taught in blocks of time. Ensure that the improved cohesion and continuity is matched by specific arrangements that guarantee that the quality and the quantity of time devoted to each subject is enough to cover all that needs to be done. (Paragraphs 15 & 82)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Lack of adult support in the younger classes inhibits learning (Paragraphs 10, 42 & 60)
- Some aspects of written reports for parents are confusing (Paragraph 29)
- Children have few opportunities to use language skills in play the youngest class and mathematics in other subjects in the rest of the school (Paragraph 44, 51 & 62)
- Standards achieved by older pupils in information technology do not match what they achieve in other subjects (Paragraph 4, 7 & 78)
- The monitoring and development of standards in subjects outside English, mathematics and science is not supported by a formal but manageable assessment regime (Paragraph 27)
- Absence rates are high (Paragraph 7 & 23)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	11	37	44	4		

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		104
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		29

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	7	7	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	1	5	5
	Girls	6	7	6
	Total	7	12	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	50 (84)	86 (77)	79 (77)
	National	82 (81)	83 (82)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	7	6	7
	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (84)	86 (84)	93 (93)
	National	82 (79)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	3	7	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	2	3
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	8	8	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (72)	80 (89)	100 (89)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	2	2
	Girls	6	5	6
	Total	8	7	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (72)	70 (81)	80 (72)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	102
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6**

Number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR– Y6

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	196693
Total expenditure	202627
Expenditure per pupil	1912
Balance brought forward from previous year	4682
Balance carried forward to next year	-1252

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	104
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	47	6		
My child is making good progress in school.	35	52	12		
Behaviour in the school is good.	12	76	12		
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	6	71	24		
The teaching is good.	41	59			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	71	6		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	47			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	53			
The school works closely with parents.	24	55	12		
The school is well led and managed.	35	59	6		
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	62			
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	41	6		

Other issues raised by parents

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. Four-year-olds are admitted to school twice a year in September and January. At the time of the inspection only two children were still four in a class of 23 reception and year one children. Four-year-olds enter a very caring, bright, attractive environment well supported by a conscientious, hard working teacher who has established excellent relationships with the children. However, she has very little extra help in the classroom and it is sometimes difficult for her to meet all the differing social, emotional and learning needs of the group, particularly those of the youngest children. The school has very good links with the playgroups and other pre school providers in the area. A well-established induction programme ensures that positive relationships are quickly and effectively forged with children, parents and carers through regular meetings and other informal contacts. Attainment at entry is variable but overall judged to be similar to that in most schools. Children make steady progress in the reception class and enter Key Stage 1 achieving most of the targets set nationally for five-year-olds.

Social and Personal Development

43. The four-year-olds are happy and settled. They are friendly and well behaved. Most generally listen and concentrate well, but sometimes, when they have to sit too long in lessons mainly aimed at the older children, they become restless and disengaged. Boys and girls respond well to encouragement to dress and undress themselves for physical education lessons and take care of their belongings. However they could be given more opportunity to make choices and decisions about their work and to show initiative.

Language and Literacy

44. Children make steady progress in their reception year and their overall attainment in language and literacy is in line with that expected of pupils on entry to Key Stage 1. Most children speak clearly and confidently and are given a good range of suitable opportunities to practise and develop these skills. The classroom is well set up to promote the language and literacy skills with comfortable attractive book areas, plenty of captions, well presented writing in the classroom and appropriate resources for role play and play with natural materials. However, limited opportunities are provided for children to practise the skills of reading and writing in their play, such as making shopping lists, taking telephone messages and writing notes and invitations in the home corner. Children are beginning to learn how to form letters correctly through regular writing practise and most write their names legibly. They enjoy listening to stories, are beginning to understand how books are organised and some are beginning to recognise some initial letters by sound and name. In the literacy hour they enjoy reading a story with the teacher but in this mixed age class, with no adult support, it is difficult for the teacher always to meet the learning needs of the youngest children at these times.

