

INSPECTION REPORT

St Stephen's Community Primary School

Launceston

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 111946

Headteacher: Mr Peter Jones

Reporting inspector: Mr Jonathan Palk
23630

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th May 2002

Inspection number: 195248

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 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Roydon Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Howson

Date of previous inspection: 16th June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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23630	J Palk	Registered inspector	Mathematics History Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13526	R Barnard	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27635	D Cinamon	Team inspector	English Religious education Geography Equal opportunities.	How good are curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23412	A Jeffs	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs.	The work of the area resource base.
24342	D Franklin	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage	Pupils' attitudes and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Stephens is an average sized primary school with 208 pupils on roll. There is no significant difference in the number of boys and girls. There are seven classes, two of which have more than one age group. The average class size is 26. There is also an attached area resource base catering for 13 pupils with complex and severe learning difficulties¹.

There are 42 per cent of pupils with special needs in the main school, which is well above average. The pupils have specific learning difficulties, emotional, behavioural and physical needs. Thirteen of these pupils have statements of special needs, which is also very high. A number of these pupils were previously taught in a special class for pupils with moderate learning difficulties² but are now taught in mainstream classes. They receive additional support from a dedicated teaching assistant.

About 21 per cent of pupils receive free school meals which is above average. All pupils are of white UK heritage. Overall the school serves an area of some social and economic disadvantage.

When children enter the school the majority are attaining well below expected standards of communication, language and literacy, mathematical knowledge and personal and social skills.

There have been substantial changes in the teaching staff in recent years. Five of the nine teachers have been appointed in the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a happy and caring school that provides a satisfactory standard of education. Standards are satisfactory, but there are some pupils who do not achieve as well as they should. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory; there is some that is weaker than expected but also some that is of high quality. The adults and the pupils in the special unit play a very full part in the life of the school. The leadership provides a sense of purpose and direction, particularly in caring for pupils, but not enough attention is given to managing the changes needed to raise standards. The school fosters good relationships with parents who hold it in high esteem. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- All pupils are fully included and there is good provision for their personal and social needs; as a result pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well.
- There is highly effective provision for children in the reception class.
- The special unit is a very good example of how to provide for these pupils' needs.
- The teaching of mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- There is good provision for teaching information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in their lessons.

What could be improved

- Standards reached by seven year olds and those attained in English by eleven year olds.
- The quality of teaching and learning.
- The way the school checks on what it is doing and managing how it is to improve.

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

¹ The area resource base serves families in North Cornwall and West Devon. It is referred to as the special unit in this report and its work was also inspected. The findings can be found in Part B of the full inspection report.

² The learning resource centre was closed in September 2001. It catered for pupils, aged six to eleven, with moderate learning difficulties.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been satisfactory improvement since the school was last inspected in June 1997. The overall standards have not improved much since the last inspection, in fact the trend of improvement in attainment has been below the national trend. The improvements in English have been limited although there is evidence that standards are beginning to get better.

The overall quality of teaching has not improved but it is better in mathematics. Improvements in the issues identified in the last inspection have been satisfactory. There are guidelines in place for all subjects and this provides for progression in pupils' learning. The assessment procedures have been developed, are consistent across the school and the information collected has the potential for the school to assess the improvements in the pupils' learning as they move through the school. This is not yet making the impact it should. Both libraries have been developed and pupils make good use of them. There are significant strengths amongst the recently appointed staff and the school is judged to have the capacity for continued improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E	E	E
mathematics	E*	C	C	B
science	E	D	D	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards attained by seven year olds in the most recent national test are below the national average in reading, and well below in writing and mathematics and compared to schools with a similar intake. Very few seven year olds achieve above average results. Results for eleven year olds have been improving in mathematics and science but are consistently well below average in English. At seven and eleven the girls are attaining higher results than the boys in English. This is also the case in mathematics tests for seven year olds.

The standards seen during the inspection in mathematics and science are broadly in line with those expected for eleven year olds. By the age of eleven standards are below average in English, but this is an improvement on last year's results.

The children start school with well below expected standards. They make very good progress in all areas of learning and when they begin Year 1 the majority has achieved standards expected of them, although oral skills are still below expectations. Pupils in Year 2 do not acquire new skills as expected and by the age of seven standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Whilst a small group of seven year olds representative of low attainers or slightly below average attainers achieve as they should, many pupils do not.

Overall pupils in Years 3 to 6 are achieving as they should in English but they have a lot of ground to catch up. There is insufficient attention given to developing pupils' oral skills and this affects higher attaining pupils in science who do not achieve as much as they should. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are learning mathematical skills well and higher attainers are achieving as well as they should.

In information and communication technology (ICT) seven and eleven year olds attain expected standards. The standards in physical education (PE) are high and above those usually attained by seven and eleven year olds. Standards in science, geography, history and religious education (RE) are below

expectations for seven year olds but in line by age eleven. In other subjects standards reached by eleven year olds are as expected.

The high numbers of pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school. Pupils in the special unit make significant steps towards their personal objectives.

The school has set realistic targets for mathematics but insufficiently challenging targets for English.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are good. Pupils are positive about their work; the majority concentrates well. Older pupils are very well motivated to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	There is good behaviour in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	This is a good feature of the school. Pupils are caring of each other no matter what their needs. Older pupils are mature and set a good example to others.
Attendance	Below national averages.

High levels of illness have affected attendance levels. Pupils respond well to the responsibilities they are given. All pupils mix together very well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	satisfactory	good

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

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Forty nine lessons were seen during the inspection; over half were good or very good. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers' good subject knowledge makes a very positive contribution to lessons; this is particularly evident in PE and ICT. Literacy is taught satisfactorily through the school, although not enough attention is given to encouraging pupils to talk or to explaining new vocabulary. Mathematics is taught well to older pupils but teaching is ineffective for six and seven year olds because teachers' knowledge is less secure. Overall not enough attention is paid to what six and seven year olds can already do and what they need to be taught next. Consequently they are not achieving well enough.

Throughout the school the behaviour of pupils is well managed. Teachers are meeting the needs of those with special educational in a well planned, systematic fashion. They make good use of teaching assistants³ in the lessons to support lower attaining pupils and those with difficulties.

The teaching in the reception class is frequently outstanding and enables children to make very good progress in all areas of learning and particularly in personal and social skills. The teaching in the special unit is very effective.

Some teachers give pupils very good feedback on how they are making progress but, overall, marking of work is not as helpful as it should be.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

³ Teaching assistants: refers to those members of staff not qualified as teachers but who work with children individually or take charge of small groups. They work under the direction of the class teacher or special educational needs co-ordinator.

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and meeting the needs of most pupils. The curriculum for the reception class is extremely well planned.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The special unit provides very well for its pupils. Pupils with special needs in mainstream classes benefit from the support they receive and often make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for moral and social development and provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The successful inclusion of pupils with a diverse range of needs contributes to the provision for pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a good feature of the school. Pupils are very well cared for. Systems for checking on academic progress are now in place but not always used.

The curriculum for six and seven year olds is unsatisfactory because there are occasions when work given to pupils is not matched to their needs and insufficient history and geography is taught. There is good provision for clubs and for pupils' physical development. Child protection is well established and taken seriously. The school has very good relationships with its parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is satisfactory overall. The head teacher working with key members of staff provides the school with a sense of direction and purpose. The head teacher gives a strong steer to the integration of pupils with specific needs.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They do not have enough involvement in monitoring or budget setting.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory use is made of performance data to set the school's strategic development. Procedures for checking on the action being taken to raise standards are not effective.
The strategic use of resources	The school has been over cautious in carrying forward large reserves.

Some key co-ordinators are having an impact on raising standards in the school; others are not fully conversant with the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. There is insufficient regular checking on the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum. The governors have made a satisfactory start on seeking best value. The special unit is very well managed. The school is well resourced and the accommodation is satisfactory. The school grounds are extremely pleasant and contribute to the quality of the experiences given to pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of the special unit • The progress made by all pupils including those with special educational needs • The quality of teaching • The attitudes and values the school promotes • They are made to feel welcome 	There were no significant areas of concern. A few parents felt that the behaviour of some children may affect others.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The leadership of the head teacher | |
|--|--|

