

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARGARET'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Northam, Bideford

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113453

Headteacher: Mr Roger Guest

Reporting inspector: Raymond Jardine
7428

Dates of inspection: 18 - 22 June 2001

Inspection number: 189910

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sea View Road Northam BIDEFORD North Devon
Postcode:	EX39 1EL
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Fax number:	-
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Lawrence
Date of previous inspection:	14 - 17 October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7428	Raymond Jardine	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14324	Michael Hudson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11849	Mary Dornan	Team inspector	English Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?
18270	Jane Morris	Team inspector	Science Art Geography History Special educational needs	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Margaret's Church of England Junior School is a voluntary aided church school. With 218 pupils ranging from seven to 11 years on roll, the school is smaller than average for primary schools. Pupils come from Northam and Westward Ho! and more recently from Appledore. The school's number of pupils on roll is rising steadily. The great majority of pupils enter the school from nearby St George's Infant School. There are currently 34 pupils (15.6 per cent) entitled to free school meals. The proportion has been falling, especially this year, to the current level that is a little below the national average. Almost all the pupils are white UK or European heritage, none of whom have English as an additional language. There are 58 pupils (26.6 per cent) on the register of special educational needs (above the national average), of whom most are at an early stage and eight (3.6 per cent) of whom have Statements of Special Educational Need. The pupils' standards on entry into the school are wide ranging but broadly about average compared to those nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Margaret's Church of England Junior is an effective school. The school achieves its aims well because teachers and support staff work together as a team committed to helping pupils achieve good standards within a caring, Christian ethos. Pupils enjoy coming to school and develop very positive attitudes to learning because teaching is good. Pupils are encouraged to work responsibly and independently as they mature. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils like coming to school, are enthusiastic and well motivated.
- Pupils develop personal responsibility and work independently in classes and around the school.
- Standards in science are good. In music and art they are high.
- The teaching is good and some is excellent.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The work of learning support assistants in classes is very effective so that these pupils make very good progress.
- The range of school visits and clubs enhance the curriculum very effectively.

What could be improved

- The involvement of the staff, governing body and parents in shaping the direction of the school's development in the longer term.
- Monitoring, support and development of teaching.
- Curriculum plans, training for teachers and additional resources for information technology (this is a priority in the school's current improvement plan).

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in October 1996. The school has successfully addressed the issues raised in the last inspection. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen at a faster rate than nationally and standards in other subjects have also improved because teaching has improved, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Higher attaining pupils are now achieving well in many subjects. The standards achieved and provision for information and communication technology, a weakness in the last

inspection, have also improved, although there is still much to be done. Many of these improvements are due to the work of subject co-ordinators who are more effective in their roles.

Statutory requirements are now met in the school's prospectus and governors' reports except for incomplete attendance information. Curriculum plans have been improved in a number of subjects but there continue to be weaknesses in design and technology and in physical education. There have also been improvements in some aspects of arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school. For example, the school makes better use of analyses of standards to guide areas for improvement; pupils are monitored more closely and curriculum targets set for each.

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	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	D	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	D	C	D	
Science	E	C	B	B	

Standards, particularly in mathematics and science, have been rising over the past three years. In 2000 the Key Stage 2 national tests for 11 year olds show standards overall were broadly in line with both the national averages and similar schools, although there were some differences between subjects and pupils. Pupils achieved above average standards in science but were average in both English and mathematics compared to standards nationally. Higher attaining pupils achieved well in both English and in science, but in mathematics, pupils' standards were below those of similar schools. Over the past two years, the school has exceeded the targets it set for English, mathematics and science. This year, St Margaret's Junior was awarded a National School Achievement Award in celebration of the school's rising standards above the national trend in national tests over the past three years.

Pupils' standards broadly reflect those of last year in English and mathematics where they are broadly in line with the national average and also in science where pupils' standards are above the national average. Standards in history and geography are above average while in music and in art, they are high. In information technology and in physical education, standards are average compared to those nationally. There are no subjects where standards are unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school. Their attitudes and response in lessons, during activities and in and about the school are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good although there are a few instances of inappropriate behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are caring and considerate and relate very well with teachers and other pupils. Pupils co-operate well in shared tasks and learn to be independent.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are well above the national average and lessons begin promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

Teaching quality is good, although there are considerable variations in the quality of teaching between subjects and year groups. Over 95 per cent of teaching is at least satisfactory while two thirds is good or better. Over a quarter is very good or excellent. However, a small minority of lessons are poor. The teaching of both English and mathematics is good and skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and with clearly focused objectives shared with pupils. Relationships throughout are very good. Learning support teachers and assistants provide very good support for lower attaining pupils who achieve very well as a result. Teachers skilfully use questions to challenge pupils to think, explain and apply what they learn. Higher attaining pupils are challenged appropriately so that they learn at a good pace and teachers are careful to involve all pupils equally in discussions and group tasks, adapting the demands of the work appropriately. Pupils learn to work responsibly and independently as they move through the school. Pupils learn at a good pace although some morning lessons are too long and the pace of work sometimes slows. Marking is good and homework generally extends pupils' learning in lessons effectively, although homework for older pupils is sometimes too demanding. Where teaching is poor, the teacher is not sufficiently clear about the purpose of the lesson and does not address instances of poor behaviour so that pupils' learning is disrupted.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a balanced and broad curriculum that includes a range of educational visits, extra-curricular activities and fieldwork. Links between subjects are stressed and skills in information technology, literacy and numeracy are

	applied well. Curriculum plans for most subjects are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school makes extra resources available. The support provided by the co-ordinator and by support assistants in classes is very effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school's Christian ethos effectively promotes pupils' spiritual development. They acquire good moral, social and cultural values in a caring environment where very good relationships are fostered. Visitors and school visits help pupils to become independent and to know themselves and others better.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and pastoral care is a priority in the school. Pupils feel safe and secure. Teachers monitor pupils' progress and set suitable curriculum targets for improvement. However, the range of assessments used for checking pupils' achievements is not brought together to use effectively with all staff.

Parent's views of the school are good. Reports to parents are very good but the school is aware that it needs to do more to seek the views of parents and to involve them in the life of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school's aim, to provide a Christian ethos where pupils achieve academically, developing strong moral and social values, are reflected well through its work. The headteacher's leadership is sound. Senior management and other key staff work well as a team to help raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body has made important strides in the past three years in re-establishing effective working structures and roles following a difficult period. Governors are very supportive but less active in challenging the school to help shape its development in the longer term.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school analyses its standards carefully. Co-ordinators of subjects review the curriculum and resources well. Arrangements to monitor, support and develop teaching are insufficiently directed at school priorities to be effective in spreading the best practice and in eliminating poor teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has used specific grants well. The governing body has rightly directed extra resources to improving the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and to improving standards in information technology and mathematics. This has been effective in raising standards. Staff specialist expertise is deployed effectively.

Teachers are well qualified with a good spread of expertise between them. Support teachers and assistants are adequate in number and they make a very effective contribution to raising pupils' standards. The accommodation is satisfactory. The school's interior is bright, attractive and has many good features, but the school grounds have been neglected and are under used. The school has a good range of learning resources to support most subjects except for information and communication technology where there are insufficient numbers of computers. Most of the principles of best value are applied well, although the school does not consult parents and the community when making important strategic decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like coming to school and they make good progress. • Behaviour. • Teaching is good. • Parents can approach the school and know they will be listened to. • Pupils are expected to work hard. • The Christian ethos and good moral and social values helps children to mature. • The good range of extra-curricular and out of school activity provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and difficulty of homework. • Insufficient information is provided about children's progress and about school life. • The school does not work closely enough with parents.

Inspectors support most but not all the views expressed by parents. Inspectors found the school's homework policy satisfactory and being implemented appropriately, although some mathematics tasks for Year 6 pupils are too difficult. Reports to parents are good but the timing of parents' evenings is being reviewed. Communication with parents and their involvement in the life of the school is a weakness that the school is eager to improve.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' standards when they enter the school in Year 3 are wide ranging but broadly in line with the national average, although during the four years for which pupils move through the school, up to one third will have joined the school or left. Pupils achieve well, especially in Years 3, 5 and 6, so that their standards by the age of 11 are above average in several subjects. In no subjects are standards less than satisfactory.
2. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, inspection findings broadly reflect the standards attained in the previous year's tests. Standards in English and in mathematics are in line with national averages while standards in science are above average. Pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory throughout. In science, pupils generally achieve well, especially in their skills of enquiry and higher attaining pupils achieve well in all the core subjects.
3. In 2000, the national tests for 11 year olds showed standards overall were broadly in line with national averages, although there were significant differences between subjects and groups of pupils. In English and mathematics, pupils' standards were in line with those nationally while standards in science were above the national average. Higher attaining pupils achieved well in English and in science. There has been an encouraging rise in standards at the school over the past three years at a rate above the national trend, especially in science. The school was this year awarded a National School Achievement Award in recognition of these successes. Girls have achieved a little better than boys over the past few years although the differences within each year are relatively small. In 2000, the school exceeded the targets it set for English, mathematics and science. However, these targets were not sufficiently challenging and the school has now set itself more appropriate targets in these subjects for the next few years.
4. In comparison with similar schools (those with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals), the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 2000 were broadly average, although again, there were significant differences between subjects. English standards were about average while standards in science were above and mathematics below. The school subsequently identified mathematics as a subject in need of further improvement in its school improvement plan.
5. Pupils' literacy skills are satisfactory overall and there have been some improvements in the quality of pupils' reading. The National Literacy Strategy is being implemented consistently throughout the school. As a result, pupils speak confidently, for example, when responding to questions and in discussion, and generally listen attentively to their teachers, other adults and pupils. They acquire a wide range of technical vocabulary in all subjects well because teachers highlight and re-enforce new terms in their lessons. Reading standards are good. Pupils generally enjoy reading both fiction and non-fiction books and many use the library and other resources to research information. Older pupils confidently discuss the features of the work of authors they like. Improving pupils' writing has been a priority for the school. Pupils apply their writing skills in many contexts and subjects so that pupils' standards in writing are at least in line with the national average.

