

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SHUTE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Haddon Road, Shute, Axminster

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113109

Headteacher: Ms Jill Mohiki

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Margaret Hulme  
3609

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 194030

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Haddon Road,  
Shute,  
Axminster,  
DEVON,  
Postcode: EX13 7QR.

Telephone number: 01297 33348

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Major A. Gray

Date of previous inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3609	Margaret Hulme	Registered Inspector	English; art and design; design & technology music; religious education; areas of learning for the Foundation Stage; special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
13450	Jennifer Madden	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11848	John Taylor	Team inspector	mathematics; science; information and communication technology; geography; history; physical education; equal opportunities; English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is smaller than most other primary schools and situated in a rural area near Axminster in Devon. It has 76 pupils on roll who are taught by five teachers of whom one is the headteacher and two are part-time. Few children live in the village, as it is very small, and pupils come from Shute, Umborne, Hampton and Whitford. Several children attending the school from outside the area are from families who chose to live in Shute specifically to be in the catchment area of a successful grammar school. There are 12 per cent of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The school has no refugees or Travellers and the percentage of children who speak English as an additional language is low (1.3 per cent). There are 20 per cent of pupils on the special educational needs register, which is above average and of these five per cent have statements of need, which is well above the national average. Before they enter school most children have had an opportunity to attend the local playgroup, which meets in the school, and the attainment of the intake on entry to school is typical of what would be expected for children aged four. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2000 but she was not present during the inspection and an acting headteacher assisted the inspection process.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a school with some strong features. Children achieve very high standards by the time they leave school, the teaching is good with a high percentage of very good teaching and staff are effective in making the school an attractive place for children to learn. Children are becoming mature and responsible and have good attitudes to their work and school life. The school has been recognised as one with good leadership and management in the past and in many respects the new headteacher is doing her best to make the changes that will enable the school to move forward. However, communication with parents is not as good as it was and their partnership with the school is suffering resulting in their losing confidence in the school's management. The hard work and dedication of the teaching and support staff are crucial to this school's success and this has been recognised by the Department for Education and Employment with an excellence award for better results in 2000 than other schools in similar circumstances. Although there is a good quality of education provided, despite some of the difficulties that staff have done their best to overcome, the value for money provided by the school is only satisfactory.

#### **What the school does well**

- By the time pupils leave school standards in National Curriculum tests are impressive.
- High standards are achieved in information and communication technology and music in the junior classes.
- Children are taught well and there is a high percentage of very good teaching.
- Children have good attitudes to their work and behaviour is good.
- It provides a good curriculum with an effective range of learning opportunities.
- Provision for personal development is good and pupils have a greater moral understanding and social responsibility.

#### **What could be improved**

- Some aspects of leadership and management
- Communication with parents.
- Provision for the Foundation Stage in one area of learning.
- The range of learning resources in some subjects because it is hampering the teaching.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in 1997. The school has made satisfactory progress in improving the development indicated as necessary in that inspection report. The role of curriculum co-ordinators is developing satisfactorily but not all teachers are certain of the extent of their responsibilities and their management roles are limited in that they do not monitor the teaching and learning of the subjects for which they are responsible although they have a desire to do so and this is now planned as part of future development. Considerable work has been done to provide younger pupils with a wider range of activities to interact, investigate and experiment. Staff have improved the curricular planning of mathematics and science to provide lessons that enable a more systematic development of pupils' skills of enquiry and investigation but further resources are needed. The range of experiences is now broader in design and technology, which is extending pupils' skills and knowledge. Some equipment and resources have been updated but the school still relies on borrowing from other sources.

### **STANDARDS**

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A*	A	A*	A*
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	A	A*	A*	A*

  

Key	
Very high standards	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests 2000 at Year 6 are impressive and those of English and science put the school in the top five per cent of schools in the country. This has been recognised by the Department for Education and Employment with an award for achievement for having better results in 2000 than other schools in similar circumstances. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in these subjects is particularly good, with 85 per cent in English, 77 per cent in science and 46 per cent in mathematics.

Children's performance in National Curriculum tests 2000 at Year 2 were above average for reading but well below average for writing. In mathematics they were at average levels. The year group taking the tests was small and when these results are analysed, as percentages one child is the equivalent of 6.5 per cent. The effect of one additional pupil on a school percentage measure is considerable. This group also had a high percentage of children with special educational needs but even so there were 33 per cent that reached the higher level in reading and 27 per cent who reached it in mathematics. Only in writing did no children reach the higher level. Current inspection findings show that in reading, writing and mathematics the children at Year 2 are achieving at least satisfactory standards and a few are doing better.

At the Foundation Stage, most children are likely to attain the early learning goals in most areas of learning by the time they are at Year 1 and some children are already at that stage and have begun the early stages of National Curriculum work. Children are doing particularly well in the areas of language, communication and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Some aspects of physical development are satisfactory but those relating to the use of the outdoor area are not because the provision is unsatisfactory.

Standards in all other subjects are typical of those expected for children's ages with the exception of information and communication technology and music in the junior classes. In these subjects standards are better and have been improved by the use of specialist teachers. In information and communication technology the school lacks essential learning resources and it is only provision of these by the teacher that enables the pupils to achieve as well as they do. In all subjects children are achieving at least satisfactorily in the infant class, with some doing better at all ages. In the junior classes pupils are achieving well and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported and have appropriate work. The few who speak English as an additional language have made good progress since entering school and now understand and speak English well enough to take part in all class work.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most make good efforts to do their best work and take a full part in school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils work and play together well and are at ease with one another. No evidence of bullying.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Most co-operate well, help one another and willingly carry out responsibilities they are given. The School Council represents all and draws attention to children's concerns.
Attendance	The rate of attendance has been very good with no unauthorised absence but this is no longer the case.

Pupils' attitudes to their work have improved and are now good; in a third of lessons seen they were very good. Children have targets to assist their personal development and older pupils organise activities to raise money for charities. Teachers are good role models and the very good relationships established with children form the foundation for good learning. A significant number of pupils is absent without authorisation and pupils arriving late for school are becoming a problem. This situation relating to punctuality is unsatisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good and the percentage of very good teaching has improved from seven per cent at the last inspection to 38 per cent at this inspection. Just one lesson was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good and sometimes very good. Teachers plan lessons in other subjects in ways that emphasise the use of literacy and numeracy skills. This is effective in reinforcing what has been learned. Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach basic skills but are sometimes hampered by a lack of such essential resources as reading books, although the school is doing its best to remedy this at present and some improvements have been made.

Particular strengths in teaching are the very good relationships that form a good foundation for learning and make children eager to do their best work. Teachers plan lessons in ways that meet the needs of all pupils and group activities are appropriate for children's stage of learning. Support staff are well briefed and use their knowledge and expertise well to support children's learning. This good teamwork is a strength of the school. Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress during lessons are used effectively in their planning. Homework that relates to work undertaken in class is used to consolidate what has been learned, particularly in the class of older pupils. Few weaknesses were seen in teaching but in the Foundation Stage it was unsatisfactory in one lesson because the planning and organisation had no teacher input and lacked suitable outdoor equipment for children to develop their physical skills as recommended in the national guidance. The youngest children lack their own secure area for physical development with appropriate equipment and teacher involvement at all times.

Pupils' learning is good because they constantly make gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are prepared to make good and sometimes very good intellectual and creative efforts. The pace of working is good and very good at Years 5 and 6, which results in finished work of a high standard. The work set by teachers maintains interest and children get on with the activities they are given to do - they concentrate well. When asked they can explain what they have learned and older pupils have a very good idea of how well they have achieved and whether or not they could have done better.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Effective range of learning opportunities. Children prepared well for next stage of education
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Children have well trained support and teachers' planning is effective for each child's stage of learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Although there are very few pupils, teachers make them feel secure from the start and they soon acquire an understanding of English and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall good. Collective worship promotes spiritual development well. Children know the difference between right and wrong and have a growing understanding of the need for social responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Overall care is satisfactory. There are some strengths but other aspects are in urgent need of improvement.

Although the school has worked very well in partnership with parents in the past, it is unsatisfactory at present. Parents are satisfactorily involved in their children's work at home and in their contribution to their children's learning. They receive a good range of information about how well their children are doing and are effective in raising funds for school resources. Many parents are very interested in their children's work and want to be

partners in the education process. The recent difficulties in relationships between the headteacher and a significant percentage of parents have put a great strain on these processes and good communication needs restoring.

Good use is made of visitors to the school to enhance subjects. Additional support is provided for those children that need it. There is a good range of activities outside lessons. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements.

Particular strengths in the way that the school cares for its pupils are seen in the ways that teachers get to know their children and relate to families, provision for those with special educational needs, the ways that teachers use assessment to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress, procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour and the ways that children are introduced to school when they start and are prepared for secondary education later. Weaknesses in the way the school cares for its pupils are: the procedures for child protection; some areas of health and safety that could affect pupils' welfare; the lack of procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Some progress has been made towards developing the curriculum leadership role of teachers but it needs to encompass the monitoring of teaching and learning. Leadership is ensuring at least satisfactory educational direction, which in some subjects is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Some improvements needed relating to the care of children and communication with parents. Good support for curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a good understanding of its performance and the use of data analysis is helping staff understand what works well and why.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its resources. Educational priorities are supported effectively through the financial planning.

The number and experience of teachers and support staff are satisfactory but the accommodation and learning resources are inadequate.

Particular strengths in leadership and management are that its aims are reflected well in the work of the school, the headteacher has made some changes to improve the curriculum, staff have a better understanding of the school's performance, good use is made of specific grants and there is effective use of new technology. There are weaknesses. The current co-ordinator for special educational needs has no allocated time to carry out her management role at present but plans have been made to improve this. It is of great credit to the co-ordinator that despite these difficulties good provision for these pupils is in place. Subject co-ordinators need to be involved in monitoring the teaching and learning. There is no policy for the induction of new teachers. Better communication is needed with parents.