These are the views of parents expressed at the parents' meeting together with the questionnaires sent to all parents. About 30 per cent of parents returned the questionnaires. Many of the parents' positive views are well founded. The quality of teaching and the progress pupils make is satisfactory rather than good. Pupils' behaviour is managed well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, standards are much the same in mathematics and science for eleven year olds but lower than they were in English at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs has increased and this has had some impact on overall attainment. Seven year olds performances in national tests for the last three years have been erratic. Results have been well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics but until 2001 had been improving in reading and writing. In the most recent tests in 2001 results were well below the national average and low when compared to schools with a similar intake.
2. Results for eleven year olds have been more consistent. Over the last two years results in mathematics have been close to the national average. Results in science have improved over the last three years from well below average to slightly below average levels. In English they have been well below the national average. Year on year improvements has been very slight in English. Taking English, mathematics and science together, improvements over the last three years are below the national trend. In the 2001 tests, results in English were well below the national average and those for similar schools. Results in mathematics are in line with the national average and above those of similar schools. This represents an improvement over the last three years. Results in science are slightly below the national average and average in comparison with those of similar schools. This is slight improvement over the performance in the last three years.
3. There is some variation in the performance of different groups of pupils. At both seven and eleven the girls overall are attaining higher results than boys in English. This is also the case in mathematics tests for seven year olds. The higher attaining eleven year olds reach the standards they should in mathematics but not in English or science. Pupils' use of language is generally not as effective as it could be in order for them to achieve more in these subjects.
4. The standards seen during the inspection in mathematics and science are broadly in line with those expected of eleven year olds. Fewer pupils attain above average standards in science compared to mathematics. Overall pupils are achieving well between the ages of eight and eleven. There are good levels of support for lower attaining pupils in lessons and their work is matched well to their needs. Overall, pupils are making reasonable progress in English between the ages of eight and eleven and the standards seen are better than last year's test results. There are some pupils, representative of average or slightly below average pupils, who do not achieve as much as they should because they have a weakness in their knowledge and use of vocabulary. This group has more boys than girls. The school is aware of boys' underachievement and is tackling this through extra lessons and additional teaching assistants' support in all lessons.
5. The children make a very good start to their education in the reception class. The great majority of them are on their way to achieving the expected standards by the time they begin Year 1 in most areas of learning. However their attainment in communication, language and literacy is below expectations. This level of progress is not maintained and achievements by the age of seven are below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The pupils continue to apply themselves and work hard but

the rate at which they acquire new skills slows because of some unsatisfactory teaching and an undemanding curriculum. Seven year olds are reading simple books and learning how to tackle new words through using sounds and other clues. A significant number do not read longer books. Standards in writing are below average. Most are still at an early stage in writing and punctuation and grammar is weak. Very few speak confidently about their work and their vocabulary is limited. In mathematics many pupils are still unsure of their number facts and many make simple mistakes in their computation. Only a very small group calculate using numbers greater than 20 or recognise the operations to use when solving simple problems.

6. By the time they leave the school pupils' level of basic skills in English are below average. Most read fluently and most have a growing sense of expression but have difficulty in picking up essential ideas. Most pupils write appropriately for a range of purposes but are weaker at organising their writing to explore and explain ideas or develop stories. A small number of pupils speak with assurance and use the appropriate vocabulary. By the time they leave school the majority has a sound base in mathematics. Pupils successfully use a range of strategies for calculating and confidently use large numbers in their mental arithmetic. They are less confident when tackling problems and using what they know. In science, pupils are knowledgeable about those aspects of science they have studied but few reach higher levels due to limitations of language when explaining scientific ideas.
7. A large number of pupils have special educational needs and experience degrees of learning difficulty in reading and writing. These pupils are distributed evenly through the school. Those in Years 1 and 2 receive effective support and their progress is always satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, a part-time co-ordinator supports teaching assistants and teachers, and pupils' progress is usually good. Although many pupils continue to find problems understanding complicated ideas and writing down their thoughts, they leave the school having developed a greater confidence in participating in classroom activities, speaking to adults and working in groups. They develop well in reading and language skills and this assists their ability to complete tasks in other subjects. However, by Year 6 many still require support and the modification of many classroom tasks particularly in the area of writing and spelling.
8. There has been considerable updating of ICT equipment, which is being used well across the curriculum. Pupils are reaching the standards expected of seven and eleven year olds and a number exceed this. Throughout the school, standards in PE are higher than normally achieved because the pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills. The standards attained by eleven year olds in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music are in line with expectations. Eleven year olds are meeting the expectations of the agreed syllabus for RE. The standards attained by seven year olds in history, geography and religious education are below expectations. They are broadly in line with those expected in art and design, design and technology and music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The school treats all pupils equally. It has a strong inclusive approach to education that ensures pupils with special educational needs are well integrated within classrooms. The equality of opportunity for pupils within the mainstream and within the special unit mean that pupils themselves are very accepting of each other's differences and difficulties. As a result, there is a secure atmosphere for learning for all pupils.

10. Behaviour in and out of class is good. This aspect has been successfully maintained since the last inspection. Behaviour in most lessons is good and sometimes very good or excellent in the older classes. This is impressive because the school has identified a number of pupils with challenging behaviour. In the minority of lessons where behaviour is unsatisfactory it is mainly because pupils are sitting for too long on the carpet listening to the teacher talk. Parents' views about behaviour are very positive and the majority of parents are particularly pleased with children's attitudes towards school. There have been no exclusions in the last year. Pupils are generally responsive to the strategies used by teachers to encourage good behaviour and this contributes well to successful learning.
11. Children quickly settle into the school's routines and have established a very positive approach to learning in the reception class. The strong links with the playgroup and carefully planned induction process are instrumental in successfully introducing children into school life. Throughout the school pupils enjoy lessons and are generally keen to learn and work hard. Pupils are well motivated and responsive to positive praise and encouragement offered by most of the staff. They enjoy talking about their work to adults. For example, during a history lesson in Year 6, pupils were very interested in finding out about life in Launceston during the Victorian times and talked happily with the guest speaker about the collection of artefacts.
12. Pupils look after the school grounds very carefully. During a walk around the grounds a group of pupils from Year 5 spoke in detail about the different areas provided for them, for example quiet areas, wild life areas and play areas. Their attitudes are very positive and they particularly enjoy taking a full and active part in the maintenance of the grounds. For example, pupils talked about a 'grounds day' when they planted trees and shrubs and also of the work of the gardening club.
13. Pupils show a good level of initiative and responsibility. Those elected to the student council take their responsibilities very seriously and record issues brought to them by members of their class in a special book. The council makes a positive contribution to the running of the school. For example, council members have been instrumental in providing a water fountain in the mobile classroom and implementing designated areas for football to be played during break times. The latter contributes to the good behaviour of pupils in the playground. Other responsibilities include the playground squad, who support those who are unhappy at playtimes, and Year 6 pupils organise the hall for assemblies.
14. Relationships are good and pupils co-operate well when they are required to work in pairs or small groups. For example, during a PE lesson pupils worked well together and all enjoyed small group team games. Pupils feel part of the school and local community and show a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils from across the age range play well together in the playground.
15. Overall attendance levels are below the national average. The main reasons for unsatisfactory attendance are a small number of families who are regular poor attendees and a high incidence of general sickness. Punctuality is satisfactory and there are few unauthorised absences.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Over half is good or very good. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is of very high quality and there is also much to praise

in Years 3 to 6. The weaknesses in teaching in Years 1 and 2 have an impact on how well pupils' achieve at the age of seven.

17. Teachers' work hard at building good relationships with their pupils and most lessons are characterised by good attitudes that contribute to effective learning. On most occasions teachers manage their pupils well. There is emphasis on reinforcing positive behaviour and the great majority of pupils respond to the praise and encouragement they receive. Teachers manage the teaching assistants' time effectively. This benefits pupils with special educational needs but teaching assistants also make a more general contribution to all pupils' learning in subjects such as ICT and PE. Teaching assistants play a vital role in supporting pupils who struggle to maintain their concentration and this ensures that lessons are not unduly disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Teachers and teaching assistants place reasonable demands on how pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties conduct themselves in lessons and expectations of how all pupils are to behave are high.
18. In the main, lessons are well planned and prepared and generally take account of the full range of needs. Many lessons are successful because the teachers' own subject knowledge enables them to teach confidently. They know precisely what questions to ask individuals and set tasks that will allow them to learn quickly. There is real purpose in these lessons from the start to finish, which combined with high expectations, results in very good learning. For example, in a Year 5 ICT lesson the teacher's knowledge came through as she demonstrated the importance of accuracy when setting up a formula for a spreadsheet and predicting what would happen if numbers were changed. Her good subject knowledge ensured that she asked pupils challenging questions that enabled her to check on their understanding.
19. However teachers' subject knowledge of teaching English and mathematics is not always good enough and in a small number of lessons the teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. In these lessons teachers are unsure about what to expect of pupils and are not clear about what pupils can already do or understand. Information gained from marking pupils' work, tests and other assessments is not used effectively to set sufficiently challenging work to make sure pupils benefit from the lesson. In some lessons too much time is given to pupils to carry out undemanding activities that do not take their learning forward. However, in the unsatisfactory lessons the provision of individual or small group support mean that pupils with special educational needs learn as well as they should, benefiting from suitable modifications to the tasks; average or higher attaining pupils achieve little. The school is aware of the need to improve teachers' subject knowledge and arrangements are in place for teachers to learn from each other.
20. Resources are well used. For instance, in mathematics lessons the use of individual whiteboards enable pupils to be involved in problem solving, whilst in English lessons the use of the computers allows all pupils to share similar texts. The extensive school grounds are used well for games lessons and also to extend scientific knowledge and enquiry. Visiting speakers serve as a focus for pupils to prepare written questions. Teaching assistants are also generally used well. They often work with groups of pupils and, in the most successful lessons, supplement and enhance the quality of teaching. This was very evident in a Year 3 mathematics lesson. Midway through the taught part of the lesson the teaching assistant worked with a small group of pupils on recognising coins. She skilfully helped them arrange the coins so they could add amounts together. The good management of the practical work helped pupils maintain their concentration and the assistant's questioning helped pupils make use of their number facts. In a PE lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5 the teaching assistants played a vital role in helping

pupils with behaviour difficulties or physical needs to take part in small group challenges. The sensitive support given to pupils who were practising throwing, catching and fielding meant they could play a full part in developing their skills without slowing the learning of others.

