

INSPECTION REPORT

DARTINGTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Totnes

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113394

Headteacher: Annie Tempest

Reporting inspector: Geoff Burgess
OIN: 23708

Dates of inspection: 12th to 16th June 2000

Inspection number: 197405

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant, Junior and Nursery

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Shinnars Bridge
Dartington
Totnes
Devon

Postcode: TQ9 6JD

Telephone number: 01803 862357

Fax number: 01803 866872

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Andrew Coldrey

Date of previous inspection: September 1997

Information about the inspection team

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Geoff Burgess	Registered inspector	SEN	Results & achievements
		Information Technology	Teaching & learning
		Music	Leadership & management
			School improvement
Sally Hall	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values & personal development
			Personal welfare & care
			Partnership with parents
			Adequacy of resources
Anne Pratt	Team inspector	Under fives	Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development
		Art : Design Technology	
Susan Barton	Team inspector	English	Assessment & academic monitoring
		Religious Education	
Peter Buckley	Team inspector	Mathematics	Strategic use of resources
		Physical Education	
David Smith	Team inspector	Science	Learning opportunities
		Geography; History	EO

The inspection contractor was:

Geoff Burgess Inspections

4, Dodhams Farm Close
Bradpole
Bridport
Dorset
DT6 3EZ

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Dartington Primary School and Nursery serve a wide spectrum of families of mainly British heritage in the community in and around the village. Most of the 365 pupils who attend the main school are housed in a rich mixture of buildings among cider apple trees either side of the brook but one class and the 59 children in the nursery are a good walk away. About a twelfth of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This figure is below average and has steadily decreased over the years. Nearly an eighth of pupils are on the special needs register of whom seven, a higher than average percentage, have statements of special need. Overall attainment on entry is similar to that found in most schools but children's pre-school experiences are very diverse and several bring their own special gifts, notably in music.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with unique and special qualities. Very good leadership, good teaching and the creative energy of its pupils are helping to raise standards. Given its diverse but overall average intake and moderate level of funding the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching in the nursery and across the school with much very good is helping pupils to achieve more than they have in previous years
- Boys and girls are encouraged to enjoy their lessons and are given a very rich range of learning experiences. They develop very good attitudes to learning
- The school sees pupils' social and moral development as very important. Boys and girls behave and relate well and are growing into mature, responsible and very self-reliant citizens
- Staff give pupils very good opportunities to experience and appreciate the arts and their own cultural heritage, to celebrate the cultural diversity of others and reflect on life and their feelings
- It has very effective links with parents and encourages them to make a very good contribution to their children's learning
- The headteacher is an outstanding leader and manager who, with the considerable help of her deputy and the governing body, is making the most of the schools' unique assets.

What could be improved

- Standards achieved by school leavers in basic skills do not match the good teaching and very good quality of learning experiences provided throughout the nursery and school.
- Pupils' enthusiasm, independence and articulate speech are real strengths but sometimes become weaknesses when they are not tempered with self-control and sensitivity to others.
- Levels of absence are too high and pupils arriving late for school disrupt the start of day for those who arrive on time

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the time of its last inspection in September 1997, Dartington Primary School was said to have serious weaknesses in several areas. Since then, HMI concluded that the school has addressed all of them to their satisfaction and inspectors are able to say that several are now strengths. Financial management is very good. Pupils have full access to a well planned, rich curriculum. All aspects of the school are very well monitored and the governing body make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school. Improvements in the school's recent results have generally matched the national trend with variations in individual subjects. This year, substantial improvements in planning and teaching are seeing the beginning of an improving trend for eleven-year-olds. Overall improvement is good.

STANDARDS

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

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

The overall trend in results for eleven-year-olds is broadly in line with what has happened across the country but while science has seen the most improvement, standards in English have generally been higher with mathematics results lower and very inconsistent. Standards in writing and mathematics achieved by seven-year-olds have been consistently above the national average but attainments in reading have gone down over the past four years and were well below average last year. Attainment this year is similar to most schools in both key stages with seven-year-olds' reading and eleven-year-olds' mathematics much improved. Most pupils are very articulate and can express themselves orally very well. New arrangements for information technology are helping all pupils to make good progress but this will take a little longer for school leavers to reach expected levels. Pupils achieve good standards in art and music with sound standards in other subjects in most classes. Boys and girls make good progress in the nursery. Pupils who find learning difficult make good progress and older pupils who are gifted musically are well supported.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time in school and are very wholehearted in their approach to everything to do with learning. They respond animatedly to their work, join in with everything that is offered and are always willing to contribute their own ideas and suggestions. .
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' very good behaviour around the site helps to make school a happy, positive experience. Behaviour in class is usually good, often very good but sometimes over-enthusiasm by the few wastes time for the rest. Behaviour overall is good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' willingness to use their initiative and take responsibility for their learning is outstanding. They are very confident and self-assured but occasionally do not appreciate that their actions can hinder others . All relationships are very good which helps make the school a sociable and largely trouble free environment.
Attendance	Absence rates are higher than they should be and in many classes, teachers have to waste time dealing with latecomers.

Pupils make a very good contribution to their own education through their positive attitudes to work and good behaviour. They are confident and enthusiastic about learning and are always ready to share their skills, knowledge and opinions with others

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Almost all lessons are at least satisfactory with almost a half good and over a fifth very good. Teaching is equally good in each key stage and it is notable that most teachers were responsible for at least one very good lesson. Good and very good teaching is found right across the curriculum with mathematics, art and information technology especially well represented. In the best of lessons, teachers channel the undoubted creative energy of their pupils into constructive and challenging activities and pupils respond with very positive attitudes to their learning. Classroom assistants make a good contribution to this especially in the nursery and in the areas of information technology, reading and special needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Pupils are given a very rich range of learning experiences covering all the required elements especially in the nursery and in the older classes. Very good attention is given to promoting pupils understanding of themselves and matters of health and safety. Older pupils have many opportunities to enhance their learning outside normal lessons and staff make commendable use of the talents of parents and the local community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Procedures for identifying need, setting targets and monitoring progress are effective and pupils' progress is good. Good provision, mainly through the good work of learning support assistants, is made for pupils who find learning difficult. Other pupils are well supported in class by their teachers who provide work at the appropriate levels.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Curricular provision for pupils to study and appreciate the arts, their own cultural heritage and to celebrate the cultural diversity of others is very good with equally good attention given to helping pupils to reflect on the more spiritual aspects of life. High quality provision for promoting pupils' personal development includes very good arrangements for the development of social skills and attitudes and moral awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers and other staff know the children very well and keep a close watch on their behaviour and personal development. Good assessment procedures are being used increasingly to monitor progress and guide planning. The school takes good care of its pupils but arrangements for improving attendance and punctuality are not working.

The school's links with parents are very good. They have a growing confidence in the school and appreciate its many qualities. It provides very good general information for them but there is room to improve the information about how well their children are doing in school. Parents' very good contribution to what the school can offer considerably enriches pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership & management by the headteacher & other key staff	The contribution which the head has made to the enormous recent improvements in the school is excellent. Very well supported by her deputy, she has shown admirable determination and wisdom in managing the very full agenda she inherited. Other staff have followed their example and leaders and managers in all areas of the school have become effective and influential. The school is very well led and managed
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and eager to do what they can to help the school to succeed. They have very well developed arrangements for fulfilling their responsibilities, know the school well and are keenly aware of its strengths and limitations. The head has ensured that they are fully involved in identifying what needs to be done to improve and as a group and individually they are providing the school with great expertise and necessary practical and moral support.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's commitment to matching best practice is excellent and there is every reason to believe that it will succeed. Monitoring and improvement have become a way of life and the school's aims the test of all its actions. The whole school community is involved in identifying what needs to be done and improvement planning is of the highest quality. The necessary very fundamental changes already made show just how effective the school's actions as a result of this have been. Teaching and learning are observed regularly in the classrooms and staff are given regular opportunities to discuss their performance.
The strategic use of resources	The head and governors ensure that the school makes very good use of all its resources. Having had to resolve a substantial deficit, all spending is targeted on agreed priorities and is carefully managed and monitored. A good supply of well maintained and used teaching resources have been accumulated in all subjects. Teaching and support staff are very well deployed and the school makes creative and innovative use of its unusual and challenging sites and range of accommodation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy going to school • Teaching is good and their children are making good progress • The school is helping pupils to grow up sensibly and behaviour is good • The staff are very approachable and it is easy to resolve any concerns • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistencies in what their children are given to do at home • The quality of information about how well their children are doing in school

Inspectors agree with all parents' positive judgements and that reporting arrangements could be improved. The provision of homework is much improved and generally good but there are inconsistencies

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Attainment in English, mathematics, science and all other subjects except information technology was said to be 'meeting the nationally expected standard' for seven and eleven-year-olds at the time of the last inspection in 1997. Since then, the school has generally improved its results in English, mathematics and science in line with most other schools. However, this is not a consistent picture in Key Stage 2 with English results plateauing and mathematics very up and down. While results in writing and mathematics for seven-year-olds stayed above the national average, reading standards have gone down. Last years results at the end of Key Stage 2 were generally average except in mathematics which was below. However, seven-year-olds achieved above average standards in mathematics with writing average and reading below. When compared with like schools, pupils' achievements were similar to most schools in most regards but English for school leavers was below average and reading for seven-year-olds was well below.