Mathematics

45. Boys' and girls' learning in mathematics is steady and by the time they are five their attainment is as expected. Four-year-olds have plenty of opportunity for counting, sorting and number recognition. Whole class numeracy lessons are usually suitably followed up with very practical sessions which reinforce number recognition, counting skills and other simple mathematical concepts such as shape. Daily routines and other opportunities such as counting out seeds to plant are suitably used to practise counting and aid number recognition.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

46. Children show a sound understanding of the basic needs of plants when they plant seeds in different conditions. They know that plants need light and water to make them grow. Visits to a local wildlife area and the school environment are effectively used to promote their knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Children make sound gains in their understanding of the passage of time when they discuss the immediate past, describing

what they did yesterday or last week. They have regular suitable opportunities to create their own models and structures. After following a local project, they have recently successfully designed and made catamarans from construction kits and recyclable materials. In religious education lessons children are gaining a sound knowledge of some bible stories. They are fascinated by the story of 'Jonah and the Whale' and understand that Jonah had broken a promise and relate this to their own experiences of life.

Creative

47. Children enjoy singing and moving to music, know some rhymes and jingles and join in with older pupils identifying instruments and providing an accompaniment. They enjoy painting and other art work and many good examples of their work in this area are on display in the classroom, notably a Noah's ark frieze with brightly painted animals and a gallery of their special paintings. Four-year-olds have ample opportunity to work in a variety of different media, collage, clay, fabric and paper.

Physical

48. Boys and girls have many opportunities to handle small tools such as pencils, scissors and glue sticks and their manipulative skills are developing steadily. They regularly practise forming their letters and writing their names. An outside space adjacent to the classroom has some equipment suitable for under fives but it cannot be used without close supervision and therefore is used only at playtimes and lunchtimes. Children have appropriate planned time in the hall to develop their physical skills. They enjoy these times and use the space in the hall well, but these lessons are tightly directed by the teacher and children have few opportunities to test and challenge their physical skills on their own.

ENGLISH

49. In the 1999 national tests in English for the end of Key Stage 2, results were above average when compared to all schools and also compared to similar schools. Key Stage 1 results in reading were well below average with writing results average using both comparisons. Modest, but appropriate targets for school improvement were set for this year and the school expects to exceed them.

50. Evidence collected during the inspection indicates that this year's results will be close to the averages at the end of Key Stage 1, but slightly below at the end of Key Stage 2 with fewer than average pupils achieving higher levels. However, evidence from other age groups indicates that standards are rising. The previous inspection reported standards around the national average. Eleven-year-olds speak confidently in a variety of circumstances, are very willing to discuss their work and give clear expression to a particular point of view. In a year five/six lesson, they interpreted events in a story from the viewpoint of their chosen character. They listen attentively and show their understanding by carrying out verbal instructions. Most younger pupils express themselves clearly and logically and speak with confidence about events or characters in books they are reading. Pupils with limited literacy skills achieve sound standards in this area with good support from learning assistants.

51. Reading standards among eleven-year-olds cover a very broad range. Higher attaining pupils read a wide range of texts, some quite demanding, for a variety of purposes and with an appropriate level of understanding. They read aloud fluently and expressively. Less able pupils read simpler texts with varying degrees of fluency, some with expression, and use a range of strategies to build words they do not know. Older pupils are currently enjoying reading from J V Marshall's "Walkabout" and year five pupils read titles by authors such as Alan Garner. Pupils in years three and four read texts aloud confidently and with a variety of intonation during literacy sessions. They understand what they read as they describe events and characters accurately. Pupils in years one and two read appropriately for their ages with much improved comprehension skills but good readers have few opportunities to use their skills in other subjects.