21. Teachers' use of questions to take learning on is varied and the impact on pupils' language development is haphazard. In the best example, teachers identify the vocabulary to be used, reinforce its meaning throughout the lesson and make clear links to the objectives of the lessons. A good example of this was seen in a history lesson. With the pupils' help the teacher had written up the vocabulary to be used during their discussion about wartime evacuation and encouraged them to use this when drafting questions for their visitor. A skilful summary of what they had learnt from the visitor again reinforced the vocabulary she wanted pupils to learn. However, teachers' planning does not clearly identify the language to be used and the questions asked of pupils do not encourage or promote pupils to think and develop ideas. This impacts on standards in literacy.
22. The marking of pupils' work is usually positive but very seldom refers to the pupils' individual targets or gives them a clear indication of what they need to do to improve. Homework set is appropriate and supports the day-to-day class work.
23. Pupils who have significant learning difficulties are taught well in Years 3 to 6 where the part-time special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) is able to plan detailed programmes, provide effective individual and small group teaching and assist class teachers and parents with detailed advice. Those pupils with the greatest difficulties receive teaching of high quality from the SENCo and are generally supported well by learning support assistants who are very experienced, sensitive and have a good professional knowledge of special educational needs. In Years 1 and 2, the headteacher has taken on the role of co-ordinator and is developing procedures similar to those available to older pupils. There is currently not the time to develop the more detailed programmes for younger pupils and this detracts from the overall progress made.
24. The proportions of strong and weak teaching is very much the same as the last inspection. There is some very good practice in the school that is beginning to be developed particularly in mathematics and ICT. The framework for planning lessons has been improved to bring about greater consistency and guidelines have been introduced to improve teachers' subject knowledge. However, there is very little monitoring of either teaching and learning or the impact of teachers' planning to raise the quality of teaching up to the best that is seen in the school.

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

25. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to all pupils is very good in the Foundation Stage. The school provides a sound balance and breadth of curriculum opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 but it is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2, due to weaknesses in the provision for geography, history and religious education.
26. All areas of the statutory curriculum are in place and the school meets the requirements of the arrangements made for collective worship. The provision for personal, social and health education, including sex education and drug awareness, is satisfactory overall. The 'student council' is effective in giving pupils a voice in running the school.
27. Access to the curriculum is very good. The senior manager with responsibility for this

aspect has a well-directed view of the curriculum and has made a good contribution to improving planning. However, while some subject managers are effective in monitoring developments in their curriculum areas, there are no reliable systems in place to ensure all co-ordinators are contributing enough to raising standards. The school very successfully includes pupils with special needs in all its activities.

28. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress. Sensibly, some activities take place outside of the classroom and this provides a secure environment assisting language development and confidence. The SENCo is careful to ensure that additional support does not detract from pupils' overall curriculum variety. The consistency of the school's approach to behaviour assists in meeting the targets for pupils who experience behavioural difficulties.
29. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been satisfactorily implemented. The numeracy strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements in Years 3 to 6 but not in Year 2. The literacy hour is too long and this allocation of time does not contribute to higher standards and there is less time for other subjects.
30. New national curriculum guidance is being put into place for other subjects and is effectively implemented for the older pupils. ICT is well catered for with all classes making good use of the computer area.
31. The school has responded to the needs of different groups of pupils and put appropriate measures in place. Some of these, such as additional support for literacy, are not fully effective because the timing is not suitable and the teaching assistants lack training.
32. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has been generally maintained since the last inspection. Acts of collective worship provide satisfactory opportunities for spiritual awareness through quiet moments of reflection. In some lessons opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on aspects of their lives and the wonders of the world. For example children in the reception class were excited and awed by the inside of the fruits they were observing, but overall opportunities are too limited.
33. Provision for moral and social development is very good. A moral code is being positively and sensitively encouraged throughout the school and the school effectively applies a positive behaviour management policy. Rewards and sanctions are clearly set out and followed. This helps to promote fairness and consistency. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Those who find it difficult to conform to the rules are provided with small measurable targets to support them in improving their social skills. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute to a variety of charity events, including supporting fund-raising events for pupils in the special unit. Members of the student council have very good opportunities to contribute to the running of the school. Class monitors support their teachers effectively, for example by helping prepare for lessons. Older pupils have additional responsibilities in the school, such as being a member of the playground squad. There is very good provision for pupils who find it difficult to mix with others or to behave appropriately through training particularly aimed at developing team building skills and raising self-esteem.
34. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for cultural development, particularly local culture. An impressive range of visits and experiences, which are offered to all pupils, considerably enhances all aspects of the curriculum. Opportunities to appreciate or consider a wide range of cultures or other traditions, particularly the diversity of cultural in Britain today, are reliant on the experiences of some of the teachers in the school,

rather than being planned for by all teachers. This leads to a haphazard experience for pupils.

35. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. A good spread of clubs is well attended by enthusiastic pupils. The community also makes a good contribution as some clubs are run by parents and by non-teaching staff. As well as having a good impact on pupil achievement, the clubs are clearly enjoyable.
36. The school has good links with the local community. These contribute well to pupils' learning and personal development. Visits to the local church, links with the town band and participation in local events, such as the town crier competition, enhance pupils' awareness of local culture, geography, music and citizenship. Good use is made of local businesses and with people especially in the development of the school grounds. The school encourages community use of its facilities for activities such as football and yoga, which brings parents and pupils together.
37. The school has good links with partner institutions. Very effective links with the attached playgroup helps youngsters settle very quickly into the reception class. Older pupils speak confidently about their move to Launceston College; staff liaise well over transfer arrangements. The local academic council provides good opportunities for joint staff training and for pupils to play in a range of sports.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. Standards of care in the school are very good. They have been maintained at a similar high level to those reported at the previous inspection. Very good procedures and arrangements are in place in relation to child protection and staff have a very good awareness of potential issues. Thorough procedures are in place to monitor health and safety issues and potential risks are identified and subsequent action monitored well.
39. Good behaviour is promoted well. Pupils enjoy being able to play with both older and younger pupils in both the playgrounds and this contributes well to the behaviour in the playground. Pupils also feel very strongly that the introduction of 'golden time'⁴ is having a very positive impact on the behaviour of all pupils in the school. Guidelines for behaviour management place a strong emphasis on praise and developing positive self-esteem in pupils. Most staff carry out these guidelines effectively. The very good range of outdoor activities helps promote good standards of behaviour in the playgrounds.
40. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory but the use of assessment for influencing teachers planning and the impact on attainment is erratic. Appropriate measures such as the additional literacy support, early literacy support and additional classes for English have been put into place to raise attainment but these initiatives are not well monitored for effectiveness.
41. The member of staff with responsibility for assessment has done a great deal to move the school forward and to tighten up assessment practices. Information from tests and teacher assessment is now collated into a manageable system and is beginning to be analysed and used in the drive to improve standards. Pupils' progress over time can now be more effectively tracked for trends and to see if pupils are achieving as well as they should, but many of the predictions made in the past for English are unreliable and often too low. The marking code has been unified so all teachers use the same

⁴ Golden time is a short period each week when pupils negotiate as a class which activities they would like to do. For example, the use of the computers, physical activities or games in the classroom. Pupils who do not behave appropriately during the week lose some or all of their golden time.

approach but it is not used consistently by all teachers to help pupils move forwards in their learning. While assessment procedures and effective monitoring have helped to raise standards in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, this has not been the case in English.

42. Assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage are very good, and used very well to guide planning. The results are regularly shared with adults working in the reception class and with parents and this is an important factor in the very good quality of children's learning.
43. The assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good. The caring ethos of the school provides security for the many pupils who experience learning difficulties. In addition, the procedures for assessing their needs, reviewing their individual education plans and providing realistic targets is of a high quality for those pupils in Years 3 to 6 and developing well for those in Years 1 and 2. There is not sufficient time to adequately support younger pupils. The school has very good relations with external support staff in health, educational psychology and social services. Class teachers and assistants are particularly grateful to be able to draw on the skills of the special unit teacher and her network of professional advice. Pupils who experience behaviour and emotional difficulties receive good personal support and this also has a very therapeutic effect.
44. Pupils' personal development is monitored well. Teachers' records contain good personal information ensuring staff have good knowledge of the pupils and their backgrounds and this allows them to give individual pastoral support well. Personal needs are dealt with in a sensitive and understanding manner. The school effectively takes measures to avoid exclusions even on a temporary basis. Parents and pupils feel confident that the school handles issues such as potential bullying effectively and sensitively.
45. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Staff do not yet use the recently introduced system to its full potential. Regular absentees are followed up well to reduce the level of unauthorised absences.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents are very positive in their views of the school and hold it and the headteacher in very high esteem. The positive relationships between parents and staff have a good impact on pupils' attitudes to school. A small number of parents are very involved in the work of the school by helping in classes and on visits. They also provide good support especially through the 'Friends of the School'. The school values their support and makes good efforts to involve all other parents in the school and their children's education.
47. Annual reports to parents are good. They give good details of pupils' achievements and personal development. Particularly helpful features for parents are indications of 'areas where parents might help' and pupils' own self-evaluations. The school takes good steps to send information on their children's progress to parents who do not attend consultation evenings. Newsletters are informative and give parents good information about staff changes and school activities. Good support is given to parents of new pupils and a good induction process helps the youngest children settle quickly into the reception class. The school has an 'open door' policy for parents. The good accessibility of staff contributes well to the strong partnership.
48. Parent's contribution to encouraging their children's learning is satisfactory. Some

support reading and homework well. The school is developing a range of suitable initiatives aimed at parents, such as curriculum evenings and the early involvement in the reception class, to encourage more interest in children's learning.