2. Current standards observed during the inspection show that improvement is being made to average standards in English and mathematics in the year six classes and that science standards are being maintained. Results will probably meet the targets agreed for this year. Pupils in year two are currently achieving standards which should match the national average in this year's statutory tests in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a great improvement on results for reading obtained in 1999. Pupils' ability to express themselves and communicate orally is a strength across the school.

3. Baseline assessment indicates that the attainment profile of four-year-olds when they start school is similar to that found in most schools but children who do not attend the nursery have a very diverse range of pre-school experiences. Good teaching in the nursery focused on the key areas of expressive language and pupils' social and personal development, is enabling these under fives to make good progress so that by the time they are five, most are ready for the National Curriculum. However, other four-year-olds who do not attend, notably those young for the year, find integrating into school life more difficult and make less progress.

4. While achievements in design technology, geography, history and physical and religious education are generally appropriate for the ages of the pupils concerned, the quality of its work in art and music are a feature of the school, especially in the older classes. The previous inspection team did not have enough evidence to make a judgement about information technology. Recent developments, including the setting up of a computer suite and the appointment of a dedicated support assistant is seeing all pupils making good progress. Standards in the younger classes are now above expectations but it will take time for this to work through to overall standards for school leavers. Good work by learning support assistants ensures that pupils with general learning difficulties make good progress towards their learning targets. Pupils with very specific needs are well supported and they make good progress while the school is very aware of and makes good provision for its musically gifted pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. The attitudes of pupils in both key stages and in the nursery are very good, and their enthusiasm has a substantial impact on the standards of attainment and progress. They enjoy coming to school and older pupils in particular appreciate the dedication of the staff and richness of the activities offered by the school. Most listen carefully to their teachers and are keen to express their views during class discussions. They usually settle quickly to their work and concentrate well on the tasks they have been given. Pupils respond well to challenging work as was seen in a year five design technology lesson, where they used their knowledge and their imagination to 'bounce' ideas off each other as they designed a fair ground ride.

6. Overall the behaviour of pupils is good which is an improvement since the previous inspection when it was satisfactory. In lessons behaviour is generally good and when the class teacher has effective strategies to control pupils it is very good. In some lessons pupils' natural enthusiasm bubbles over and they call out instead of putting their hands up. Behaviour at lunchtime and breaks is very good and boys and girls show a great deal of self-control and independence when not closely supervised. They are trustworthy and show great respect for their environment, particularly the nature area. Pupils say that incidents of anti-social behaviour are rare and there were no exclusions last year.

7. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. Their very mature approach to school life is particularly striking as is in their sense of responsibility and ability to use their initiative. This was seen at lunchtime when even the youngest pupils made sensible choices about whether to sit inside or outside and ate their packed lunch without any fuss. Year six pupils who work in the school office at lunchtimes took part in interviewing successors from year five. Members of the school council organised meetings for year six pupils to discuss ways of improving pupils' attitudes towards mealtime assistants. Relationships are very strong throughout the school community. Boys and girls generally work well in groups, although some pupils with strong personalities fall out amongst themselves. The inclusion of pupils' with learning difficulties from a nearby school is greatly enhanced by the caring attitudes of Dartington pupils towards them. This was seen in a games lesson, when two girls ran to greet a pupil with special needs. They walked together to the next activity, arms around each other's waists, pleased to renew their friendship.

8. The attendance rate for 1998/9 of 92.4 per cent is well below that found in most schools and rates have declined over the past three years. Although the majority of absences are due to illness, a significant number of parents are taking their children out of school for outings and holidays. Concerns about lateness were identified in the last report. Despite frequent reminders, this has not improved and too many parents are not bringing their children to school on time. Valuable time is lost during the first lesson of the day while the teacher deals with latecomers. Attendance rates and lateness are unsatisfactory and this has a detrimental effect on learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

9. Almost all teaching throughout the school is at least satisfactory with nearly a half good and more than a fifth very good which represents a considerable improvement since the last report. Most teachers then taught at least one unsatisfactory lesson, amounting to 15 per cent in total. This time, ten teachers taught at least one very good lesson in one of seven different subjects. An important factor in this has been the contribution made by pupils to their own learning through their good behaviour and enthusiasm for what they are learning. They learn from and help each other and complete tasks in good time. This was not the case at the last inspection where younger pupils especially had difficulty in sustaining concentration. Although the quality of teaching is generally associated with the teachers involved, the structures of the literacy and numeracy strategies have had a beneficial effect on the teaching of basic skills throughout the school. This is most clearly seen in numeracy where mental maths and number strategies have a high priority with consequent good gains in speed and understanding. Music and information technology benefit greatly from the contribution of additional staff with particular expertise.

10. The nursery gives children who attend a very good start to their school careers and is very important in ensuring that, when these pupils enter the main school, their attainments in all the areas of learning are at least in line with those found nationally. Many do even better. With the skilled help of her nursery nurse, and the support of many parents, the head of the nursery department has created an ordered and secure environment in which children from very diverse backgrounds work happily together and gain in confidence and capacity. The spacious building is well organised into clearly defined work areas and when not working with an adult, boys and girls know exactly what to do and what is expected of them. The rest of the class move sensibly and constructively around other activities mainly based on a seaside theme with minimal need for adult help or control. Teaching is very good in the nursery.

11. Nearly two-thirds of teaching in the reception classes is at least good with more than a half very good. In the class with the few remaining four-year-olds teaching is sound with several good features but a small group of children with poorly developed work habits make it difficult for the teacher to ensure that the rest can concentrate on their work. The situation is made worse by the disturbance caused by several parents and children coming in significantly late in the mornings. Very good teaching in the older class was characterised by a dance lesson involving pupils from the neighbouring special school. Firm expectations of behaviour and well-established work habits made it possible for the teacher to plan a very well thought out and stimulating activity based on the movement of toys. The whole required pupils to understand mathematical ideas of space and to think as well as move. Clear instructions, a brisk pace and a vigilant teacher enabled even those pupils who find concentration difficult to maintain discipline and control throughout.

12. More than two thirds of teaching in years one and two is at least good with a sixth very good. A major feature of much work in all four classes is the pace and rigour which comes from well-matched work, well prepared and organised activities and resources and pupils who know what is expected and are confident of their own abilities. This was evident in a very good literacy lesson involving stories about the sea based on the shared text, 'Mr McKee Goes to Sea'. An excellent introduction, exploring the text and pictures for clues about the story, led most pupils to search diligently for 'ee' and 'ea' words while the teacher worked with a group reading the book. In an older class, the interaction between the teacher and her pupils during mental maths is very positive which encourages real interest and involvement in what is being learned. A well-planned range of practical activities such as 'throwing and catching numbers' combined with the very effective questioning and support provided by the teacher and the classroom assistant enabled every pupil to learn more about place value and the use of '0' as a place holder. In a less successful lesson on Judaism, too much information was provided, much in book form, and pupils were confused by the concepts which were not well explained.

13. The overall profile of teaching in Key Stage 2 is almost as good as it is in the younger classes with most very good teaching concentrated in the older classes and in the core subjects and art. The best teaching engages the pupils in well-planned and prepared activities enhanced by very well established routines and work habits. Thoughtful and challenging questioning, such as well older pupils were asked to say how they would improve their 'moon-buggy' designs, helps to challenge pupils' thinking. All pupils' contributions are accepted and taken seriously which encourages them to be confident and creative in their responses. This was well shown in a lesson where pupils discussed 'caring' had so much to contribute that they ran out of time. In many lessons, a very positive atmosphere is conducive to good learning and real intellectual effort with minimal need for the teacher to do anything but encourage and prompt. Artists in year six feel very safe about the problems they encounter sketching their friends and are more than happy to give and seek advice. All have very mature attitudes to the task, working quietly and sensibly well able to reflect on and improve their work. However, these attitudes were not evident in an unsatisfactory art lesson where the teacher could not curb the energy or enthusiasm of several members of the class causing the pace of learning to slow which meant that several pupils did not really understand what they were supposed to do.

14. Learning support assistants (LSAs) make a good contribution in the area of special needs. They have formed good working relationships with teachers and the pupils in their charge and whether enabling pupils to work alongside their classmates or working with individuals and groups out of the classroom, they constitute an important teaching resource. When there is no ancillary support available, work is usually matched to the needs of individual pupils and the teacher focuses on these pupils to give support and explanations. Good use is made of the expertise of a reading specialist LSA in developing reading strategies throughout the school. The information technology technician makes a very good contribution to helping pupils of all ages to make the best use of the computer suite. Visiting instrumental teachers make it possible for a large number of pupils, some with particular talents, to receive high quality specialist tuition on a wide range of instruments.

