

INSPECTION REPORT

COMBE MARTIN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Combe Martin

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113145

Headteacher: George Oreshko

Reporting inspector: Geoff Burgess
OIN: 23708

Dates of inspection: 11th to 15th March 2001

Inspection number: 222621

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	
Date of previous inspection:	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Combe Martin Primary School is situated not far from the seafront in converted secondary buildings. It serves a wide spectrum of families of mainly British heritage from the town but with a few from the surrounding area. Just less than a fifth of pupils take free school meals with much work in this tourist area seasonal and low-paid. The number of pupils on roll has been between 180 and 200 for the past five years but a large year six group will leave this year and numbers will fall. At times the number of pupils leaving and joining the school mid-year is high but recently this has been similar to most schools. More than a quarter of all pupils are on the special needs register, an average number, and none has a statement. Attainment on entry to the reception class is similar to most schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education with good teaching and improving academic and personal standards. Leadership and management are satisfactory and with average funding and attainment on entry, it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching, especially in the younger classes, is helping pupils to achieve more throughout the school and standards to build from reception up
- Young children are benefiting from very good teaching and a rich and stimulating curriculum in the reception class
- Pupils' social and moral development have a high priority. They behave well, get on well together and are growing into mature, sensible and responsible citizens

What could be improved

- The historic shortfall in standards in the older classes is being reduced steadily but there is still some way to go before pupils achieve their full potential
- Learning opportunities for pupils in years one to six, but especially in the junior classes, are dominated by literacy work and they receive a mundane diet of activities in and out of class.
- Aspects of management systems, procedures and organisations which have evolved over the years are no longer rigorous enough to ensure that the school makes the most of its assets

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since its last inspection in February 2000 when standards were low, results in national testing by eleven-year-olds improved by a great deal more than the national trend in English, mathematics and science but still lag behind most schools. The last report identified standards in reading and writing as the only issue and understandably the school has concentrated on this to good effect as indicated above. This area was also the focus for HMI on their monitoring visit in February 2001, when it was said reasonable progress had been made. However, other important issues including very low overall standards in Key Stage 1 and reservations about the foundation curriculum were mentioned in the report but not identified as priorities. Very good improvements have been made in both these areas but other issues need further attention and overall improvement is satisfactory.

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	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	E*	D	D	well above average A
mathematics	E	E	E	E	above average B
science	E	E	D	D	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

In the past three years, standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in national testing have been mainly well below average with a dip to the bottom five per cent in English in 2000. 2001 saw a good recovery in English and a steady improvement in mathematics and science was enough to take science into the below average category. Results for seven-year-olds were poor for the whole period. Current standards in English, mathematics and science in year six are all below average but since results achieved by the same year group in Key Stage 1 tests were in the bottom five per cent nationally, this represents a good improvement. Pupils in reception and years one and two are achieving well and standards in reading, writing and mathematics in year two have improved enormously from very low to average. Children in the foundation year are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals before the end of the year. Standards in physical education and art are average throughout the school. Other subjects reflect standards in the core subjects being below average in the older classes and average in years one and two. Pupils who find learning difficult in Key Stage 1 are making good progress towards their targets but older pupils are not.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The majority of boys and girls enjoy school and are interested and involved in their work and play. Younger pupils are especially enthusiastic about their learning but some older pupils tend to lose interest and their ability to concentrate towards the end of the afternoon. Otherwise attitudes to learning and school are good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Staff work very hard to help pupils to know what behaviour is appropriate at different times and they respond very well. Behaviour in class is usually good, sometimes very good but occasionally deteriorates a little in junior classes in the afternoons. Play and lunchtimes are happy sociable occasions with little need for adults to intervene.
Personal development and relationships	Children get on well together and relate well to staff and visitors. Most act in mature and sensible ways and are very happy to take on responsibilities when they are offered. Older pupils take their duty of care for younger members of their family groups very seriously and the youngest pupils are confident and self-reliant beyond their years..
Attendance	Despite the school's best efforts, attendance levels are below those found in most schools.

Greatly improved attitudes and behaviour have made the school a much more pleasant place for staff and pupils to work in and helped both to concentrate on teaching and learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Lessons seen overall	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory

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.