6. Pupils' standards of numeracy are in line with those nationally. Pupils acquire good mental skills as they move through the school so that they choose appropriate and efficient methods of calculation to add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately. Older pupils use formal written methods where necessary, they present their work clearly and many pupils can apply their skills to solve every day problems in a variety of contexts, identifying the key information they need. Pupils apply their numeracy in a range of subjects to display information graphically, to estimate, compare and to measure because their teachers provide many good opportunities to practise these skills.
7. Pupils' standards in history and geography are above average while in music and in art, their standards are high. Pupils are achieving well in these subjects because they are enthused and challenged by very knowledgeable teachers. In music and art, the specialist expertise that the subject co-ordinators bring to the school, is deployed very effectively throughout. In physical education and in design and technology, standards are average. Standards in information technology have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with those nationally. Pupils apply their information technology skills in a range of subjects and by the age of 11, many can research, process and adapt information from a number of sources and present their work, taking account of intended audience.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Their needs are carefully assessed and appropriate and precise targets are set. The special educational needs co-ordinator, the learning support teacher and the learning support assistants work very closely and effectively with these pupils. Teachers usually give careful thought to these pupils in their planning. There are rare occasions when pupils showing challenging behaviour are not successfully integrated into lessons through the effective matching of tasks to ability and aptitude.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Since the last inspection, pupils' attitudes have improved and are now very good and a strength of the school. In several of the lessons observed pupils' attitudes were excellent. The great majority of pupils are very happy to learn, respond eagerly to challenge, sustain interest and enthusiasm, and remain fully attentive in classes and assemblies. Pupils are very well motivated, show a high degree of commitment and stay closely focused on task. They work very effectively both on their own as in programmed reading, and in paired and group activities such as scientific research. Pupils take pride in their efforts and are pleased to share the joys of achievement. They offer constructive ideas, listen to what others have to say, and their contributions to discussions, for instance in art and history, are thoughtful and imaginative. Pupils' retrieval and evaluation skills are often better than their year group averages. Parents confirm their children enjoy school and work hard. Pupils' very positive attitudes substantially enhance their learning.
10. Since the last inspection pupils' behaviour has continued to be good and parents are happy with the standards achieved. Both the school discipline policy and class rules are well understood by pupils, and suitably applied by most staff. Pupils are taught to exercise self-discipline and the majority respond willingly to what is expected of them. Although the atmosphere in most classes is calm, orderly and purposeful, at times in some lessons, for example in Year 4, a few pupils are

inattentive and their behaviour is inappropriate. At playtimes and around the school pupils behave well and have respect for property such as wall and tabletop displays. Behaviour during assemblies is good. At lunch pupils are well mannered and friendly, making it an enjoyable social occasion. Pupils are generally polite and pleasantly inquisitive with visitors. During the inspection there were no signs of abuse, harassment or aggression. One pupil was excluded for a fixed period last year. Pupils' good behaviour benefits their attainment and progress.

11. Pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection. It is now very good and a strength of the school. Pupils are self-assured and have high personal esteem. Although there are few real opportunities in many lessons for pupils to show initiative and independent action, they enjoy responsibility and carry out class and school tasks, such as gate and bell duties, with considerable enthusiasm and pride. Pupils are pleased when their individual and collective efforts and achievements are recognised in merit awards and at celebratory assemblies. The house system promotes a spirit of friendly competition and community spirit. School captains are very diligent in representing the views of their peers. Pupils' social awareness is enhanced through discussing important moral and social issues such as drug abuse and conservation. They appreciate the purpose of charities, benefit from visits and local events and have a very strong sense of citizenship. Pupils develop marked maturity as they progress through the school.
12. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils are treated with respect and they flourish under the consistent and sensitive approach of staff. Most pupils trust and have affinity with their teachers and readily confide in them when they are upset or worried. Relationships within peer groups and between older and younger pupils are positive and friendly, and those from different social backgrounds and of both genders interact comfortably. There are many constructive and harmonious relationships. Pupils are caring and considerate and they co-operate successfully. They have noticeable respect for the values and beliefs of others, and a good understanding of peer group feelings. Playtimes are lively but congenial. At lunches pupils sit happily together, although rarely choose to do so at mixed tables. Relationships are enhanced during extra curricular activities and residential visits. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the school community.
13. Attendance is very good and a strong feature of the school. Attendance in the last school year was well above the national average and unauthorised absence in the same year was in line with the average. Both rates are better than at the time of the last inspection. Punctuality is very good and lessons start on time. Registration is prompt and efficient, pupils answer politely and there is an orderly start to the daily sessions. Pupils' very good attendance and punctuality make a positive impact on their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Overall, the quality of teaching is good but there are considerable variations between subjects and year groups. Teaching is particularly good in Years 3, 5 and 6. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when teaching in Years 5 and 6 were weaker. Over 95 per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better and two thirds is at least good. A quarter of lessons are very good or excellent. However, four per cent of lessons are poor or very poor. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and there is some very good and excellent teaching in a number of foundation subjects, including music, art and design and technology. In

the last inspection, it was reported that in some lessons, higher attaining pupils were not challenged enough, that teachers make insufficient use of information technology and marking quality was too variable. All these weaknesses have been improved substantially. Inspectors' judgements support the parents' views that teaching in the school is good.

15. Teachers plan lessons well and set clear objectives for developing pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Objectives and the structure of lessons are shared with pupils at the start of lessons and important new vocabulary in the subject is often highlighted. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and the basic skills are taught well, for example, in art and in music where the school utilises the very good specialist expertise amongst the staff effectively throughout the school. Consequently, standards in music and in art are high. Teachers enjoy very good relationships with pupils and manage them well so that their behaviour is almost always good. Pupils are eager to respond and contribute to whole-class discussions because teachers ask effective and challenging questions to assess pupils' understanding and to make pupils think and explain. They are careful to choose a wide cross section of boys and girls, of different abilities and include pupils with special educational needs, adapting their questioning to each pupil so that lessons are inclusive and wholly shared experiences.
16. Teachers and support staff work well together. This collaboration is a very strong feature of lessons. Support assistants are well briefed by teachers and they know how they can contribute to pupils' learning. Detailed information about pupils' progress is logged so that all members of staff who are involved in providing for the particular needs of individual pupils can work closely together. This ensures that there is structured and unified support for nearly every pupil identified as having special educational needs. In lessons, the skill and expertise of support staff are used efficiently and very effectively. These members of staff provide the right amount of challenge alongside the care and security that some pupils with very specific needs require.
17. Teachers make very good links between subjects through some stimulating contexts for lessons that capture pupils' imagination and enthusiasm well. They also take many opportunities to encourage pupils to apply their skills in literacy, numeracy and information technology across the curriculum. A good example is a history topic about Britain during the World War II when Year 5 pupils contrasted the movement of children from the cities to the countryside with their own experiences. The teacher planned meticulously and used excellent resources from the time to engage all pupils, including displaying information about a German aircraft shot down locally. Pupils went on to skilfully design and make a ration card of their own that included their picture, personal details and some ration coupons, using a number of computer applications to very good effect. These pupils made very good progress during the sequence in both their history and information technology.
18. Most lessons include group tasks that are adapted in difficulty for different ability groups of pupils and which are appropriately demanding. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well through more demanding tasks and through their discussions with teachers. In some morning lessons, where English and mathematics lessons can extend to 70 minutes, time is not used as well as it might, because the pace of pupils' work slows in the latter part of their main activities. This is more evident in lessons involving Year 3 and 4 pupils. Pupils support each other well in shared tasks, discuss their ideas and are encouraged to make decisions for themselves

and to work independently throughout the school, particularly in practical subjects such as science, design and technology and when using computers.

19. The latter parts of lessons, where teachers summarise what has been learned, vary in impact considerably. Some teachers are very effective because they involve a range of boys and girls of different abilities, focus on reinforcing the main objectives for the lesson, identify problems to follow up and link what has been learned to the next sequence. On some occasions however, the plenary is too short, does not involve pupils sufficiently to assess clearly what has been learned or link clearly to the next stage.
20. Teachers set appropriate homework in line with the school's policy, although occasionally, the mathematics 'problem of the week' in Year 6 is too demanding for some pupils who then worry unduly. Teachers' marking is effective in correcting work and provides useful comments to help pupils to improve. On the few occasions where teaching is poor in Year 4, teaching plans do not focus on clear objectives for the lesson so that pupils are not clear about the purpose of their work. Also, instances of poor behaviour on the part of a small minority of pupils are not managed effectively and this disrupts the flow of the lesson resulting in little learning by the rest of the class.