Governors are aware of the principles of best value and make satisfactory attempts to use them in the management of the school and in procuring services and resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and are becoming mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way that the school works with them.</li> <li>• The way they feel about approaching the school if concerned or needing information about children.</li> <li>• Information about how well their children are doing.</li> <li>• Leadership and management.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. The range of information about how well children are doing is good and activities outside lessons are typical of other primary schools. The recently fragmenting relationship

between a significant number of parents and the headteacher has damaged the partnership with parents and the restoration of good communication is essential.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The previous report of 1997 judged standards being achieved as being broadly the same as those expected nationally by Year 2 in English and mathematics but much better in science. Attainment for Year 6 pupils was well above average in English, mathematics and science. The findings of the current inspection, based on lessons and the scrutiny of written work, show that standards are generally in line with national expectations for Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics but there are a few children doing better. At Year 6 standards are higher than expected nationally and some pupils are working at a much higher level in English, mathematics and science.
2. When children enter school, the assessments undertaken by teachers show that usually, although the overall attainment is typical for children of this age, there are several children who are more able and their skills in literacy and numeracy are better developed than others. Standards for the Foundation Stage, in most areas of learning, are satisfactory and some children have already moved to the early work of the National Curriculum. In the physical development area of learning, standards are satisfactory in some aspects such as the development their finer physical skills as they use a range of small equipment and tools safely. They are gaining greater dexterity in the use of small construction apparatus and in the control of the mouse when using the computer. However, standards are unsatisfactory in those elements related to the work children should be doing in the outdoor area because the provision is unsatisfactory. There is no teacher involvement or appropriate equipment.
3. In National Curriculum tests in 2000 the performance of Year 2 children was above average for reading but well below average for writing. Their performance in mathematics was in line with the national average but in science the teachers' assessments showed them as well below average. When these results were compared with schools in similar contexts the best results were in reading, which was average; for writing they were below average and for mathematics well below average. Pupils' performance at Year 6 for the same year show that English and science results were very high, putting the school in the top five per cent of schools in the country. Performance in mathematics was well above average. These were very good results for the oldest children, which remained unchanged when compared to those of similar schools. At Year 6, all pupils reached Level 4 and above in English, with 85 per cent reaching the higher Level 5. In mathematics, there were two pupils below Level 4 but all others reached that level and 46 per cent were at Level 5. In science, all pupils reached Level 4, with 77 per cent reaching the higher Level 5.
4. The results of infant children have been looked at carefully to see if they accounted for some underperformance. This has been pursued rigorously by the new headteacher who has been concerned to remedy any weakness. She has correctly introduced joined writing at an earlier stage than in the past and hopes to see improvements in writing this year. However, in 2000 there were over 30 per cent of Year 2 children with special educational needs, which does account for results at the lower levels. Despite these difficulties, an analysis of reading shows that all except two pupils reached the acceptable Level 2 and 33 per cent the higher Level 3. In mathematics, all except one pupil reached the acceptable Level 2 and 27 per cent reached the higher Level 3. In writing the picture was different, with four pupils below the acceptable Level 2 and four pupils at the lower end of Level 2. Few achieved the higher end of Level 2 and none

reached the higher Level 3. Teachers are aware that the 15 children who took the tests are a small year group and percentages do distort results when one child is the equivalent of 6.5 per cent. The effect of one additional pupil on a school percentage measure can be considerable. However, this has not prevented them from trying to ensure that all children give their best performance.

5. In the infant class, children communicate satisfactorily. Speech is clear and children make their needs and wants understood. Some children, including those at Year 1 and the Foundation Stage, are very articulate and respond well to the teacher's questions, using a range of vocabulary. The effective teaching enables pupils to achieve well and by the age of eleven pupils' responses to teachers' questioning are well considered and they use interesting vocabulary, showing interest in the use of words no longer in general use. Pupils know how to explain their opinions and ideas and enjoy taking part in discussion and debate. Generally, children enter school familiar with books and know how to use them. Teachers give much attention to the teaching of letter sounds and the majority of children soon learn to use this skill to read unfamiliar words. They enjoy stories and use the school library. By Year 3, pupils read with improving fluency and accuracy and older pupils enjoy discussing the merits of one author over another. The older pupils are adept at finding information they need from several sources, including the Internet, and are very competent readers of fiction and poetry. There are avid readers in all classes and more able pupils take delight in using their skills whenever possible. By Year 3, pupils read with improving fluency and accuracy and older pupils enjoy discussing the merits of one author over another. The older pupils are adept at finding information they need from several sources, including the Internet, and are very competent readers of fiction and poetry. Writing is improving in the infant classes and standards seen were sound. Average writers communicate meaning clearly, developing their ideas in short sentences, using spoken language but with some evidence of the use of punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. Handwriting is legible and children are learning to join their letters. By Years 5 and 6 pupils have made good progress. Their writing shows good use of punctuation and interesting use of dialogue; it is in many forms and for a range of purposes including lists, poems and notes. They spell correctly and use words of greater complexity such as *onomatopoeia*. Work is checked for misspelling and other errors of presentation.
6. In mathematics, most seven year olds understand place value of numbers to 100 and use this knowledge confidently when putting numbers in order, adding and subtracting. They can identify common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and some of their properties. They measure accurately and estimate lengths using standard units such as centimetres. They know how to use simple graphs to convey mathematical information. However, few children understand numbers to 1000 and not enough progress has been made in some elements of mathematics such as shape, space and measure. By eleven, most children can find answers quickly and accurately, using methods such as halving, doubling, rounding numbers up and down and splitting numbers by place value. They have a good range of mathematical vocabulary, which they use correctly when explaining their methods. They know the units and values of the metric system, use degrees as a unit of measure and record and interpret mathematical data.
7. Literacy and numeracy skills are used well in other subjects. For example, in geography Year 6 pupils have researched and investigated mountain environments, resulting in well-written factual accounts of similarities and differences. In religious education, younger juniors write a story from St Luke's Gospel and some accounts of what is known about Jesus with evidence to back them up. The use and application of mathematics are particularly good. Some excellent examples were seen in the use of angles to control a robot, in the use of accurate measures to investigate the properties of liquids and solids in science and when interpreting temperature,

rainfall and altitude measurements in geography.

8. The National Numeracy Strategy has had a distinct impact on raising standards and the school identifies the improvement in oral and mental mathematics as its greatest success of recent times. It has also awakened interest and enthusiasm for number work, especially when children are challenged to find alternative ways of finding answers and are given the chance to share them.
9. In science, Year 2 children gained new knowledge about keeping healthy and learned that taking exercise and eating the right types and amounts of food are important factors. They sort objects into groups on the basis of hardness and softness, and whether they will bend or squash. Most understand the meaning of an investigation and when they observe what happens they write simple conclusions. Their achievement in scientific enquiry is improving. They now observe changes more carefully and record in simple scientific words what they have seen. By the time they leave school, children have learned how to work methodically through a scientific enquiry. They have a secure knowledge of what constitutes a fair test. They predict what might happen and the likely difference in outcomes if one element of a test is changed. They have a good knowledge of human biology and an increasing understanding of life processes.
10. In all other subjects standards are typical of what would be expected for the children's ages with the exception of information and communication technology and music in the junior classes, where standards are better than that expected for age. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the Devon Agreed Syllabus.
11. In information and communication technology most seven-year-olds are confident when using technology to support their learning. They understand the function and use of the keyboard, mouse, disks and printers and know how to use a menu to make choices about presenting and enhancing their work. Standards are well above the expected level in the junior classes. By Year 6, most pupils have learnt to use information and communication technology as a resource. This enables them to present information in different forms for specific purposes and audiences. This was the case when they used a web site to find out about climatic conditions in mountainous regions. This extended to work on the interpretation of graphs, contrasting climatic conditions with those of Shute and learning how altitude has an effect on temperature and rainfall. The use of a subject specialist is having a very positive effect on standards because her knowledge is used well and she brings with her the resources that the school lacks such as those needed for the control element of this subject. Without access to these resources, pupils would be unable to reach the standards that they do.
12. In music the use of a subject specialist who is a regular member of staff is a strength of the school. She uses her knowledge and skills well to interest and enthuse pupils. By Year 6 their listening and appraising skills are good. Written accounts of musical appreciation show that pupils have listened well and comments reflect the ways that instruments have been used in compositions. Their writing also expresses their thoughts and feelings, which sometimes changes as they listen. Most can compare the different impact of pieces with the same title but with different composers. For example, they find that *Adagio for Strings* by Samuel Barber has a very different impact from that of a piece with the same title by William Orbit. They develop great confidence and dexterity with percussion and have a good sense of rhythm and knowledge of how to combine musical elements in their own compositions. They experience a range of styles of music and talk about them with animation in class.
13. In all subjects children are achieving at least satisfactorily in the infant class and some are doing

better at all ages. The majority of children are making good progress based on their attainment when they enter school. In the junior classes pupils are achieving well and making good progress. This is particularly notable given that all classes have a significant percentage of pupils with special educational needs. In the infant class there are 11 per cent, in the Year 3 and 4 class there are 33 per cent and in the Year 5 and 6 class there are 15 per cent. The particularly good adult support for these children and the teacher's planning of appropriate work are the factors that enable them to make good progress. Although there are very few children who speak English as an additional language they have made good progress since they entered school. Now they understand and speak English well enough to take part in all class work

14. The hard work and dedication of the teaching and support staff are crucial to this school's success and this has been recognised by the Department for Education and Employment with an excellence award for better results in 2000 than other schools in similar circumstances.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

15. Pupil's attitudes have improved since the last inspection and are now good. In a third of lessons observed they were very good. During the inspection it was clear that pupils enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to their work and school life. The majority arrive on time and settle quickly to the school day. Good teaching, combined with the quality and range of learning opportunities, ensures that pupils are mostly attentive and interested during lessons. They are keen and confident in the school's family atmosphere, supported by the good classroom management. These positive attitudes begin at the Foundation Stage, where the establishment of very good relationships has resulted in children that are secure, well behaved and eager, for example, to take part in discussion with adults.
16. Behaviour of pupils in and around the school is generally good. The occasionally challenging behaviour is well managed and has minimal effect on the learning of other pupils. All staff have clear expectations of good behaviour, which equally apply during break times and lunchtimes. There was no evidence of bullying in the school and all children, including the youngest, were at ease with one another, the older ones helping the youngest. There were no exclusions in the year before the inspection.
17. Pupils' personal development is good. Children negotiate targets with teachers and parents not only for their academic work but also for their personal development. Year 6 pupils run a charity group, which organises events - for example, a non-uniform day for UNICEF and a very successful cake stall for the Indian Earthquake Appeal. Circle time, when children all sit round quietly and discuss their work with the teacher, is an integral part of school life. Such times enable children to express their opinions and to explore problems - for example, the use of the Astra turf for ballgames or the exclusion of other pupils. The School Council has recently been expanded to include pupils from each year group. This is seen by the pupils as being very successful and has brought to light a different set of issues, including the fact that the youngest pupils find the physical state of the toilets intimidating and girls object to having for the use of the entire school only two toilets, of which one is toddler size and one is child size.
18. Relationships within the school are very good in the calm and purposeful atmosphere. Teachers provide very good role models for pupils, who, as a result, relate very well to one another and have confidence in their social skills. In just one lesson, a few pupils were seen to find working in a group uncomfortable but the teacher used her skills effectively to help children co-operate and make the group task successful. Those pupils with special educational needs and those who

come to school knowing very little English have similarly very good relationships. This results in good efforts and perseverance in completing work.