Most teaching is at least good with several very good lessons mainly in the reception class and two unsatisfactory lessons in Key Stage 2. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good in years one and two and satisfactory in the older classes, the main difference being that expectations are higher in the infant classes and the work is better matched to the full range of pupils' abilities. Art and physical education are well taught throughout the school with good teaching in other subjects where teachers have particular expertise. Younger pupils make a good contribution to their own learning by their interest and willingness to try hard but some older pupils lose their spark in the afternoons and learning suffers. Inappropriate activities contributed to the less than satisfactory lessons. Teaching assistants make good and sometimes very good contributions to pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Criticisms in the last report have led to the school concentrating on all aspects of literacy to raise standards. Numeracy also has a high profile and as a consequence, the time and energy devoted to other subjects has diminished and the breadth of the curriculum reduced especially in years three to six. With few activities outside lessons, the overall range and quality of learning opportunities is less than in other schools. The exception is in the foundation stage where children have a rich range of suitable activities and experiences to enjoy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Basic procedures for identifying need, setting targets and monitoring progress are in place but these and the arrangements made to deal with pupils' needs are not working well enough in years three to six. In addition, some extra help unnecessarily takes pupils out of lessons in other subjects they would otherwise get a great deal from. However, provision in the younger classes is well integrated and much more effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Staff make good provision for promoting the development of pupils' social skills and attitudes and moral awareness. Curricular provision for pupils to study and appreciate their own cultural heritage and celebrate the cultural diversity of others is not well developed but sound attention is given to helping pupils to reflect on the more spiritual aspects of their growth. Overall provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers and other staff know the children well and take good care for their safety and well-being. School procedures for these aspects are satisfactory but in the school's context, need to be better. Attendance and behaviour are monitored carefully and improvement is actively promoted. Current assessment arrangements are adequate to keep an eye on academic progress and guide planning but information could be set out more clearly. Personal development is well monitored but few records are kept.

A significant minority of parents are not very happy with several aspects of the school but the majority are pleased with recent improvements especially in behaviour and feel comfortable in their dealings with staff. Satisfactory information is provided about general matters but school reports are not as informative as most. Parents make a sound contribution by supporting homework and the parents association but less volunteer to help in school than is the case in many other schools.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership & management by the headteacher & other key staff	The contribution made by the head and senior staff to the day to day running and overall direction of the school is satisfactory. However, the educational direction of the school has been distorted by an over-emphasis on literacy and elements of the school's management are not sufficiently well coordinated. Staff with responsibility for core subjects are making a good contribution to improvement in them but, with the focus on these, other coordinators, some fairly new, have not been in a position to develop their roles and make a real impact.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and keen for the school to succeed. Various committees meet regularly to conduct business with the curriculum committee having a special responsibility for the action plan. With several governors on the school staff, there is a good awareness of what is going on in the school but in some areas including finance and standards, governors are too dependant on the head for detailed information. The new chair is determined that the governing body should develop its role as a critical friend and improve its contribution to strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A great deal more time and effort has been put into monitoring the work of the school than previously. Information about pupils' attainment is collected; pupils' work is compared to national standards; teaching and classroom practice is regularly observed; pupils' and parents' opinions are sought. However, as yet the evaluation of this has not been used effectively to establish detailed priorities for planning for improvement other than in literacy.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of existing staff, accommodation, books and equipment and spending has been focused on dealing with underachievement. However, the large overspend incurred in doing so will make things difficult for some time to come and the impact of the money spent has not been monitored to judge its effectiveness.

The leadership is to be congratulated on bringing about the very good improvements in provision and standards in the infant department and in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. However, further improvements are being inhibited by a lack of thought about the wider consequences of decisions before they are made or to monitoring their intended and unintended impact when they are implemented.

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 are making good progress • the staff are very approachable and the school works well with parents • improvements made in the past two years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards of behaviour • the information about how well their children are doing • aspects of the way the school is led and managed • the number and range of activities provided outside normal lessons

Inspectors agree with both positive comments. Pupils behaved well throughout the inspection but reports do not have enough detail about how well their children are doing compared with boys and girls in other schools. The school provides fewer extra activities than most schools of its size and type and some aspects of the way the school is managed need attention.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The last report noted that between 1997 and 1999, standards as measured by the results of national testing were poor for a variety of reasons mainly due to staff absences and the consequent loss of pupils to other schools. English results for eleven-year-olds fell drastically in 2000 but improved by even more the following year to a level that would have been average in 1999. However, with national standards still improving, this still only counted as below average in 2001. Results in mathematics and science both improved by more than the national trend and thus caught up in 2000 and 2001 which was enough for science to move up from well below to below average. No real discrepancies between boys and girls or pupils of varying attainments were noted in the last report or are obvious in the breakdown of information from the latest tests.