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

21. The quality and range of opportunities for learning are good throughout the school. The curriculum is broad, balanced and enlivened further by a good range of school visits, visiting speakers and extra-curricular clubs. Almost all statutory requirements for the curriculum are in place, except for an element of information and communication technology. Overall, the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. In the last two years the school has rightly concentrated on the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The school is implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully, particularly literacy, and pupils now make more effective use of information and communication technology in a range of subjects.
22. Curriculum planning in most subjects is good because of the effective work of co-ordinators. The school has a good overview of the curriculum and there are strengths in many areas such as in English, science, music and history. Many teachers stress the links between subjects, especially in their topic work. Skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are applied well in a range of subjects. The school's provision for personal, social and health education, including sex and drugs education is effective.
23. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects although some have significant weaknesses that affect pupils' standards. The school's physical education scheme of work requires more depth and guidance to ensure all teachers are clear about what to teach and how to teach it. Curriculum plans for design and technology provide insufficient guidance on how pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills should build from year to year. Information and communication technology was identified as a weakness in the last inspection, and the curriculum has improved substantially since then. However, there are still some gaps in provision for information technology, for example, in monitoring the environment using sensors. In addition, curriculum plans have too few specific examples and guidance on good

opportunities to use information technology in various subjects and from year to year. These two subjects are currently a school priority for development. Some morning sessions are overlong and some pupils are unable to sustain their concentration so that time is not used well. For example, some English and mathematics lessons can last up to 70 minutes.

24. The provision that the school makes for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers' lesson planning is shared with support staff and highlights specific learning opportunities that the teacher is concentrating on with any one or group of pupils. In a Year 5 geography lesson the learning support assistant worked with one pupil with specific needs. The teacher's planned activity, to measure and translate scale to real measurements using pieces of string, had been adapted so that the special educational needs' pupil could be totally integrated and achieve well alongside her classmates. On the rare occasions when lessons are not successful, teachers do not plan effectively for those pupils with special educational needs, particularly for behavioural difficulties.
25. The school offers a wide range of good extra-curricular activities that are a strength of the school. Netball, cycling proficiency and gymnastics were all seen during the week of inspection. These activities successfully enhance pupils' social skills. Parents, teachers and members of the community help to run these successful clubs, for example, the very good art club.
26. Educational visits and fieldwork enrich the curriculum offered to pupils well and good use is made of the local environment. For example, Year 6 pupils make good use of Bideford quay as a context for developing their literacy skills when looking at the difference between fact and opinion. A recent visit to York by Year 5 and six pupils was most successful and they were keen to discuss the trip with inspectors. Pupils produced lively illustrated and interesting work files about their visit reflecting their effective use of literacy, numeracy and information technology skills.
27. The school makes effective use of the wider community in a variety of ways to bring added relevance to the curriculum. Visits to the immediate local area, to museums and nature reserves plus organised field trips to undertake river studies make a significant contribution to the curriculum. The school also organises visits to places further away. Visitors to the school are many and varied. They bring an additional richness to the topics that pupils are studying and effectively enhance lessons. The local council has recently been involved with the school to support Year 6 pupils considering the impact of the redevelopment of Bideford Quay in their geography lessons. Year 3 pupils receive letters from and are writing letters to their pen pals in another local primary school. Visiting clergy from different churches come to the school to talk to the pupils in assembly and the school performs its Christmas Carol Concert at the church as well as holding termly assemblies there. The school's internet facility is used by the pupils to link with pupils around the world. Gymnastic clubs that involve the community are also held at the school.
28. Pupils transfer from the partner infant school at seven and the school has close links with that school. Teachers visit the school to ensure there is a smooth transition from infant to junior school. Similar effective links are forged between St Margaret's School and the secondary school. Comprehensive Records of Achievement provided by the school also aid this transfer. Overall, pupils at St Margaret's are prepared well for their next stage of education.

29. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their development are good. These findings generally reflect those of the previous inspection, although there has been an improvement in the cultural dimension of the school's curriculum so that it too is good. The school effectively reflects its Christian ethos and aims through its work and links with the church and the community.
30. Alongside their lessons about Christianity, pupils learn about other faiths, cultures and beliefs. Pupils gain much from the school's close ties with the church. Assemblies are held at the church each term. Christmas services and other special occasions are marked by the church and school jointly. Visiting clergy from the Methodist and Baptist churches regularly lead assemblies in the school.
31. There is much evidence around the school of the way in which pupils are encouraged to develop their spiritual awareness. Displays feature artefacts associated with Christianity and other world religions. The confirmation of pupils is celebrated at the school and the views of others are respected. The school promotes a strong awareness of the values and beliefs of others in many subjects of the curriculum. For example, in history the life styles of the ancient Greeks are studied and Year 3 pupils discuss knowledgeably, the way that the roles of women were established.
32. Pupils show good moral values. They know the difference between right and wrong and pupils respect and care for each other. All members of the school community respond well to each other's individual and personal needs. Pupils co-operate well during group activities. They are supportive and kind to those pupils who have specific needs, involving them fully in their discussions and activities.
33. Pupils' social development and awareness is promoted well through a variety of successful charity works including supporting 'Jeans for Genes' Day, Comic Relief and the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Pupils take responsibility for the school library and run this during lunchtime. They display initiative as they organise the library without noticeable adult support. During practical work such as science investigations, pupils co-operate and work well together. The geography work in Year 6 has given pupils the opportunity to reflect upon the impact of the redevelopment of Bideford Quay and their responsibility when considering changes to the environment. In Year 3 and four, topics on recycling of waste have given pupils time to explore issues relating to sustainability.
34. The school places significant emphasis on raising pupils' cultural awareness and this aspect has developed well since the previous inspection. Pupils have many and varied opportunities to find out about different cultures and traditions. They have access to field trips and visits to other parts of the country, such as London and York. They go on visits to places in the locality including Northam Burrows, the local art gallery and events such as the 'Potters' Exhibition'. In art, pupils study many artists from different times, countries and cultures including aboriginal art. Internet links also provide pupils with the opportunity to find out about how people live in Australia. These experiences give pupils the chance to find out more about themselves and the richness and diversity of their own heritage.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. Procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are satisfactory overall, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The school has a sound Christian ethos,

staff know pupils very well and pastoral care has a high priority. Pupils feel safe and secure. Procedures for accidents, illnesses and medicines are satisfactory and sufficient staff have in-date first aid qualifications. The child protection policy does not clearly state either how to recognise signs of child abuse or the action to be taken if there are concerns. The designated child protection officer is trained and good links are established with the requisite agencies. However, staff do not know the identity of the child protection officer.

36. Health and safety are satisfactory, but some aspects need attention. The school is reviewing its management and monitoring of health and safety, a policy is being developed and staff awareness improved. Risk inspections are carried out. Officers from the emergency services conduct 'Life Skills Days'. Cleanliness and hygiene are satisfactory. Emergency evacuations are practised, however attendance registers are not held centrally for easy access and formal afternoon registrations are sometimes overlooked. At the time of the inspection the school had no visitors' book. The boiler rooms are without fire extinguishers, hazardous substances are not fully secured and the inspection of portable electrical appliances is out of date. The school has no automatic fire alarm or emergency lighting.
37. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are good. The school has introduced an effective individual education record for each pupil that tracks their academic progress made in every National Curriculum subject. Teachers update this record every half term and curriculum targets are set for pupils. These targets are also discussed with parents. This aspect of the school's work is an improvement since the last inspection and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, teachers and support staff know their pupils well and recognise and respond to their needs effectively. Class teachers and the assessment co-ordinator, through the analysis of a range of assessment data, monitor pupils' academic performance. However this information is not yet used to produce targets for each pupil's expected standard by the age of 11 years except for pupils in Year 6. There are a variety of assessments used, and more introduced recently, that need to be brought together into a single database to enable all staff to use them more effectively.
38. Teachers use assessment data to inform their planning well. The learning support staff keep detailed notes. Moderated portfolios of work in most subjects ensure teachers are clear of expectations in each year group and subject. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well. Their detailed and very specific individual education plans are fully implemented in the classroom and these pupils generally make very good progress. Teachers are very well supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The school encourages close liaison with parents so that everyone is completely involved and many parents commented that the provision is very good, although a very small minority of parents raised issues about specific aspects of special educational needs support. The inspection team considered these issues and judged that the school provide very good care.
39. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good and a strength of the school. The teaching of personal, social and health education, drug abuse and sex education is sensitive and well conceived. To help pupils develop self-assurance and maturity, and to play a meaningful role in school life, they are given a progressive range of responsibilities as they move through the school. Younger pupils have tasks such as tidying cloakrooms and libraries, while older pupils undertake gate and bell duties and assist at lunches and assemblies.