52. By the end of both key stages, pupils' writing skills are developing mainly satisfactorily. However, few pupils attain above average standards at the end of either key stage. The importance of writing within the school is immediately evident. Text plays an important part in displays throughout the school and indicates the degree to which writing is used throughout the curriculum. For example, older pupils write first-hand accounts of their visit to Dartmoor, and dialogue for dramas about classical Greek tales. Years three and four write letters about their concerns to figures in authority, and descriptive passages about the discovery of an Egyptian tomb. Pupils in years one and two produced a very professional storybook with processed text and colourful illustrations and they wrote poems about the joys of spring. Work is at least adequately presented throughout the school. Pupils of all ages develop text-handling skills on the computer when producing word-processed versions of a variety of written work.

53. Boys and girls of all ages and abilities make satisfactory progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding in English. Literacy sessions provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills. The use of writing to a variety of purposes is satisfactorily developed across the curriculum. Pupils develop sound reading strategies through working with a wide range of texts. Drama has a high profile in the school, which helps to develop all aspects of literacy skills. Pupils are involved in writing dialogue and in rehearsing and presenting performances that often include music and dance. Their involvement in producing costumes, scenery etc. helps to create a more meaningful context for the literary content. Those with special educational needs make good progress thanks, largely, to the effective support of learning assistants, but also to the skill of teachers who provide work which addresses their specific needs. It is particularly pleasing that these pupils have the opportunity to share their work with the rest of the class, as when pupils in years five and six told their stories based on Red Riding Hood.

54. Most pupils are attentive in lessons, concentrate well and show enthusiasm for their work and pride in what they produce. They settle to their work quickly and make useful contributions to lessons, when appropriate. Behaviour is very good in almost all situations and relationships between pupils and with adults are invariably very good. There is a feeling of general respect between all involved.

55. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Teachers plan adequately to ensure that tasks are appropriate to both age groups in the classes. They show good subject knowledge in their helpful interventions in pupils' work. At times, the pace of lessons drops and not enough is expected of more literate pupils. Key Stage 2 teaching is consistently good. Planning is thorough and work is designed to cater for pupils of all levels of ability and learning intentions are made clear to them. Teachers have positive relationships with pupils and their management and control are consistently good. Good use of time and resources ensure that lessons maintain their pace and urgency. Pupils are made to see that what they are doing is important and expectations of their performance are high. Teachers are developing day to day assessments using target cards to maintain the challenge to pupils. Very effective learning support assistants are well used to teach pupils who need extra help with language work.

56. Management of the English curriculum is good. The literacy strategy has provided the basis of a satisfactory scheme of work and teachers work to a set of appropriate teaching policies. Half-termly assessments of pupils' work against National Curriculum levels are recorded over the pupils' school life to produce a running record of progress. With national test results, this provides a useful tool for tracking and monitoring groups of pupils as they move through the school. Samples of pupils' work are kept and pupils' own assessments are used to create a record of achievement, which follows each pupil through the school. The coordinator monitors planning and scrutinises pupils' work to monitor outcomes. As a result of spending in conjunction with the literacy strategy, resources for English are good with plenty of good quality class reading books. The varied and accessible non-fiction library is enhanced by collections borrowed from the schools' library service. The school also has a sizeable library of source materials for teachers and pupils make their own reading resources. Good use is made of visitors, including authors, dramatists, theatre groups and local community representatives.

MATHEMATICS

57. The last inspection report said that 'overall standards of achievement are generally in line with the national expectations at both key stages'. Similar words could be used to describe current standards but the school's results have been very up and down in the intervening years. Although standards in the present year six are, if anything, a little below average, when they were year two their results were the worst since testing began. A disproportionate number of pupils have learning difficulties and taking both these factors into account, the year group has made good progress over the past three years. Progress is equally good in years three, four and five and pupils' achievements are at least suitable for their ages and improving as they move through the school. Current standards in year two broadly match those seen in most schools but fewer pupils are achieving higher standards than might be expected.