2. National test results for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics were depressingly low in the past five years, often in the bottom five per cent of all schools, which meant that overall standards for all pupils now in years three to six were poor on entry to Key Stage 2. This was especially the case with the present year six who had very poor results in 1998 with reading and mathematics in the bottom two or three per cent nationally. For this year group, and years four and five, this has been compounded by higher than usual numbers of pupils leaving and joining the school. With a massive concentration on numeracy and especially literacy, current standards in English, mathematics and science in year six though still below average are improved relative to other schools by something like a year more than the four years worth of improvement which might have been expected. The greatest improvements have been in mental maths and in reading which are both approaching levels seen in most schools.

3. With most pupils achieving at least satisfactorily throughout Key Stage 2, a similar improving picture can be observed in English, mathematics and science in years three, four and five though, apart from reading, standards are still below average. The overall progress being made by pupils in year three is especially commendable since they suffered greatly from a series of changes of teacher in both their reception year and in year two. However, with good teaching, pupils in one parallel year three and four class are making better progress than in the other. Current arrangements for supporting Key Stage 2 pupils who find learning difficult are not helping them to achieve the targets on their individual plans quickly enough.

4. Given the consistently very poor results seven-year-olds achieved in national tests as noted in paragraph two, the fact that this year's year two are achieving levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science similar to those in most schools shows a remarkable improvement. The roots of this can be traced back to the good start these pupils received with the arrival of a new teacher in the reception class in 1999 as noted in the last report. Two years on, and with the addition of a very skilled early years trained teaching assistant, very good provision is seeing children in their foundation year making very good progress with many already achieving most of the early learning goals expected of them by the end of the year. Continued good teaching in years one and two has built on this so that boys and girls are achieving well right across the curriculum and attaining the sort of standards seen in other schools and better in reading. Well integrated provision for younger boys and girls who need extra help with well matched work means that these pupils make equally good progress as their classmates.

5. An unfortunate consequence of the school's concentration on literacy has been that many other subjects have been marginalised especially in years three to six. For instance, in a year five/six class, pupils have four ninety-five minute afternoon sessions which are not timetabled for literacy, mathematics and science. With one of these taken up by swimming, it means the teacher has less than five hours to cover all the other subjects. As a result, apart from art and physical education, standards in them are below what might be expected.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. The school's continuous efforts to ensure good attitudes and behaviour are now resulting in better standards across the whole school. Parents' view, that behaviour is improving, expressed at the pre-inspection meeting, is borne out by inspection evidence – it is now consistently good, whereas it was reported as satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The 29 per cent of parents responding to the questionnaire who are concerned about the standard of behaviour should be assured that standards are improving. Pupils' personal development, particularly their moral and social development is good. Attendance levels, however, remain below the national average and are therefore unsatisfactory.

7. Children's response and attitudes to learning in the foundation stage are very good. They know routines well, enter their classroom calmly and with confidence ready to follow the teacher's instructions and join in all the activities available to them. In physical education they follow instructions well, stop when required, participate with enthusiasm and watch carefully when their friends are asked to demonstrate their bouncing and catching skills. Their behaviour is always very good. They are learning to take responsibility for clearing away after activities and enjoy being chosen to return the register to the office. Their positive attitudes to learning and very good behaviour have a positive impact on their learning.

8. Attitudes to learning for the vast majority of pupils in years one to six are good. Pupils listen with interest to their teachers and each other. In a literacy lesson, pupils were very well motivated, and some quite animated, as they discussed the arguments they might use in their writing about banning fox hunting. Pupils are usually keen and enthusiastic to give their answers and suggestions at the beginning of numeracy lessons in response to teachers' good questioning. Occasionally some pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration towards the end of longer sessions and consequently call out or 'switch off'. Pupils are happy to discuss their work and proud to tell visitors about aspects of school life, such as how good the dinners are.

9. Pupils are responsive to the strategies used by teachers to encourage good behaviour and this contributes to successful learning. They beam with pride when they are selected to have the 'special cushion' or are awarded team points. Movement around the school site, is calm and, in the main, sensible. Pupils enter the hall for assemblies in a quiet manner, ready to listen. Pupils play happily together across the ages during break-times and are not concerned about bullying. No aggressive behaviour was observed during the inspection.