49. For pupils with learning difficulties the close contact with parents is very beneficial. Parents and teaching assistants remarked particularly on the availability of the headteacher and the ethos of support and care they experience when in contact with the school. The school provides good support and advice for parents seeking to assist children who experience difficulties. It has been noticeable that those parents who have felt able to take the school's advice and act on it have seen good progress in their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The head teacher working with key members of staff provides a clear sense of direction and purpose. This has ensured the success of the special unit, the smooth introduction of new teaching staff and the successful integration of a large number of pupils with special educational needs. There is strong emphasis, shared by all staff on ensuring good provision for pupils' social and moral education. The head teacher and deputy are aware of the need to raise standards further and have begun to take action to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should.
51. There has been a focus on improving teaching and learning through staff training in literacy and numeracy and developing consistent approaches to lesson planning. This has been successful in improving the structure of lessons, but has not been entirely successful in eliminating unsatisfactory elements of teaching because the methods for checking up are too casual. The senior managers are also beginning to assemble information about pupils' performance, but the pace of this development is not as fast as it could be and not all subject managers are fully involved. There is some very good information available but it is not currently being used in a rigorous manner.
52. The management of special educational needs is effective. Special educational needs provision receives very good support from senior management and the governing body. Money has been made available to provide high quality resources, training and a very good level of teaching assistants. It has had a very significant effect on both standards and the status given to this essential area of the school's work.
53. The ICT and mathematics co-ordinators are particularly effective and both subjects have seen some improvements in provision and standards.
54. Systems for monitoring the performance of teachers are now in place but not enough time has been given to keeping progress under review. There are no regular mechanisms for improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school and the pace of development in this area of the work of the school has not moved on since the last inspection.
55. The school is working closely with the local education authority (LEA) in drawing up action plans for raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. This is already making an impact in numeracy, which has seen an improvement in pupils' mental skills and problem solving. However, there are a large number of other priorities in the school improvement plan with little reference to how the action will raise standards. There is no supporting management plan to check on the impact of the action being planned and this results in some slippage in the planned activities.

56. The governors carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily. There are good structures in place for the governors to review the community, premises and curriculum developments but they are less rigorous in checking on standards and evaluating the budget priorities. They have made a commendable start on establishing checks that will establish best value through their consultations with parents and professional agencies; for example in relation to the school behaviour code, the inclusion of those pupils with special needs and outdoor play facilities. Governors are not sufficiently involved in monitoring how the school is intending to raise standards.
57. Financial management is secure. Day-to-day financial administration and monitoring is very good. The annual budget and additional funds are used appropriately. There is a clear link between the school's priorities and spending. For example in the provision of additional hours for special educational needs support and the resourcing of ICT. However, the school has built up a very large surplus and is overly cautious in its management of this. Some small amounts are used to safeguard the hours of the SENCo. The school has committed about one third of the surplus in improvements to the premises and a prudent sum has been allocated to balance the current year's budget. The school is also wary of future fluctuations in pupil numbers and this has led to the very cautious approach. Whilst this continues to be an issue it has led to a lack of forward financial planning, especially in relating spending to school improvement issues and also to the initiatives in the school development plan. The cautious approach has also resulted in senior management staff, especially the head teacher, undertaking a high level of teaching commitments such as providing supply cover leaving insufficient time for monitoring school developments.
58. The school is well resourced and resources are used effectively. The school is attractive and inviting to parents and pupils. Improvements to both the libraries have benefited pupils' opportunities for reading and using ICT skills. The outside grounds are used well for science, the arts, geography and physical education.
59. The strengths identified in leadership and management have been maintained since the last inspection. There have been a considerable number of staff changes and five of the teachers have been in the school for less than two years. Some of these changes have served to strengthen teaching but also resulted in problems for the consistent management of some subjects. A large number of support staff are employed and with the vision of the deputy head teacher and the energy of the teacher in the special unit there is an effective programme of staff development.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to raise standards further and improve the quality of education the governing body working closely with the head teacher should;

(1) **Raise standards reached by seven year olds and those attained in English by eleven year olds by:**

- improving the quality of teaching oral skills throughout the school;
- improving planned opportunities for writing in different areas of the curriculum in Years 1 and 2;
- giving more emphasis to developing pupils' scientific reasoning;
- providing more opportunity to acquire geography and history skills in Years 1 and 2.

(Paragraphs 4, 5, 21, 25, 90, 93, 99, 119 & 143)

(2) **The quality of teaching and learning by:**

- improving the quality of teaching the additional literacy and early literacy strategies;
- improving the quality of mathematics teaching in Years 1 and 2;
- improving the quality of marking;
- making full use of performance data and assessment information when planning lessons;
- re-evaluating the time given to teaching literacy skills.

(Paragraphs 19, 22, 29, 31, 95, 98, 102 & 105)

(3) **Improve systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school by:**

- establishing more regular and systematic monitoring by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and subject co-ordinators of standards and quality of teaching;
- identifying in the school improvement plan how and when monitoring is to be undertaken;
- introducing a systematic approach to monitoring of lesson planning and teaching that checks that the school's main priorities are being addressed;
- introducing more regular and systematic evaluation of action being taken to raise standards and involve the governing body in this, in order to strengthen their role in development planning.

(Paragraphs 24, 27, 51, 55, 56, 104, 109 & 124)

Minor issues

Ensure that opportunity for learning about other cultures is planned systematically. *(Paragraph 34)*

Seek ways to improve children's access to the well-equipped outdoor play area. *(Paragraph 70)*

The work of the Area Resource Base (Special Needs Unit)⁵

61. This base is a major strength of the school. It is a highly successful pioneering development in the inclusion of pupils with severe disabilities in mainstream settings. The quality of education that the pupils receive is very high and each one makes significant progress.
62. Currently the special unit provides support for thirteen pupils who have complex learning difficulties. At least a quarter of this group have profound and multiple problems, usually including severe speech and mobility problems, but often complicated by medical, physical and intellectual difficulties that require skilled and sensitive support. When they enter the special unit, most find it difficult to communicate and often react to others with challenging or withdrawn behaviour. Progress for these pupils is, thus, to be measured in how well they develop socially, how well they mix with others and how well they start to become independent in thinking and planning for themselves.
63. Progress on all of these fronts is always good and often very good indeed. Progress is often made in small steps. The responding to eye contact or making a considered choice of drink may be a significant step forward for an individual pupil. It is often difficult to see progress over short periods of time and it is a tribute to the team working in the base that considerable progress was evident for all pupils, some within the period of the inspection. This is further supported by the developments that can be seen from the detailed and wide-ranging assessments carried out and recorded. Pupils who entered with few communication skills can, after a few months, make choices and express feelings using sign and symbol cards and, gradually, the spoken word. A few who experience severe behaviour difficulties soon settle into a positive routine and begin to relate to strangers in more appropriate ways.
64. All pupils receive the full curriculum, which the resource base teacher plans in parallel with the mainstream class teachers. Good adaptations have been made to the literacy and numeracy hour formats so that pupils have equal access to class discussion, group work and feedback sessions. In a very good mathematics lesson, the whole class started in a circle singing a counting song. Each pupil had a number and was encouraged to say their part of the sequence. Some sang independently, others used an electronic support to speak for them. It was clear from the responses of the assistants that many pupils made contributions that were positive developments for them. This progress was noted verbally and later written into the record books to ensure that future lessons built on the development. When the class split into groups, some used building bricks to count from one to three; one used the computer to reinforce his ability to respond using a switch; while the higher attaining group worked with the class teacher on more formal activities relating to the symbols of one to fourteen. At the end of the lesson all pupils came back together and told the group what they had been doing. This 'plenary' was relaxed, but still a very successful learning event.
65. The work is well resourced and there is a wide range of stimulating equipment to provide rich learning experiences. Thus, in a literacy lesson, six pupils worked in a group to develop spontaneous speaking. Stimuli included sand, pasta, shaving cream and water. Pupils were encouraged to experience the textures and comment on them. It was noticeable that all were excited by the experience and able to describe it in their own way. One pupil described the foam as "warm" and "smelly", while another told the visitor that the sand was "cold" and that he poured it through the wheel. A second group received a very good 'sign language' session with a highly skilled teaching assistant.

⁵ Referred to as the special unit throughout the report

She signed along with the video of a monster story. The follow-up work required the group to describe the 'Gruffalo' using sign, gesture and the spoken word. The group started with single words, but soon were so enthralled that they discussed the story in complete sentences and easily recognised a range of rhyming words. Within the group a pupil who chose not to speak used sign effectively and his responses to adults showed considerable progress since his arrival in the special unit. In all lessons, teaching, by both teacher and assistants, is good or very good, characterised by humour, appropriate demands and challenge. This assists in encouraging pupils to try out new words and sentences without anxiety.