58. A key factor in improving standards is the priority which staff across the school give to encouraging and requiring pupils to think mathematically and use appropriate mathematical vocabulary to discuss ways of working. Older pupils working out how much water it would take to refill the town pool first had to relearn how to find the volume of a cuboid and then use their 'own' quick ways to multiply the three dimensions together. Plenty of appropriate suggestions were made and the teacher used less useful ideas constructively to make teaching points without dismissing the ideas. Pupils subsequently worked very sensibly in pairs to obtain the necessary data and subsequently with a little help came up with ways of taking account of the sloping floor of the pool. In another lesson pupils were required to work backwards by inventing problems using numbers or measurements provided.

59. In a good lesson on fractions in the younger junior class, well-matched work enabled pupils to build on their knowledge of common fractions by learning the significance of the numerator and the denominator leading to equivalent fractions by doubling for year fours. This in turn led on to asking what three and twelve are both multiples of in the fraction, three-twelfths. The teacher's awareness of her pupils levels of understanding was shown by the way she went back on work when it became apparent that several pupils could not say why they would rather have a quarter than a sixth of a birthday cake. Similar good use of assessment was shown in the older class where the teacher revisited work from the previous day with a lower attaining group.

60. Six and seven-year-olds showed a developing awareness of number in working with numbers close to 10 while others add 9 to single digit numbers by adding 10 and taking away 1. However, in a less successful lesson focussing on putting numbers up to a hundred in order, the tasks provided did not require pupils to stretch themselves and several gained little from the exercise. The activity for older, more able year twos was not clearly explained so that, though able to do the work, they had to wait for the teacher to make it clear for them what was wanted. Younger pupils in the key stage were provided with a range of largely practical activities. Year ones made up their own 'sums' some using apparatus, the rest in their heads. Others counted on and matched simple shapes in a game. All got on well and most were able to talk about what they were doing and answer associated questions. However, with only the teacher to help and talk to them about their work, their pace of learning flagged and opportunities for them to consolidate and build on their understanding were lost.

61. Good use is made of simple 'instant' recording devices to provide the teacher with quick feedback about the performance of individuals and the class as a whole. Number cards are well used in the oldest class to enable all pupils to show what happens when numbers are increased by 10, 100 or 1000 for instance. Learning support assistants make a good contribution to the achievements of pupils who find mathematics difficult. Sometimes, necessarily, this entails working away from the class on parallel work or more specific activities related to pupils' mathematics individual education plans (IEP). More often, pupils are helped to do the same work as other pupils in the class. Unusually, to ensure that the needs of the less numerate are given sufficient priority, the mathematics and special needs coordinators have set up a system

whereby any child who finds mathematics particularly difficult has a mathematics IEP which may be in addition to a language based IEP. Because of this and through the hard work of the learning support assistants, pupils with special needs related to numeracy make good progress.

62. Overall, most teaching is satisfactory with some good and one unsatisfactory lesson as noted above. The coordinator took over a subject which needed a great deal of attention with no scheme of work and inadequate resources to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. Initially through her own efforts and latterly with the support of the Numeracy Strategy, mathematics is now well developed within the school as a subject in its own right but learned skills are infrequently used in other subjects. Resources and support materials are in good supply and well maintained and used. Arrangements are good for assessing pupils' work, recording progress, setting targets, and monitoring trends and provision. Work is marked regularly but more use could be made of written comments to prompt pupils to improve their work.

SCIENCE

63. Standards of work in science are average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. This broadly reflects the most recent statutory assessments for seven-year-olds and national test scores for eleven-year-olds. Evidence from past work and teachers' planning, indicate that all elements of the science curriculum are being well covered and that experimental and investigative science, identified at the last inspection as a weakness in the science curriculum, is now being satisfactorily addressed. During the inspection week, all classes were studying different aspects of the area of science related to life processes and living things.

64. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have recently been to a wild life conservation area and this has provided an excellent opportunity for the study of plants and other living things. Five and six-year-olds show a good awareness of the needs of plants and in their experiments related to planting seeds in different conditions, clearly understand that plants need light and water to grow. They are beginning to ask questions such as 'How?', 'Why?' and 'What will happen if?'. Seven-year-olds make steady progress in their understanding of the differences in living things and how they adapt to the environment in which they live, when they closely observe shells and seashore life with magnifiers. They talk about the similarities and difference and sort things into groups according to simple features.

65. Year three and four pupils make very good progress when, through gathering plants and flowers in the area around the school, they learn about the life cycle of flowering plants, pollination, seed production, dispersal and germination. Most confidently identify and name parts of the plant such as sepal, stamen, stigma, ovary and pollen. They set up and conduct experiments enthusiastically to find out which colours are most attractive to insects. In years five and six, pupils studying the human body give very good explanations of the functions of different parts of the body and major organs. In one very good lesson pupils used language well in describing bones as the structures of the body, scaffolding, the shapers and protectors of body parts. They investigated the way in which muscles work and through simple practical tasks discovered how muscles function in relation to bones and ligaments in the body.

66. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work in science. When they are taken outside to look for plants and other living things, they behave sensibly and are interested and absorbed by the task. On their return to the classroom they settle quickly and are eager to talk about what they have found. When working in pairs, as in the lesson investigating muscles, they cooperate with one another, share ideas and resources and get on quietly and quickly.

67. All teaching is at least satisfactory and in two lessons in Key Stage 2, it was very good. Teachers' scientific knowledge is very secure and lessons are well prepared and resourced. In the very best lessons the learning objectives are made explicit to the pupils, the pace of the lessons is brisk with high expectation of both behaviour and learning, explanations are clear

and pupils knowledge and understanding is extended and tested by skilful and challenging questioning. All teachers use the environment around the school very well to enhance and support learning in science. Pupils also make regular visits to places further afield such as wildlife areas and the coast. During the week of the inspection, year five pupils scientific knowledge and understanding was greatly enhanced by returning to an area of coast, marsh and woodland with a naturalist, to make comparisons between what they had observed earlier in the year and how it was now.

68. Science teaching is well supported by a good policy and by the use of a national scheme of work which is providing a good structure and skills framework. All pupils have targets for their learning in science but these are sometimes too general and not sufficiently well related to scientific knowledge and understanding. Regular assessment tasks provide good information on pupils' achievement and progress. The science coordinator has usefully started to organise resources to match the various programmes of study and has good plans to develop a portfolio of work in science to show progression and further raise standards in science.

OTHER SUBJECTS

69. Though all the pupils in at least one key stage were observed learning in religious education and all the foundation subjects except geography, the total number of such observations was inevitably relatively small. Where possible this was supplemented by the scrutiny of teachers' planning, work completed this school year and by discussions with pupils.

70. To avoid repetition and provide a solid base for judgements about teaching and other aspects of provision, art, design technology, geography, history, Information technology, music, physical and religious education are reported on as a group, with strengths and weaknesses pinpointed.

THE FOUNDATION SUBJECTS - ART, DESIGN TECHNOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, MUSIC, PHYSICAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

71. Boys' and girls' achievements this year are appropriate for their ages in most of these subjects in both key stages with art better in both key stages, religious education better in Key Stage 2 but standards in information technology lower in Key Stage 2. Boys and girls are making sound progress through both key stages in most subjects including information technology with good progress in art throughout the school and in religious education in the older classes. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make satisfactory progress, especially in the more practical aspects of the above subjects.

ART

72. Pupils make good progress in art. Five and six-year-olds carefully paint and create a range of animals for a Noah's ark frieze. They work imaginatively and confidently, taking pride in the finished results. Six and seven-year-olds closely observe the colour, texture and shape of shells, leaves and other natural objects, collected on a visit to a wildlife conservation area. They successfully recreate what they see in pencil drawings and demonstrate a good understanding of colour and the techniques used to create light and shade. In Key Stage 2. Many good examples of pupils working with a range of media and using a variety of skills and techniques are on display. This enhances classrooms and shared areas and celebrates their achievements in the subject.