10. Relationships are good and pupils co-operate well when they are required to work in pairs and small groups. Children from across the age range interact well as a number of school activities are organised in family groupings. This contributes to the good relationships across the school as pupils care for and help others who belong to 'their group'. For example, a child showed her care for another who was new to the school, by taking her hand during the whole-school assembly; year six boys helped Foundation Stage children do up their coats before they went out to play following the family assemblies. Pupils undertake a range of responsibilities and do so sensibly and in good spirit. Year six boys organise the music for assemblies, playground helpers help look after the youngest children at break-times and school councillors represent their class on the school council. Older pupils apply in writing to be considered for certain jobs such as playground helper.

11. A significant percentage of parents responding to the Ofsted questionnaire did not feel their child enjoyed attending school. Those pupils spoken to during the inspection enjoyed most aspects of their school day. Attendance levels do however remain below the national average. Analysis shows many pupils are taken out of school for holidays during term time. Poor attendance adversely affects pupils' progress, as work cannot always be repeated in the same depth. The school has been successful in reducing the number of unauthorised absences and no exclusions were made in the last year. Most pupils arrive in school on time ready to start the day's activities.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. In Combe Martin School's first inspection in 1996, nearly a quarter of lessons were said to be unsatisfactory. By 2000, this had gone down to five per cent, all in Key Stage 1, with nearly a quarter now very good throughout the school. All teaching in the foundation class was at least good with seventy per cent good and better in Key Stage 2. In her monitoring visit in February 2001, the representative of HMI saw ten lessons, one of which was unsatisfactory, five good, mainly in Key Stage 1, and the rest satisfactory. Reports of local authority monitoring visits focusing on literacy in 2001 say that teaching is satisfactory but that it needs to be much better to eradicate underachievement.

13. Nearly three-fifths of teaching is now good and very good with two unsatisfactory lessons and the rest satisfactory. However, this is very unevenly spread throughout the school. The great majority of teaching in the foundation stage is very good with the rest good; most teaching in years one and two is good with one very good lesson; and most teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory with one very good lesson and two unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is associated with the capabilities of individual teachers with no particular strengths in individual subjects except maybe physical education. Hence, despite all the efforts made, the teaching of literacy is no better than mathematics or the foundation subjects taken as a whole.

14. With the considerable help of her well-trained and very effective teaching assistant, the reception teacher makes very good provision for the children in her care and they respond with enthusiasm, interest and real effort to please. This is an improvement since the last inspection when, even then, all teaching was at least good. Key factors in the very good learning that takes place are the very well understood routines and expectations that have been established. Boys and girls know exactly what to do and are confident and happy in their work. This was well demonstrated at the start of the day when children settled happily and quickly at the teacher's feet for the register which was completed in minutes with no fuss. At the same time, the teaching assistant was very skilfully working on reading with a little girl, talking her through the story using the pictures then supporting her attempts to read it using known words and 'guessing' others using the initial sounds. Meanwhile the teacher, assisted by 'Croaker' the frog, helped children recognise end phonemes by his saying the words wrongly. Bright, sparkly children loved telling 'Croaker' how to say the words properly and gained much from doing so. In the lesson that followed, well planned, prepared and matched, stimulating activities and high quality input from both adults ensured that children gained greatly from their time in school.

15. Teaching in the two Key Stage 1 classes was shared between class teachers, one of whom was a temporary teacher who had only just taken over for a maternity leave, and two students undertaking their final practice. To further complicate the situation, the other class teacher had only returned from a long leave a few weeks before the inspection. However, it was very clear that the classroom organisation and ways of working had been so well established that staff and pupils were well able to absorb the changes and get on without too much disruption. With no unsatisfactory teaching this time and most good, this represents a big improvement since the last inspection.

16. A good example came in a very busy and well-prepared literacy session which stretched most of the children who enjoyed the challenge. Making good use of small white boards and felt-tip pens, pupils wrote their own spellings of words ending -nk and the teacher was able to quickly check their answers and provide instant feedback. So one pupil was helped to hear and see the difference between 'th-ink' and 'f-ink' in seconds. Moving on to the main focus, the teacher drew out the main features of non-fiction books and introduced the ideas of 'diagrams', 'sequencing' and 'captions' before pupils moved into one of five groups with different levels of challenge. One group used the library (with a classroom assistant), another the computers with a CD ROM encyclopaedia and others various ordering and labelling activities in the classroom.

17. With less than half of all teaching good and better this time compared with seventy per cent when the school was last inspected, teaching standards have gone down in Key Stage 2. The main reasons why most teaching was judged to be satisfactory were the generally low expectations across the key stage and, with two year groups in each class, the spread of challenge in the work planned was insufficient to meet the needs of the range of pupils present.