19. Attendance during the school year September 1999 to July 2000 was very good and well above the national average, while unauthorised absence in the same year was well below the national average. However, it is clear from the registers that since September 2000 this is no longer the case. A significant number of pupils have been absent without authorisation and pupils arriving late for school are becoming a problem. This situation relating to punctuality is unsatisfactory.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

20. The quality of teaching is generally good, which is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. However, there is one important difference. At the last inspection there was only seven per cent of very good teaching but this has now improved to 38 per cent. As in the previous inspection there was a very small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. In this inspection it was unsatisfactory in only one lesson.
21. The teaching for the Foundation Stage and Year 1 and 2 children is good. At the time of inspection, the headteacher, who usually teaches this class for two days each week, was not in school. Consequently, these children were taught for one day by an acting headteacher, who had never taught them before, and for the other two days by their usual teacher. Both teachers have established very good relationships with children and are friendly and approachable. Children feel secure and happy in their company and quickly settle into the routines of the day. Teachers plan sessions effectively for the three age groups, introducing a lesson and then providing group activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of learning. The organisation and planning in respect of literacy and numeracy are particularly good because the teacher makes effective use of her knowledge of the new Foundation Stage areas of learning to meet the children's needs and those of the Year 1 and Year 2 children whose work is at National Curriculum level. In some sessions the teacher gives priority to working with the older pupils during group activity times but the play activities provided for younger ones are well structured and other adult involvement is planned for them to enable progress during the session. The teacher was generally able to check how all groups were progressing and the well-trained support assistants were effective in supporting children's learning. At no time did the teacher and support assistant have to leave the group with whom they were working to intervene in other groups because of unsatisfactory behaviour. Teachers provide a good range of resources and give clear explanations of the activities so that children understand what they have to do and sustain concentration and complete their work. Consequently they are able to explain what they have learned.
22. The only unsatisfactory lesson was at the Foundation Stage. The teaching of the physical development area of learning is satisfactory in the classroom but unsatisfactory outdoors because the planning and organisation rely entirely on support staff and parents and the school lacks suitable outdoor equipment for children to develop their physical skills as recommended in the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. Although the supervision provided by support staff and parents is good, the youngest children need their own secure area for physical development with appropriate equipment and the activities require teacher involvement at all times.
23. The teaching of Years 1 and 2 is occasionally very good. The very good relationships established with the children make them confident in asking questions and responding to

directions. They have good attitudes to their work and behaviour is good. Teachers manage children well, which is extremely important in such lessons as physical education in the hall. A great deal of space is taken up with the storage of lunchtime chairs and tables because one of the main storage areas is used to store playgroup equipment. Although lessons are planned very carefully around the constraints of space, it does hamper what teachers wish to do and what children in this situation can achieve. Although the acting headteacher had made some improvements since the registered inspector had visited prior to the inspection, teachers have to work in spaces where there are potentially hazardous situations and this needs remedying immediately.

24. The teaching of Years 3 – 6 is particularly good. In half the lessons seen it was very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach. The teachers' good knowledge of the curriculum is evident in the way that subjects are presented and explained. Learning objectives are shared with the children who understand what they have to do.
25. Teachers manage pupils very well, particularly in the class with the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The teacher has laid a good foundation for learning by establishing very good relationships with them all. She values their contributions and listens carefully to what they have to say, making appropriate comments that make them feel valued and raises their self-esteem. In all classes, those adults who support pupils who have statements of special educational need are very skilled and as they work alongside them they keep the children working at their tasks and provide encouragement so that work is completed. They are exceedingly well briefed by the teachers and have a good understanding of the activities in which all pupils are involved, resulting in any child getting support as he or she needs it. Teamwork is well established and consequently the support staff can readily change from one activity to another. All pupils benefit from these ways of working and get the best possible support and guidance.
26. In the very good lessons teachers make exceptionally good efforts to ensure that all lessons get off to a good start. This was done particularly well in numeracy sessions, which began with bright, breezy oral activities that were often very challenging. This was the case in a class of older pupils where the development of halving and doubling skills were made more difficult by introducing a time target factor. The very skilful questioning by the teacher gave everyone an opportunity to explain their way of working and emphasised the learning objective to use mental skills to predict answers and provide a check when working out is done. The tasks challenged pupils to apply their skills and tackle more difficult examples. For example, they had to give true or false responses to such questions as, "If you have £3,465 .16 and £1,994.26 is spent will you have £1,446.13 left – true or false?" As pupils work they appreciate a 'traffic lights' system where they can indicate a lack of understanding by colour coding their work. The teacher uses this effectively as it influences how she plans the next lesson.
27. Homework in mathematics is mainly used to reinforce what has been learned and is usually linked to recent class work. The work taken home is often the same for all pupils and one parent expressed concern about this for those with special educational needs. However, the teacher does ask pupils to use their traffic light colour coding system so that when she marks the work she knows where problems have arisen and relies on parents' drawing her attention to their concerns.
28. All teachers make effective use of their knowledge to link one subject to another and show pupils how to make the best use of prior learning. This was the case in a science lesson when pupils were investigating variations in pitch, using stretched rubber bands and varying columns of

air. Their task was to link cause and effect and make scientific statements when comparing results. The very good questioning and discussion showed evident understanding of physical processes and there was strong pupil participation. The new learning about sound through vibrating air built well on previous work and proved to be an effective link to knowledge of musical instruments. Learning was enhanced by the searching questions such as, “When making or using panpipes how can you get all the notes from one long pipe?” Such questioning inspired pupils to make good intellectual efforts to explain their achievements scientifically. As in mathematics, homework was set that involved pupils in research.

29. The use of specialist teaching to improve standards is used to very good effect in both music and information and communication technology. For example, a lesson on control technology with Year 6 pupils linked all elements of the lesson with their own experiences, which was an effective teaching technique because they understood the use of such controls in videos, singing birthday cards, car door opening and traffic lights before they moved on to the main part of the lesson. Skilful questioning extended their knowledge and understanding quickly, such as of the meaning of *sensor* and of how speed cameras work. Pupils were inspired and challenged to produce a storyboard of a sequence for a pelican crossing and programming to direct and control a screen robot. Very good learning was generated by the high quality of pupils’ attitudes to the work. The levels of concentration, co-operation with others and skill in finding ways of tackling difficulties were impressive. The work of the learning support assistant was particularly good, as he had produced various aids to help those working with the programmable toy. The finished work was at a higher standard than expected for the age group.
30. The good teaching is having a very positive effect on children’s learning. Pupils’ learning is good because they constantly make gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are prepared to make good and sometimes very good intellectual and creative efforts. The pace of working is good and very good at Years 5 and 6, which results in finished work of high standard. The work set by teachers maintains interest and children get on with the activities they are given to do, concentrating well. When asked, they can explain what they have learned and older pupils have a very good idea of how well they have achieved and whether or not they could have done better.
31. The hard work and dedication of the teaching and support staff are evident in this school. During the inspection staff were not deterred by experiencing an inspection without their headteacher and their teamwork is one of the school’s strengths.

### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

32. The curriculum and range of learning opportunities has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The weaknesses highlighted in the last inspection have been remedied. Considerable work has been done to provide younger pupils with a wider range of activities to interact, investigate and experiment. The introduction of more practically based schemes of work and some improvement in resources are giving a broader range of experiences in design and technology and better support for the learning of skills of enquiry in mathematics and science. Some equipment and resources have been updated but the school still relies on borrowing from other sources.
33. The requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education are met. There are good strategies in place for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, which enable pupils to reach well

above average standards by the time they leave the school. However, the shortage of some resources and their poor quality restricts the depth of teaching in religious education, music, art, science, information and communication technology and physical education. Teachers show skill and ingenuity in dealing with this problem; for example, they borrow items from parents, make their own aids and improvise with everyday objects such as milk bottles and nail boards for teaching science.

34. The curricular planning is appropriate for the Foundation Stage. It relates well to the areas of learning and makes provision for those children who are ready to begin work on the National Curriculum. However, the policy is out of date and needs to come into line with the new curriculum for the Foundation Stage and mirror the good practice seen during the inspection. Overall, provision for these young children is good, although the outdoor activities to support physical development rely entirely on support staff and parents taking the children to a part of the school grounds, some distance from the classroom, while the rest of the class are in the hall having physical education with the teacher. This leaves the children with no teacher input and having to rely predominantly on the use of playgroup equipment which is too small. This situation is unsatisfactory.
35. Overall, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is good support by well-trained staff. Annual reviews, in line with the national Code of Practice, are organised for those pupils who have statements of special educational need. Individual education plans, which are detailed and specific, are in place for all children on the special needs register. However, the co-ordinator has no time allocated to work with these children to monitor their progress. The adults supporting these children in lessons have high expectations of their work and behaviour and pupils respond well to this. Relationships are very good, resulting in the pupils showing determination and perseverance in their efforts to improve.
36. Equal opportunities for all pupils are secured by the careful lesson planning, which provides different levels of tasks matched to the range of abilities in the class. These give all children the same chance of achieving the learning objectives. All pupils have equal access to such activities after school as games, computer and drama clubs. The school deals effectively with any issues that compromise equal opportunities. For example, new resources for reading have been purchased that are of particular interest to boys to encourage them to read more.
37. The school organises a wide range of opportunities outside lessons for its pupils. These include netball, football, computer, conservation and drama groups. The curriculum is also enhanced by visits to coastal locations such as Beer, and a biennial educational residential week is organised at Heatree House on Dartmoor for the older pupils. Visitors to the school also enrich the curriculum. These have included a storyteller, African musicians and some puppeteers who presented *Tales of other Cultures*
38. There is good provision for pupils personal, social and health education. Health issues, including sex education and the misuse of such drugs as tobacco and alcohol, are included in the curriculum for older pupils. The importance of a balanced diet, hygiene and exercise are taught as part of the school's attention to healthy living. Children are taught safe practices, when for example, moving physical education equipment and experimenting in science.
39. The school cultivates other aspects of personal development very effectively. This results in pupils having good attitudes to the school, sensible and secure relationships with other pupils and adults and behaving well.

40. Provision for pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is good. There is good promotion of spiritual development. This is accomplished through school assemblies, which help to develop their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. For example, the assembly on the theme of giving up something precious, taken by a visiting minister, was about Lent and led to the significance for Christians of Good Friday, and the spirituality in the story of '*The Selfish Giant*'. The opportunities to reflect and share thoughts on themes such as love, happiness, sadness and forgiveness give children some understanding of some of the fundamental questions of life. Spiritual awareness is also well developed in lessons. For example, in a science lesson, pupils' sense of wonder was aroused when spinning discs they had made produced white light from a mixture of prime colours and concentric circles from black images.
41. Provision for moral and social development is also good. Children develop skills in lessons where they work together, take responsibility and learn how to appreciate the good and bad effects that their actions have on others. There is a school council, to which all pupils have access and which meets to discuss those social issues that concern the school community. Recently they have discussed the problems associated with safety relating to traffic congestion outside school and the problems for the youngest children because of the inadequate toilet provision. Circle time sessions, during which pupils are given the opportunity to air their views and problems, are a regular part of the curriculum. Older pupils have a number of responsibilities, which they undertake very efficiently, such as preparing the hall for assembly. Social skills are extended beyond school, particularly through the pupils' charity club when they are involved in raising money for such charities as Oxfam, the local *Wizz Kids*, which provides mobility equipment for handicapped children and East Devon Disabled Athletes. Pupils clearly distinguish right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and accept that rules are an essential part of living together in harmony. Pupils try very hard to uphold the school's personal aims of caring for themselves, others and the environment. The school makes particularly good use of the BBC computer programme 'Me, My Family and Friends', using it very successfully to consolidate learning of social and moral skills.
42. Provision for children's cultural development has improved and is good. It is fostered in such subjects as art, music, geography, history and religious education. They learn to appreciate music and art from their own and other cultures. Children participate in music and recorder festivals and enjoy visits from instrumental players. They take part in Maypole and country dancing. An appreciation of the diversity of people is taught in religious education through the study of Muslim, Jewish and Hindu faiths. The school has been careful to ensure that the most recently bought books reflect the traditions and life styles of ethnic groups as well as those about communities in Devon. The design and technology work by older pupils linking festival foods to different religious celebrations and the literacy work relating to the poem *Hiawatha* are examples of how the school is endeavouring to raise children's awareness of multi cultural issues through the curriculum.
43. The school is very much a part of the local community. The pre-school playgroup, the parish council and events such as the evening classes about African music use the premises. Further links with the local community that involve children are such events as Harvest Festival and school concerts. Local people use their expertise to extend the curriculum; for example, the local policeman talks about his work. They join with other small schools to extend what they can offer, through, for example, sporting events and shared visits to places like the Millennium Dome. Staff work together with other schools on improving standards by, for example, finding ways of assessing and developing children's writing.