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

15. The school provides a rich and varied curriculum especially in the nursery and in Key Stage 2. All of the statutory requirements are covered and effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are in place. The time allocated to this is appropriate which allows the school to address some of its identified priorities. Provision for pupils to apply their skills in Information and Communication Technology to other subjects in the curriculum is good. The arts are developed well through the topics and detailed planning makes good links between subjects.

16. Good progress has been made in addressing the issues raised in the previous inspection report and all weaknesses in curriculum development have been addressed. A comprehensive development review has taken place and systems and structures are now in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and its impact on standards. The role of subject coordinators is clearly defined and routine monitoring ensures the full coverage of the curriculum across the school. Planning is comprehensive and increasing use is made of the schemes of work available from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Governors maintain an active interest in the curriculum through links with subject coordinators which keeps them informed of curriculum development. The curriculum is now rich and varied and meets the needs of all pupils in the school including those with special educational needs. Other issues raised in the last inspection included the length of the teaching day at Key Stage 2 and this has been extended to the recommended time. A policy for drugs awareness has been implemented within the programme of personal, social and health education. The information and communication technology curriculum now covers the full National Curriculum programme of study.

17. A wide range of visits and visitors enhance the curriculum. Visits are made to places of local and national interest, for example, Totnes, Maiden Castle, the Tutankhamun Exhibition, Morweldham Mine, Britannia Royal Naval College and Salton Cove. Regular visitors include health professionals who contribute to health, drugs and sex education and the police who support road safety and safe cycling. Good use is made of the skills and talents of parents in the community and, for example, an author works with pupils to develop writing skills. Parents are frequently involved in classroom activity and help with swimming, reading and special events.

18. The school is proud of its achievements in music, art and drama and this is supported by parental expectations. Pupils from the school entertain local residents and participate in community activities such as the local Arts Festival and the Groundswell Song Cycle where they perform with professional writers and musicians. Other community links include involvement with the Dartington Hall Estate, local businesses and groups such as Morris Dancers. The school takes part in Christian celebrations and church activities and the vicar regularly leads assemblies. Pupils have many opportunities to enhance their learning outside normal lessons through the extra curricular activities that are organised. Throughout the year a range of clubs are organised including music tuition, Information Technology, library, French, nature, homework, netball, football, cricket and dance. Residential visits extend the curriculum.

19. The school works in partnership with local schools as part of the Totnes Academic Council and good links are made. This group facilitates curriculum and staff development and a collegiate approach to planning and assessment with good arrangements in place to ensure a smooth transfer to secondary education. The school's current initiative with its neighbouring special school where pupils work with each other on a regular planned basis, is having a very positive effect on pupils in both schools.

20. Pupils' personal development is given a very high priority and the school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth. The school explicitly seeks to offer more than just physical security and the delivery of the National Curriculum and as a consequence pupils have a wide variety of rich and relevant experiences which promote their spiritual development very effectively. The unique school site with mature trees, a stream and a nature trail provides many quiet, beautiful places where children can sit and reflect on the wonders of the

natural world. School assemblies, whilst always fulfilling statutory requirements, also seek to give pupils the opportunity to reflect on issues such as care of the environment. A good example was an assembly which looked at special places and related this to the school's nature area. It highlighted and celebrated through photographs and discussion, the beauty of the lichen and the trees and the return of the ragged robin. Many very good examples of pupils being encouraged to acknowledge and express their thoughts and feelings through drama, art, music and poetry were observed. In most classrooms there are well presented displays of natural materials such as shells, fossils and rocks which pupils are encouraged to handle and observe closely with magnifiers and microscopes. Many pupils were observed quietly reflecting on the wonder of these objects. Religious education lessons make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness, when a wide range of beliefs, issues and traditions are discussed and considered.

21. The school provides strong moral and social guidance. Staff set a good example by valuing pupils' ideas and celebrating their achievements. Relationships throughout the school are very good. It is a very caring environment where everyone is listened to and valued. Pupils are clearly taught the difference between right and wrong. They all help to negotiate and agree classroom and school rules which makes them feel that the rules belong to them and so they strive hard to abide by them. A recently set up school council debates matters relating to fairness, right and wrong on behalf of the whole school. The social development of pupils is given high priority. Year six and year three have developed a buddy system with year six taking the responsibility of care for their younger 'buddies' very seriously. The system is working so well, that it is to be extended to other year groups. A quiet, comfortable area has been provided where children can discuss their worries and concerns with a trained counsellor who spends one day a week in school. The very well planned programme of personal, social and health education ensures that a range of issues, many related to social matters such as friendship and dispute, are regularly discussed and considered.

22. Many activities, both in and out of lessons, require pupils to work closely together and consider the needs of others. For example, the nursery children provide entertainment for the elderly at times such as Christmas and May Day and visit their year five and six friends for the day when they are on summer camp. Pupils of all ages regularly share activities with the nearby school for children with special needs. From the earliest age, pupils are taught to reflect on mankind's moral responsibility for the care of the planet and to recognise the importance of social responsibility. Boys and girls carry out classroom duties such as tidying up, collecting and fetching registers and sorting classroom resources. As they progress through the school pupils are encouraged towards greater independence and responsibility, with year six pupils confidently undertaking a range of duties which include manning the school office at lunchtime one day a week. They also advertise for, short list and interview their successors to the office job showing a high degree of initiative and professionalism.

23. Pupil's cultural development is very well promoted with many opportunities, both in and out of lessons, for them to celebrate and enjoy the richness and diversity of man's cultural heritage. They are encouraged to explore a wide range of literature both from their own cultural heritage and from those of other cultures. This was well demonstrated in a literacy lesson when pupils compared Japanese and Indian versions of the same story. Music and art are a strength of the school and cultural traditions and differences are often celebrated through these subjects. Work of a very high standard in drama, music and art was produced as a result of a visit from three Nigerian artists and a very good Key Stage 2 assembly led by a music teacher looked at the art of African drumming for celebration and entertainment. A group of pupils demonstrated their well developed skills in African drumming and percussion. Many local artists and craftsmen share their specific talents with the children and introduce them to local and rural crafts such as weaving with willow and glass making. The school makes many visits to places of interest which extend pupils' cultural awareness, recent visits include the Tutankhamen exhibition, the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, buildings in Totnes and the Pete Goss catamaran challenge.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

24. The school provides good educational and personal support for its pupils who feel happy and safe. Class teachers know the pupils well and give good support on a day-to-day basis. Induction arrangements for pupils joining the reception class and other pupils joining school during the year are good. Younger pupils say that the 'buddy' scheme works well and they are happy to share their concerns with the older pupils. Boys and girls value the guidance and help available from the school counsellor who visits the school each week. Other adults, including support staff and mealtime assistants make significant contributions to pupils' care. Those with a wide range of special needs are well looked after by the school. Their needs are regularly assessed, progress monitored and those who need it are given skilled and positive support.

25. Overall the school has satisfactory procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. The arrangements for child protection are very good and a clear policy has been drawn up. The lack of training raised in the previous report has been addressed and all staff, with the exception of mealtime assistants, have received basic awareness training. A team of professionals raised pupils' awareness of child protection issues sensitively. The head teacher carries out her duties as the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection effectively. Arrangements for first aid are generally good. Sufficient staff have received basic training, but no-one is formally qualified in first aid. The appointed person has gained valuable additional first aid qualifications and provides good quality care for pupils who are ill or injured. However, the treatment area lacks privacy and is not near a toilet.

26. The school pays due regard to health and safety, and has addressed the issues raised in the last report. The brook is now fenced and a risk assessment was undertaken. The governors, head teacher and caretaker work hard to minimise risks whilst maintaining the unique character of the premises and site. A number of minor health and safety concerns were brought to the attention of the school during the inspection.

27. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are generally satisfactory. Staff are effective in following up unexplained absences and there are good links with the educational welfare officer. The school does not have an attendance policy and parents and staff do not have clear guidelines on which types of absences will be regarded as unauthorised. Although the school gives frequent clear reminders to parents to bring their children to school on time, the measures are not effective in ensuring that pupils are punctual.

28. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good, and the school operates as a happy and harmonious community. An ethos of good behaviour is reinforced in lessons and assemblies. Older pupils know that they must act as good role models. The behaviour policy promotes good behaviour and reward systems operate throughout the school. Each class draws up its own set of rules and teachers have devised their own ways of controlling behaviour. However, some of the strategies are less effective as is shown when pupils continue to talk when they have been asked to be quiet. The school has drawn up a clear anti-bullying policy and incidents of anti-social behaviour are dealt with effectively but it has not formulated a policy on the use of force to control or restrain pupils.

29. In the previous report assessment and monitoring procedures were identified as a key issue for development. The school has made good progress in addressing the issue and manages the systems in place effectively. On entry into the school children are assessed as to their personal development using the local authority scheme. Parents are fully involved in this initial process. The children are known very well and their learning is quickly matched at an appropriate level against the desirable learning outcomes.