66. The opportunities provided for inclusion are particularly impressive. Not only do pupils from the base integrate fully at breaks and lunchtimes; they also attend mainstream PE and music lessons. Mainstream pupils also visit the special unit in order to 'play' with pupils in supervised activities. In one exciting development, the Year 2 class and the base joined for music. The lesson began with all of the children signing 'I Can Sing A Rainbow' using Makaton signs. This two-way interaction is what is truly meant by inclusion and mainstream pupils benefit at least as much as the special unit pupils. Inclusion is well monitored and tailored to individual pupils.
67. A major strength of the work is the link made with parents, support services and voluntary organisations. Many of the developments and much of the equipment is provided from locally raised funds. The special unit's teacher uses her very wide contacts to ensure that detailed assessments are made of all pupils and the results acted upon. Thus, a recent visit by specialists in feeding programmes has assisted teaching assistants in overcoming severe difficulties for one pupil at lunchtime. A similar link with outside agencies has identified the need for specific chairs and these have been purchased.
68. Families and specialists have a very high regard for the special unit's provision. It links with families from a child's point of diagnosis and is the centre of a very effective multi-professional network.
69. The success of the special unit arises from very good management by the teacher and very positive support from the headteacher and special needs governor, who both frequently work with the pupils. Grants are appropriately used to provide the high staffing level and the very good range of resources. All teaching assistants within the unit receive good, often very good, training.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	10	17	15	4	0	0
Percentage	6	20	35	31	8	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	208
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	45
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	24
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	88
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	17	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	12
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	19	20	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	62 (74)	65 (79)	71 (79)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	9	11	10
	Total	21	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (74)	77 (79)	74 (79)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	14	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	10	12
	Girls	10	13	18
	Total	16	23	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (62)	72 (86)	94 (93)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	12
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	24	23	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (62)	72 (86)	88 (93)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	177
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	29
Total aggregate hours worked per week	529

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

⁶ This balance exceeds recommended contingencies. A small element is to be used to safeguard special educational needs support, and one third is committed to improving the school building.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	590,406
Total expenditure	539,530
Expenditure per pupil	2,569
Balance brought forward from previous year	56,049
Balance carried forward to next year ⁶	106,929

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	208
Number of questionnaires returned	63

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	49	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	56	2	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	63	10	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	56	8	3	6
The teaching is good.	52	48	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	57	6	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	44	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	38	60	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	24	63	8	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	60	35	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	59	10	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	60	6	0	13

Two per cent reflects the views of one adult response to the questionnaire, three per cent reflects the views of two adults, ten per cent reflects the views of six adults.

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

70. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning was good at the time of the last inspection. This has improved significantly since the last inspection and provision is now very good indeed. Children are provided with a very good range of learning opportunities in an extremely stimulating environment. As a result of consistently very good teaching, all children, including those who find learning difficult, are making very good progress. Good use is made whenever possible of the school grounds, but the lack of a door leading directly outside and no covered outdoor area inhibits opportunities for children to make full use of the facility.
71. Children enter school with attainment well below that expected for their age, particularly in the important areas of communication, language and literacy. By the time they enter Year 1 the majority achieve very well and are set to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Attainment is below the expected levels in communication, language and literacy.
72. Very good induction procedures ensure that children quickly settle into the routines of school. There are many very good opportunities for parents to work alongside their children in class. During these sessions parents receive helpful support and advice that help them make a valuable contribution to their children's learning. Parents are regularly invited into class to share the children's achievements.
73. Assessment procedures are very good and are used very effectively to support the teacher's planning. Regular assessments are made and highlighted to indicate what each child has achieved towards the early learning goals in each area of learning. All information is used very well to report to parents both at consultation meetings and for written reports.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. All children, including those who find learning or conforming difficult, make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Boys and girls are happy to come into school and know the early morning routines of sitting on the carpet in a circle for registration. They sit quietly, answer very politely to their names and listen to each other share their news or show things they have done at home. All children are secure in their understanding of the rules in the classroom and expectations of behaviour in and around the school. They share equipment and take turns when playing games. For example, a group of three children confidently took turns to shake the die and match the dots with a number.
75. The teaching of this area of learning is very good. The teacher makes each child feel really special at all times. She shares her very high expectations of behaviour very effectively with the children using praise judiciously. The excellent role models provided by all adults working in the Foundation Stage helps build effective relationships and enables children to make very good progress in developing personal and social skills.

Communication, language and literacy

76. Children of all abilities make very good progress but many are unlikely to achieve the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Children are beginning to speak clearly and confidently. For example, several children retell the story of Jack and the Beanstalk with support from the pictures and the teachers' careful questioning. However many still use a limited vocabulary, speaking in short phrases rather than complete sentences. The youngest children in the class use simple short phrases to act out their version of the story to the rest of the class.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. There is very well planned provision that appeals to the children and support staff are very well briefed on how they are to encourage literacy and language skills. For example there are several collections of books with the appropriate puppets and other props for children to use when re-telling the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. Children are able to take on the role of characters in the story and re-enact the story with confidence. In the stimulating 'garden centre' and 'the hospital', children are beginning to communicate with each other well.
78. Very effective teaching methods such as the use of puppets, poems, sound games and large print books, capture the children's interest in reading and writing. Most children enjoy listening to stories or visiting writing areas. Most are beginning to respond well when the teacher is sharing a story with the whole class. Early reading skills are beginning to develop through the use of 'Jolly Phonics'⁷ and the children know many of the letter sounds and actions associated with the letters. Children have very positive attitudes to books and are eager to share books with adults. Higher attainers read simple text accurately and talk in some detail about the pictures in the book. They are beginning to use initial letter sounds to read unfamiliar words. Average attaining children are beginning to read simple repeated phrases accurately and also talk confidently about the pictures. The lower attaining children turn the pages correctly and show a keen interest in illustrations and print. They point to words and confidently tell the story in detail, using short phrases.
79. In writing, children use writing and mark making as a means of recording and communicating meaning. Higher attainers are using their phonic knowledge to write simple words and are beginning to form a simple sentence, sometimes using the correct punctuation. Average attaining children are using initial letter sounds to convey meaning and explain in detail to an adult what they have written. Lower attaining children communicate by using a series of familiar letters and trace successfully over the teacher's writing.

Mathematical Development

80. In this area the children are achieving well. This is because of excellent teaching and the very wide range of practical experiences offered to children. The environment is rich with opportunities for children to develop mathematical skills and understanding. Lots of practical activities are provided for the children to enable them to have a secure knowledge and understanding of number before they start to record. This is backed up with very well organised adult support and has an extremely positive impact on children's knowledge and understanding of number. Sessions at the end of the lessons are used very well to give the children opportunities to share their work. They are also used very effectively to reinforce the objectives of the lesson and to assess children's

⁷ 'Jolly phonics': a teaching programme that combines sounds with actions.

understanding. For example in one lesson the teacher quickly had all the children singing number rhymes that reinforced counting on and counting back. The higher attaining children were challenged to take this further by asking for the number after twenty-one while the lower attainers were asked to tell her the number after three.

81. Most children count forwards and backwards accurately to ten and higher attaining children count beyond. Only three children did not join in singing all the number rhyme 'Ten Little Indians' with finger actions. Higher and average attainers give an accurate number sentence to correspond with a picture. For example, 'there were ten penguins and two went for a swim so there were eight penguins left'. These children confidently order numbers to twenty correctly and add and subtract numbers to ten. Those at an early stage of acquisition of numbers are willing to attempt to count objects using numbers to ten and are beginning to form their numbers correctly using a small whiteboard. Higher and average attaining children identify which is the 'taller' or 'shorter' bean and use cubes to compare the heights of the beans. Lower attaining children measure the tails of the mice, using plastic cubes to determine the longest and shortest tail.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

82. Children make very good progress in this area. The children know that buds grow on the trees and describe to an adult some of the things they observe during walks around the school grounds. They know that their beans need water and sunlight to grow and some children, mainly higher and average attainers, are beginning to keep a 'bean diary' to show how their bean is growing. With support, most children sequence pictures of the life cycle of a butterfly correctly. Higher and average attaining children describe some of the features of a spider and lower attaining children know that a spider has eight legs. They talk about the visit from the school nurse and know that it is important to have a healthy diet, including fruit and vegetables. The children are beginning to find out about the wider world through postcards and photographs taken during 'Roger Rabbit's' visits around the world.
83. The quality of teaching of this area of learning is very good. The teacher has very good understanding of the needs of young children and the classroom is extremely well organised with a wide range of activities to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. For example, an adult used the book and props for 'Handa's Surprise' to reinforce the names of a range of exotic fruits to a group of children. This followed a very good lesson when the teacher showed the children lots of different fruits and created a wonderful sense of awe and wonder when she cut the fruits in half to show the children the different types of seeds in each fruit.

Physical Development

84. Children make very good progress in this area. During physical activity sessions, children show a good awareness of space, themselves and others. Most of the children respond very well to music, interpreting and moving with control and co-ordination. For example, in one lesson children moved appropriately to the music of 'The Flight of the Bumble Bee'. Two pupils from the special unit responded well to the slow drumbeat and to the busy bells. Children follow instructions, and showed a sound awareness of each other during games with a parachute. Children ride and park their tricycles skilfully and safely.
85. Teaching is very good and this has a positive impact on children's learning. As a result, they are making very good progress. The teacher's excellent rapport with the children,

together with very good knowledge and understanding of this area of learning, contribute very effectively to the development of individual children's physical development skills. Children respond very well to the teacher's advice and instructions. Very good classroom assistant involvement means all children are fully involved in the lessons. Their support in music and movement sessions ensures children from the special unit are very well integrated.

Creative Development

86. Children make very good progress in this area. The lower attaining children roll and mould play dough to make different fruit and place beads on their fruits for the seeds. Other children make close observational paintings of lemons and oranges, using the correct colour paint. Higher attaining children make detailed observational drawing of oranges, grapefruit and melons that have been cut in half. They draw the seeds in detail and use coloured pencils or mix their own paint to colour the drawings. These children are achieving standards better than expected for their age. Children improvise their imaginative play very effectively. For example one child took on the role of the shop assistant and another the customer in the 'garden centre'. Two children were able to use musical instruments well for sound effects during a performance of Jack and the Beanstalk.
87. By the time children enter Year 1 they are generally achieving better than expectations in their computer skills because of skilled and imaginative teaching. They are secure in their knowledge of how a computer works, the layout of the keyboard and how to carry out basic processes such as deleting, producing capitals and printing work.
88. The quality of teaching is very good. Activities are well planned by the teacher, and provide the children with very good opportunities to develop their creative skills. The teaching assistants are fully involved in planning and helping children with the activities. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and an artistic flair, which supports children's learning very well. For example, her focused teaching of the skills and techniques required to make close observational drawings enabled a group of children to produce work of a high standard.