44. The curriculum is well organised to enable the school to achieve its aims of creating the right curricular and other opportunities to ultimately fulfil pupils' potential in adult life. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

45. The school generally provides a supportive environment where each pupil is well known to the class teacher in particular and throughout the school. This supportive environment contributes to their personal development; similarly, pupils with special needs are well catered for, receiving good support from well-trained classroom assistants.
46. However, there are areas of care which are unsatisfactory, including child protection. The person responsible for child protection is the headteacher, who was not in school during the inspection, but information from teachers shows that although they know to whom they should report their concerns they have not received adequate training, have not been regularly updated, and have not had procedures clearly laid out for them. This should be remedied immediately.
47. Similarly, there are areas of pupil's health and safety that leave much to be desired and on which urgent action should be taken. The head teacher has undertaken a risk assessment but this is a simple checklist. There is no documentary evidence of the in-depth look usually undertaken at regular intervals by the responsible governors. Other aspects of pupils' welfare that need attention are the unfenced pond which is easily accessible to children, the lack of toilet facilities, particularly for older girls and the youngest children and pipes that protrude from the building at child height
48. Pupils themselves are aware of some of the issues, which have been discussed in School Council. One area of particular concern is the problem created by cars dropping off and picking up pupils. This has implications for road safety and, although governors have discussed these concerns at great length and sought police advice, no solution has yet been found. In addition, some delivery vehicles were observed visiting the school while children were using the hard play space and although staff took every care to keep children safe the vehicles had to cross this space to gain access to the school. By contrast, health and safety issues that occur during lessons are assessed and appropriate action taken while teachers explain the implications to pupils. First aid equipment and trained staff are available throughout the school day. The accident book is regularly completed and parents informed when necessary.
49. Procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are good. Good classroom management and high expectations are in place from the time pupils enter school. The good supervision of the playground at break and lunchtime ensures fair play for all. Particular problems are discussed with children at such times as assemblies and the School Council, the latter giving pupils the opportunity to have their views discussed before agreed action is put in place.
50. Overall, support and guidance for pupils' educational and personal development are good. Pupils and parents are involved in the target setting process. The annual spring term report to parents brings together the shared assessments by pupils, parents and teachers. Records of achievement and moderated work are kept in the classroom and are regularly brought up to date. Support for pupils with special education needs and those who come to the school knowing little English are good. Those children on the special educational needs register have individual education plans and targets identified for them enable good progress to be made. Those with statements of special educational need have annual reviews. As improvements are

made children may be removed from the special educational needs register. Their progress is monitored by the co-ordinator and new targets set for their individual education plans when they are ready to move on. The school has not ignored the needs of more able children who are faster workers and work is matched appropriately to their stage of learning. This was reflected in the high percentage of Year 6 pupils achieving the higher levels in National Curriculum tests last year. Procedures for assessing children's attainment and progress are good. Teachers make an assessment of children's skills when they enter school and plan for their individual and group needs. In lessons progress is monitored and assessments are used to plan what needs to be learned next.

51. The school has well-planned induction arrangements for new pupils. Children attending the playgroup are already familiar with the school but all prospective pupils undertake a programme of visits before starting and attend half time for their first two weeks. The school works closely with secondary schools in the area, especially with Year 7 tutors, to ensure a smooth and supportive transition.
52. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory. Registers are marked appropriately. However, there is no regular monitoring of registers within the school and recent problems with the Education Welfare Service have meant that no outside monitoring has been undertaken in the recent past. As a result, lateness and the level of unauthorised absence are increasing.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

53. At the last inspection the school's partnership with parents was judged as a major strength. Although there are some satisfactory elements, such as the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and their contribution to children's learning at school and at home, the findings of this inspection are that the effectiveness of the school's links with parents are unsatisfactory.
54. Through conversations, meetings and in responses to the inspection questionnaire, parents express positive views about their children liking school, making good progress, working hard having the right amount of homework, behaving well and becoming mature and responsible. However, 54 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire feel the school does not work closely with them and 25 per cent are uncomfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. Discussions with some parents, and letters received, revealed that they felt their concerns were not dealt with sensitively nor appropriately. A third of the responses indicated that parents did not feel well informed about how their children were getting on and 23 per cent considered that there was not an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Although 72 per cent of parental responses thought that teaching was good there were few who disagreed, as 19 per cent didn't know. However, a significant percentage (44 per cent) considered that the school was not well led and managed.
55. The evidence provided shows that parents receive good amounts of useful information through regular newsletters and letters dealing with specific items. The two annual reports are well written and perceptive. The spring report involves parents with their children in an assessment of the year's work to date while the final summer report is a good summing up of each pupil's year in school. Those parents whose children have special educational needs are similarly involved in their child's individual plans and reviews. These practices are typical of many primary schools.

56. The school holds parents' evenings and parents new to the school have a special evening in October to discuss the curriculum. There is usually time for teachers to talk to parents informally before and after school and teachers say they are willing to do this or to make appointments to see parents at other times if a concern arises. However, at present, there is little informal daily contact with teachers although relationships with teachers are good.
57. At present there are very few parent helpers in the school and some say they do not feel welcome. Many parents are very interested in their children's work and despite the concerns expressed want to be partners in the education of their children. They supply a good level of support out of school hours, helping their children with reading, and as they grow older with a wider range of work. The school has an effective Parent, Teacher and Friends Association, which draws together the school, parents and the local community to raise funds from which the school benefits. Parents have responded well to the school's request to help with the provision of after school clubs and extra curricular activities.
58. The recently fragmenting relationship between a significant number of parents and the headteacher has put a great strain on all these processes. Some parents, especially those who are less confident, now say they find it virtually impossible to approach the school. Without the restoration of good communication, the supportive partnership that previously existed will founder, to the detriment of pupils' learning.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

59. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Although there are strengths there are also weaknesses that need urgent attention. The effectiveness with which the governing body is fulfilling its responsibilities is generally satisfactory but again there are some matters relating to the care and welfare of the children that need attention. During the inspection the school was seen as an orderly community where children are secure and enjoy their work. The hard work and dedication of the teaching and support staff are crucial to this school's success.
60. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2000 but she was not present during the inspection and an acting headteacher assisted the inspection process. Apart from the evidence of school documentation and discussions with the headteacher during the visit to the school prior to the inspection, staff, governors and parents of children at the school have provided information about this aspect.
61. Since her appointment, she has acquired a view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This recognises the high standards of achievement in English, mathematics and science by eleven-year-olds and shows concern for what was seen as some underperformance by seven-year-olds. Objectives have been established for securing improvement. These have included a higher profile for education at the Foundation Stage, more practically based schemes of work, a whole-school approach to lesson planning and some improvements in resources. Some sound progress has been made towards achieving these goals. Resources for the Foundation Stage are better, a new scheme for mathematics has been introduced and an agreed planning format, based on what children are expected to learn, has been introduced.
62. Some progress has also been made towards developing the curriculum leadership role of teachers. They now have an overview of curricular planning, they audit resources and provide support in their specialist areas for other teachers. Although there are plans to improve this

situation further, currently they still lack opportunities to monitor the teaching and learning in their subjects, and, in some cases, have little accurate knowledge of the standards being achieved across the school. Not all co-ordinators are clear about their responsibilities. Some teachers have had their co-ordinator roles changed. Co-ordinators expressed concerns about the limitations which prevent their carrying out their role successfully. For example, the co-ordinator for special educational needs has no allocated time to work with the pupils to monitor their progress, deal with the reviewing and writing of annual statements and individual educational plans or meet parents. It is of great credit to the co-ordinator that despite these difficulties good provision for these pupils is in place. However, the headteacher's planning shows a change is to be made to provide more time for these tasks. Staff training is well linked to curricular development such as with the recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and teacher appraisal has been accomplished through the compilation of job descriptions. There is no policy for the induction of new teachers, although an induction day for teachers new to the school was held more recently.

63. Currently parental concerns about the links between home and school have escalated. The chair of governors is aware of the deterioration in parental confidence and of the concerns mentioned above (*paragraphs 54, 57*) and has taken some measures to address the issue, including the investigation of complaints received. Teachers and other staff have good relationships with parents but there is a need for a more positive lead from the headteacher.
64. Governors work hard to shape the direction of the school. They are well informed about pupils' achievements in curricular and other activities. They have well-organised committees, which give good support to such aspects as curricular development and special educational needs. Visits to the school by the governor chairing the curriculum committee give the governing body a clear picture of the success or otherwise of initiatives they have sanctioned, such as the new accommodation for the Foundation Stage. Collectively they work conscientiously to resolve the school's difficulties - for example, in their efforts to solve the problems relating to vehicular access to the school. The chair of governors meets the headteacher every week and, with other governors, actively supports learning in and out of the classroom. The knowledge and understanding he has acquired about the quality of education the school is providing and how it can be improved ensure that the governing body is able to make well informed decisions
65. There are several effective procedures in place for the school to check its performance and identify what it needs to do to improve. These include the careful analysis of statutory and optional National Curriculum tests. This analysis is used to highlight areas where teaching needs to be concentrated and to help set targets of improvement for individual children to work towards. It has begun to monitor and evaluate teaching but this is an area which is underdeveloped. In searching for ways to move forward the governing body looks closely at how to make the best use of its resources and spend its funding wisely.
66. Some good decisions have been made in recent times, which have had a significant impact on children's achievement. The employment of a specialist teacher has led to improved standards in information and communication technology. The employment of an above average number of well-trained learning support classroom assistants has supported pupils' learning and had a positive effect on the progress they make, particularly those with special educational needs. The decision to extend the infant classroom and buy new resources to provide better facilities for children at the Foundation Stage is another way in which spending has been effectively matched to educational priorities. Specific grants have been used purposefully, by, for example, funding extra lessons to boost the attainment of eleven-year-olds in English and mathematics and paying for the use of Honiton Leisure Centre to compensate for the inadequacy of the

facilities for gymnastics and dance. There is clear evidence that the results of these expenditures have met the objectives. Good use is made of new technology to support day-to-day administration and pupils' learning. The excellent use made by the pupils of information and communication technology, particularly the Internet, is a strength of the school.