30. Pupils are assessed appropriately using the standardised tests at the end of both key stages and the school has recently adopted the optional tests for other year groups in Key Stage 2. The results are used effectively to identify weaknesses in mathematics and literacy. Recently

introduced systems to enable detailed tracking of the progress made by individual pupils have not been in place long enough to be used in monitoring and planning but have great potential. Information from testing helps to identify groups of pupils who will benefit from additional support from the booster class in English and mathematics in year six, which has a positive impact on the attainment and learning of these pupils. Assessment is identified as integral to the learning process and incorporated into all lesson plans, which are monitored regularly by subject coordinators, the headteacher and assessment coordinator.

31. Portfolios of individual pupils' work are kept and matched to national standards to indicate attainment. Reading records in Key Stage 1 are very good and pupils move well through the schemes but records in Key Stage 2 are less effective. Opportunities are sometimes provided for pupils to mark their own work and see their own achievements. Class teachers maintain their own record keeping systems effectively but this has yet to be developed into a cohesive whole school system to match the tracking initiatives noted above. Some teachers set informal individual targets in the core subjects but there is scope for this to be developed throughout the school. Examples of marking stemming from the agreed policy show how well it is used to improve pupils' learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

32. Parents and carers express a positive view of the school. They say that their children like coming and feel that the school is well led and managed. They feel welcome in school and say that their concerns and suggestions are taken seriously. A significant minority have concerns about homework and after school clubs. Some felt that they did not receive enough information about how their children were getting on. Dartington School's links with its parents are very effective. The parent governor with a special interest in home/school links works extremely hard to improve and maintain good communication with the parents. Initiatives include termly parent forums and a year six parents' support group. The school has been very receptive to parents' suggestions and has taken on board ideas such as a newsletter and a 'before school' club.

33. Information which the school provides to parents and carers is good. Weekly newsletters give details of future events and celebrate pupils' work and the school's successes. The prospectus and annual governors' report have improved since the last inspection. They are informative and generally contain all the information that they should. The school provides parents with helpful and detailed information about future topics and has invited parents to valuable sessions on literacy and numeracy. Inspectors share some of parents' concern about the quality of information about their children's progress, particularly through pupils' annual reports. They give details of what the pupils can do but not what this means in terms of standards. However, termly parent/teacher consultations provide valuable opportunities for discussion about pupils' progress. Parents of pupils who find learning difficult are closely involved in deciding what should happen next and are kept very well informed about their children's progress.

34. Parents make very good contributions to their children's learning at school and at home and the impact of their involvement on the work of the school is very good. Some help in the school, for example with swimming and others with particular talents, such as a children's author enrich children's experience. Most listen to their children read at home and sign the home/school reading records. The quality and quantity of homework is variable and this limits some parents' opportunities to become involved with the work their children do at home. A very active Parent Teacher Association raises a considerable amount of money to enhance educational provision for the pupils. Parent governors are very dedicated in their quest to improve the life of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

35. Leadership and management of the school are very good. Since its low in 1997, levels of professionalism, leadership, responsibility and confidence have increased enormously and the staff team now constitutes a powerful force for good. Governors are becoming ever more efficient and effective in their group and individual roles. Every issue from the last inspection has been

addressed and weaknesses have become strengths. No aspect of the school has been ignored and every opportunity taken to make the most of its unique human and physical resources.

36. The headteacher inherited a school which in September 1997 was judged to have serious weaknesses in its leadership and management. To compound this, it had a very large budget deficit and to help pay it back, was without a deputy head for a year. Since then, the head has, in her own optimistic, pragmatic and determined way, been responsible for managing a revolution in the development of the school. She provides very effective and positive leadership and, with the considerable support of her deputy head, has worked closely with the staff and the governing body to put in place policies and procedures to improve planning and decision making. The headteacher's contribution to the present very healthy state of the school is outstanding.

37. Governors are very supportive and committed to the school, many visiting on a regular basis. They now have a well-defined and understood structure of committees and individual responsibilities and a clear programme related to the priorities identified in the school development plan. Many bring considerable expertise to the governing body and all are very keen for the school to succeed. They take their monitoring role very seriously visiting regularly and receiving feedback from staff on the effectiveness of various current policy developments. As individuals and as a body they know their school and their responsibilities very well. The special needs governor is very supportive and is a regular visitor to the school. She has a clear view of provision in the school and reports regularly to the governing body on special needs issues.

38. Everyone in the school fully understands his or her respective role and is committed to fulfilling it and in constantly improving. Staff manage their responsibilities effectively and are very conscientious. The special needs coordinator has managed the development of her area, which was unsatisfactory at the last inspection, extremely effectively and the separate nursery is very well run and managed.

39. Monitoring and evaluation have high priorities in the school community with the lead taken by the head and deputy head who keep a very close watch on what is happening. Standards, classroom practice and the effectiveness of policies and procedures are kept under review by responsible staff and governors. Recent developments in using more detailed assessment procedures for 'tracking' individual pupils and similar groups through the school have great potential for making this an even more rigorous process. Individual members of staff are encouraged to think about their own performance through professional interviews and professional development through in-service training has a high priority. The clearly structured and very practical school development plan was put together from the various strands identified during the schools' efforts to rectify its serious weaknesses and gain 'Investors in People' status. It is a comprehensive document which focuses on the key aim of improving standards and involves everyone in deciding what should be included and how effective actions have been.

40. Overall financial planning to support the school's educational development is very good. Resources are provided in line with priorities in the school development plan, which is generated through open consultative procedures. Priorities in the last two years have focused on literacy, numeracy and information technology. The school's administrative officer has effective financial procedures that provide valuable support to the headteacher and governing body in planning priorities within the school. A planned audit did not take place due to flooding in the school. Very good use of information technology supports the management of the budget and 'Assessment Manager' maintains pupils' information. All grants are used as intended and a nominated teacher has responsibility for managing the Standards Fund, related to specific training for teachers. Effective management of these funds and rigorous evaluation of the training ensure that money is well used. The school makes very good use of its imaginatively developed environmental areas and its own and the communities sport facilities. Governors exercise best value principles although procedures are not formalised. National and local data is used to compare standards and cost within similar schools and the parent governors hold regular parent meetings and consult on such issues as the menus for school lunches and the introduction of a breakfast club.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41. To ensure that every child can make the most of the ever improving high quality learning environment being developed and match the academic standards achieved in similar schools the headteacher, governors and staff of Dartington Primary School should

- 1) Make full use of developing systems to assess pupils achievements in literacy and numeracy in some detail and track their progress in particular aspects to:
 - set challenging but attainable individual targets based on current information to promote and measure achievement
 - use information gained from this process to evaluate what is working in terms of teaching and the curriculum and why
 - set challenging but attainable annual school targets in each sub-level of optional and national tests to stimulate intellectual rigour throughout the school
(Paragraphs 30, 31, 38 & 59)
- 2) Channel the creative energy of its pupils so that others are not hindered by it by:
 - ensuring that all teachers expect the same high standards of behaviour as they do in many classes and that a common approach is used across the school to achieve this
(Paragraphs 13, 28, 57, 64 & 72)
 - providing early help and support for those pupils who find it difficult to make the necessary adjustments to living in a school community
(Paragraphs 3, 11, 43 – 45)
- 3) Minimise the loss of time for individuals who miss too much school time and for others who lose time because others are late by:
 - making very clear to all parents what constitutes valid and reasonable absence, make one day holidays into unauthorised absences and deal with them accordingly and make attendance a virtue by praising good attendance.
 - making all parents aware of the amount of time lost to lateness and involving them in discussing ways of improving the situation
 - making a firm time for closing registers and requiring parents to register their child's presence at the school office if they arrive after the register is closed.
(Paragraphs 8, 11 & 27)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- improving aspects of the way the school deals with illness and first aid (Paragraph 25)
- making sure reports say how well pupils are doing as well as what they are doing (Paragraph 33)
- making more use of emerging literacy and numeracy skills in play situations in the reception classes (Paragraph 46)
- stretching more able pupils in science in Key Stage 1 (Paragraph 63)
- making class music more meaningful for able musicians by making more use of their talents and knowledge for the benefit of their classmates (Paragraph 94)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	96
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	21	48	29	2		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	40	365
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	44

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	30

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	21	32	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	20
	Girls	23	32	32
	Total	40	51	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (83)	96 (88)	98 (93)
	National	82 (81)	83 (82)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	21	18
	Girls	28	32	27
	Total	46	53	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (80)	100 (90)	85 (90)
	National	82 (79)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	22	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	19
	Girls	19	15	19
	Total	30	29	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (74)	66 (43)	86 (63)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	20
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	33	36	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (72)	82 (55)	91 (70)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	303
Any other minority ethnic group	20

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

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

Number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.0
Average class size	30.4

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	53.12

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	661551
Total expenditure	654504
Expenditure per pupil	1978
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	7074

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	405
Number of questionnaires returned	71

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	49	6		
My child is making good progress in school.	31	52	7	3	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	63	8		4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	45	20	9	3
The teaching is good.	39	47	8	3	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	44	18	11	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	29	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	33	50	11	4	1
The school works closely with parents.	41	41	11	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	48	42	5	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	48	4	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	50	14	5	7

Other issues raised by parents

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. All three and four-year-olds are currently in the nursery and one of the two reception classes. In the nursery, there are 59 children, some attending part time and some full time. Each nursery session caters for 39 children. At the time of the inspection, 22 children on the nursery register were four and 39 were three with 12 children still four in the reception class on the same site. The nursery and attached reception class are housed in spacious purpose built accommodation with its own extensive outdoor play area and swimming pool. Although the reception class shares the excellent outdoor facilities, the nursery has most of the space in the building and the indoor space for the reception class is limited in comparison. The nursery building is away from the main school site and consequently everyone has to work hard at maintaining close links with the school. Four-year-olds leave the nursery and enter reception classes twice a year in September and January.