18. Most lessons are well planned and a strength of teaching is the very good way pupils are managed even in the late afternoons when they sometimes become irritable. In all classes, the best teaching occurs in whole class sessions usually at the beginning of the lesson. Typical of all the above was a numeracy lesson where during the mental maths section, sharp and interested pupils responded very animatedly to the teachers challenging questions. With suggestions such as 0.5×0.5 and $10 - 9.75$ when asked to give questions with the answer 0.25, they showed how numerate they are. However, the following symmetry exercises at three levels presented no challenge for them and they completed the task in minutes. In the one very good literacy lesson, detailed planning at several levels with well chosen texts and clearly explained learning objectives meant that pupils were working at their limits during group work.

19. Of the two unsatisfactory lessons, one came about because the numeracy material prepared by the teacher was flawed so that it was undoable and pupils wasted time and lost interest, with some getting into trouble for not doing enough work. With the teacher wanting silent independent work and pupils needing to talk about it, the lesson deteriorated and little learning took place. The other took place late in the afternoon and after a long, desk based day, and another introduction, discussion, desk based activity in prospect, several pupils lost interest, went off-task and produced a small amount of messy work.

20. Teaching assistants make a good and sometimes very good contribution to pupils' learning especially in the areas of special needs and early literacy support. They are usually well briefed by teachers but plans do not always identify which group is receiving additional support nor how it is intended to support these pupils with meeting the targets set on their individual education plans. Teachers are appropriately responsible for setting the targets on pupil's individual education plans, reviewing them each term and setting new ones. However the targets set are not sharp enough or measurable in small steps and as a result progress is difficult to assess.

21. The support role of the special needs coordinator has not been properly thought through and her impact on the progress of pupils who need extra help in years three and four is not as good as it could be. While supporting in class in the mornings, most of her time is taken up by unplanned, unspecific general support around the classroom while in the afternoons, she covers ground which could productively have been included in the morning session. Unfortunately, this also means that these pupils miss out on other subjects such as working on the computers, which they would gain a great deal from. In a session where this happened, a further difficulty was the fact that she was trying to work in the same shared area as the computers surrounded by many distractions for her vulnerable pupils.

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

22. The quality and range of the school's learning opportunities, although good in the foundation stage and sound in years one and two, are unsatisfactory overall and do not promote high standards across the curriculum. While the statutory curriculum, including collective worship, is in place, it is insufficiently broad, balanced and relevant in years three to six where time allocated to the foundation subjects of the national curriculum and religious education is inadequate. The school was identified as under achieving in literacy in the last inspection, although other areas of weakness were noted, and since then the school has focused almost exclusively on this target to the detriment of the richness of the wider curriculum. Literacy and numeracy strategies have been satisfactorily introduced but the skills and knowledge acquired are little used in other subjects. While pupils apparently have equal access to the curriculum, in practice the school must ensure that when pupils are withdrawn for extra support they do not always miss the same activity.

23. Although pupils in years five and six benefited from the opportunity of a residential visit last year to an outward bound centre in Bideford, use of the local environment is not built into the curriculum to enrich pupils learning systematically and extra curricular activities have historically been few in number and ephemeral in nature, a concern expressed by many parents

24. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory but a coherent policy or secure framework to ensure coverage and progression in what is taught has not been developed. Teachers use opportunities as they arise to emphasise the importance of pupils' personal development and use 'circle time' and 'family assemblies' to provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss issues relevant to their own experiences. Sex education and awareness of the misuse of drugs is taught through science and when it arises in discussion.

25. The community makes a sound contribution to pupils learning through visitors to the school, such as the local surf school, police and fire officers and pupils contribute to the community through invitation to school events and participation in the 'Earl of Roan' annual folk festival. Good links with the local pre-school group, which is sited in the school grounds and the main receiving secondary school ensures pupils move smoothly between the different phases of education.

26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in reception and years one and two but unsatisfactory in years three to six. In the younger classes pupils are well integrated and supported within lessons by teachers or teaching assistants. Tasks are usually planned to meet the specific needs of the pupils. In the older classes, teaching assistants support pupils satisfactorily during literacy and numeracy sessions but those who are withdrawn for additional support often miss lessons from which they would benefit. For example two pupils in an older class were withdrawn for extra reading support during a geography lesson. A group of younger boys were receiving additional literacy support while the rest of their class were working with computers in the same teaching area. In addition, timetable arrangements are such that pupils who are in one of the years three and four 'focus groups', have literacy and numeracy almost the whole day and miss out on other, very worthwhile activities.