ENGLISH

89. Attainment in English is generally improving although this has yet to be reflected in most recent test results. The present Year 6 pupils are expected to exceed the targets set for them, but due to significant numbers of pupils of below average attainment, standards are below the national average. Inspection findings are that standards in the present Year 5 are higher, therefore test results next year should show significant improvement. Reading standards for seven year olds have improved over the last year but standards overall in reading and writing remain below average.
90. When they start in Year 1, the speaking and listening skills of the majority of pupils are below expectations. Poor vocabulary often impedes pupils' ability to comprehend what they read and to express themselves in writing. The younger pupils are often reluctant to answer questions and are not given enough opportunity to develop speaking in other ways. Pupils do not readily use subject specific vocabulary, as there is insufficient emphasis on this in lessons. Generally, the range of speaking opportunities offered to pupils is too limited. When teaching is very effective pupils respond very well. They explain their thinking, discuss issues, collaborate with others to make decisions and were, for instance, very chatty when taking a visitor around the school grounds.

However, high quality teaching and the effective use of English across the curriculum is not a regular feature of the school's practice. Consequently, poor oral skills persist and contribute to below average standards by the age of eleven.

91. Year 1 pupils make satisfactory progress in reading but by age seven the standard for many is still below average. Higher attaining pupils read accurately, explain what authors and illustrators do and talk about a favourite book read at home. The majority less readily comprehend what they read. The lower attaining pupils are very hesitant and have few strategies to cope with unknown words. Pupils are familiar with non-fiction books and locate very simple information.
92. By age eleven most pupils read from a good range of books but, while they have preferences for authors and types of books, even those identified as higher attainers struggle to give reasons for their choices. The majority understand the meanings that idioms convey and refer to the book they are reading to explain how this affects the passage. They find information from non-fiction books but have difficulty in picking up essential ideas. There are a high proportion of pupils with special needs in the year group who are less accurate in their reading and struggle over new words. Consequently, standards overall are below those typical for this age. Many pupils in Year 5, however, are already up to average levels; evidence that standards are rising. From the age of eight pupils are developing good library skills using ICT and the Dewey catalogue system to locate books on particular subjects. Home/school reading booklets play an important role in keeping parents involved in their children's reading, although there is variation between classes in the regularity with which these are completed by staff, pupils and parents.
93. Most Year 1 pupils write simple sentences, form letters correctly and are beginning to use full stops and capital letters. Only above average pupils in Year 2 write confidently, using interesting beginnings to sentences and developing ideas in stories. The majority convey very simple ideas, often spell common words inaccurately and do not develop ideas. A considerable proportion of pupils are at a very early stage in writing, learning to put spaces between words and showing little phonic knowledge. Year 1 and 2 pupils have no opportunity to develop their writing in other curriculum areas such as geography and history. By the age of seven the majority are below the standard expected for their age.
94. By the age of eleven standards in writing are below average. Although the school is taking steps to improve this, the improvement is very uneven and is mostly seen in Years 5 and 6 where the teaching is consistently good. The very large numbers of pupils with special needs in Year 6 depresses the overall results so, while the proportion of pupils who are expected to achieve the average and higher levels of attainment is an improvement on the previous year, overall attainment remains below average. Year 6 pupils have written letters, poems, play-scripts and some well expressed autobiographies, even those written by lower attaining pupils contain a lot of interesting detail. The quality of writing in Year 5 is particularly good. Higher attaining pupils write fluently. Their reviews of 'The Hobbit' are lively and use carefully chosen vocabulary and sometimes quotes to give the reader a good idea of what the book is about and why it might appeal. Average attaining pupils also write well and lower attainers express opinions even though their sentence structure is less secure.
95. The quality of pupils' learning is directly related to the quality of teaching and this varies considerably. Year 3 pupils have made good progress over the year from a very poor start but standards are still low, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Pupils in Years 1, 2 and 4 do not make as much progress as they should, as the work does not sufficiently

match the needs of the average and higher attaining pupils. The work lacks challenge and teachers' expectations of what these pupils should be able to achieve are too low.

96. Some teaching is of a very high quality and this is reflected in the standards reached. In one of these high quality lessons, resources were stimulating and organised so that all pupils learned effectively. The teacher had high expectations of all aspects of learning and behaviour. Tasks were planned so that all pupils at different levels of attainment achieved well. Pupils settle to work quickly and completed tasks in the time given. The teacher's skilful questions elicited full and reasoned explanations by pupils about the work. In the better lessons oral work precedes the written work so that pupils know how to begin. In one lesson the opportunities for speaking and listening were particularly good and pupils listened very well to each other. Consequently, pupils were confident in reading and discussing their writing with the class and gave and received critical evaluation. Pupils expressed very thoughtful ideas about improvements that could be made to a book review about 'The Hobbit'. The teaching assistant was very well briefed and had an equally positive, consultative approach to interacting with the pupils.
97. The provision for pupils with special needs is good and they are effectively included in all aspects of lessons. Literacy support from the SENCo for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good. She provides effectively for pupils' learning needs through a carefully planned programme and her good relationships with pupils. Teaching assistants mostly work well with pupils, helping them to concentrate and understand during whole class teaching but some assistants need further training in this respect. They are usually more confident when supervising group work. Some of the initiatives to improve the attainment of other groups of pupils are less successful. While pupils benefit from more individual attention, booster classes, additional literacy support and early literacy support make only a marginal contribution to raising standards, due to the staffs' lack of expertise.
98. The picture in English is very similar to that last reported. Overall planning has been improved and assessment procedures are in place but the data collected has not yet been used to raise standards. Some teachers do not have secure knowledge about the levels pupils have reached. A good start has been made to set targets for pupils and sharing this information with them. The literacy strategy is followed and the school has appropriately set writing as a priority. There are a number of weaknesses in the leadership and management of the subject. In particular there is no clear view as to how standards are to be raised and no regular focused monitoring of the action being taken. Consequently, the impact of some very good provision is diminished. There is too much reliance on trying to improve writing through teaching in the literacy hour and no overall strategy to develop literacy through other areas of the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

99. Attainment in mathematics is below the national average for seven year olds and in line with national average for eleven year olds. The pupils start school with poor levels of mathematical skills, and as they move through the school achievements vary. Average and higher attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they should in Years 1 and 2, because the teachers' subject knowledge is insecure. The work they are asked to do is not always meeting their needs and this hinders their progress. As a consequence, the proportions reaching above average levels are low. All pupils are making the progress expected of them during Years 3 to 6 because the provision in most areas of mathematics is good.
100. By the age of eleven the pupils have a sound grasp of the four operations and are

confident about working with high numbers. They understand the relationships between, for instance, fractions, decimals and percentages and most use their knowledge to solve practical problems. They confidently use their table facts to solve multiplication and division problems and nearly all pupils have good recall. This is the result of regular table practice. Good use made of ICT to reinforce number recognition and also for working on data and spreadsheets. Older pupils explore probability, but there is little in the work of higher attainers that reflects pupils making generalisations from number sequences or from data.

101. Standards attained by seven year olds are lower than at the last inspection and the predicted levels for pupils are too low. In this area of the school, progress has been unsatisfactory. Overall, however, progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards are rising through Years 3 to 6 and there is some very good teaching. These year groups have benefited from the successful introduction of the national strategy for teaching numeracy. There is an emphasis on teaching calculating strategies, which is leading to much greater confidence in pupils tackling problems. It is also benefiting teaching assistants in carrying out their work successfully. This was demonstrated well in a Year 6 lesson where a teaching assistant confidently used a fraction board to emphasise how a multiplication strategy could be used to solve a fraction problem. Throughout the school, teachers pay particular attention to the careful presentation of work and this benefits lower attaining pupils because they make few careless mistakes.
102. The rate of progress in lessons reflects the quality of teaching that varies from very good to unsatisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 lower attaining pupils and those slightly below average make satisfactory progress because mathematical skills are taught carefully and there is sufficient support particularly for six year olds to help them work practically. However, expectations of what average and higher attaining pupils can do are not matched well to what pupils already know and understand. Some of the higher attaining pupils are not challenged and consequently do not learn the skills necessary to reach the higher levels, whilst the work set for lower attaining pupils is overly demanding. For example, the expectations of a lower attaining pupil to use table facts to tackle multiplication and division were unreasonable but at the same time some higher attaining pupils were asked to repeat number facts to 10. In one lesson, during the introduction a group of higher attaining pupils had to wait whilst the teacher took the whole class through a procedure step by step. The explanation became over long because the lower attaining pupils lacked the necessary knowledge. Higher attaining pupils were not encouraged to contribute and they lost interest in the activity. In another lesson with a group of average and lower attaining pupils the pupils were given no opportunity to consolidate their knowledge of mathematical vocabulary and many pupils were unable to begin to identify which operation to use when sorting out word problems. In some lessons there is not enough opportunity for pupils to talk about mathematics or explain their thinking or observations. This was confirmed by the narrowness of work set in some classes which was more concerned with completing worksheets rather than giving pupils more practical experiences that would enable them to reinforce their mathematical reasoning.
103. There is some very good teaching with the older pupils enabling them to make good gains in their learning. The teaching is brisk, well focused and the teachers are very confident about what the pupils need to learn. In one lesson the use of white boards to help pupils calculate percentage problems was effective and the range of practical settings for these problems quickly engaged the pupils. The best lessons are well organised; finish with enough time for pupils to celebrate what they had achieved and left them feeling very positive about mathematics. In other effective lessons the first part focuses on quick responses and encourages pupils to explain their answers. This was

the case in a lesson with Year 6 pupils who were asked to multiply 13 by 13. The teacher effectively encouraged pupils to consider what they already knew about the number before effectively illustrating the strategies different pupils had chosen to use. The group and individual activities were well chosen to build well on what pupils have done previously and this helped them extend their understanding.