43. Nursery children are well taught by a hardworking team of four which comprises one nursery teacher, one nursery nurse and two classroom assistants, who frequently receive valuable help and support from parents and other friends of the school. The reception class teacher, however, only has a classroom assistant for five hours a week. She has 23 children in her class, not all have been to the nursery or had pre school education. Some still need a great deal of support and help, particularly in the social and emotional area of their learning and the teacher finds it difficult to address all of these needs when teaching on her own. There is scope to review this situation to enable more help to be given to this class.

Personal and social development

44. The majority of children have well-developed personal and social skills. They are friendly and chatty and enjoy coming to school. Boys and girls play and work well together and take responsibility for tidying up and caring for their environment. Children in the nursery are encouraged to be independent and take care of themselves after such activities as swimming, when they dry and dress themselves with the minimum of fuss. They frequently take initiative such as when a three year old confidently fetched a cloth and mopped up a spilt drink without any intervention from an adult. In the reception class, however, a few children are still finding it difficult to settle into the routines of school and are unable to take part in group activities and sessions without close adult support and help.

Language and literacy

45. Three and four-year-olds in the nursery are making good progress in language and literacy and the progress of under fives in the reception class is steady. Most children will attain the nationally agreed targets for five year olds when they enter Key Stage 1. Many well planned activities promote speaking and listening skills and the children are confident speakers. Children in the nursery and reception class enjoy listening to stories and are usually very attentive at these times but a number of boys and girls in the younger reception class still find listening to and following instructions difficult, consequently the pace of their learning is slowed.

46. Many four-year-olds know the names and sounds of a number of letters and some are beginning to recognise a good many of the most commonly used words. They are learning through a wide range of purposeful and practical activities such as when children in the nursery explore initial sounds through their work on the sea and sea creatures. Groups of four-year-olds, looking at the letter 'O', were carefully painting and drawing an octopus. Children in the reception class, reading a Big Book story together, confidently named parts of the book such as the spine, front cover, author and illustrator. They could pick out words that they recognised and comment on the characters and plot. Three and four-year-olds have many good activities which promote the skills of control and coordination that are required for writing. They paint, draw, glue, sew, stick and cut. Four-year-olds are effectively learning to form letters when they copy under an adults

writing and in the reception class a role play area set up as a Travel Agent provides good opportunity for children's purposeful, invented writing. However, there is scope to introduce more opportunities for the nursery children to use invented writing in their play and thus practise, in a purposeful way, the skills they are mastering in more formal lessons.

Mathematics

47. Boys and girls make steady progress in mathematics and their attainment is as expected of children of this age. In both the reception class and the nursery, mathematical activities are well related to the children's current interests. The sea theme is well used for teaching number, shape, size and sorting in the nursery. Children were observed carefully counting out 8 tentacles for their octopus and cutting out four different sized fish for their seascape. They were able to count to ten, recognise the numerals and use the correct language to describe size. Work on boats and sails has reinforced and introduced shape and most children can identify the basic shapes of triangles, squares and circles. In the reception class the teacher uses good strategies to introduce the children to new mathematical ideas and concepts. The children are well motivated by the contents of a secret bag and eagerly identify the shape and size of mystery objects, effectively learning new mathematical vocabulary such as edges, corners, sides. Teachers in both the nursery and the reception use many of the every day routines for practising and consolidating mathematical concepts appropriately. Snack time is well used for counting such things as cups and matching them to the number of children present. The cutting up of apples suitably introduces the idea of halves and quarters. At the end of sessions number rhymes and songs reinforce counting and introduce the concept of adding and taking away.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

48. Children in the nursery and in the reception class are gaining a good understanding of the world in which they live. They have many good opportunities to explore their environment both locally and further afield. The current sea theme has initiated some good work in this area and some very positive learning has taken place as a result of a visit to the seaside. Nursery children closely observed a real mackerel and learnt many of the special words associated with the parts of fish. Reception children explored light and dark when they pretended to swim into an under sea cave to look for treasure. Both classes have interesting and stimulating displays of shells and other sea related objects, which children freely examine and discuss. Boys and girls are beginning to gain a sense of the passing of time in their daily discussions of the day and date. They have some sense of time long ago, when they talk about fossils found on the beach, handle a collection of fossils and look at pictures in a book. A group in the nursery became very involved in making their own fossils using shells, plasticine and plaster of Paris. There was genuine excitement and amazement at the results.

49. All three and four-year-olds have good opportunities to make and build things. Children in the nursery have two large, very well equipped construction areas. These are constantly in use and children are often observed building complicated structures and eagerly discussing their designs and structures with one another. In the reception class four-year-olds made and designed binoculars for a pirate ship, they displayed sound design skills and were able to join materials with sellotape and glue. The two computers in the nursery area and one in the reception class are constantly in use and many children were observed using them. Children are confident in using the computers and have good control when using the mouse to play simple games and draw pictures. Good examples of children's work with the computer are on display, including pictures of boats and some computer generated designs of sails.

Creative development

50. Three and four-year-olds have a good repertoire of nursery rhymes and songs which they sing tunefully and enthusiastically. They enjoy all the many times when they can paint and create collages with a variety of materials, model with dough and clay and use recycled materials to produce models and pictures. Children in the nursery class responded well to the story of The Rainbow Fish by creating their own glittery fish with paint, paper and shiny materials. Three year olds were fascinated by the patterns and colours made by their bubble prints. Children in the

reception class created attractive undersea environments using a variety of 2D and 3D materials and techniques. The nursery and the reception class environment is enhanced by many good displays of children's art work and although some of it is very directed, there are good examples of children's personal response to creative stimuli. Children in the nursery have two large well-equipped role play areas, currently one area is a yellow submarine, while the other remains a home. These areas provide some very worthwhile creative play and are always well used. Children in the reception class have less opportunity for creative play but an area well set up as a travel agents provides some opportunity for role play.

Physical development

51. The very well resourced and extensive outdoor play area and attached swimming pool, shared by the nursery and the reception class, ensure that children make good progress with their physical skills. Children have ample opportunity to climb, run, jump and control wheeled toys in this area. The site challenges their physical skills, as there are different levels and many different and exciting pieces of apparatus to use. They regularly use the swimming pool in the summer and many are very confident in the water, with a number already able to swim. The reception class makes weekly trips to the main school building where they take part enthusiastically in a music and dance lesson led by a teacher from the main school. All the children, even those who have some problems settling to daily classroom routines, find these sessions challenging and absorbing. Boys and girls have soundly developing manipulative skills. They cut, stick, glue, draw and paint, put together and take apart construction toys and use table top jigsaws and toys. Children in the nursery decorating fish shapes with needle and thread showed well-developed hand and eye coordination and great perseverance.

ENGLISH

52. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are in line with the national average at the end of both key stages, which is similar to the findings in the previous report. Throughout the school pupils attain good standards in speaking and the majority listen well. They speak clearly and from an early age are eager to present their ideas and viewpoints confidently. Seven-year-olds offer comparisons of the characters and settings within books. They sort out their ideas sensibly and use a growing vocabulary. Older pupils use a wide vocabulary correctly, including that specific to subjects, and speak with expression. They are well able to discuss a range of topics in a meaningful way. A minority of pupils in both key stages find listening to adults and to each other difficult. Their eagerness to take part leads to them calling out which stops others learning.

53. The attainment of seven-year-olds in reading has risen this year and is in line with the national average. Most can read simple text fluently and with expression using a variety of strategies to read unfamiliar words. They are able to follow the story and self-correct their reading when it doesn't make sense, as well as explaining the story. All are confident in talking about their favourite story and books. Most read books for information and understand the value and use of the contents and index pages. Pupils know and understand how to find books in the school library including how to use the computerised catalogue.

54. Standards attained by eleven-year-olds in reading are in line with the national average. By the end of the key stage the average and higher attainers read accurately and fluently for a range of purposes. The lower attaining pupils are less confident, not recognising the purpose of punctuation or understanding the text sufficiently well to self-correct mistakes. Year six pupils enjoy reading with sustained concentration. They discuss text in detail, identifying and analysing the style of writing of the author David Almond. Many have a wide knowledge of books, which they enjoy talking about. Pupils in year five read confidently and explore the difference in characters between Grandpa Chatterji and Grandpa Leicester and their feelings in the book 'Grandpa Chatterji'. Year three and four pupils read with expression identifying parts of speech, such as verbs, within the text and using them to make their reading more meaningful, for example, 'muttered'. All pupils have well developed library skills and choose their own reading books including information books as well as poetry and plays.