The house system fosters corporate spirit and endeavour. School captains act as an important link between pupils and staff by representing pupils' views to the headteacher. Pupils enjoy educational and residential visits, learn about charities, deliver gifts to local people and take part in community events. The school strongly encourages pupils to be involved in sport. Pupils' individual and collective efforts and achievements are recognised in merit awards and at celebratory assemblies.

40. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory as they were at the time of the last inspection. The attendance policy, as outlined in the prospectus, does not mention the educational disadvantage of pupils taking holidays in term time. Class teachers normally sanction applications for such holidays. Most parents observe the absence procedures and ensure their children are punctual. Attendance registers meet major statutory requirements, but there is a lack consistency in completion because they are not closely monitored.
41. Since the last inspection, procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour have continued to be satisfactory. The discipline policy suitably defines standards and expectations and reinforces the importance of positive behaviour. It includes a balanced range of rewards and sanctions that are implemented by almost all staff with consistency and common sense. The policy is supplemented by class rules that are displayed in classrooms and resource areas. During some playtimes there are insufficient staff on duty to supervise the two play areas, and pupils move between them unobserved and enter the school building without permission. The school's procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good and no groups or individuals are unfairly treated or disadvantaged. The equal opportunities policy is good, the bullying policy very good, and both meet statutory requirements. Pupils are fully aware that any signs of abuse, harassment or aggression will be dealt with firmly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents' views of the school are good. The parents' meeting was well attended and there was a very good response to the parents' questionnaire. Opinions expressed at the meeting and through the questionnaires indicate that parents support the school's provision for their children. Parents say that the school is well led and managed, teaching is good, and their children work hard and make good progress. Parents confirm their children enjoy school, they are becoming more responsible and mature and their behaviour is good. Parents also say they find it easy to approach staff with questions and problems and the school provides a good range of activities outside lessons. Evidence gained during the inspection upheld these views.
43. A significant minority of parents is unhappy about three aspects of the school's provision: the amount of homework children are given, the information they receive about children's progress and the closeness of home-school links. Inspection evidence showed that the school's homework policy is appropriate and implemented satisfactorily. However it was found that information on progress other than through the written reports, and the relationship with parents could be enhanced and the school recognises the importance of doing so, for example, through the recent revival of The Friends of the School.
44. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents has remained satisfactory since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment and learning benefit accordingly. The quality

of information provided for parents, including that on pupils' progress, is also satisfactory. Regular notices and newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school activities and events. School reports are very good. They provide a synopsis of the syllabus, give a clear commentary on pupils' progress, set targets for improvement and include pupils' comments. There are two annual parents' evenings to discuss pupils' progress and parents can see staff after school by prior appointment. The school does not seek parents' views through questionnaires and not all classes keep a home/school diary. The prospectus is clear and imparts useful information. The governors' annual report is well presented. Both documents meet statutory requirements, except that attendance figures are incomplete. The school's complaint procedure is satisfactory and known to parents.

45. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is good. The school values the part families play in pupils' education and welcomes their interest in all aspects of school life. Several parents and grandparents help with classes and activities and accompany educational visits. The parent/teacher association has recently been re-established and is attracting increased support for its fund-raising and social events. Pupils' reading diaries are kept in the lower school and many parents assist their children with homework.
46. The parents of pupils with special educational needs work closely with staff in drawing up and implementing their individual plans. The home/school agreement suitably emphasises mutual commitment and most parents comply with their undertakings about attendance and punctuality. Although some few parents rely heavily on staff input and offer little themselves, either to the learning process or the life of the school, the majority recognises the importance of partnership and makes a good contribution to their children's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. St Margaret's achieves its aims well. The school's Christian ethos, caring and supportive environment, encourages pupils to work increasingly independently and to acquire a sense of moral and personal responsibility. Key staff, such as subject co-ordinators and the school's special educational needs co-ordinator, work well with the senior management team to a common purpose of making further improvements to the school's standards. The headteacher provides sound leadership and promotes good relationships and a sense of teamwork throughout the staff. Parents have also commented that leadership throughout the school is good.
48. The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all those in its care. The policy is being implemented well and the school is inclusive in its ethos. The school's staff are careful to involve pupils of all abilities and backgrounds in lessons and in the life of the school, they know their pupils well and work hard to overcome barriers to learning. The management of special educational needs and the effectiveness of learning support assistants throughout the school are very good. The charging policy for school visits includes a subsidy and additional support for parents who cannot afford to pay the full amount. However, the policy is not sufficiently explained in the school's prospectus to enable relevant parents to use it effectively. Day-to-day communication and routines within the school are effective and the atmosphere is typically calm, welcoming and friendly. However, some policies such as aspects of health and safety around the school are not monitored closely enough to ensure they continue to be effective. The school uses

information technology to manage some key information about pupils, staff and the school's finances but this does not yet extend to the management of the wealth of assessment information available in the school.

49. The headteacher has delegated specific roles and responsibilities appropriately so that key staff make an effective contribution to the management of the school. The senior management team analyses and compares the school's standards to identify areas for improvement, for example, citing mathematics as a priority for improvement as a result. This aspect of management has significantly improved since the school was last inspected. Co-ordinators are now much more effective in their role, focusing on raising standards for example, in English, information technology, science and music. They annually review their subjects and advise the senior management team of their priorities. Consequently, the school's improvement plan is soundly based and includes appropriate targets for improvement for the next year. The governing body has directed resources appropriately towards these priorities and the plan is an effective working document in managing change over a period of 12 months. While the headteacher, staff and governing body are clear about the school's immediate priorities, their aspirations and goals for the longer term have not been discussed and articulated in a way that provides a clear strategic direction for the school. There is an urgent need to review the school's priorities for the longer term, involving staff, parents and the local community to help shape its future and to ensure all are working together towards common goals. Consequently, the school's improvement plan should be extended to cover at least three years.
50. The senior management team has recently developed its role in monitoring and supporting teaching but this aspect of their work has not yet been linked closely enough to school priorities to be effective. In particular, priorities in the school's improvement plan such as the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy have not yet been monitored by the co-ordinator or headteacher sufficiently to guide improvements. Teaching quality in the school varies quite widely so that some teachers require more support and guidance while the best practice in the school is not sufficiently disseminated.
51. The governing body has recovered well from a very difficult period two years ago and is now better informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The committee structures are firmly established, have clear terms of reference and governors effectively carry out their statutory duties. There are a number of comparatively new governors who are involving themselves in the life of the school. Most have specific duties such as being linked to a subject area and many visit the school to learn more, although they do not yet formally report back on their visits. Subject co-ordinators in priority areas are now beginning to update governors on progress, for example, in the use of information technology in the school. The headteacher also ensures governors are informed about the school's standards compared to other schools. While the governing body is very supportive, it does not yet challenge the school sufficiently in areas where it needs to improve or systematically review the impact of its spending decisions on school priorities.
52. The finance committee monitors the school's budget carefully. Financial resources and specific grants are used well for their intended purposes. An auditor's report of last year indicated that financial management is satisfactory and almost all the recommendations made have since been implemented. The governing body has made some good decisions in directing additional resources to appropriate areas,

such as the school's provision for special educational needs, and improving the number of computers in the school. The school has also deployed specialist expertise amongst the staff in subjects such as music, to very good effect in raising standards. The school has adopted most of the principles of best value well. While it does compare its standards, challenges the services it provides and works hard to achieve the most from its purchasing, the school seldom consults or takes account of the views of parents or the local community when making important decisions.

53. Overall, the school is effective in meeting its aims and parents like much of what the school provides. Taking account of the school's local context and its average expenditure in relation to primary schools nationally, it provides good value for money.
54. Staff are well qualified and trained, with a good spread of expertise covering the subjects of the curriculum. They are hard working and offer good support to each other. Learning support assistants have a good range of expertise and support pupils' learning well. The school welcomes parents and relatives into the school. Teachers guide their assistants and helpers effectively so that they make a very significant contribution to pupils' achievements, especially those with special educational needs.
55. Although there is no induction policy for staff, good procedures are in place for those who are newly qualified and staff settle well on their appointment. The governors have agreed the school's policy for implementing performance management and systems are in place that enable teachers to set targets and to review progress, including those for the headteacher. Those governors involved in the policy have received training and the school's professional development provision is now more closely linked to the school's priorities.
56. The adequacy of accommodation is satisfactory and suitably assists the effective delivery of the curriculum. The premises consist of a one-storey building with a pleasing central courtyard. There is no clear sign indicating school's reception. The exterior of the building is shabby, with flaking paint, broken panelling and rotting window and doorframes. The grounds are unkempt. The old swimming pool, wild life pond and adventure areas are unused and unattractive, and rubbish has been allowed to accumulate. The school has a grassed play area and ready access to facilities near the infant school and at the sports centre. The two hard play areas are not well marked for play activities.
57. The interior of the building is airy, bright and cheerful and has many good features. The classrooms are of good size and there are a generous number of resource and support rooms, as well as activity areas, offices and stores. The hall is spacious. The atmosphere in the school is purposeful but friendly. Corridors and classrooms are interesting and colourful and there is a wide range of imaginative and exciting displays, mobiles and paintings, many of them with a multicultural theme supported by pictures and artifacts. The balance between teaching aids, topic materials and the celebration of pupils' work is good.
58. The availability of resources for teaching subjects is variable but good overall. In English, mathematics and science resources are good and in music and art they are very good. The ratio of computers to pupils is low. The issue of insufficient computers continues to be an area for the school's focussed development. Not enough materials are available for design and technology. Other minor deficiencies

in English, mathematics and geography, noted at the time of the last inspection, have been addressed satisfactorily.