27. Family grouping arrangements, which are now a well-established part of school life, underpin provision for pupils' moral and social development, which is becoming a strength of the school. However, far less emphasis is placed on pupils' spiritual and cultural development and although the former is satisfactory, cultural development has lost much ground since the last inspection and is now unsatisfactory.

28. The provision for moral development is good. Very clear codes of conduct are actively promoted across the entire age range. Pupils compile their own class rules and at the present time playground rules are being decided upon using the full democratic process of the school council. Pupils are taught about right and wrong and given opportunities to consider a range of moral and ethical issues. For example during the inspection older pupils were asked to produce writing which reflected a balanced argument about whether fox hunting by hounds should be banned. Writing in year two books show that pupils have considered our responsibility to look after the environment. Teachers and learning support assistance provide good role models of respect, co-operation and care.

29. Arrangements for promoting pupils' social development are also good. They work in lessons in pairs and small groups developing their skills of negotiation and tolerance. The oldest have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit, which extends their opportunity to work and live with their friends from across the whole year group. The family grouping arrangements are very successful in providing pupils with a different social context and in developing good attitudes to care for those younger or less capable than themselves. Family assemblies are particularly successful in bringing pupils together from across the age range to discuss issues and reflect on their own and others' viewpoint. They are encouraged through these arrangements to work as a team to achieve success and support one another. The school council provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to have 'a say' in how everyday routines are organised and they willingly give up some time each week for a term when they are representing their class. The council is led competently by a pupil chairman. All are confident to contribute even the youngest pupils from the Foundation Stage.

30. Spiritual development is satisfactory overall. Whole school and family assemblies are planned to cover an interesting range of themes during the course of a year. An appropriate

atmosphere is created by the use of music and by the lighting of a candle to indicate that this is a time for quiet thought and reflection. Pupils gain insights into their own beliefs and those of others as a variety of festivals are celebrated throughout the year. Teachers occasionally capitalise on opportunities that arise across the curriculum to nurture this aspect of pupils' personal development, however, it is not planned and many more opportunities are missed.

31. Cultural development is unsatisfactory. The school has had few visits from artists, musicians or travelling groups recently though they have happened in the past and authors feature in regular Book Weeks. The present arrangements for teaching subjects such as art, music and drama allow insufficient opportunities for pupils to experience the arts of this and other countries and other ages. Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to appreciate or consider a wide range of cultures or other traditions. An attractive display in the library reminds pupils about how the Chinese new year is celebrated but there is very little evidence to show how pupils are taught about the many different cultures which exist across our own multicultural society. Few visits are made out of school and not enough use is made of the rich cultural heritage of the local area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. Pupils are well cared for during the school day. Staff know their pupils well and strive to meet their individual needs. Learning support assistants provide good additional support and guidance to pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs.

33. Satisfactory attention is given to matters of health and safety. The premises are checked regularly to identify any potential dangers, fire drills take place regularly and equipment is checked for safety. However, not enough attention is given to risk assessment for any visits outside of school or specific activities, for example in science or design and technology. Arrangements for first aid and care of children who become ill at school are good and appropriate records are maintained. Procedures for child protection meet requirements and the policy has recently been reviewed but training to ensure staff have up-to-date awareness of their responsibilities is long overdue.

34. Monitoring and promotion of attendance is very good although the school's figures remain below the national average. Absences are followed-up carefully and as a result very few absences remain unexplained. Parents are contacted when a pupil's level of attendance raises concerns. The school works closely with the educational welfare officer to improve attendance levels. Certificates have been introduced to encourage pupils to attend regularly.

35. A wide range of strategies is used to ensure good behaviour and encourage self-discipline; consistent implementation has been successful in raising standards of behaviour. Various rewards and awards are used and pupils are given clear guidance on the appropriate way to behave through codes of conduct which are applied across the school. Family grouping arrangements engender strong loyalty to the group, encouraging pupils to work hard and behave well to gain points for their team. The school recognises that although detention has been used a great deal in the recent past that it might not be the best way to support and encourage the few pupils that are still finding appropriate behaviour difficult to achieve. A more positive approach is needed.

36. Satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection, although some elements remain in the developmental stage. Procedures used include the statutory assessments for pupils in years two and six, the optional tests for pupils in years three to five and initial assessments in the reception class. The school also uses some commercial reading tests to support them in raising standards in English. All this information is satisfactorily collated by teachers and used to set targets. However, the information is not organised in such a way that it can be easily interpreted. The senior management team review targets set in English, mathematics and science each term but the initial targets are often unrealistic and have to be lowered. This affects teacher morale and indicates that information is not being sufficiently analysed to make sound judgements on expected standards to be achieved.