73. Much of the art work is well linked to other curriculum areas. Eight and nine-year-olds were observed, very absorbed in painting and drawing a still life composition of plants and flowers as part of their work in science. Some very detailed, sensitive representation of the composition showed great attention to detail and a good knowledge of the structure and parts of plants. Ten and eleven-year-olds in their studies of the Greeks in history made, painted, glazed and fired pots in the style of ancient Greek pottery and they are creating tunics for their

Olympic style games and decorating them with block prints. Pupils' appreciation of the work of other artists is well recorded in a book of beautiful paintings by pupils that are in the style of artists such as Van Gogh, Turner and Monet. Other notable examples of pupils' work in art include a bright colourful mural of a jungle scene painted on an outside wall of the school and a very comprehensive record of visits to a local art gallery where examples of pupils' work are exhibited. Pupils are very proud of their efforts. They work well in art lessons and many say that art is their favourite subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

74. The amount of evidence for work in design and technology is limited to one lesson observed at Key Stage 2 and past work on display. Five and six-year-olds design and make good flower pots with junk materials and a recent local project involving the building and design of a catamaran by Pete Goss has inspired children to carefully design and make their own boats with recyclable materials and construction kits. Six and seven-year-olds in their study of toys investigated the different designs and mechanisms used to operate puppets. They show good cutting and joining skills designing and making puppets with wood and other materials.

75. In Key Stage 2 design and making tasks are often well related to work in other subjects. Much of the current work in years five and six is linked to the history of the Greeks and in the only design and technology lesson observed, pupils were making sound progress in their understanding of materials and their properties when they made Greek helmets. They were able to talk about their designs and describe the function of the different elements. Pupils generally enjoy design and making tasks. However occasionally when pupils are not challenged insufficiently by the task or finish and have no clear idea of what they are to do next, they become restless and behaviour deteriorates.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

76. New curriculum planning arrangements meant that only one history lesson, in Key Stage 2, was observed during the inspection and no geography lessons, but discussions with pupils and examination of work suggest that standards in both subjects are appropriate for the ages of pupils in both key stages. Pupils in year one compare their situation with other times and places and know that the earliest clothing came from plants and animals because people hadn't learned how to make cloth. They know that houses in different parts of the world vary because of such things as "the weather". In year two, pupils compare a collection of old toys with modern day playthings and have a sense of the chronological order of the toys. They begin to study maps and draw their own plans of such things as routes home, including recognisable features on the way.

77. Year three and year four pupils know the importance, in terms of trade and communications, of the River Nile to Egypt and know how archaeological discoveries have contributed to our knowledge of the ancient Egyptians. By years five and six, pupils are making on-site comparisons between their own and another part of Devon. They understand the effect of social phenomena such as the growing number of second homes in their town and the recession in the fishing industry. Pupils are aware of the geological origins of Dartmoor "tors", and know the significance of the most common map conventions. They track the likely migration routes and foreign destinations of summer visiting birds. Most understand the debt we owe to ancient civilisations, such as the Greeks, in terms of, for example, language and mathematics, and they have appropriate knowledge of people and events in the Tudor period – for example William Shakespeare, and the Wars of the Roses.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

78. The last report said that information technology resources were 'barely adequate' and that the subject was 'not planned or taught in a consistent way throughout the school'. Salcombe School now has an adequate supply of up to date computers and though their use did not feature strongly during the inspection, previous work, displays, planning documents and pupils' comments indicate that information technology is taught in a much more structured and

consistent way now. As a consequence, standards in the younger classes especially are now close to what is expected especially in communicating information by word and picture. Pupils in the older classes are making much better progress than at the time of the last inspection but it will take a little time for them to make up for lost time. The coordinator has worked hard over the past three years to build up the subject and knows what needs to be done to take it further. Staff expertise has been identified as a priority and he will soon be starting to use his recently acquired trainer status to help his colleagues to become more confident.