59. The school makes effective use of the facilities in the area. The local leisure centre for swimming, the nature reserve at Northam Burrows and the pottery gallery all provide additional resources for the school to use. The links with the church also provide opportunities to enhance the curriculum for pupils. Church members come into school to hear pupils read. The church has also contributed funding for music equipment. Visitors to the school and visits by pupils to localities further away, such as York and London, provide valuable support to pupils' understanding of different cultures, cities and peoples' lives. These learning opportunities significantly enrich the curriculum.
60. The school meets statutory requirements except for incomplete information relating to attendance in the school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to raise pupils' standards further, the school should:

- (1) Take account of the views of all involved with the school, including parents and the local community, to set goals for the direction of school development in the longer term and extend the school's improvement plan for achieving them to three years or more. (paragraphs 49, 52)
- (2) Develop further the school's systems for monitoring, supporting and developing teaching, involving the senior management team and subject co-ordinators, to focus particularly on:
 - priorities in the school's improvement plan such as implementing national strategies; (paragraph 83)
 - eliminating some poor teaching in Year 4; (paragraph 20)
 - spreading the very good practice in teaching quality across the school to improve teaching further. (paragraph 50)
- (3) Build on the good progress already made in improving the provision for information technology by:
 - improving further the number of computers in the school; (paragraph 58, 122)
 - providing training for teachers to improve their skills in information technology; (paragraph 120)
 - improving curriculum planning for information technology to provide more specific guidance in a scheme of work. (paragraph 23, 87, 121)

The third issue is currently a priority in the school's improvement plan.

62. In addition, the school may wish to take account of a number of minor issues raised in this report when drafting its action plan. These issues are discussed in the following paragraphs:

- Improve the scheme of work for design and technology and physical education – paragraphs 23, 104, 134.
- Review the timing of morning lessons – paragraph 18, 23, 73.
- Improve the quality and consistency of plenary sessions in lessons – paragraph 19.
- Make better use of the range of assessments used to monitor pupils by setting them individual targets for the end of key stage and bringing together the key assessments into a single database – paragraph 37.
- Improve standards of health and safety around the school – paragraph 35, 36, 48.
- Clarify the school's charging policy in the prospectus – paragraph 48.
- Improve the school's communication and links with parents and the community - paragraphs 43, 44.
- Improve the accommodation externally, including the state of the school grounds – paragraph 56.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12.5	14.5	42	27	0	2	2

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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	218
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	34
Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	58
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	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	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	28	24	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	21	27
	Girls	18	16	21
	Total	38	37	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (65)	71 (63)	92 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	21	26
	Girls	18	16	18
	Total	34	37	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (57)	71 (58)	85 (80)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	213
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	27.4

FTE means full-time equivalent

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	116

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	381,407
Total expenditure	354,191
Expenditure per pupil	1,632
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,761
Balance carried forward to next year	27,216

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	235
Number of questionnaires returned	98

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	44	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	43	6	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	69	4	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	51	19	3	1
The teaching is good.	44	51	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	53	26	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	42	5	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	43	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	20	49	23	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	37	47	6	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	44	5	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	44	7	1	4

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

ENGLISH

63. Standards seen in English are in line with the national expectations for 11 year olds and their achievements are satisfactory overall. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they are well supported by the special educational needs teacher and learning support assistants. Higher attaining pupils achieve well.
64. The school's results in the 2000 standard national tests were in line with those nationally and for similar schools. Standards in pupils' writing are at least satisfactory. Standards in speaking and listening are also satisfactory while pupils' standards of reading are good. The school target for 11 year old pupils in English was exceeded in 2000. Results in 2000 were also an improvement over previous years and inspection evidence shows that this upward trend is continuing. English standards at the school have risen over the past four years in line with national standards. The school has concentrated its efforts on implementing the National Literacy Strategy effectively so that teachers are now confident in their use of the strategy. As a result there have been some improvements in standards, for example, in reading.
65. Pupils listen carefully and understand instructions and directions. Attainment in speaking and listening is in line with national expectations. Many are eager to take part in oral discussion and to answer questions. Their vocabulary is improving and progress through the key stage is satisfactory. Many pupils sustain an informative and often humorous conversation, and higher attaining pupils are confident in asking questions and responding to each other's suggestions and ideas. They enjoy opportunities to discuss in groups and contribute their ideas in whole-class sessions. However, there are too few opportunities provided for drama and role play to enable pupils to make better progress in their speaking skills. By the age of 11, pupils speak clearly and confidently in a range of situations.
66. Pupils' attainment in reading is above average and they achieve well as they move through the school. The teaching of phonics in Years 3 and 4 through the Additional Literacy Support initiative has helped to improve pupils' reading. Pupils in Year 3 are able to use word books, word lists and alphabetical order confidently. They use word-building strategies competently and can discuss how they are attempting to spell a word. Thoughtful, well-focused questions by class teachers extend pupils' comprehension skills and use of inference and deduction when considering texts, such as 'Goodnight Mr Tom'.
67. Pupils understand the school's library organisation and can describe the processes of locating and retrieving information from both books and the Internet. Many pupils explain how they select their next book by studying the contents and skimming the text. Others look for a favourite author or select from a favoured series. All readers have firm opinions of what they like and dislike. Pupils read expressively in class and in assemblies, and because they are developing a sense of audience, they communicate well.

68. Throughout the curriculum, there are many planned opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills across the subjects of the curriculum and this helps raise pupils' attainment significantly. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils consider factual writing about the redevelopment of Bideford quay and in Year 5, pupils are expected to empathise with the feelings and thoughts of children who had been evacuated in the war. Pupils are sound readers of fiction and non-fiction and Year 4 pupils can discuss different styles and types of poetry, such as haiku and cinquain. The reading skills of the average and above average pupils are sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with most texts. By Year 6, pupils can confidently discuss features of favourite authors and books, offering reasons for their views.
69. Standards in writing are in line with national expectations. Pupils' progress is variable from year to year, but it is satisfactory overall. The school has identified this aspect as an area that requires further development to bring attainment in line with reading at the end of the key stage. In writing, pupils show an appropriate awareness of language and its rules and conventions. From entry into the school, pupils are encouraged to join up their writing and the standard of handwriting and presentation throughout the school is good. Pupils take a pride in their work and their presentation standards are good. Pupils in Year 3 ably write to their pen pal discussing in detail, events in their lives, such as 'a wobbly tooth', the make up of their family or where they are going on holiday. All pupils are clear about the conventions used in letter writing and they apply these well. By the age of 11, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of grammar and punctuation. They use different forms of writing appropriately, for example, in using a non-chronological report for writing about Bideford quay, in applying persuasive language when describing advertisements in magazines and in retelling an incident from another perspective. Year 6 pupils plan their work well. Examples of plays, autobiography, mystery, information, descriptive and narrative writing demonstrate the effective development of pupils' different writing styles. Higher attaining pupils in particular, convey meaning successfully. Information and communication technology is being used to good effect in each year to support work in English.
70. Pupils are keen, interested and motivated in their work and want to please their teachers. They respond well in lessons because they are conducted at a good pace and usually include challenging activities. Pupils generally behave well in lessons because relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Many pupils are members of and use the local library to extend their reading.
71. Teaching varies from satisfactory to excellent, with most teaching being good, especially in Years 3, 5 and 6. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen. Teachers apply guidance from the National Literacy Strategy effectively in their lessons, for example, they are very clear as to what should be taught in each year group. Lessons move at a good pace partly because time targets are set to ensure pupils achieve suitable amounts of work. Planning and preparation are thorough in most lessons and teachers manage and promote the pupils' behaviour well.
72. All teachers make appropriate choices of texts to share with pupils; these engage pupils' interest and develop their listening skills well. In the best lessons, teachers' explanations are clear and expectations are challenging. As a result, pupils are confident, attentive and well motivated. They focus on tasks with enthusiasm and write confidently in the chosen style. For example, Year 5 pupils are able to write a play script to include the feelings and emotions of the characters involved because

learning objectives are clear and pupils know what is expected of them. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to make their script more life like by attempting authentic accents when dramatising their play scripts. Teachers ask challenging questions to encourage pupils to think and explain, for example, in the plenary sessions of most lessons where teachers encourage pupils to describe what they have learned and to think about what they need to learn next.