67. The school employs an adequate number of qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to teach the curriculum. The school administrator is extremely efficient and this enables teachers to concentrate on their work in the classroom. Although resources are generally adequate for teaching the National Curriculum and religious education, there are some significant shortages, which affect the depth to which some of the subjects can be taught. Resources for art are inadequate, some music and physical education equipment is old and needs replacing, there is a lack of artefacts for religious education, geography and history, a general shortage of practical equipment, not enough chairs for dinner time and no water supply in two classrooms.
68. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory duties, but there are a number of safety and welfare issues, that it needs to resolve. Some aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory because they make the teaching more difficult or have the potential to interfere with children's welfare. The school hall is very small. Space is restricted significantly by the heaters and grills which protrude extensively from the wall, the storage of dining furniture, and other items of furniture around the perimeter. It is unsafe for all but very basic physical activity. The storage of the playgroup's equipment in the only designated space exacerbates the problem. Overall, there is a shortage of adequate storage space in the school. This results in problems of accessibility and maintenance of quality; for example, musical instruments are deteriorating through being stored in a damp area. The toilet facilities, particularly for the youngest children and older girls, are inadequate. Other aspects of pupils' welfare that need attention are the unfenced pond, which is easily accessible to children, and pipes that protrude from the building at child height
69. Governors give a good account to parents through their annual meeting and report. The latter is a very comprehensive and interesting account of the school's achievement and its aspirations. It fulfils all statutory requirements except for giving details of the school's provision for special educational needs.
70. Governors have some sound consultation systems in place, such as the involvement of parents in setting targets for pupils' progress in learning, although this is an area of some concern at the moment. It achieves satisfactory value for money through cost effective decisions and the careful use of its resources to improve the education of its pupils.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

71. In order to improve pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, and staff need to:

### **improve the leadership and management of the school by:**

- remedying those aspects of care that have a detrimental effect on the welfare of the children;
- ensuring that co-ordinators are clear about their roles and extend their management of subjects to encompass the monitoring of teaching and learning across the school;
- providing some time for the special educational needs co-ordinator to include monitoring of children in her management role as planned;

*(refer to paragraphs: 23, 46, 47, 48, 61, 67,)*

### **improve the communication with parents to bring the partnership they have with the school back to its previous high quality;** *(refer to paragraphs: 58, 62)*

### **improve the provision for the Foundation Stage by:**

- providing a secure outdoor space for the physical development area of learning,
- providing appropriate equipment for the outdoor area;
- ensuring that a teacher is in control of the class at all times

*(refer to paragraphs: 22, 34, 81, 82)*

### **ensure that teachers can do their work as well as possible by providing an adequate range of learning resources in all subjects.** *(refer to paragraphs: 33, 66, 81, 82, 96, 112, 116, 129, 144, 148)*

## **OTHER ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

72. The school should also consider the following minor issues:

- ensuring that the governing body's annual report to parents includes all the statutorily required information;
- ensuring that there is a policy about the induction of new staff.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	38	48	10	3	0	0

*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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		76
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		15

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	9	6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	6	8
	Girls	5	5	6
	Total	13	11	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (67)	73 (56)	93 (78)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	7	6
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	13	12	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (78)	80 (89)	73 (89)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	7	6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	6	5	5
	Total	13	11	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (92)	85 (85)	100 (92)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	5	6	6
	Total	11	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (85)	92 (85)	92 (92)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (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	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	64
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*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	0	0
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: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	25

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	112

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	156,378
Total expenditure	154,995
Expenditure per pupil	2,039
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,258
Balance carried forward to next year	7,641

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	75
Number of questionnaires returned	43

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	56	2	2	5
My child is making good progress in school.	19	63	12	2	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	49	12	12	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	53	9	14	0
The teaching is good.	35	37	5	5	19
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	37	23	19	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	30	16	9	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35	44	7	7	7
The school works closely with parents.	19	28	35	19	0
The school is well led and managed.	19	28	23	21	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	23	58	7	7	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	53	21	2	2

### **Other issues raised by parents**

There were some comments in relation to safety but other parents thought this had been addressed. Parents were unaware whether the school had a health and safety policy but commented favourably on the use of an accident book.

The majority of parents considered that there has been a period of instability in the school. They recognise that change is inevitable but expressed concerns about some changes that have been happening more recently. One parent recalled changes made at the appointment of the previous headteacher. While there was general acceptance of change with a new headteacher, parents considered that the management of change was important and they needed to understand why things that had appeared to work in the past were now being changed.

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

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

73. At the time of the inspection, the older children in the Foundation Stage had been in school for two terms but the youngest children were in their first term at school and some were still adjusting to the school's routines. The local playgroup uses the school hall for several mornings each week and shares its outdoor equipment with the school. Both teachers of the Foundation Stage work closely with the playgroup and know these children well before they start school. When children enter the reception class the assessments undertaken soon after they start show that overall attainment is typical for pupils of this age. However, several are more able and their skills in literacy and numeracy are better developed than others. The previous inspection found that children made steady progress and that standards in all areas of learning were satisfactory for their age. The findings of this inspection are that the majority of children are likely to attain the early learning goals in the areas of learning and some are already succeeding so well that they have begun the early work of the National Curriculum.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

74. Children learn to mix amicably with others, to share and follow instructions. Overall, they show good self-discipline and are learning to take turns as they respond to questions from the teacher. Lesson planning provides opportunities that enable children to work together co-operatively such as role-play and imaginative play in the '*estate agent corner*', and good adult intervention and involvement ensures that equipment is used in the way planned. The teachers and support assistants give social development a high priority and most children settle well at the beginning of the day. Most are secure and confident. They behave well and show good attitudes to their work, relating well to one another. Standards in this area of learning are satisfactory.
75. The teaching for this area of learning is good. The usual teacher and acting headteacher, who had never worked with this class before the inspection, have established very good relationships with the children and this has formed a foundation for good learning. They are friendly and approachable and provide a secure place for them to learn. Teachers plan activities with clear objectives for what children need to learn and consequently pupils are sure of what is expected of them. The teachers show concern for the needs of all children and time is made for them to learn the consequences of their actions, as in a lesson when the snatching of an object and its consequent repercussions were carefully explained and order restored quickly. Adult intervention and discussion improves learning and the management of pupils is very good.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

76. Children begin the early stages of reading and writing when stories are read to them. They enjoy stories and concentrate well at such times. Older ones have shown an interest in reading and a high priority is given to teaching the sounds of alphabet letters and how this knowledge can be used to read unfamiliar words. Some younger pupils can do this too but most are learning the critical features of words such as shape and length. The older children understand that written words have meaning and recognise some familiar words. They make simple sentences, choosing from a range of everyday words and know that the first word must have a capital letter. More able children write more than one sentence in their stories and diary writing; they show a wider range of vocabulary than that expected for this age group. In the whole

class group children are encouraged to respond to questions and most make good attempts. Some children are very articulate, their speech is clear and their responses show that they have a good understanding of what they have been asked. They confidently retell a story in the correct sequence. Some children write their name unaided and others are making efforts to do so. Most children can hold a pencil correctly but not all use it effectively and have to be shown. The older children are acquiring a handwriting style that shows well-formed letters. The more able children have already reached the early learning goals and have begun the early work of the National Curriculum. Other children are well on the way to achieving these goals and most are likely to achieve them by the end of the Foundation Stage. Achievement has been good since they entered school.

77. The quality of teaching for this area of learning is good. The very good relationships that exist among teachers have laid a secure foundation for learning. Effective use is being made of elements of the National Literacy Strategy and group activities vary according to the children's stage of learning. Teachers modify or extend tasks and maintain children's interest. There are well-planned areas to promote speaking and listening skills such as the *estate agent* imaginative play area. Support staff make good contributions to children's progress by listening carefully, encouraging the use of interesting words and showing that they value the efforts that children make, which raises their self-esteem and encourages better efforts.

### **Mathematical development**

78. Children experience a good range of counting games and practical activities, such as sorting and matching objects, to develop their numeracy skills. They combine objects together as they explore the early stages of addition. Older children are reasonably successful at adding two sets of objects together and more able pupils find the correct total when using symbols to record what they have done. The older pupils have made good progress and are at the stage of recording addition in a number of ways. The slower learners are not at this stage and are working towards the early learning goals. They count to five, still have difficulty forming numbers and using simple mathematical language when talking about quantities, shape and size as they use such terms as *circle*, *bigger*, *more* and *less*. Children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage and the more able pupils are beginning the early work of the National Curriculum.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

79. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are good. They talk readily about their homes and school and draw them from memory. They have constructed houses from cartons and used adhesive to join pieces together. Their understanding of chronology is beginning as they talk about the photographs and captions of their own homes, using such terms as *newest* and *oldest*. They have looked carefully at building materials and used a video to watch how bricks are made and used in house building. Effective use has been made of the imaginative play area to extend their understanding of the work of an estate agent in selling property. Children are familiar with computers and are learning the correct terms such as *monitor* and *printer*. They understand why a mouse is used and are acquiring increasing dexterity in its use. Children have many opportunities for exploring and investigating as they take part in scientific activities. For example, in a jelly making activity they extended their knowledge and understanding of how cooking changes food. They observed carefully to determine when the jelly crystals had dissolved and took turns to pour the liquid into pots. They showed particularly good control as they attempted to put equal amounts of jelly into each pot. Children have

achieved very well since entering school and are already attempting some of the early aspects of National Curriculum work, particularly in science.

80. The teaching of this area of learning is good. Teachers make effective use of their good knowledge in the way they present the activities, explain tasks and comment to enable children to make gains in knowledge and understanding. Every opportunity is seized to link activities to other subjects and use prior learning. A good example of linking science and mathematics was when children were measuring out the jelly liquid. They filled nine pots with orange jelly but only six with raspberry jelly. They explained that nine is three more than six and since they used the same amount of liquid on each occasion they need to even up the raspberry pots to make nine like the others. The teaching makes very effective use of such methods as investigation, experimentation and the use of senses to extend children's knowledge, skills and understanding. Support staff are deployed effectively and use their knowledge and skills of this area of learning well to support learning and improve standards.

### **Physical development**

81. In the classroom there are many opportunities for children to develop their finer physical skills as they use a range of small and large equipment. They use such tools as scissors and pencils safely and are gaining greater dexterity in the use of small construction apparatus and in the control of the mouse when using the computer. The outdoor area for physical development is not close to the classroom and can only be used at set times. It is not a separate, fenced area as it is in many schools. The Foundation Stage uses the outdoor area when the infants, in the same class, are involved in physical education in the hall with the teacher. At the time of inspection there were three adults supervising the children outdoors but no teacher was present, although from time to time she observed them through the window. Generally, children move about confidently and are learning to do so safely. The equipment they use belongs to the playgroup and is far too small for children at this stage; for example, children using the wheeled toys have difficulty keeping their feet on the pedals, resorting to moving along with feet on the ground. There is no suitable equipment for them to extend their skills in climbing, balancing or jumping until the summer term. Such equipment as is available is also stored badly, making it difficult for children to have access to it easily or take responsibility for putting it away. The provision for this area of learning is unsatisfactory and needs immediate attention if children are to achieve all the early learning goals for this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.
82. The teaching of this area of learning is satisfactory in the classroom but unsatisfactory outdoors because the planning and organisation rely entirely on support staff and parents and the school lacks suitable outdoor equipment for children to develop their physical skills as recommended in the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. The supervision provided by support staff and parents is good and these adults take great care to see that children are safe. However, the youngest children need their own secure area for physical development, with appropriate equipment, and the activities require a teacher's involvement at all times.

### **Creative development**

83. There were no opportunities to see children involved in creative activities such as art and music but there is sufficient evidence to show that children paint, draw and make collage pictures. They take part in imaginative play, enjoy musical activities and explore the different sounds of percussion instruments. No judgement can be made about the quality of teaching for this area of learning.

84. The management of the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory because it has been allocated to one of the two teachers but she was unaware of this responsibility when discussing her role and there was clearly some confusion. This teacher's work with the Foundation Stage is good but she has not undertaken some tasks necessary in the management of the stage. Both teacher and support assistant work well as a team. They plan the activities, providing appropriate adult intervention and involvement and in using a wide range of skills. The support assistant has brought a wealth of knowledge from her previous work as a playgroup leader and has undertaken additional training in special educational needs. During the inspection the teacher, support assistant and acting headteacher used their skills and knowledge very effectively to teach, direct and support children's learning. The policy for the Foundation Stage does not relate closely enough to the required curriculum for these children and needs updating. Although staff are making good efforts to manage this stage and in most areas of learning standards are good, they need to be clear about their responsibilities.