MUSIC

79. Music has a strong profile in the school especially in the winter months. One class music lesson and recorder lessons in another class were the only class based musical activities taking place during the inspection. However, instrumental lessons, a musical performance and singing in assembly indicate that standards are sound overall with strong features where teachers have particular expertise, notably in Key Stage 2. Younger pupils knew the names of many instruments and could identify them from the sounds they made and 'tangerine' is really quite close to tambourine! They followed the 'conductor' in accompanying their singing and were beginning to use symbols to act as a score. All pupils have the opportunity to learn the recorder in years three, four, five and six and most achieved sound performance levels reading from simple scores. Several older pupils have the opportunity to learn orchestral instruments and the quality of playing by a group of violinists working with a visiting teacher was very high. No concessions were made for their age in the use of technical language and performance expectations and the trio responded very well. Performances involving music are a feature of the school and the team was fortunate to be able to see a small part of a larger production that showed what this contributes to pupils' musical and social development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

80. Standards observed in physical education during the inspection were appropriate for the ages of the pupils concerned and the school has a well-developed programme of activities that ensure that all pupils experience the full range of the curriculum. In the youngest class, the class theme of 'Noah's Ark' was well developed to prompt pupils to move in different ways to represent the animals. Years one and two pupils interpreted the different moods of some music they had composed to accompany the words of a book they had shared. Pupils in both classes responded well to the challenge of the lessons and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Older pupils made good use of the field to engage in some vigorous activity connected to athletics. A good range of extra-curricular activities including an adventurous residential visit to Dartmoor supplement class based work. It is very unfortunate that local difficulties have prevented the school from using the neighbouring town swimming pool this year but the school is planning to resume swimming using a local hotel swimming pool in the winter.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

81. The quality of work seen in lessons and in pupils' religious education books is good and reflects the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Younger pupils showed a good awareness of the story of Noah's Ark and were very articulate in talking about the concepts of trust, obey and promise. The teacher then introduced the story of Jonah and the Whale encouraging boys and girls to recognise the same ideas in the story. By stopping halfway, she encouraged them to think about what might happen next. Younger juniors showed how much they had learned about the parables and miracles of the New Testament when writing 'postcards' about how they would look to an observer. In discussion, it was obvious that they had been required to think deeply about the 'moral' or meaning of the stories. Pupils' books showed the full range of learning which they experience. Years one and two books contain work based on a visit to the local church and a section on feelings using pictures from magazines. In the oldest class, large amounts of work on Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism are sensitively marked with thoughtful little questions such as why? – how do you think?. A good example came after a pupil's comment – 'Would being a Buddhist be boring all the time?' Other work on the awesome and threatening aspects of nature was well related to the miracle of the storm – a very appropriate connection for Salcombe.

TEACHING AND OTHER PROVISION IN THE FOUNDATION SUBJECTS

82. Most teaching outside the core subjects is satisfactory with some good lessons and one very good religious education lesson. In most cases the quality of teaching is related to the interest and expertise of the teacher in the particular subject. Most lessons were well planned and prepared using the documentation agreed by the school for the particular subject. Both activities and pupils were generally well managed and in most cases, interesting and relevant activities provided for pupils to take part in. However, sometimes the pace of the lesson is slow and activities take longer than necessary. Curriculum leaders have put a great deal of effort into their several responsibilities and each subject is now backed up by planning documentation and assessment and monitoring procedures to support teachers in their work. Good use is being made of national schemes of work and by blocking the time spent on several subjects, teachers have the opportunity to work in a concentrated way on specific subjects. However, teachers are aware that firm structures need to be put in place to ensure that every subject is covered as it should be year on year. Resources are generally in good supply and well stored and maintained except in religious education where the school's stock of religious objects is low.