73. In less successful lessons, teachers lack enthusiasm when reading the text and sometimes do not praise pupils effectively. Some morning lessons are too long so that pupils become restless and distracted. Opportunities are missed to engage pupils' interest through open-ended questions that require pupils to deduce and predict what might happen. Guided reading is not always well structured, for example, to encourage pupils to 'read between the lines' of stories to understand characters' feelings and motives.
74. Marking is good overall and sometimes very good, demonstrating an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers and support staff have a good knowledge of pupils' abilities from tests and close observation, and records kept on pupils' progress are used well to guide the next steps in their learning. Teachers encourage pupils to become more aware of their own learning by setting clear and meaningful targets to help them progress. Appropriate homework is generally set. Pupils are expected to complete unfinished work at home and they are keen to do so.
75. The leadership and management of English are good. The literacy co-ordinator is knowledgeable and committed to improving the school's provision for English. She has successfully monitored lessons throughout the school in order to guide teaching and learning and is aware of teachers' strengths and weaknesses. She has successfully led the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, which is having a direct impact on pupils' standards. Money has been spent wisely on resources, although the reading schemes need updating further.

MATHEMATICS

76. The results of the 2000 standard national tests for 11 year old pupils were in line with the national average but below the average for similar schools. However, the standards of higher attaining pupils were average compared to those in similar schools. Standards in mathematics have been rising in recent years at a rate higher than those nationally and girls have achieved a little better than boys. The standards seen during the inspection are in line with the national average. Many pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory but they are uneven as they move up the school. Both lower and higher attaining pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs. There have been some improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the way pupils use and apply their mathematics to solve problems in a range of everyday contexts. Pupils' mental mathematics and oral skills have also improved and are now good.
77. Pupils are developing a good range of efficient strategies for calculating mentally because their teachers provide challenging and stimulating mental warm up sessions in the early part of their lessons. Year 3 pupils add and subtract numbers with two digits mentally. By the end of Year 4 most pupils' are secure in their knowledge of multiplication and division facts up to times 5 and including times ten

tables. By Year 6, pupils are able to solve problems mentally involving combinations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division as when pupils quickly work out one third of ninety multiplied by five and add three. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 can suggest efficient strategies for solving problems, such as working out the number of children in a cinema when four fifths of the 850 present are adults.

78. The school has placed more emphasis on using and applying mathematical skills to solve problems so that these feature in most lessons. For example, Year 3 pupils use co-ordinates to describe a sequence of movements on a grid and can then describe movements around a map. Year 5 pupils learn to describe relationships between numbers in an equation and can then work out if a number of cars of different sizes will fit into a parking bay.
79. Pupils apply their numeracy skills in a range of subjects across the curriculum well, for example, in displaying data from surveys, information gathered from scientific experiments and measuring and shaping materials when assembling products in design and technology. Pupils enjoy mathematics, generally work well together and can work independently when required. In one Year 3 class, pupils used co-ordinates to identify letters on a grid and produced a message in code that was deciphered successfully by their partners. Pupils helped each other and were supported well by their teacher and support assistant. On finishing this work, pupils worked from their practice books without prompting from their teacher so that time was used well.
80. Teaching quality is good, especially in Years 3, 5 and 6. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of their subjects and they plan lessons carefully, guided by clear objectives that are shared with pupils. Introductions and mental and oral sessions are conducted at a good pace. Lessons are appropriately demanding because teachers have high expectations, know and manage their pupils well. Consequently, pupils' behaviour and attitude in lessons are very good. Teachers often challenge pupils to calculate mentally and then explain their methods so that they can be compared and discussed. Mathematical vocabulary is featured and reinforced regularly. The main activities for lessons are adapted well for pupils of different abilities and learning support assistants are very effective in their work with lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Resources and practical work are used to good effect, as when a Year 3 class learned about the points on a compass. Their teacher used a range of methods for involving all pupils, including turning in different directions, turning a number of degrees, moving from point to point on a grid and identifying directions on a map. By the end of the lesson pupils had learned very effectively and many could describe sequences of movements in different directions and knew for example, that from north clockwise to west is 270 degrees.
81. The closing sequence of lessons varies in quality; some plenary sessions summarise key points learned and link to the next sequence effectively. On some occasions, however, teachers do not devote time or involve pupils sufficiently to reinforce what has been learned and to identify points to follow up. Homework is generally appropriate and extends lessons well, although the 'problem of the week' set in Year 6 can be too demanding so that they unduly worry some pupils.
82. The curriculum is planned effectively and supported through a new published scheme. Resources for the subject are good and are used very effectively to

support and guide lower attaining pupils. Some lessons in the morning extend to 70 minutes – too long for many pupils who tend to slow down during their main activities so that time is not always used as well, especially in Year 3 and 4 classes.

83. The mathematics co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. There is a good action plan but at present the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been uneven in the school because its impact is not sufficiently monitored, especially in teaching. While pupils are assessed regularly, these assessments are not yet brought together into a single database with other assessments and targets for achievement to monitor pupils' progress effectively. Some training for teachers has been provided and this has had a positive effect on the mental and oral element of lessons but more is needed, especially to focus on the effectiveness of the plenary.

SCIENCE

84. In the 2000 standard national tests, pupils aged 11 years achieved standards above both the national averages and those of similar schools. Higher attaining pupils achieved particularly well. The proportion of pupils achieving beyond the expected level was higher than the national average and above that achieved in similar schools. Standards seen during the inspection from an analysis of work, photographs and observations made in three lessons, show pupils' standards have been maintained. They are above the national expectation and pupils continue to achieve well in all aspects of the subject. Those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils achieve very well. Standards in science have been rising at a rate significantly above national trends in recent years. These results are very pleasing and show an improvement since the last inspection. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
85. By Year 6, pupils can identify an appropriate approach to take when conducting investigations and can identify the key factors to be considered. They make predictions, record observations and are beginning to relate their scientific knowledge and understanding to the outcomes of their investigations, for example, when investigating the porosity of substances.
86. Pupils have good attitudes to science. They enjoy their lessons and co-operate well as they undertake their investigations. Their folders are very well presented and they take pride in their work. Pupils apply their numeracy skills well in science. They can accurately measure small quantities of water in Year 3. Appropriate links are also made between literacy lessons and science, when teachers use relevant non-fiction texts. Opportunities to use literacy skills are successfully fostered, for example, when pupils are encouraged to develop different styles of writing when they report on their investigations and produce their topic folders.
87. Teachers and pupils use many aspects of information technology effectively. Pupils use the Internet to research their topic work. Pupils in Year 6 use a spreadsheet to record and present information about the growth of plants under different conditions graphically. However, the use of information technology does not yet extend to gathering, processing and presenting data from experiments using sensors linked to a data-logger.

88. During the inspection insufficient lessons were observed to enable a rounded judgement to be made on the quality of teaching in science. The lessons that were seen were guided by clear objectives and focussed very much on the investigative process. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. For example, teachers carefully guide Year 3 pupils through an experiment to compare how well different paper towels mop up water. Each step in the process is discussed, the variables decided on and controlled. Higher attaining pupils are able to do the majority of this work on their own and they achieve very well. Teachers' marking is effective, enables pupils to celebrate their good work and suggests the next steps for pupils to aim for in their learning, encouraging a positive approach to the subject. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are prompted and supported well so that they produce good quality reports. By Year 6, almost all pupils can plan and carry out a fair test confidently. For example, these pupils can explain which factors to keep the same and the one they are to change and to measure during their investigation into the viscosity of liquids.
89. The introduction of a revised scheme of work has had a significant impact on pupils' standards. The school's programme of work is comprehensive and guides the development of pupils' enquiry skills well, although less emphasis is devoted to investigational work in Year 6 than in other years. Weaknesses in curriculum plans reported at the time of the last inspection have been addressed.
90. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and supports colleagues well. She leads staff in-service training effectively. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and also reviews pupils' work in order to track their progress, although she does not yet monitor lessons. Information gathered is used to review and update the existing scheme of work so that pupils are sufficiently challenged and build on prior knowledge. The school grounds have not been developed into a resource for science learning but the school does use the local area, for example, when pupils explore the dunes and 'Northam Burrows' to support their teaching about habitats. Pupils also visit the local recycling centre.

ART AND DESIGN

91. Art is a strength of the school. At the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are well above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well throughout the school. Improvements since the last inspection have been good.
92. The school's art curriculum is broadly based and very stimulating. Pupils experience all aspects of the art curriculum. They respond very well to the work of artists, for example, after looking at the work of Picasso's portrait, painted in 1907, Year 5 pupils produced portraits of famous celebrities that required them to have an understanding of 'cubism'. They created images, organising visual qualities to add the dimension of 'cubism'. They made very good progress as the teacher challenged and supported all pupils to work on strong lines as the dominating structural device. The learning support assistant in the class admirably supported a pupil with specific special needs.
93. Art is also used to support other areas of the curriculum and effective links are made with many subjects. In music, pupils listen to the 'Ride of the Valkyries' and then paint in response to the mood created by the music. Pupils' cultural

development is also significantly enhanced by their work in art. For example, Aboriginal art is studied, as is the work of Monet, Kandinsky and Van Gogh. Information technology is used very successfully in the appreciation and exploration of art as when pupils use digital cameras to produce fractal images with reflective symmetry.