## **ENGLISH**

85. In National Curriculum tests in 2000 the performance of Year 2 pupils was above average for reading but well below average for writing. Pupils' performance at Year 6 for the same year show that English results were very high, putting the school in the top five per cent of schools in the country. These were very good results, which remained unchanged when compared to similar schools. At Year 6, all pupils reached Level 4 and above, with 85 per cent reaching the higher Level 5, which is well above the national average.
86. However, when compared with similar schools the Year 2 results in reading are at the national average level and still well below for writing. The results of infant children have been looked at carefully to see if the results in the past have been owing to some underperformance. However, in 2000 there were over 30 per cent of children with special educational needs and some results are accounted for by this high percentage of children on the special educational needs register. Despite these difficulties all except two pupils reached the acceptable Level 2, with 33 per cent reaching the higher Level 3 in reading. In writing the picture was different, with four pupils below the acceptable Level 2 and four pupils at the lower end of Level 2. Few achieved the higher end of Level 2 and none reached the higher Level 3. The 15 children taking the tests are a small year group and percentages do distort results when one child is the equivalent of 6.5 per cent. The current headteacher has correctly introduced joined writing at an earlier stage than in the past and hopes to see improvements in writing this year.
87. Evidence from lessons and from a scrutiny of written work and listening to children read shows that standards in English are satisfactory in the infant class, where Year 2 children achieve a level expected for their age and good at Year 6 as pupils do better than achieve at a level commensurate with their age.
88. In the infant class, children communicate satisfactorily. Speech is clear and children make their needs and wants understood. A few children are still very shy, using only one- or two-word responses but they are more confident when talking to the support assistant. Others are very articulate and respond well to the teacher's questions, using a range of vocabulary. When the register is taken they are encouraged to respond in a language they like and several use French or German. This is particularly helpful to the very few children who speak English as an additional language, because they enjoy sharing their knowledge with others. Good progress has been made since they entered school and they understand and speak English now well enough

to take part in all class work. The effective teaching enables pupils to achieve well and by the age of eleven standards are at least typical for their age and some do better. Responses to the teacher's questioning are well considered and interesting vocabulary is used. For example, when explaining the meaning of *glittering eye*, as used in the poem of the Ancient Mariner, pupils explained that the text meant *hypnotising with eyes*. They know how to explain their opinions and ideas as when Year 3 and Year 4 pupils were talking about the beliefs and practices of North American Indians as a follow up to the poem *Hiawatha*, which was used to introduce children to choral speech. Older pupils show interest in the use of words no longer in general use such as *averred* and *uprist* and find the meaning because they enjoy using as wide a range of vocabulary as possible.

89. Overall, children enter school familiar with books and know how to use them although most are not readers. At the Foundation Stage, much attention has been given to the teaching of letter sounds. The average readers do not use expression yet and sometimes lack accuracy. They enjoy reading and often have lots of books at home. Above average readers enjoy books and are eager to read. They read with expression and make good use of their knowledge of punctuation in their reading. They read at home and enjoy showing their parents how well they can succeed. By Year 2, children have a reasonably good grasp of letter sounds and this helps them to read words that are unfamiliar to them. They enjoy stories and use the school library. The slower readers have difficulty in tackling words that are unfamiliar to them because they are less skilled in their use of letter sounds. There is hesitation in their reading and a tendency to skip unknown words rather than use their knowledge of letter sounds to assist them. They say they do not use a library. By Year 3, pupils read with improving fluency and accuracy and older pupils enjoy discussing the merits of one author over another. The older pupils are adept at finding information they need from several sources, including the Internet, and are very competent readers of fiction and poetry. Above average readers cope with most texts but the reading skills of some slower learners can create difficulties for them in any learning that depends on reading.
90. Writing is improving in the infant classes and standards seen were sound. Average writers communicate meaning clearly. They use appropriate words and there is some evidence of the use of punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. They develop their ideas in short sentences using spoken language. Common words are often spelt correctly or show that they are phonetically plausible. Handwriting is legible and children are learning to join their letters. Progress since September is satisfactory in writing and good in handwriting. Above average writers communicate well and stories have a beginning, middle and an end. They show understanding that writing is used for different purposes and their work includes stories, factual writing and letters. The writing of Year 1 children shows a better standard for their age than that of Year 2. Writing clearly communicates meaning and printing is legible with well-formed letters and they are beginning to join two letters together. They use interesting words in their story writing, such as *captured*, and use descriptive words in their writing about a friend. Good writing is often inspired by fiction. This was the case in a class of Year 3 and 4 children who used their imagination well to write an account of a journey through a peach that was inspired by *James and the Giant Peach* by Dahl. Accounts showed particularly good use of descriptive words such as *squelchy* and *delicious*. By Years 5 and 6 pupils have made good progress. They write alternative, more modern versions of fairy stories, which show good use of punctuation and interesting use of dialogue. Their writing is in many forms and for a range of purposes including lists, poems and notes. They spell correctly and use words of greater complexity such as *onomatopoeia*. Work is checked for misspelling and other errors of presentation.

91. Literacy skills are used well in other subjects. For example, in geography Year 6 pupils have researched and investigated mountain environments, resulting in well-written factual accounts of similarities and differences. They make good use of word-processing skills when writing about celebration menus for food technology. In religious education, younger juniors write a story from St Luke's Gospel and some accounts of what is known about Jesus with evidence to back them up.
92. English is taught well. In half the lessons seen it was good and in the other half it was very good, particularly in the junior classes. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers across the school know how to teach reading and writing and do it well because they have the technical skills – for example, teaching children how knowledge of alphabet letter sounds helps them to read unfamiliar words. The very good relationships established with children form the foundation for good learning. The excellent rapport that some teachers have with pupils makes them eager to try hard and do their best. This was particularly good in the infant class and resulted in improved reading with better use of expression. The teacher's own animated reading of *The Three Little Pigs* brought the story alive and they soon joined in with favourite lines, even correcting words that others misread. Even some of the younger children understood how clues such as size of text, bold text, use of capitals and punctuation help the reader to make a story more interesting to the listener
93. Teachers make sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and how this links to what they have covered previously. They help pupils to make connections between subjects. Teachers effectively promote pupils' interest in new words and insist that proper terms for language are used. For example, teachers used correct terminology in all lessons and both infant and junior children did so too.
94. Good teacher knowledge is evident in the way the subject is introduced and explained. Lessons are planned to challenge and inspire pupils. This was particularly well done in a class of junior pupils with 33 per cent on the special educational needs register. The pupils had been introduced to the poem *Hiawatha* in a previous lesson and to maintain interest the teacher, who had visited North American Indians, introduced the session with artefacts made by them such as a dream catcher and a birch basket. Immediately their interest and imagination were captured and she made effective use of the poem's rhythms, such as *big sea water* to progress to a dramatisation of images of the dream catcher and warriors. A sequence of movement is developed before returning to the classroom for children to make their own class poem in the style of *Hiawatha*. The plenary was used well to introduce the follow up to this work that was to take place the next day.
95. Pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual education plans, which are followed carefully, resulting in good teaching that is well focused. The teaching assistants give pupils opportunities to succeed by providing activities that capture their interest and make them eager to get on with the task. Additional literacy support is provided for those pupils who did less well in the tests last year and they are making good progress. Booster classes are planned to help slower learners at Year 6.
96. Until recently the subject has been managed well by a teacher of a junior class who has a good knowledge of the subject and has provided advice and support to others which teachers say they have appreciated. That co-ordinator has been given other responsibilities and the subject is now managed by the new headteacher, who was not in school to discuss her strategies for improving standards. Discussion with teachers revealed that the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well. However, learning resources have been a problem that is only partially

resolved. The use of commercial reading schemes has been rationalised and the headteacher has correctly identified a lack of books and consulted staff about choice but a wider range is needed, particularly with interest levels for boys. Parents have given much help with reading in the past but there is less help now. Reading diaries are used and parental comments are included but these are not always responded to by some teachers.

## MATHEMATICS

97. Evidence from lessons and the scrutiny of written work shows that the attainment of seven-year-olds is average, which is similar to the standards reported at the last inspection. The attainment of eleven-year-olds has improved considerably and is now above average, and for a significant number of children, well above average. This compares favourably with National Curriculum test results in 2000. Teachers have high expectation of all children and this results in more able children reaching very good standards and children with special educational needs making good progress. Over the last five years the school has maintained these levels, which, taking into account the small number of children in each age group, is a significant achievement.
98. The numeracy hour has had a distinct impact on raising standards and the school identifies the improvement in oral and mental mathematics as its greatest success of recent times. It has also awakened children's interest and enthusiasm for number work, especially when they are challenged to find alternative ways of finding answers and are given the chance to share them with others.
99. Attainment in using and applying mathematics is improving in Year 2 and work in number and algebra is satisfactory. However, not enough progress has been made in shape, space and measure. For example, few children understand the term *angle* as a measurement of turn and data work has not been extended to interpreting information from lists, tables and graphs. Most seven-year-olds understand place value of numbers to 100 and use this knowledge confidently when putting numbers in order, adding and subtracting. Few understand numbers to 1000. They identify common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and some of their properties - for example, the difference between a square and a rectangle. They measure accurately and estimate lengths, using standard units such as centimetres. They know how to use simple graphs to convey mathematical information.
100. The quality of teaching is good in the infant class, satisfactory at Years 3 and 4 and very good in the class of Year 5 and 6 children. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are becoming more confident in the teaching of basic numeracy. For example, in the infant class, comparing answers when doubling and halving extended pupils' learning. From this they began to understand the meaning of inverse processes in mathematics. Lessons are well planned, with new work firmly based on previous skill, knowledge and understanding. Teachers match work carefully to the abilities of the children to make sure that they all have an equal chance of achieving the learning objectives. This enables children with special educational needs to make good progress. This was evident in a lesson when older children were using rounding up skills in money to find change. The tasks had been carefully graded, the teacher asked questions which gave the children confidence to use known skills and the learning support assistant was well briefed to provide individual support where it was required.
101. Lessons are taught in an enthusiastic manner and challenge and inspire children to improve. In a lesson with older children a limited amount of time was given to complete a series of mental questions. This sharpened up number skills, demanded concentration and made children aware of the need to be productive. This is a technique that needs to be shared, because in another class the lack of any work targets resulted in some children achieving very little.
102. Teachers make effective use of resources. For example, the use of real menus and real money and of computers for use by younger children consolidated learning about digital and analogue times. Learning support assistants are deployed well by teachers and are used very effectively

to support children's learning. This was seen in a lesson with a group of Year 3 children when, with the good quality of support, they learned how to use menus, draw up bills and calculate change.