55. Standards in writing are in line with national averages at the end of both key stages. Across the school, pupils write for a wide range of purposes using suitable formats including diaries, stories, poetry, letters and descriptions including non-fiction writing such as when the youngest pupils describe a game they have made. Year one pupils use an extending vocabulary and write creatively using interesting phrases, for example, 'wrinkle the water'. Year two pupils use greater imagination in their story writing giving more thought to characters involved, as well as spelling more difficult words and including punctuation. Pupils in year three recognise stories have different styles and write in a traditional style 'Once upon a time' or 'In the beginning'. Year four pupils write a report in the past tense of the sequence of events leading to the return to Totnes of the catamaran 'Team Philips'. Pupils in year five write formal letters of complaint, which provide good arguments against a funfair being sited at Dartington Hall. The oldest pupils write convincing reasons with enthusiasm about why we should read their recommended books. Following a visit to Dartington Hall many poems flowed conveying their thoughts, feelings and observations.

56. Pupils in both key stages are making good progress in their knowledge and understanding and the acquiring of new skills. Class and small group discussions provide them with good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. A wide range of texts are explored and discussed in literacy hour. Pupils acquire a very good appreciation of books and make satisfactory progress in developing a range of reading strategies. Skills in writing are extended through the many and varied opportunities presented. The Literacy strategy and good support by additional staff are having a positive impact on the progress of all pupils including those with special educational needs.

57. Attitudes in lessons are good and sometimes very good. Pupils are given responsibility for their own learning and encouraged to use their initiative, which they do from an early age. They settle promptly to their tasks, working independently when required, in a very calm atmosphere. Relationships are very good and they respond thoughtfully to questions. Pupils are often absorbed by their teacher reading to them. Most pupils listen well to their teacher and other pupils. However, a few are so eager to participate in discussions that they call out which is detrimental to other pupils learning.

58. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Lessons are very well prepared and teachers' plans have clear objectives linked appropriately to the requirements of the literacy strategy. Subject knowledge is good and skilful questioning by the teachers promotes animated discussions. Explanations are clear and the enthusiasm of teachers for the subject is apparent. A range of teaching strategies are used to maintain pupil interest and concentration, for example the on-going use of a story map to compare different 'Mr Grumpy' books.

59. Since the last report the literacy strategy has been very successfully implemented. The coordinator has identified the way forward for literacy, reviewing resources with the whole team and leading literacy surgeries where good practice, management of the hour and ideas are shared. She has a clear view of her role and has monitored the implementation of the strategy effectively, checking planning and collecting samples of pupils' work to monitor standards. Teaching of the Literacy hour has also been observed. The whole team have looked at samples of work to agree levels of attainment. Optional tests in years three, four and five will be analysed and used to track individual attainment. A new marking policy has been adopted which ensures that the pupils know how their work is being assessed. Learning targets are set for individuals, however these could be more formalised and rigorous. Samples of levelled work are retained in pupils' records of achievement which aid the support needed to extend individuals' learning.

60. Reading at Key Stage 1 has been a major focus with improved systems and management of resources, which has given improved results. The systems in place for tracking and recording reading in Key Stage 1 are very good and the school has identified the need to extend this to Key Stage 2. Resources are good and the pupils make very good use of the school library, both as a centre to read fiction and to research for information. Good use is made of visiting authors and theatre companies as well as the pupils' involvement in workshops to enhance pupils' learning.

MATHEMATICS

61. Standards in mathematics seen during the inspection are in line with national averages at the end of both key stages and are an improvement on the most recently available (1999) national test for pupils. Since the previous inspection the school results have fluctuated but shown an overall upward trend, in line with the rise in national standards, and the school expects to meet its targets for 2000. The main factor contributing to the recent improvement in the standards of attainment in mathematics is the quality of teaching.

62. The teaching of mathematics is mainly good in both key stages and shows a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school has benefited from local initiatives prior to the introduction of the national numeracy strategy and is fortunate in having as one of its mathematics coordinators, a local authority 'Leading Maths' teacher to provide an example and give support. This has been a key feature in raising teacher confidence and competence in the teaching of mathematics. Planning is thorough and work is pitched at levels in line with the expectations of the National Numeracy Framework. The coordinator, headteacher and governor with responsibility for mathematics monitor teaching.

63. A significant factor in the standards achieved by pupils of all abilities is the priority which staff across the school give to encouraging and requiring pupils to think mathematically and use appropriate mathematical vocabulary to discuss ways of working. A good example of this is the way in which teachers use the introductory mental mathematics work in each lesson. Year one and two pupils when looking at two and three digit numbers understand zero as a place holder, while year six pupils respond enthusiastically to Egyptian multiplication by doubling and then adding or subtracting. Very good use is made of simple 'instant' recording devices to provide the teacher with quick feedback about the performance of individuals and the class as a whole. Clock faces used in a year two lesson enable the teacher to assess individual attainment and match later work to the pupil's ability. In this lesson effective use was made of the learning support assistant to work with groups of pupils and this contributed to their sustained concentration. Time spent on mental mathematics work is improving pupils' number facts and multiplication tables at all ability levels, as well as their enjoyment of mathematics. It also makes a contribution to their speaking and listening skills.

64. Teachers' management and organisation of pupils is generally good. A very good example of this was in a year three lesson where pupils were very well organised into ability groups with a learning support assistant effectively deployed. The pace of the lesson was rigorous, the work challenging and a well-planned plenary session showed good pupil progress during the lesson. Conversely, however, in a year three and four lesson pupils calling out answers caused others to be off task and had an adverse effect on their learning. Pupils respond very well to good quality organisation and management. In a year six lesson, pupils, when set the challenge of building the tallest square based pyramid from an A4 sheet of paper, worked quickly, sharing materials and discussing their work very sensibly.

65. Teachers' expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve are high. Good questioning skills are used effectively to develop mathematical thinking and strategies. Teachers not only pace their lessons well, but also pace their questioning to allow pupils time to think and reflect on their answers or strategies. For example, in a year five lesson pupils reflected on the difference between perpendicular and parallel lines. This makes a significant contribution to the good levels of pupils' achievement, their acquisition of skills and enthusiasm for mathematics.

66. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but comments are often limited to encouragement rather than how pupils can improve. The presentation of pupils' work is not of a consistently high standard and does not reflect their ability. The use mainly of plain paper does not help pupils to organise their work and often leads to them making needless errors, for example when setting out calculations vertically or drawing shapes. Mathematics homework is a well-established feature of

the subject with a strong emphasis on the learning of multiplication tables and number facts. Although there is some evidence of the use of mathematics in, for example, geography, its use is not systematically planned across the curriculum.

67. The subject coordinator's well formulated improvement plan for the subject includes the analysis of national test results for each pupil, monitoring pupil progress and the introduction of short-term achievable targets for each pupil to help them know how well they are doing. These strategies have a clear focus on the continued raising of standards in mathematics.

SCIENCE

68. Standards of attainment in science have improved at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress and the standards of attainment are in line with the average of all and similar schools. The attainment of higher attaining pupils is in line with national averages but below in comparison with similar schools. Planned work for science provides a good platform of knowledge and understanding for pupils at Key Stage 1 but does not provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

69. By the age of seven pupils are able to use simple classifications. They sort shells or seeds by shape, colour and size and can explain their reasons for the groupings. Good progress is made in expressing scientific ideas and in recording their observations and findings. When undertaking investigations they are beginning to predict outcomes. They are able to describe the life cycle of frogs and butterflies as part of their work on life processes. Most know that plants need light, water, warmth and soil in order to grow. From observations made following a visit to the coast, they use creative language in describing seaweed, for example, as "greeny brown and crispy at one end".

70. Years three and four pupils continue to develop their investigative skills. In work on materials, they handle different types of rock and draw conclusions on the properties and hardness. They conduct experiments to discover whether the rocks are permeable or impermeable. Pupils have a good understanding of parts of the body and can name major organs and bones in the skeleton. They know what makes a healthy body and are able to classify materials and conduct experiments on friction. In years five and six, pupils are capable of organising their resources for investigative work, know how to plan and conduct a fair test and are able to evaluate its effectiveness. They conduct experiments on filtration and separation and describe and record the methods used. In testing the air resistance of paper, their experiments lead them to conclusions on the merits of different paper. Work on life processes enables pupils to describe the process of photosynthesis accurately. The terms stamen, petal, sepal, carpel, stigma and style are used in naming parts of a plant. In studying biodegradable materials pupils make links to the effect on the environment of litter.

71. The quality of science teaching is good. Clear and concise introductions give lessons a sense of purpose and pace and pupils respond appropriately to engaging and challenging activities. The use of resources to support learning is good and provides pupils with first hand experience. A variety of rocks, flowers, plant seeds, plants with different roots and seashells were available for pupils to observe, classify, sketch and experiment upon. Learning is also supported by well-presented displays in the classroom that invite closer observation and interaction. Questioning is used to good effect and enables pupils to focus on the task. Teachers use a combination of demonstration, discussion and questioning to reinforce the objectives of the lesson. Classroom assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs. They work well with pupils in helping to focus their attention and sustain concentration. The interaction between teachers and pupils is based on mutual trust and respect and pupils are encouraged to question and contribute to discussions. Advice on safety, as when handling sharp rocks, is provided.