In other subjects, teachers are using the key objectives from the national suggested schemes of work to highlight areas of the curriculum covered. However, this procedure has not yet been developed sufficiently for teachers to know exactly what knowledge, understanding and skills each pupil has attained during the year.

37. The school has recently introduced a system of 'progress books' for each pupil, which contain examples of pupil's work in literacy, usually completed at the end of a unit of learning as an assessment task. Samples of work are carefully and mainly accurately assessed using the National Curriculum level descriptors for writing. These books are useful tools to track individual pupil's progress in writing. Teachers regularly discuss samples of pupils' writing to agree on attainment using the National Curriculum level descriptors for writing and have collated these samples in a portfolio. This is also a useful tool to support teachers with assessing writing. However there are no up to date portfolios for the other subjects.

38. Use of assessment information to guide future planning has improved since the last report and is now satisfactory. The school is beginning to analyse test results to identify areas for improvement. For example, handwriting was identified as an area for improvement and the school has recently focused on improving handwriting skills. The English co-ordinator has bought a selection of fiction books, particularly to interest boys and to encourage them to have a more positive attitude to reading. Assessments are also used effectively to identify pupils for booster classes and also to set group targets in each class. The assessment co-ordinator is fairly new to the role and has focused mainly on her role as English coordinator since being appointed at the school. However, she has been involved in the recent review of the assessment policy, which is now understood and being used consistently by all teachers.

39. Monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory. Individual pupil's attainment in English, mathematics and science are satisfactorily collated on a core assessment and forecast sheet. This enables teachers to monitor individual pupil's attainment and forecast what they hope each will achieve by the end of the year. Most teachers are setting realistic targets.

40. The school makes satisfactory use of assessment information to identify those pupils who are finding learning difficult and to set targets on their individual education plans. The individual education plans are reviewed termly. However many pupils identified as needing support, have been on the register for some time and the special needs co-ordinator plans to review this in the very near future, using additional diagnostic tests. The school has good links with other agencies that offer advice and support for the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents' views about the work of the school are improving slowly. Many appreciate the effort made by the school to improve the partnership with them for the benefit of their child's learning. They are provided with a satisfactory range of information and a number are actively involved in the life of the school, which has a positive impact on children's learning.

42. Analysis of the parents' questionnaire shows parents are increasingly satisfied with a number of areas of the school's work. For example, over 85 per cent of parents responding to the questionnaire feel their child is making good progress, that the school works closely with them and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with concerns. The school is anxious to take parents' views into account and carried out its own survey between the last inspection and this. Similar areas of concern arose. For example, parents have concerns about how well the school is led and managed, the standard of behaviour, and the range of activities offered outside of lessons. Inspectors agree that a number of areas of the school have improved but there is some way to go in the areas that concern parents, for example very few extra enrichment activities are offered.

43. Parents feel better informed about their child's progress than at the time of the last inspection, although response to this question on the questionnaire still attracted negative views. Reports were redesigned in consultation with parents and, although they are easy to understand,

there is not enough information, particularly for English, mathematics and science, to gain a realistic picture of pupils' attainment and progress. Parents can seek this information at consultation meetings with teachers offered each term, and at other times as the school does encourage parents to take advantage of its 'open door' policy.

44. Other information provided for parents is of variable quality. Newsletters are informative, helpful and reasonably frequent. The code of conduct booklet clearly sets out the school's expectations in relation to appropriate behaviour. A booklet provided for parents of Foundation Stage children helps them support their child as they begin school. Unfortunately neither the prospectus nor the governors' annual report to parents contain all that is statutorily required, therefore parents are denied easy access to some key information.

45. The contribution made by parents to their children's learning at home and school is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is enhanced by parents' commitment to hear their children read regularly. Parents of foundation stage and years one and two children provide very good support of early reading skills. A number of parents help in school and others help when pupils go swimming. The parent teacher association is very active and supportive of the school's work and they do much to promote the school within the local community. Funds raised by them are used well to enhance facilities and resources for the children. They recently provided funding to improve the number of computers. The introduction of literacy and numeracy sessions for parents has attracted good support from parents and encourages them not only to improve their own skills but to get more involved in their child's learning.