103. A strength of the very good teaching is the development of children's confidence to tackle difficulties, to use resources and prior learning in their current work. This independence enables them to learn by applying their own ideas and methods. For example, when finding if a given answer was true or false some pupils realised that it was necessary to round up only one of the amounts to predict the answer.
104. Teachers use marking and assessment very effectively to support pupils' learning. Constructive comments, which are helpful and encouraging, are appended to almost all the work done in books and children by referring to these look back and learn from their successes and failures. This, and the end of lesson sessions, when all children come together to talk about what they have learned, enables teachers to plan the next stage of learning effectively. Homework is set every week to consolidate class work and to extend learning. This is done very conscientiously.
105. The co-ordinator for the subject is the headteacher, who was not in school to discuss her strategies for improving standards. However, the subject is given a high priority in the current development plan, which highlights the need to improve the attainment of seven-year-olds and introduce a more practical approach to mathematics. It is too early to judge the former, but with the use of the National Numeracy Strategy and the introduction of a new scheme of work, children are becoming more confident in using and applying mathematics. A start has been made on evaluating the quality and outcomes of lessons. Assessment procedures are good. There are sound systems in place to analyse test results and use them to track and support progress and set children individual targets for improvement. The use of funding to provide booster lessons for the Year 6 children prior to the National Curriculum tests has also been successful in helping to maintain high standards at this age.

## **SCIENCE**

106. The teachers' assessments in 2000 of standards for children in Year 2 were well below the national average. These low levels were significantly affected by the high percentage of children with special educational needs in that year group. Standards have improved and the achievement of the current seven-year-olds is average when matched against the National Curriculum levels for that age. There is particularly sound progress in scientific enquiry, which is an area identified for improvement in the school development plan. The high level of attainment of Year 6 children, reported in the last inspection, has been maintained. Results of National Curriculum tests in 2000 were very high when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. The current Year 6 pupils achieve similar, well above average standards. Eleven-year-olds are especially good at scientific enquiry in, for example, their ability to set up a fair test, predict outcomes, compare these with results and explain differences.
107. Year 2 children know that taking exercise and eating the right types and amounts of food help humans to keep healthy. They sort objects such as wood, metal, paper, plastic and rock into groups on the basis of hardness, softness and whether they will bend or squash. Most understand the meaning of an investigation, how to observe what happens and write down simple conclusions. Their achievement in scientific enquiry is improving. They now observe changes more carefully and record in simple scientific words what they have seen.

108. By the time they leave the school children have learned how to work methodically through a scientific enquiry; for example, when investigating the properties of different types of materials used for insulating. When investigating the properties of solids they show they have a secure knowledge of what constitutes a fair test, how to predict what might happen and the likely difference in outcomes if one element of a test is changed. They have a good knowledge of human biology and an increasing understanding of life processes. This was the case in one lesson when pupils explained in detail the conditions that plants need to grow and thrive.
109. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have very secure knowledge and understanding of teaching science to children at this age. They recognise the importance of practical activities and all the lessons seen included a good range of these. These challenge and inspire the children and present them with rich opportunities for new learning. This was the case in a very good lesson with Year 3 and Year 4 pupils when they were examining the properties of light. The variety of well-planned activities provided opportunities to learn about the spectrum, how water refracts images, shadows and opaque and translucent properties of materials. Using information and communication technology to research topics such as sources and the speed of light was another good feature. The high quality of teaching, with the effective use of discussion, resulted in very good learning as children tried out their own ideas to answer the scientific questions posed.
110. Science lessons are extremely well planned, with interesting tasks that give children of all abilities a chance to achieve the learning objectives. This was evident in a lesson in the infant class. They were looking at how foods change when cooked. The frying of sausages and the melting of chocolate inspired them to concentrate hard, observe carefully and describe what they had seen in simple scientific terms. The teacher used the lesson effectively to improve their awareness of food hygiene, health and safety.
111. Particularly strong features of a very good lesson with older children were evident in the opportunities to learn independently, the use of classroom support and use of assessment. Pupils were challenged to investigate variations in the pitch of sounds caused by vibrations and varying sized columns of air. Their tasks gave plenty of scope for them to try a variety of approaches when investigating. They were encouraged to discuss their findings and especially any unusual discoveries. The difference in the pitch of sounds when bottles, filled with different amounts of water, had air blown across the openings or were struck by a hard object was one of these. By making them think about what they already knew the teacher extended their learning about scientific phenomena. Again, the effective aid provided by the support assistant ensured that children with special educational needs made good progress. By the end of the lesson pupils had a good knowledge of the link between vibrations and pitch and understood how sound was transmitted through air. Assessment was carried out well, both during a 'coming together' session at the end of the lesson and by the constructive marking of their work. The evidence from this provided the learning objectives for the next lesson. Homework is set regularly to support the work in the classroom. It is carefully marked and often used as a starting point in lessons.
112. Overall, the management of the subject is satisfactory but has elements that need development. The role of the subject co-ordinator has not yet been satisfactorily developed. While it includes an overview of curricular planning and responsibility for resourcing the subject, there has been no opportunity for checking the quality of teaching and learning. Science is identified in the school's current development plan for improving children's investigative and enquiry skills particularly in Years 1 and 2. The introduction of a nationally agreed scheme of work, based upon clear lesson learning objectives, has enabled the school to progress towards this objective.

It has also helped the school to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum 2000. The assessment procedures are currently under review, although systems are in place to analyse test results, track children's progress and identify individual targets for improvement. The subject has just adequate resources to teach the National Curriculum, although lessons sometimes depend upon teachers' ingenuity - for example, by using milk bottles, toffee wrappers and nail boards. Teaching is also hindered by a shortage of visual aids, equipment for practical work and the lack of a water supply in two classrooms. Good use is made of the nature area for studying life processes and living things.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

113. It was not possible to see any lessons in art and design but a scrutiny of past work showed that standards are typical for children's age in the junior classes and children are making satisfactory progress. Some of the more able pupils in the older junior class are doing better. Pupils do have sketchbooks and work in these shows that they are learning about the use of detailed pencil work, the use of watercolours, figure drawing and portraits. Design work has included posters, detailed drawing of hats, other designs for clothes and the school environmental area. The junior classes have art folders that contain a range of art including watercolour painting, observational drawing and graphic designs. A few figure drawings of sporting activities and still life representations were particularly good. Younger juniors had attempted to make box dioramas to put a sculpture in a setting inspired by the work of Frink and Houshiary but no sculptures were seen.
114. Insufficient evidence was available for a judgement to be possible about standards in the infant class but that provided showed that children paint, draw and make collage pictures. Samples of work on portraits show that children are encouraged to use a range of media. Some drawing is detailed and children are learning about the uses of different types of drawing pencil and are taught drawing techniques such as how to use shading.
115. Discussions with older pupils indicated that they consider that standards are not as good as they might be. They clearly understand that they need to be more organised and plan more accurately and that this would enable them to complete their work in time. They talked about the changes that happen as the work moves from conception to completion. At times the lack of resources has made their efforts more difficult, lacking success. For example, when sharing computers with Year 5, the older pupils had less time and work on creating faces was less successful. The selection of materials is limited by availability and restricts what can be achieved; for example, there is no clay and a very limited range of papers. Although the school has a good range of work of artists past and present, pupils were unfamiliar with that of many artists, making reference only to Picasso, Van Gogh and Hockney.
116. The management of this subject is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator, who normally works part-time, is now responsible for managing four subjects of which this is one. The resources are unsatisfactory and badly stored. Some are in a poor state. The range is limited and is having a negative effect on what some pupils feel they can achieve. The co-ordinator is unable to monitor the subject in the way that she would like and has no time to see the teaching and learning at first hand. During discussions with the headteacher, prior to inspection, concern was rightly expressed about the level of learning resources for this subject but she has not had enough time to bring about the improvements needed.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. At the last inspection no judgements were made about attainment or progress. Although few lessons were seen there is sufficient evidence in the current findings to judge that standards are in line with those typical for age. The range of evidence provided shows that, unlike at the last inspection, the requirements of the National Curriculum are met.
118. In the infant class children use construction equipment and talk about how they have joined pieces to make a model. They draw designs of houses based on what they have seen and remember before they make models. They use cartons, paper and adhesive to make houses and understand how to join different materials together. They are gaining greater dexterity in the use of tools such as pencils, scissors and glue spreaders and are aware that they need to be used safely. They are involved in food technology as they design and make food for a party, using fruit and salad vegetables.
119. In the junior classes, pupils build upon the skills and techniques they have already acquired in the infant class. At Years 3 and 4 they have explored examples of 'pop up' books and seek explanations of how this is done using moving and linkage type mechanisms. They are improving their skills to measure, mark, cut and shape a range of materials using appropriate tools, equipment and techniques. Measuring and marking out are now more accurate and they use a hole punch, glue and tape only when most appropriate. By Years 5 and 6, the samples of work show that pupils make good use of word-processing, desktop publishing and printing to plan and display ideas. Effective use is made of literacy skills to write factual accounts of how pupils arrived at designs and in generating ideas for products after thinking about who will use them and what they will be used for. This was seen in work on celebration menus, where knowledge of Divali, Harvest, Halloween, Christmas and Greek food was used well to design a meal suited to a particular culture. Pupils have researched the best products to include in designs, for example, by looking at the contents of cereals to design a healthy breakfast. When using an evaluation process there is recognition that the quality of a product depends on how well it is made and meets its intended purpose. The range of work demonstrated that pupils were involved in developing, planning and communicating ideas. They evaluated processes and products using knowledge and understanding of materials and components.
120. No judgement was made about teaching during the previous inspection as no lessons were observed in this subject. Current findings are that, in the few lessons seen the teaching was good. There has been an improvement since the last inspection and training has made teachers more secure in their knowledge. Now the development of knowledge and skills is planned systematically. Pupils are taught their knowledge, skills and understanding through investigating and evaluating familiar products and they are extending their understanding of the views of those who use them. Teachers provide focused, practical tasks that enable the development of techniques and skills and ensure that design and make tasks use a range of materials giving breadth of study. Teachers make particularly good links to other subjects. For example, a visit to Rowland's Orchard, which is 200 years old, provided an historical insight and links to numeracy with graph work and to geography with mapping skills were effective ways of maintaining interest and extending tasks for the more able pupils.
121. The management of the subject is sound but the co-ordinator has had no opportunity to monitor the teaching and learning in other classes.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

122. By the age of seven and eleven children are achieving standards in line with the National Curriculum levels relevant to their age. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection.
123. At seven they understand about how different types of weather influence the clothes people wear and the activities they pursue. They know about seasons and how these affect things that grow and how some types of dwellings are linked to weather and climate. They understand what a map is and can use a simple atlas to locate the British Isles and other well-known places in the world. By the time they leave the school they show sound skills when using computers to locate their own houses on a map. They use aerial photographs to identify different landscape features such as hills and rivers and know how to use climate, altitude and location to explain how places contrast with where they live. Year 6 children show a good understanding of the geography of Devon, can locate places in the United Kingdom and the world and have knowledge and views about environmental issues such as air pollution.
124. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers make effective use of resources such as information and communication technology, pictures, atlases and maps to arouse interest and enthusiasm. These motivate children to acquire new knowledge and understanding as they find out about how weather, climate and landscape influence the lives of people. Teachers show a good understanding of the subject; for example, they used a visit to a nearby coastal settlement to develop skills in map work and interpret computer information geographically. Children were observed using their post-code to access maps of their own neighbourhood and web sites to find details of the climatic conditions of places in mountainous areas they were studying.
125. Lesson planning is good. Teachers' activities are well matched to the ages and abilities of the children in order to give them all an equal chance of achieving the lesson aims. Teachers have high expectations of children, as was shown when the independent learning skills of older children were developed through the use of different sources to learn more about weather forecasts, patterns of climate and climatic zones and the choice of individual ways of recording their findings.
126. The management of the subject is satisfactory but no time is allocated to monitor the teaching and learning in classes. A nationally agreed scheme of work has led to better planning. The identification of step by step learning aims has given more structure to teaching, learning and assessment. It has also enabled the school to amend its curriculum to bring it in line with the National Curriculum 2000. Good use is made of the local area and visits further afield, such as the residential visits to Dartmoor. A good feature is the way the subject is taught to make it pertinent to the lives of the children.