72. Pupils listen carefully, are responsive to teacher directions and eager to work on the tasks that are set. There is a willingness to share ideas, discuss their findings sensibly and to listen to others. However, there are instances where pupils become over enthusiastic and talk out of turn. As science is frequently a practical activity, most pupils engage willingly in the activity, take responsibility and enjoy learning.

73. The science coordinator monitors the curriculum and provides effective leadership in the subject. Since the last inspection the scheme of work and planning system has been revised with increased use of nationally available planning materials. Good use is made of the school grounds for environmental investigation and science based adventurous activities. The local environment is well used to support science activity through curriculum and residential visits. Learning is further extended through extra curricular opportunities and homework.

ART

74. All pupils make at least good progress in art and many attain standards which are above those expected of pupils of a similar age which is an improvement since the last inspection. The school and its governors are keen to ensure that art and design have an important place in the curriculum and that pupils' creativity is developed from the earliest age. Five and six year olds are making very good progress in the development of their ability to represent what they see when they look carefully at shells and other seaside artefacts and produce well observed still life drawings. Seven year olds making a book in the style of "The Seashell Song" closely observe some real fish and look at J M W Turner's sketches and studies of fish, before they draw their own. The finished pencil drawings are of a high standard showing great attention to detail and a good grasp of the techniques involved in creating light and shade.

75. Many good examples of pupils working with a range of media and using a variety of skills and techniques can be seen in the older classes. Years three and four, inspired by work in history, on Ancient Egypt have produced very creative and imaginative Egyptian masks from papier mache. Year five pupils have looked at rocks, stones and shells from the beach and carefully mixed water colours to match the delicate tones and shades of these natural materials. Older pupils have produced some work of an exceptionally high standard and the year six building is enhanced by many excellent displays of art work. These include very detailed paintings of buildings and local scenes done from photographs taken in Totnes, block printing on fabric, detailed self portraits in pencil, clay masks and careful pencil and watercolour studies. Two very good art lessons were observed with year six pupils. Both looked at figure drawing and pupils produced work which showed very good progress in their ability to observe detail, to reflect on their work and adapt it accordingly. One year six class followed up their life drawings of one another by looking at the stylised life drawings of Egyptian artists. Their own work in the style of this art was very detailed and showed very well developed drawing skills.

76. All pupils enjoy art with many saying that it is their favourite subject. In most art lessons pupils work quietly and sensibly. They discuss what they are doing confidently and are not afraid to ask for help and advice from their teachers.

77. The quality of teaching is mainly good with much very good. Teachers plan their lessons very well, taking good account of the excellent scheme of work that the school has produced. In the best lessons there is explicit teaching of skills and techniques and pupils are encouraged to reflect on their work and develop and improve it accordingly. Resources are well chosen and presented. Teachers regularly introduce children to the work of famous artists and craftsmen such as Matisse, Cezanne and William Morris. They use a wide variety of stimuli for pupils' art work. A recent visit from Nigerian artists produced a very impressive collection of work with clay, fabric printing and dying and weaving. The school's unique environment is well used for art. Pupils have created woodland sculptures, designed collages with natural materials and made exciting mud monsters. Art is used effectively to extend and support work in other curriculum

areas. Pupils have responded creatively to poetry such as Walter de la Mares poem, 'Silver' and Judith Nichols poem 'Dragonbirth'. They listened to Holst Planet suite and responded by painting their imagined ideas of Mars. Many excellent examples of art work come from pupils studies in history and geography such as the Egyptian masks and drawings. Art work is celebrated and valued by many exciting displays in classrooms and shared areas with the special talent of some pupils being given special recognition. The school benefits from the very valuable help of parents many of whom are artists and craftsmen and who share their talents willingly with the children and enrich their creative experiences.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

78. Pupils throughout the school are making mainly good progress in design and technology. In Key Stage 1 they are achieving standards appropriate for their age and in Key Stage 2 standards are a little above those expected from pupils of a similar age. Five year olds in the reception class make good progress when making picture books, with moving parts, about the seaside. They are able to offer lots of good suggestions as to how to do this and eventually all successfully design and make a picture of figures jumping up and down in the water, using a simple slide and sleeve mechanism. Six and seven year olds create effective moving sea creatures by using a range of simple techniques to join and assemble the parts. They use tools such as scissors and staplers safely and are able to make some judgements about their work.

79. Older pupils undertake a range of designing and making tasks successfully. Year three pupils make realistic suggestions about how they can design and make a package which will protect a biscuit when sent through the post. Pupils in year five produce step by step plans with well labelled sketches of how they will make a fair ground ride. They show a good knowledge of simple mechanisms such as levers, pulleys and cogs. In year six pupils, have worked in pairs to designed and made moon buggies using a variety of recyclable materials and commercial kits. All are very different but very successful. The finished models use a good range of techniques to facilitate movement and have involved the children in designing electrical circuits, using the power of a magnet and exploring friction force. Boys and girls discuss their finished models and evaluate the success of the project against their original design intentions. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject. They are proud of their work and are keen to express their ideas and talk about what they are doing, but occasionally they are so eager to put forward their ideas and opinions that they do not listen well to the contributions of others. Most pupils are able to work together, in groups or in pairs to complete a task successfully.

80. Teaching in the subject is mainly good and sometimes very good. Teachers take good account of pupils' previous learning and most lessons move at a brisk pace using questions well to help pupils generate ideas and evaluate their work. Occasionally too much time spent on the introduction of the lesson slows the pace of learning and pupils become restless. The subject is well led by two coordinators who have kept a good photographic record of design and technology projects throughout the school. This shows that children have had a very wide range of experiences from designing and building mud huts in the grounds to going for Guinness Book of Records recognition by making four hundred puppets for a Christmas production. A well resourced area is set aside for cooking activities and although none were observed during the inspection, pupils recalled memorable occasions such as preparing a Greek meal as part of their work in history and making bread at harvest time.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

81. The school organises termly topic themes with either a history or geography bias. During the period of the inspection it was not possible to observe history lessons being taught and judgements are based on discussions with pupils and staff and the analysis of pupils' work. The skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils in these subjects are as expected. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

82. The geography skills of pupils are steadily developed as they progress through the school. In Key Stage 1 pupils acquire first hand experience of coastal locations with visits that support work in the classroom. They are able to express a preference for the nearest seaside location and describe the physical features of a coastline using appropriate vocabulary such as beach, cliffs and harbour. In describing the characteristics of the seaside they recognise features such as the horizon, sky, rocks, waves, sand and fish. When comparing posters of an Australian coastline they detect similarities and differences in sand colour, surf, sea and sky. Good use is made of maps to find places. They have good awareness of continents and seas and know the location of Australia, India and Antarctica on a map. The world map on the playground has helped in this respect.

83. In Key Stage 2 pupils use symbols to record the weather on a chart. They are familiar with points of the compass and can identify NW and SE in describing wind direction. Homework task on the weather supports classroom learning. In years five and six, there is a growing awareness of how environmental issues affect different places and how and why settlements arose. Pupils appreciate that people can hold different views and opinions when reflecting on environmental issues. In investigating their own environment, pupils have undertaken traffic surveys and identified vehicle frequency patterns from the results. Pupils gain appropriate skills in mapping. They know that a map is a scale representation and that symbols represent key features. Grid references are used to identify location. The use of 'Map Explorer' on the computer has added greatly to this understanding.

84. In history, pupils' finished work demonstrates that they understand the features and events of past societies and the consequences of change. Year one pupils draw pictures to record their visit to Totnes Castle. Detailed work by year two pupils show an understanding of how Viking longships were constructed. An account, by year five pupils, of a visit to a mine makes contrasts between their own and the lives of children who worked in the mines. The accounts of life in Ancient Egypt are very descriptive and record the dangers involved in building pyramids. Detailed drawings of Egyptian figures capture the character of the period. Year six pupils demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of Tudor Totnes through their work on housing styles, trades, craftsmen and clothing. They are able to make comparisons between their own and Tudor times. The local study of Dartington shows an understanding of the changes to agriculture on the area. Pupils investigate the changes that have occurred locally by studying maps from different time periods.

85. The quality of teaching in geography is good. Teachers plan interesting and stimulating activities that challenge and engage pupils. The local area is well used and visits to local places provide good support to the geography and history curriculum. A variety of other resources including taped sea sounds, photographs, cruise brochures and posters are used as a stimulus to geographic enquiry. Questions are used well in encouraging pupils to discuss their seaside experiences and to expand upon their answers. Teachers are aware of pupils needing support and additional attention. The management of pupils is good with an effective partnership with support assistants who use their initiative in working alongside pupils who have difficulty focusing during discussions. Some introductions to lessons are too lengthy, particularly for younger pupils to sit and listen. Class routines are firmly established and good behaviour is praised. Restless pupils are managed well and the teacher stops lesson where behaviour falls below expectations.