94. Pupils work with a range of media and tools, in two and three dimensions. Pupils have sketchbooks that are used to monitor their progress in sketching skills. All pupils' work is valued and displayed round the school. These displays help to create a positive and attractive learning environment. There are displays that show 'batik' work, printing, clay, work with textiles and fabric paints and crayons. All pupils enjoy art and the great majority are totally absorbed during lessons so that they work conscientiously.
95. Teaching quality varies considerably but overall it is good and the best is excellent. Most lessons have specific objectives, are very well resourced and teachers ensure that they teach the basic skills to every member of the class. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. This was apparent when pupils in Year 6 discussed with their teacher, the techniques to use to get the sheen on their observational drawings of rainbow trout. Teachers also encourage pupils to learn from each other and to appraise each other's work as when they were appreciating the efforts made to recreate a painting in the style of Monet. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, both by the teachers and by the learning support assistants.
96. The co-ordinator is very experienced. Her thorough subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject are reflected in the standards of the art work seen throughout the school. She monitors planning and acts as a support to her colleagues, although she does not have the opportunity to visit classrooms to monitor the teaching of art.
97. Resources are many and varied. They are easily accessible, good in range, quality and quantity. Pupils have access to large, well-equipped work areas. The school's work is displayed locally and recently the school won a prize that celebrated the good quality work that it produces.
98. Learning support assistants are very committed and make a very good contribution to the high standards achieved. For example, they run a popular lunchtime craft club that makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. There is also an after-school art club that gives pupils opportunities to explore art even further and the results of their endeavours are to be seen around the school. The school also makes good use of a variety of visits and visitors as a stimulus for art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Standards seen during the inspection are average in relation to those nationally, and similar to standards during the last inspection. Pupils develop and apply their knowledge and skills in design and technology through a variety of contexts as they progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards.
100. Year 3 pupils consider what criteria to use when designing, for example, a recycling litter bin for the school to use. These pupils used the results of a litter survey

around the school, to consider litter that is re-usable or will not rot, to design ways of separating types of litter. The best designed bins included wheels for ease of movement. Year 4 pupils make effective use of pictures and models of artefacts, such as Greek pots to design and make their own. Many of their designs resemble the artefacts reviewed. They include regular patterns and pictures that tell a story from the perspective of the ancient Greeks and Spartans, inspired by the pupils' topic work in their history. In the best examples, pupils consider what the containers might be used to carry when deciding on materials to use to make the pots water proof. However, pupils in Year 3 have also made pots in a similar context and progress in pupils' skills of designing from Year 3 to Year 4 is insufficient.

101. In Year 5, pupils design photographic picture frames taking account of audience and context. In one very good lesson, the teacher shared very clear objectives with pupils and made excellent use of commercially designed 'photo frames, to encourage pupils to design imaginatively. As a result, pupils took account of how the frames stand freely, hinge to access the picture and their shape in relation to the purpose of the frame when designing their own. Pupils were constantly referred back to their design criteria and encouraged to review and adjust as they progress their designs. Pupils made very good progress in their design and evaluation skills and were able to discuss aspects of their work well with others. However, pupils in Year 6 have also undertaken similar work. In making their picture frames, many pupils' cutting, shaping and joining techniques are not sufficiently well developed to produce products with a quality finish. However, the best picture frames seen are well proportioned, simple and effective in construction and fit their purpose well. Pupils in Year 6 comment on ways of improving their designs in the light of their draft attempts and give due attention to the audience for their products.
102. Pupils enjoy designing and making a range of products from a variety of materials, often in the context of their science or history topic work. They work safely with cutting tools and with due regard to others around them. Pupils discuss and share their ideas, work independently and apply their numeracy skills well to measure and scale their designs.
103. Teaching varies considerably across the year groups but is generally good. Teachers share clear objectives with pupils, use artefacts and pictures well to model design ideas, and provide effective planning templates to guide pupils through the design process. Pupils are regularly reminded of their design criteria and homework is used well to research ideas further. In the most effective teaching, pupils are inspired by their teacher's very good knowledge, careful planning in stimulating contexts and use of resources to model the proposed work. However, pupils learn at a slower pace where teachers are repeating work without assessing pupils' prior knowledge and skills sufficiently to build on what they know and can do.
104. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable about his subject and has assessed samples of pupils' work from every year to monitor standards. Curriculum planning from year to year for the subject is weak and has not been reviewed for some time, although the subject is a priority in the current school's development plan. While the curriculum provides a number of stimulating contexts for developing pupils' knowledge and skills, insufficient attention has been given to ways of improving pupils' skills as they move from year to year, an issue identified in the last inspection report. Some design challenges are repeated in the lower school and others in the upper school. Consequently pupils' progress is uneven. For example, their skills with tools when shaping, cutting and joining are barely satisfactory by Year 6. Resources for the

subject are also barely adequate. The co-ordinator's action plan recognises and sets out to address these weaknesses.

GEOGRAPHY

105. During the inspection insufficient lessons were observed to enable a rounded judgement on the quality of teaching to be made. However, on the basis of the three lessons observed, displays around the school, photographs, teachers' planning and an analysis of pupils' work, pupils' standards by the end of Year 6 are above average and pupils achieve well throughout the school. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection, brought about in part by the provision of an improved scheme of work that guides the teaching of basic skills in the subject effectively. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in class and they make very good progress.
106. The school's links with the community are very effective. Visitors to the school and visits to areas both close to and far away from the school, make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in geography. Field trips to the estuary to study erosion, to Bideford to consider the impact of change on the local environment and the use of experts to talk to pupils all have a significant impact on pupils' learning. On a recent field trip to Bideford a council official accompanied pupils to explain the implications of the redesigning of the quayside. The pupils then had access to the council's large scale planning display materials. They referred to them, making notes and interpreting the information they could find whilst considering newspaper articles that gave opinions for and against the redevelopment project.
107. Excellent opportunities to enrich the geography curriculum for pupils in Year 6 were also provided during a recent visit to York. These pupils learnt about features relating to the location of places in their environments. They compared and contrasted their home region with that of a large city as they visited museums and a castle. This and other visits promote pupils' awareness of their own culture and of other cultures well.
108. Information technology is used very effectively to support geography. Year 3 pupils use computer software to learn about and use co-ordinates to describe sequences of movements on a map. Year 5 and 6 pupils use the digital camera to record specific features on their field trips and then they print and adapt them unaided on their return to school. Pupils apply their developing literacy and numeracy skills effectively in geography. For example, pupils write brochures to help attract visitors back to Devon in the context of the recent 'foot and mouth' outbreak, and they accurately convert scales when measuring distances with pieces of string on actual sketch plans.
109. In the lessons seen, teachers have very good knowledge of their subject so that basic skills are taught well. They prepare resources and plan effectively. They question skilfully and challenge pupils to think and explain well, as when pupils' learning about scale on a map in a Year 5 class, was reviewed and used to develop their next stage in relating these to actual distances. Pupils have very positive attitudes to geography and they work diligently in lessons because the work provided is stimulating and relationships with their teachers are good. They take a pride in their work, present it very well and are very well behaved. Pupils organise themselves and co-operate well in their group activities.

110. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and guides other teachers effectively. He has ensured that teachers have appropriate curriculum resources to develop pupils' basic skills in geography. A comprehensive booklet for pupils to complete in Years 5 and 6 provides an effective framework that enables pupils to build on their prior knowledge well. The co-ordinator understands strengths and areas for development in teaching from his monitoring of lessons, although analyses of pupils' standards to guide improvements are used less in the subject.

HISTORY

111. The pupils' standards achieved by the age of 11 in history are above average and there has been a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection. Pupils understand how they can find out about and then interpret information from the past. They make good progress in their enquiry skills as they study their topics, looking at a range of evidence such as artefacts, photographs and eye-witness accounts. For example, in Year 5, pupils show an increasing depth of factual knowledge and some understanding of the trauma of being an evacuee during World War II as they draw on accounts of first-hand experiences. When studying the Victorians in the upper school, pupils use local census material and other data as they select evaluate and combine information from different sources in order to further develop this topic as a local study.
112. Teachers make strong links between history and other subjects. Opportunities to use literacy and information technology skills are particularly noticeable, for example, when pupils make replica ration cards to support their 'Evacuees' topic in Year 5. Pupils in Year 4 examine Greek fables during their literacy lessons as they study the ancient Greeks in their history topic. The school makes good use of the museum service, visits to galleries and other historical sites to enhance the curriculum. Teachers and pupils draw on video sequences and compact disc as additional sources of information in lessons. Drama workshops also help to bring history to life, making a significant contribution to the school's history curriculum.
113. Overall, teaching is good, but it varies considerably in quality. The best is excellent but there is occasional poor teaching. The more effective teaching is evident in Year 3, 5 and 6. Teachers usually display good subject knowledge and their planning is thorough. They encourage pupils to describe clearly what they know about a topic at the start of a new theme and they review their learning at the end. This process is effective in helping teachers keep track of pupils' progress to build on what they know, understand and can do. Teachers choose very stimulating contexts for lessons that capture pupils' imaginations. In one excellent lesson, the teacher brought the history of 'Britain since the 1930s' to vivid life through effective use of first hand information about what it was like to be an evacuee during the World War II. Objectives for the lesson were very clear for pupils, who became totally absorbed in reliving the experience of being sent away from home to a strange environment. The teacher gave excellent descriptions of those events supporting his account with artefacts and photographs from the time. Where teaching is poor, tasks are not sufficiently structured and organised to enable pupils to progress. As a result, many become uncooperative, frustrated and bored so that their behaviour deteriorates to a point where there is little constructive learning.
114. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well by learning support assistants who are fully briefed about the content of lessons and what pupils are to

learn. Teachers are very clear about how support staff can fulfil their role so that these pupils make very good progress. Detailed notes and observations made by support staff ensure that teachers know what progress is being made. Pupils nearly always show good attitudes to history and they respond well to their lessons.