## **HISTORY**

127. It was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection. However, an analysis of children's work and teachers' planning documents shows that the school is teaching the full National Curriculum in this subject and standards are in line with that typical of age.
128. Seven-year-old children have developed a sound understanding of the passing of time by investigating favourite kinds of toys used by different age groups and simple family trees. They are beginning to recognise aspects of life in the past by talking and writing about old information pictures and photographs. They can apply criteria to artefacts, such as types of materials and

power source, shape and purpose, when defining what is old and new. Older children recognise some of the differences and similarities between periods of time through their study of Shute in the past and present. They have learned how to interpret photographs and contrast their lives at school with those of children beyond living memory. Through a detailed study of the ancient Greeks, the oldest pupils have learnt about characteristic features of a past society, know about main events, people and changes and understand some of the ways this era has influenced life today through, for example, creative art and the Olympic Games.

129. The subject is well planned around a nationally agreed scheme of work. Resources are generally adequate, although there is a shortage of artefacts. Good use is made of computers for research work. The school makes good use of resources beyond the school; for example, a visiting storyteller and actors came to enhance the work about the Vikings and Tudors.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

130. Standards for seven-year-olds are in line with that typical for their age but eleven-year-olds are achieving well above this expected level. Achievement of the older children has improved since the last inspection. A very good feature of the subject is its wide use in many lessons to support and extend learning. For example, teachers use it to develop an understanding of analogue and digital times in the infant class and to support problem solving skills through using the 'Farthing Wood' programme in a junior class.
131. Most seven-year-olds are confident when using computers to support their learning. They understand the function and use of the keyboard, mouse, disks and printers. They know how to use a menu to make choices when using a computer program to present and enhance their work. For example, they use different types and sizes of fonts for story writing. By the time they are eleven most children have learnt to use it as a resource to find, structure, refine and present information in different forms for specific purposes and audiences - for example, by using a web site to find out about the climatic conditions in mountainous regions. This led to work on the interpretation of graphs, contrasting climatic conditions with those of Shute and learning how altitude affects temperature and rainfall.
132. The school made a very sensible decision when appointing a part time specialist teacher to lead the subject. She does this very effectively and efficiently and her management of the subject is good, effectively raising standards. The school has gained considerably from her expertise and her influence has resulted in other staff now using information and communication technology confidently to support many aspects of learning. A good, nationally agreed scheme of work is currently being introduced which will bring the curriculum into line with the requirements of the National Curriculum 2000. An assessment scheme, linked to certificates of achievement, in which children match what they can do against certain targets is planned. Resources are adequate, but there is a shortage of equipment to teach control technology and the use of sensors. The Year 6 ice cream project, when children used computers to design a full marketing programme and put it into practice illustrates the very good standard and range of skills being taught. It is a further example showing that the subject is not taught in isolation and how very effectively it is used as a learning resource.
133. The teaching is good in the Year 3 and 4 class and very good in the Year 5 and 6 class. In a Year 4 lesson about organising images, text and sound the teacher's good subject knowledge was evident in the introduction of digital images, which provided a challenging and inspiring focus for the lesson. Good questioning and discussion supported the step-by-step approach,

during which text was 'wrapped' around digital photographs produced by the children. This resulted in almost all the children learning how to produce images, develop them and integrate them to enhance their written work.

134. In the class of older pupils there was very good planning, enthusiastic teaching, a high level of competence and skill in developing children's independent approaches to learning. The tasks related to control technology were prefaced by an interesting discussion about how devices, such as remote controls, speed cameras and security lighting work and was quickly followed up by a range of interesting and motivating tasks. Pupils were required to apply intellectual and creative effort when writing programmes to direct a screen robot to draw a flower. They had to decide on a suitable mathematical shape, calculate the angle sizes required to ensure that a repeat pattern of this was symmetrical and write a coded series of commands for the robot to follow. The discreet intervention by the teacher was very successful in enabling them to learn by developing their own ideas and methods. Discussing traffic lights and pelican crossings taught other children about the importance of sequencing, while others learned how to tackle difficulties, identify mistakes and correct them, when programming a floor robot to follow a defined track. A good feature of the latter activity was the high quality of input of the learning support assistant in helping a boy with special educational needs succeed with the task, make good progress and gain more confidence and self esteem.

## MUSIC

135. It was possible to see only one lesson of music in the junior classes and none in the infant class. However, a range of evidence was provided, including written work, tapes of pupils composing and tapes of performance in singing, which showed that standards in music have been maintained since the last inspection and are better than those expected for children's age in the junior classes. By Year 6 the listening and appraising skills are good. Written accounts of musical appreciation show that pupils have listened well and comments reflect the ways that instruments have been used in compositions. Pupils describe, with enthusiasm, recent class work on creating musical moods and effects using percussion instruments. In their writing they expressed their thoughts and feelings, which sometimes changed, as they listened to a piece called *Variations* by Andrew Lloyd-Webber. Their writing compared the different impact of pieces with the same title but with different composers. For example, they found that *Adagio for Strings* by Samuel Barber had a very different impact from that of William Orbit.
136. Pupils' levels of enthusiasm and interest are high. They develop great confidence and dexterity with percussion; they have a good sense of rhythm and knowledge of how to combine musical elements in their own compositions. They experience a range of styles of music and talk about them with animation in class. This was the case when they were learning about lyrics and as they listened to the style of a particular singer they determined it was jazz. Older pupils particularly enjoy composing and evaluating their own and others' work.
137. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in the infant class but teachers' assessments show that they play percussion, sing in tune and perform action songs and number rhymes. Records indicate that children are learning how rhythm is used in playing and singing.
138. No overall judgement can be made about teaching but in the one lesson seen it was very good. The class teacher had planned very challenging work that inspired pupils and resulted in very good efforts and sustained work. Correct vocabulary is used at all times and pupils use such

terms as *legato* and *staccato* with confidence. The teacher's very good knowledge is evident from the way the subject is presented and explained. The excellent relationships with pupils give them security and confidence. Their inhibitions disappear and they take a full part in the activity that produces animated songwriters who perform eagerly.

139. The co-ordinator is a specialist; her teaching is a strength of the school and is having an impact on the standards achieved. The co-ordinator has improved the subject since the last inspection and maintained high standards. The management of the subject is generally good. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in resources and greater involvement in community projects. The assessment of skills is well established in the junior classes, but not yet at the infant stage. Although the co-ordinator is able to monitor the subject in the junior classes the lack of monitoring of teaching and learning in the infant class is a weakness recognised by the co-ordinator but ways to remedy this have not yet been discussed with the new headteacher.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

140. It was possible to see only one lesson of physical education. This was a gymnastics session with a mixed class of Year 1 and Year 2 children. Standards were in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum targets. No judgement can be made about standards in the junior classes as no lessons were seen but planning shows an intention to cover work as required by the National Curriculum.
141. In the lesson observed the quality of teaching was very good, particularly in view of the inadequacy of the accommodation. By careful planning children were involved in vigorous activity which enabled them to improve their understanding of the effect of exercise on their hearts and how beneficial this is for good health. The teacher used activities involving stretch and balance shapes to improve posture and made good use of children's performance to improve that of others. The building of a sequence of movements developed body control and enabled children to learn through their own ideas and methods. Their achievements were enhanced by the teacher's well-judged intervention, which added good starting and ending posture to their performance.
142. The school's accommodation for teaching physical education indoors is unsatisfactory. The hall is small and the space is restricted significantly by heaters and grills, which protrude extensively from the walls, and by the storage of physical education equipment, tables, chairs, and other furniture. This renders it unsafe for all but very carefully controlled activities. The use of the small storage space to house the equipment of the village playgroup exacerbates the unsatisfactory situation, as the school has no alternative but to leave its own equipment in the hall. Currently the school is trying to remedy the problem by using Honiton leisure facilities for the teaching of gymnastics and dance for junior children. However, there is no guarantee that funding for this can continue indefinitely. When the weather permits, good use is made of the adventure playground, the field and the small area of artificial turf, although the latter is in need of repair. The school has been involved in the Top Sports project, which has improved the teaching of games skills.
143. The school has a swimming programme and almost all children are able to swim at least 25 metres safely and competently by the time they leave the school. Outdoor pursuits activities include abseiling, orienteering, and archery. These are taught during the residential week for older children at Dartmoor.

144. The school is now using a nationally agreed scheme of work, which is well linked to the National Curriculum 2000 and provides structured learning as children move through the school. There is a range of extra-curricular activities including netball, football, gymnastics and table tennis, which enhance the physical education provision and the pupils compete with other similar schools in games activities. For a school of this size this is a very good feature. Overall, resources are satisfactory, although some of the small games equipment is of poor quality

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

145. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the Devon Agreed Syllabus and relate closely to that recommended by national guidance. In lessons and the range of written work sampled, children were at least achieving standards expected for their age and some were doing better. Children learn about Christianity and have a growing knowledge and understanding of other world faiths
146. In the infant class children are gaining new knowledge and understanding of the Jewish celebration of Passover. They know that it is associated with the time that the Israelites wanted to leave slavery in Egypt and that the celebration is about the final plague that resulted in their being released. There is particular interest in the Seder plate and children understand the symbols and what they represent. At Years 1 and 2 children show a good understanding and their responses to questions make good use of prior learning. At this stage, attainment is better than might be expected for their age.
147. In the junior classes younger pupils have been learning about what Jesus was like and have extended their understanding of what the Gospel records say about Jesus. They use this evidence to discuss the kind of person Jesus was. Older juniors are studying the Bible and learning about the books in the Old Testament and New Testament. They have a good understanding about its being like a library of different books. Pupils talked about the *brainstorming* technique they had used to list the types of writing found in the school library as a starting point. They had then looked at the contents page of the Good News Bible to identify the types of writing from the titles of books. The more able pupils chose two or three titles and wrote what they thought they were about. For example, they thought that *Revelation* might be about the future and *Psalms* might be poems and verses. Pupils' reasoning demonstrated their good understanding and extended knowledge. Slower learners had their task modified and they made a poster showing what was in the Bible, using some simpler information provided by the teacher. Some pupils' written work showed how they had extended the task to choose an excerpt from the books of Genesis or Psalms and give reasons for their choice.
148. The quality of teaching is good and produces good learning. Teachers' good knowledge was evident in the way the subject was presented and explained. Although the activities of both year groups in the infant class were similar, they were modified or extended according to children's stage of learning. Particularly good efforts were made by the teacher to find the right activities and since there are no artefacts for the subject the task was more difficult. Books are the main source of information and teachers have to borrow what they lack or be inventive and make their own. In all classes the very good relationships with pupils encouraged class discussion and pupils showed good attitudes to their work, making real efforts to do their best. Teachers value children's contributions, which raises their self-esteem. This was particularly noticeable in the class of Year 3 and 4 children, where 33 per cent of pupils have special educational needs. These children were eager to get started on activities and co-operated well in a group.

149. The co-ordinator for the subject has recently left the school and the new headteacher expects to take responsibility for it. In the absence of the headteacher, staff could offer little information about any aspect of the management of this subject that was affecting standards but there has been no monitoring of teaching and learning.