104. The co-ordinator has worked very hard in a short space of time to identify in what areas of mathematics pupils are not achieving and taken successful steps to address this by checking on teachers planning. She has not had the time to monitor the impact of this planning in all lessons and some teaching is not as effective as it should be. Resources are used well. Teaching assistants have been trained to give small group support that is having a positive impact on achievement in lessons.

SCIENCE

105. Standards of attainment in science are below the national average by the age of seven and broadly average for eleven year olds. This is a similar picture to last year's test and task results. Standards have been generally improving since 1999 when they had dropped substantially. However some higher attaining six and seven year olds are not achieving as well as they should because the teaching is not challenging them. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall with the best progress made through Years 3 to 6. Standards overall have been maintained since the last inspection.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are generally clear. The lesson objectives are shared with the pupils at the start so that they know what they are going to learn. This has a positive impact on their learning. Teachers question well to assess knowledge and understanding and to promote discussions. For example in one lesson quick concise questions enabled the teacher to know that pupils had a clear understanding of the purpose of the arteries in the body before moving on to pupils investigating their pulse rate and how it relates to the function of the heart. In lessons where teaching is good, the teachers have high expectations of attainment and set challenging tasks for the pupils. In another effective lesson pupils were asked to investigate the chemical reactions between two substances. They had to find out whether different proportions of the two substances made a difference to the results. The teacher circulated asking probing questions that developed pupils' thinking. As a result most pupils made good progress. Teaching assistants are well briefed and suitably deployed in the classroom to work with pupils who find learning difficult.
107. By the age of seven the average and higher attaining pupils have reached a similar level of attainment, but this remains below that expected of pupils of this age. They describe which forces they used to move materials and sort materials into natural and man-made groups. They predict what will happen to certain materials, such as jam and milk if they are frozen but do not yet recognise that some changes can be reversed and some cannot. Pupils identify a range of habitats for animals and are beginning to sort living things into groups according to set criteria. For example some pupils identify, categorise and investigate animals that have feathers, scales, fur and skin. Lower attaining pupils are working at a level well below that expected for their age because of weaknesses in recording and in their ability to explain their knowledge and understanding orally.
108. By the age of eleven the majority of pupils demonstrate an appropriate knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties. Pupils plan their investigations

appropriately; make secure predictions of what they expect to happen, record their results in a table and draw reasonable conclusions from their results. A small group of pupils need a high level of support in order to reach the same conclusions. In a Year 4 lesson pupils investigated whether girls have bigger feet than boys. They made appropriate suggestions of the best way to tackle the investigation and measured the different sizes of their feet. Pupils knew that to make it a fair test they needed to all measure the right foot with their shoes taken off. Pupils in a Year 5 lesson measured their pulse rate accurately and related the pulse beat to the heart. They knew that arteries carry oxygenated blood around the body and that the heart is a muscle. They understand the scientific terms, 'evaporation' and 'condensation' to describe the changes in materials. Pupils' books indicate that they are covering all topics from the suggested national guidelines for science satisfactorily. Learning is accelerated in Year 5 and Year 6 because greater emphasis is given to correct usage of scientific vocabulary.

109. The subject co-ordinator is very new to the role and has not had sufficient time to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning across the school. There have been no opportunities for senior staff to share the analysis of test results to provide her with identified areas to be developed in order to raise standards. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. Resources are satisfactory and the good links with the local secondary school enables pupils in Year 6 to have access to specific scientific equipment to use in their investigative work. The school grounds are a very good resource for pupils and the wildlife area with a pond and a mini-beast area are effectively used and ensure good progress in this area of science.

ART AND DESIGN

110. Standards in art and design are as expected of seven and eleven year olds which is the same as at the last inspection. Progress in learning is good overall and younger pupils are achieving particularly well.
111. The quality of teaching and learning is good and as a result pupils achieve well. Lessons are well planned and the teachers are using the national guidance well to support them in their planning. Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge that has a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example six year olds use chalk and charcoal to produce portraits in the style of famous artists, such as Renoir and Van Gogh. They review their work and show how it can be improved. In one lesson pupils were shown how to use viewfinders to make close observations of Breughel's playground games before they reproduced their own ideas on hardboard. This level of challenge and high expectation is leading pupils to produce work of a high standard.
112. In another good lesson older pupils made close observational drawings of buildings and the countryside around them. Using these drawings they created a composition of rural or urban views which demonstrated a good understanding of structure, pattern and proportion. They used charcoal and graphite pencils well to add texture to their pictures and some pupils over painted effectively with a light wash of colour. Pupils in Year 3 studied how stencil prints were developed by early American settlers to decorate their homes. They combined this research with what they had already learnt about symmetry to produce their own stencil patterns. Similar good links to mathematics were explored when pupils in Year 4 began to plan a journey using signs and symbols. Most knew that they are working in a style similar to that used by the Aborigines and had a secure understanding of the colours used in Aboriginal art.
113. The temporary co-ordinator is collecting samples of pupils' work that allow her to

successfully monitor the coverage and development of skills. Sketch-books are used by older pupils, but few of these books are marked well enough for pupils to know what they are doing well and what techniques they need to develop further.

114. Pupils' work is celebrated well around the school through attractive displays and the art club is well supported. Some has been used well to decorate the library area for the younger pupils. This demonstrates that their work is valued by everyone and as a result impacts well on pupils' learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)

115. Pupils' attainment in design technology (DT) is meeting expectations at seven and eleven. All pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. Evidence for this judgement has been obtained from looking at samples of pupils' work and from talking to pupils because no lessons were observed during the inspection. No judgement can therefore be made on the quality of teaching of DT. Standards of attainment have been successfully maintained since the last inspection.
116. Most seven year old pupils are sufficiently confident to generate ideas and plan what to do next, based on their experiences of working with tools and different materials. They select appropriate techniques to join materials and are just beginning to evaluate their work satisfactorily. For example seven year olds making a wheeled vehicle recognise what went well, but are not confident enough to suggest what they could do better in the future.
117. By the age of eleven most pupils' work accurately, paying attention to the quality of finish and to the function of their models. Year 6 pupils successfully design and make an electrically powered vehicle, effectively combining their knowledge gained in science with DT skills. They plan, design, make and refine their vehicles using a range of materials and tools, achieving work of a standard expected for their age. Good evaluations are made and photographic evidence indicates that pupils very much enjoy both making and testing their vehicles. A small group of pupils in Year 6 were working with a teaching assistant making a slipper using their designs. The designs appropriately identified the purpose of the slipper and the materials the pupils planned to use. The good quality use of adult support throughout the older classes enables the lower attaining pupils to achieve as well as the rest of the class.
118. Teachers' planning, together with evidence from displays of pupils' work, indicate that design and technology has developed well since the last inspection. Good links established with other subjects support the development of other skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 choose the appropriate materials when designing and making egg covers based on their scientific research. In Year 4 pupils' understanding of a fictional character led to some exciting designs for a chair. Pupils in Year 5 are designing and making musical instruments that link well to their music and history lessons.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

119. Standards in geography and history are below expectations for seven year olds and broadly average when pupils leave the school. Too little time is given to geography and history for the younger pupils to have sufficient knowledge of either local features or places beyond. Their knowledge of events in the past and how the past is different from the present is weak.
120. One geography lesson and three history lessons were observed. Combined with a

scrutiny of work it is clear that pupils are learning well in Years 3 to 6. The teaching is effective. There are plenty of opportunities in the lessons for pupils to work in small groups to research information and present their findings. For example, in a Year 4 history lesson, pupils combined what they had found out about from written evidence on Boudicca to prepare drawings of the 'Queen of the Icena'. As the lesson developed the pupils went on to fill in gaps in the information they had; such as the jewellery she might have worn. In a Year 5 geography lesson the pupils successfully learned how to present information about comparative use of water on a bar chart. Expectations were high as the task was not simple but all were ultimately successful and charts well presented. A feature of both lessons was the good levels of support offered to lower attaining pupils.