115. The co-ordinator is effective, knowledgeable and provides good support to colleagues with their planning. She suggests ideas for activities and is continually refining the scheme of work. There is a clear emphasis placed on the development of skills of historical enquiry, an aspect that has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' work, displays in classrooms and topics brought to life around the school are monitored by the co-ordinator to guide improvements to the curriculum, although she does not have opportunities to work with colleagues in their lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

116. Standards in the subject are average compared with pupils' standards nationally, although there are a few gaps in the school's provision. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection because there is now at least one computer available to each class and because some aspects of curriculum planning have improved considerably. Pupils use computers routinely in the various subjects of the curriculum and their achievements are at least satisfactory in most aspects of their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils' achievements in Year 5 in particular, are good. Pupils with special educational needs develop their skills well because they are supported effectively as they work.
117. Pupils in Year 3 use the computer in a range of subjects and contexts, for example, to develop an understanding of co-ordinates when reading maps in geography. Pupils also present information such as weather patterns over time, graphically in bar charts and research information about Athenian life from compact disk to inform their topic work on ancient Greece. Pupils use the keyboard and mouse well to save, organise and present their work. They can devise a sequence of instructions to control a roamer along a predetermined pathway. By Year 4, pupils are organising their work from a number of sources, including text and images from a digital camera, for example, to present a newspaper article on the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb to a satisfactory standard.
118. Year 5 pupils progress very well in their knowledge and skills, for example, when they produce a ration card as part of their history topic on Britain during the war. In one very good lesson, their teacher chose a very stimulating context that engaged and interested all pupils in the class. He skilfully modelled some ideas for the ration card, and showed pupils' examples from the time. The various steps in manipulating the text and images between several computer applications were very well demonstrated by the teacher who involved pupils of all abilities in the discussion. As a result, they adapted digital images of their face to fit the size of the card and merged in appropriate text in the style of examples they were shown. Pupils also designed ration stamps imaginatively from the perspective of those living at the time. The final products are of a very good standard and higher attaining pupils in particular, achieved very well. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 use e-mail to exchange information with other schools, including a link with an Australian school. By Year 6, many pupils are researching information in a range of topics using the Internet. They enter information from science investigations such as those for the conditions required for the growth of plants, to show the results graphically as part

of their report. Many pupils can add, refine and combine different forms of information confidently and with the needs of their audience in mind.

119. Pupils enjoy using computers to research information, to make presentations in a variety of forms taking account of their audience, and in sequencing instructions to control events such as creating a mathematical pattern using a screen turtle. They are responsible, work independently, co-operate very well in shared tasks and discuss next steps in a mature way.
120. In the week of the inspection, only one teacher was observed teaching information and communication technology and so a rounded judgement on teaching quality cannot be made. Teachers often make good use of their very skilful learning support assistants to support pupils with special educational needs who make very good progress. Opportunities to use and apply information and communication technology are identified by class teachers to enhance pupils' learning in most subjects. Skills in the various elements of information technology are mapped out well by the very knowledgeable subject co-ordinator to help teachers build on pupils' prior learning as they move up the school. However, teachers' own knowledge and skills varies considerably between classes so that the use of information technology in lessons is uneven between year groups.
121. The school's curriculum plans do not yet provide sufficient specific examples of activities to be included to help guide teachers in their planning. Pupils are also not yet using sensors to gather, process and present information about their environment using data-loggers, for example, as part of their science enquiries. This is an important gap in the school's curriculum planning. While there are more computers now available, the number is still low.
122. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in providing more computers and improving some aspects of curriculum plans. Even so, the subject rightly remains a priority for the school. Further improvements are needed in the number of computers, training and guidance for teachers and more detailed guidance in a scheme of work. The subject co-ordinator is effective in providing a clear direction for improvements in the subject. Appropriate targets have been identified in a good current action plan.

MUSIC

123. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well, attain standards that are well above average by the age of 11 years and enjoy their music making activities. Music has a firm place in the school's curriculum and there has been a long tradition of musical excellence in the school. Music was recognised as a strong subject in the last inspection and standards have improved since then.
124. The success of the school in music owes much to the co-ordinator who is a skilled musician and who provides strong leadership. The co-ordinator takes the majority of music lessons in the school. The provision provided by visiting specialist teachers is a strength of the school and keyboard, recorder, guitar, woodwind, brass and orchestra ensembles further enhance the provision for all pupils. This enables the higher attaining pupils to achieve very well. The pupils who play musical instruments attain particularly good standards in their ability to read and play music. They perform confidently in assembly and are enjoyed by the pupils watching.

125. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, sing well showing good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. Pupils confidently and accurately sing in two-part songs and rounds. Simple tasks, such as singing a well-known hymn in assembly, are performed to a very high musical standard. Boys particularly enjoy singing and sing well. Pupils listen carefully to detail and are encouraged to use musical vocabulary such as ostinato, drone, rhythm and major/minor when discussing a song or composing a piece of music. When composing pieces of music, pupils are able to follow symbols with increasing accuracy.
126. Music makes an important contribution to pupils' social and cultural development and to the life of the school generally. Pupils' attitudes to learning in music are very good. They demonstrate real pride in their compositions and performances. Supportive feedback from the teacher encourages pupils to improve their performance further. Well-briefed classroom assistants support pupils with special educational needs so that they are fully involved and confident in their music making. Pupils' sense of purpose when exploring music and musical instruments is clearly evident in all lessons seen. They are encouraged to compose and perform and much of this good work is developed further for homework.
127. The quality of teaching is very good and at times excellent. Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start of lessons and are referred to throughout. Lessons are well prepared and very focused. Pupils' earlier learning is considered and built on effectively. Assessments are used effectively to evaluate achievement and to influence the planning for future lessons. Time is used very well and pupils are kept highly motivated by the variety of experiences presented to them in lessons. In an excellent Year 3 lesson, pupils watched a sequence of video of Year 6 pupils drumming and were asked to identify the pattern heard, clap the rhythm to a rhyme, listen and appraise 'La Volta' from a tape recording, work in a group on a set task and perform in the plenary for the class. During the lesson, discussion was ongoing, developing musical appreciation further and linking all the different parts of the lesson together.
128. The co-ordinator is highly motivated, skilful and enthusiastic and manages the subject very well. The scheme of work written by the co-ordinator has been updated and is used well. She has rightly identified information and communication technology as needing further development. High quality resources are available, including tapes, CDs, reference books and a wide range of musical instruments, both tuned and untuned.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Although only a small number of physical education lessons were observed during the inspection, pupils' standards are satisfactory and all pupils receive their full entitlement. Overall, there has been a significant improvement since the last inspection especially in Years 5 and 6. There is no difference in standards achieved between boys and girls.
130. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of the importance of warm up/cool down and the effect of exercise on their bodies and how it contributes to their general health and welfare. In Year 6 pupils move around the playground with increasing control and demonstrate an expected range of passing, catching and volleying skills. Higher

attaining pupils develop their racket skills well and perform a series of movements with increasing control and accuracy.

131. Most pupils participate enthusiastically. However, where some Year 4 pupils do not do what is asked by their teacher and are disrupting the lesson, little or no learning takes place. Many pupils are willing to share ideas, work co-operatively and make good use of opportunities to practise their skills. The majority of pupils enjoy the sessions and are appropriately challenged. Apparatus is sensibly and responsibly used and in competitive situations pupils show due regard for laws and fair play. Teachers manage pupils well in most lessons. Pupils with special educational needs, including one from the local special school, integrate well and are given appropriate encouragement and help from both pupils and staff.
132. Teaching varies from satisfactory to very poor but is satisfactory overall. Teachers change into suitable clothing and footwear for lessons. Pupils are made aware of health and safety issues, change for physical education lessons and rings and watches in most cases are removed. In the satisfactory lessons, teachers show appropriate subject knowledge but opportunities are sometimes missed to show correct technique in improving pupils' skills.
133. In Year 4, the teaching lacks sufficient focus on developing skills, knowledge and understanding because planning for lessons is weak. The pupils are not well managed and, as a result, pupils' behaviour is poor. In the upper school, pupils achieve satisfactory standards because they are taught skills and techniques systematically. This was illustrated in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were taught how to pass the baton in a relay race and for the pupil to continue running. In the weaker lessons, opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and other pupils' work are sometimes missed.
134. The co-ordinator, who is new since the last inspection, has addressed some of the shortcomings in the subject. However, the scheme of work lacks detail and less confident members of staff are not sufficiently clear about what to teach or how. In addition, the scheme lacks sufficient rigour to ensure pupils build on prior experiences and develop skills in a systematic way as they move through the school. Monitoring of the subject is unsatisfactory and the school's policy is not always implemented. Accommodation and resources for the subject are good overall.