86. The coordinators for history and geography have worked together to develop a humanities programme. Teachers are given sound guidance and support and there is regular liaison with governors. Subject plans have been revised since the last inspection and are now detailed and provide links to other subjects. Monitoring of the subjects is well developed and the coordinators' work with staff across the school in ensuring planned progression and continuity. A good emphasis is made of practical experience and fieldwork and the environment within the local area is used well to enrich class-based learning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

87. At the time of the last inspection insufficient evidence was available to make any judgements. With the introduction of the computer suite in the library and the appointment of a computer technician to effectively run it, every child now has regular timetabled opportunities to work with computers and other equipment. As a consequence, there has been a dramatic improvement in pupils' ability to use information technology (IT) as a tool. The greatest impact of this can be seen in the younger classes where standards are already at least appropriate for the ages of the pupils concerned. Older pupils are making good progress but it will take a little time for them to catch up with the work they missed before the suite was available.

88. By siting the suite in the library, teachers are able to use a variety of organisations so that the minimum amount of time is lost in changing between activities. A good example of a purely IT based session in Key Stage 2 used both the computer and a programmable toy to give pupils the opportunity to move either the cursor or the toy along a set path by giving instructions. With the teacher in the library area concentrating on the toys and the technician helping with the computer group, each group achieved what they set out to do with some confidence. Slightly older pupils were helped by their friends from the neighbouring special school to use a desk-top publishing programme to create a document about Totnes. This involved several IT skills including importing from a floppy disc and changing fonts and colours. Older pupils were observed gathering information about the ancient Egyptians for their current topic while others were making good use of the adventure type simulation 'Map Explorer', to learn about and practice using maps at a range of difficulty levels.

89. In another lesson, a parallel activity using CD Roms on the computers and books in the library, gave year two pupils the opportunity to access information from a variety of sources in a structured way. While the technician supported groups finding information on George Stephenson to complete worksheets, the teacher worked with the rest trying to find the same information using research skills in the library. Since this also involved a search for Library classification numbers on the dedicated library programme, it also showed pupils how computers can be used as a tool. Even younger pupils showed how well they could control the mouse and use a painting programme in 'painting' three seaside objects on the screen. These were subsequently printed as evidence of progress. Standards in Key Stage 1 are good.

90. New arrangements have been in place for a year and the impact is obvious. The coordinator is an enthusiast who understands what needs to be done and the contribution of the technician in working with pupils on a day-to-day basis is very good. With a well set-up scheme of work based on national expectations and a system for monitoring individual progress in place, standards are bound to keep on improving as pupil and teacher confidence grows.

MUSIC

91. The school has a well-founded reputation for the quality of musical performance of a considerable proportion of its older pupils. Individually and in ensembles, they reach levels of knowledge and expertise well in advance of what might be expected and several are particularly gifted. This was the case at the last inspection but concerns were expressed then about the quality of class music provided for those pupils who did not have extra tuition. A good deal of work has been done in this area and class provision is much improved with all at least satisfactory and some good. The poor quality of singing was also commented upon but the spirited and tuneful way the whole school sang an African hymn they had only just learned showed how much this aspect of music has improved.

92. Several other important aspects of provision were also demonstrated. The singing assembly was taken by the school's music teacher whose confidence and expertise, helped by the very skilled accompaniment of a visiting instrumental teacher, encouraged everyone to have a go. This was also enhanced by the contribution of several percussionists whose rhythmical accompaniment

drove the whole thing along. A demonstration of drumming by an older pupil using an African drum after only one weeks practice showed how gifted some pupils are.

93. Arrangements for pupils to receive extra tuition from visiting tutors have been well thought out with class teachers alternating the timetable to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same school lesson each week. The school is fortunate to have several small areas for the lessons to be taken in and more than half the pupils in the older classes take the opportunity of playing woodwind, brass, violin, cello, guitar, keyboards and percussion. Even more continue to play the recorder after their first taster and join together in ensembles at various levels. The quality of teaching for all of these activities is always good, often better, and the pupils concerned gain a great deal from taking part.

94. From class music observed and planning, the quality of provision is obviously much better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Good use is being made of a commercial scheme to provide structure and continuity and as teachers gain in confidence, the pace of learning and the quality of pupils' performance are both improving, especially in the younger classes. In some classes, teachers are able to relate the musical teaching objectives to the current topic as in a lesson based on a seaside theme where the 'She sells sea-shells' rhythm was used and the world of the rock pool was used to give ideas for a composition. However, in the older classes, class music, to some extent understandably, rarely stretches the able musicians and some thought might be given to involving them more in the teaching process by making use of their knowledge and expertise for the good of their classmates.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

95. Lessons in games, athletics and swimming were observed during the week of the inspection. Pupils' standards in games and athletics are in line with that expected of pupils of a similar age, while those in swimming are higher. Evidence from teachers' planning shows that all pupils have opportunities to take part in all aspects of the physical education curriculum. All pupils swim during the summer term, the younger pupils in the school's learner pool and the older pupils in the nearby community pool. Only exceptionally, is a year six pupils unable to swim 25 metres.

96. The overall standard of teaching at both key stages is good. Features of good teaching are the planning, organisation and management of pupils that ensures a good pace to the lesson, enabling pupils to achieve maximum activity. A good example of this was in a year six lesson when pupils wasted no time in walking quickly to the community pool, changing and being ready to start. Conversely at the same time, teachers organising years three and four games adopted a more leisurely pace and consequently pupils had less time for activity.

97. Reception class pupils were well managed in their initial swimming session with well-planned activities to build water confidence and to ensure they are kept warm. Good support from a parent in the pool helped to keep them on task. Teachers' subject knowledge and an expectation of what the pupils can achieve is good. In a year one and two games lesson pupils' made good progress in improving throwing and catching skills in response to teacher expectation. In this lesson the range of balls used challenged pupils' skill levels. Good use of questioning, for example when looking at an individual performance in games lessons contributes to improving standards.

98. Specialist javelin teaching was evident in a year six athletics lesson taken by a physical education teacher from the local secondary school as part of the primary secondary school liaison programme. Pupils made good progress in this lesson although the casual rather than sports wear of some pupils did not lend itself safely to this activity. Good use was made of the schools spacious surroundings during a year three and four orienteering lesson where pupils used their compass direction skills. Good teaching also contributes to pupils' enjoyment of physical education. They listen and respond well to instructions, co-operate when working together and are able to evaluate their own skills and those of others. Through its emphasis on working together, the subject strengthens the school's provision for pupils' social development.

99. Since the last inspection the strength of the subject and its provision for extra curricular activities has been sustained, and teaching is now good at both key stages. Assessment is on going and progress is recorded in pupil records. The level of resourcing is good overall with some good quality equipment, and facilities for physical education are generous. Although the hall is only satisfactory, the school has a spacious field and the use of its own and the community swimming pool. The community tennis courts, marked out also for netball, are also well used. The provision of extra curricular sporting activities is a strong feature of the school and the coordinator and other staff give a valuable contribution by preparing teams to participate in local competitions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

100. Pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. Pupils in year two understand that people may follow a particular religion. All are familiar with the festivals of Christmas and Easter and their importance to Christians and know about the Hindu festival of Divali. They know that the Bible is a special book and can recall stories from the Bible such as Moses and know that he is an Old Testament character. Most understand the significance of religious services to some people and know the conventions of prayer, 'Dear God, . . . Amen'. Through Key Stage 2 pupils develop an awareness of other world faiths including Judaism, Hinduism and Islam but some of their knowledge is confused.

101. In their understanding of religious education the pupils make satisfactory progress. They articulate their thoughts very well and ask many meaningful questions. In furthering the younger pupils understanding of the story of Jonah a pupil answered 'God loves us all and gives us a second chance'. The pupils in year two are able to express their feelings clearly and talk about when they have felt happy or sad and ways in which they have managed to cope. Pupils in year three are beginning to recognise that the teaching of Jesus is relevant to them; for example, 'focus on the good things in people' and 'when someone does something wrong forgive them'. Year four pupils discuss the meaning of Bible stories in greater depth and apply it to their own feelings, as in the story of the lost sheep. Ten-year-olds write expressive poetry about 'trees' in relation to new life and memorials. The oldest pupils study religious art and compare their own image of Jesus with some interpretations of different artists. Those with special educational needs are well supported and make sound progress.

102. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good. Planning reflects the statutory requirements for religious education based upon the local education authority agreed syllabus. Teachers have good knowledge of the Christian faith and of other world religions. Opportunity is given for the exploration of religious views and deeper understanding of religious issues through reflection and discussion. Often links are made to collective worship as well as other subjects in the curriculum. Where teaching is at its best pupils are well motivated and their own experiences are incorporated into their learning. Additional staff are well deployed to support pupils in their discussions and written responses. From an early age pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, show respect for each other and recognise that others' opinions matter.

103. Since the last inspection all teachers have gained in confidence in teaching other religions aided by in-service training provision which has increased subject knowledge. The newly appointed coordinator has clearly identified the needs of the subject. Teachers are well supported in planning and pupils' work is monitored. With the implementation of a more detailed scheme of work, and assessment of pupils' understanding recorded, standards in knowledge of religions are showing good signs of improvement.