121. Good links with other subjects are planned into the work of older pupils. For example most pupils use the Internet to research information and surveys are tied into mathematics objectives. In a history lesson in Year 3 pupils had prepared a set of questions to ask a visitor about his personal experiences of living through the Blitz. The lesson helped them build up a picture of this period in history and at the same time gave them a focus for writing questions and developing language skills.
122. Geographical and historical enquiry skills are systematically developed in Years 3 to 6 through effective planning of the curriculum. For instance, Year 4 pupils have grasped the main reasons for the location of settlements by contrasting St Stephen's with the Indian village of Chembakolli. Year 5 pupils have taken their study skills further by studying the use of natural resources in different parts of the world. Using a spreadsheet, pupils have contrasted their use of water with that of a family in Ethiopia. A visit by the town archivist gave pupils a deeper insight into the history of their town through a successful study of locally gathered Victorian artefacts.
123. By eleven standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Pupils locate features on ordinance survey maps using symbols and four-figure co-ordinates and navigate their way around the school grounds using a compass. Pupils have a good knowledge of key events over the last 200 years. Older pupils set about researching methodically; raising questions and seeking answers from a wide range of sources. They successfully present their findings, for example in detailed posters showing the different locations for tourism and its impact throughout the world. Whilst in history pupils write moving accounts of the life of children working in a Victorian match factory.
124. Both subjects have made little progress since the last inspection, and achievements of seven year olds have declined. There is now a co-ordinator who has responsibility for both subjects. The post is new and she has worked hard to ensure that resources are organised to support the topics covered. There is sufficient guidance to allow for a systematic development of skills, but there is no monitoring of the subjects to ensure this is carried through in lessons. Some lessons reflect how history and geography have the potential to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, but this is haphazard and left to the relative strengths of the teachers. This reduces the impact of some of the good work seen in both subjects in raising overall standards of literacy.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

125. By the age of seven and eleven pupils' standards in ICT are in line with national expectations. Inspection evidence, from throughout the school, indicates that standards are on course to be above average in the near future. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection, particularly with regard to co-ordination, the number of computers and their cross-curricular use. Good management and investment means that this progress should continue.
126. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. It is often very good indeed. It is characterised by good teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants, very good lesson planning and classroom management techniques. Pupils work well in pairs, sharing knowledge and showing considerable application and excitement.
127. By the age of seven all pupils are achieving well. They convert data into block graphs, word-process short passages with the correct spellings and research their projects on animal diets using CD-ROMs. They sort shapes, combine them to make patterns and quickly carry out simple mental arithmetic tasks on screen. Pupils are as much at ease in producing 'warm' and 'cool' pictures with the aid of an art package as they are in correcting text passages with faulty punctuation and spacing.
128. By the time they leave school, pupils have learnt sophisticated skills relating to control, setting up, for example, screens that allow them to adjust time switches within an imaginary bedroom. They also refine their skills in word processing, drafting and re-drafting work. Older pupils have worked together to produce 'newspaper accounts' of the Afghan war and confidently use spreadsheets and databases. They make good use of cut and paste techniques to develop posters, utilising 'clip art' and fonts in different colours and sizes to improve the presentation of their work.
129. Teachers make good use of computers in other subjects, using word processing across the curriculum to present work. Data handling programs are used well by pupils to support their work in mathematics and geography and they confidently use the Internet and CD-ROMs for research. For example, in a very good lesson pupils had collected data on their own water usage and then by altering the formula were able to make comparisons with a country in the developing world. This exercise helped them develop views within their geography work.
130. The co-ordinator has implemented a very good training programme that has ensured a high level of confidence in most staff. This means that the best use is being made of the ICT suite. The emphasis on using the computer to back up curricular work is a model of its kind. Graphic programmes supplement artwork on Mondrian, while the results of growing seeds is quickly updated and displayed on the computer screen. Considerable work is carried out to back up literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, history topics such as Greek transport are researched and recorded, while design technology skills are developed through the use of 'screen turtle' programs.
131. The ICT development plan is very good. The ICT suite is of a very high quality and means that teachers can take classes of 30 pupils in pairs without the fear of hardware breaking down. The plan builds on the recent developments and seeks to ensure a raising of ICT levels throughout the school. This is an area of the curriculum of which the school should be proud.

MUSIC

132. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection, but discussions with pupils, together with a scrutiny of teachers' planning and the school's policy and programme of work provided enough evidence to indicate that pupils meet national expectations at both seven and eleven. It is clear that staff and pupils enjoy the experience of singing and making music. Lack of leadership in the subject, however, means that the subject is not developing as well as it might.
133. Throughout the school, lesson planning is good. Teachers make very good use of pupils' enthusiasm for singing. They ensure that a wide range of instruments are available and take care to point out the key principles of rhythm, dynamics and mood. In a good Year 3 lesson, the teacher started by settling the class into marking a clear beat, which was then related to 'A Long Way to Tipperary'. She provided a useful running commentary to ensure accuracy in beat and phrasing. She also drew out the historical connections. Pupils learned to appreciate that singing can drown fear and a marching beat is useful for fighting troops. The follow-up activities were well planned and challenging. Some pupils worked with assistants to develop a marching beat outside the classroom while some used triangles to provide a counterbeat. Other pupils developed a further beat pattern with the teacher, using wood blocks and tambors. Pupils expressed excitement and obviously enjoyed the lesson highly.
134. Discussions with Year 5 pupils indicate that music remains popular throughout the school. They remember clearly how they had designed and made their own instruments in their Greek history project. They also felt that their knowledge of rhythm and of individual instruments assisted them in making judgements about pop music. They had a wide experience of identifying "pro's and con's" of particular pieces of music, they had composed pieces to identify the characteristics of Greek gods and all had experience of small group performances in front of the class. They had clearly developed informed views about music and were also improving their own confidence and competence in performance.
135. The inspection team was impressed by the use of music lessons to enrich the inclusion opportunities. Two pupils from the 'special unit' joined the reception class in a music and movement session. All pupils enjoyed being 'busy' to 'The Flight of the Bumble Bee' and representing their growing seeds to music. Similarly, the combination of the Year 2 with youngsters from the special unit provided a wonderful opportunity for those with complex difficulties to work in a large group setting and develop the disciplines associated with responding to simple musical notation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

136. Standards are above those expected of seven and eleven year olds and this is similar to the findings of the last inspection. All pupils achieve well in this subject. The school continues to provide many very good opportunities for pupils to develop their individual skills and learn to participate in teams. This is benefiting standards. All pupils go swimming and standards exceed the expectation of the National Curriculum.
137. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the energetic warm ups which start all lessons are carried out safely. The teachers incorporate personal challenges from the outset that encourage the pupils to work hard and to do their best. For instance, an athletics lessons for Years 5 and 6 proved very successful. Pupils had recorded their personal bests over previous sessions and were intent on improving these. The teachers took time to demonstrate how throwing the

javelin requires greater effort from shoulder and hips and that running needs the arms to work harder. At the end of the lesson the pupils referred to these techniques as reasons for why their performance had improved. Furthermore, the personal challenges were effective in motivating pupils who had low scores because they had been encouraged to set realistic targets for improvement.

138. Good use is made of groups in developing understanding of how to play small-sided games and improving gymnastic skills. For example, in a Year 4 lesson the teacher developed the skills of throwing, striking and fielding systemically. At each stage, there was sufficient time for pupils to perfect the skill and evaluate their performance before bringing them all together in a small game. An effective feature of this lesson was the use of the teaching assistants to ensure those with behavioural difficulties observed the rules. For instance, they were prompting them to wait their turn before becoming bowlers or directed them to run to the right base.
139. Demonstration is used effectively. In a Year 2 gymnastics lesson, pupils were asked to share with each other how they might improve landings. From this, the teacher introduced tuck jumps and how to add a twist to the jump. The effect was that pupils extended their sequences creatively and incorporated jumps as a way of changing direction.
140. Physical education makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development in the school. Younger pupils learn to play safely and co-operatively during playtimes with pupils from the special unit, whilst older pupils take charge of setting out and managing their athletics lessons.
141. The co-ordinator is particularly good at extending the range of activities available to pupils. She is an active member of the area schools sporting body, organising competitive events for sports such as cross country, tag rugby and quick cricket. This ensures that these sports form a regular part of the school's curriculum. There has been sufficient training for staff and resources are used well. In addition to the extensive school grounds for adventurous activity, such as orienteering, equipment is set out each playtime for pupils of all ages to use and a very good range of clubs are available after school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

142. Standards in religious education are broadly average by the age of eleven but are below average at seven. Pupils have a clearer idea of the moral values than they do of different beliefs and customs. Teaching in religious education makes a good contribution to the moral development of pupils through, for example, developing their understanding of relationships between people and the value of helping others.
143. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but is rarely stimulating. Pupils listen to a lot of information given them by teachers without any other strategies to help them understand and think about what they are hearing. Opportunities are missed throughout the school for pupils to write about the subject. Occasionally pupils are asked to express what they know in more lively ways such as a comic strip to represent living by Christian values. Teaching rarely encourages pupils to draw common threads, to compare beliefs and values, to know that there are different places of worship, or that most religions have some form of a holy book.
144. The school makes good use of the local church as a resource for first hand investigation of the building, church 'furniture' and artefacts. Year 4 pupils were

stimulated by their visit during the week to draw and write about what they found. Following their visit, Year 1 pupils made stained glass windows using their knowledge of symmetry to help them cut out a suitable shape.

145. By the end of Year 2, a small minority of pupils are able retell the story about Joseph and his life in Egypt. The majority however, find it very difficult to respond to questions and express what they know. By the time they leave the school the knowledge that pupils gain is mainly factual. Most pupils know some Bible Stories, have some idea of the difference between the old and new testaments and will know about Christian places of worship. They learn about St. David and St. Piron who built a church in Cornwall. They know a little about Hinduism, mostly through the Divali story, and a very little about Sikhism. Pupils studying Judaism have covered this area in more depth and know more about customs and artefacts used. The pupils enjoy this work but are reticent in sharing their views during discussions. The encouragement to discuss fundamental questions is not yet being developed through religious education lessons.