46. Parents of pupils who find learning difficult or who have behavioural difficulties are satisfactorily involved in the special educational needs process. Opportunities are provided, during the open evenings, for parents to discuss their child's specific needs and they are informed of the targets for their child on the individual education plans. However, parents are not yet involved in the setting of targets nor do they have a specific target for them to help their child to achieve. The special needs coordinator meets parents of those pupils who are receiving support through action plus and feels that any parents with concerns would be confident to approach her for advice.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Leadership and management were said to be satisfactory in the last report with several senior staff new to their posts after a time when the school did not have an effective senior management team. The work of the governing body and the schools financial planning and management were singled out for praise. However, one aspect of the main issue, standards in reading and writing, was strengthening the management structure for implementing the literacy strategy. In her monitoring visit in February 2001, the representative of HMI noted good improvements in this area but questioned the impact of the monitoring of teaching and pupils' standards and progress, and the quality of the action plan.

48. As a result of the school's actions, good improvements have been made in several areas, notably the quality of provision and standards in the infant classes, provision for literacy and numeracy in the junior classes and gains in standards in both, and the great improvement in older pupils' attitudes and behaviour. All of these came about as a result of decisions made by the leadership of the school supported by the governors and staff. The appointment of a literacy coordinator completed the senior management team in 2001, and the three members who are responsible for the core subjects have done a good job in developing their subjects though there is still room for improvement. However, other coordinators have had little chance to develop their subjects although they have audited their needs and set out action plans.

49. The main reason for this is the fact that the school has focused on the single issue, literacy, identified in the last report. All school action planning has concentrated on this and the other subject action plans have not been integrated into a comprehensive whole school improvement plan. This is just one of many unintended consequences brought about by the school's single minded focus on literacy which was also the only area monitored by HMI and, until

recently, the only area monitored by the local authority. However, this has considerably distorted the school's educational direction with other, equally weak areas not receiving the attention they have needed while others, such as the broader curriculum, have actually been damaged by the literacy focus. While this is understandable, it is the school's end responsibility to ensure that its actions in one area, however well intended, do not result in a weakening of other aspects of the education it provides.

50. Management of special educational needs is satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinator has a realistic action plan and has introduced a new format for the individual education plans. She gives satisfactory support to colleagues but being new to the role herself, needs to attend training in order to help her develop the role effectively. She has made good links with the special needs governor, also recently appointed which enables the governing body to be kept informed of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. However, she is not involved in making decisions about how any special needs funding is allocated.

51. The head and senior management team have been much more active in checking up on the work of the school through the monitoring of information from assessments, the evaluation of teaching and learning in the classroom, the comparison of pupils work with national levels and through pupil and parent questionnaires. However, with everything focused on literacy and the emphasis being more on the collection than the interpretation of information, very little use has been made of it other than to describe the present situation. For instance, nothing in the current school development plan is derived from this activity with the great majority of aims 'reviews' rather than actions based on these reviews. While a few areas have measurable targets such as 'Core subject assessments in median-upper quartile by end of year', there is no evidence of any feedback or debate about whether any progress has been made. As it stands, the current SDP is not an effective vehicle for bringing about school improvement.

52. Governors are very supportive and keen to do their best to help the school succeed. An appropriate range of committees and individual responsibilities helps them to conduct business efficiently and fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities with the help of an efficient clerk. However, with several new to the job and the rest having had few training opportunities to learn exactly what their role is and how to go about it, their impact on the development of the school has been limited. There is no tradition of holding the head and senior management team to account for decisions such as the expenditure on supply teachers so that the 'booster classes' can take place nor any evaluation of the value for money it provides. At the moment, governors are too reliant on the headteacher for detailed information about such areas as national test results and the budget although with several working in the school or recently left, there is a good awareness of what is going on around the school. The new chair, who is also a new governor, is a frequent visitor who helps regularly in the infant department. She is fully aware of the need for governors to get to know exactly what their role is, to become sufficiently well informed to question and challenge and to take an active role in strategic planning.

53. Satisfactory overall financial planning to support the school's educational development is generated through open consultative procedures. The school development plan identifies costings but agreed success criteria are not sufficiently rigorous to make it possible for judgements to be made about the value for money of improvements. For instance, with no specific performance targets, no evaluation has taken place of the impact of adding an extra day to the special needs coordinators time. The school makes satisfactory use of existing staff, accommodation, books and equipment and spending has clearly been focused on the school's under achievement in literacy identified in the previous inspection. However, the over spend in so doing, and the departure of a large year six age group, give a projected deficit budget of approximately 13% of the total budget for the coming financial year 2002/03. This will make things difficult for some time to come and the impact of the money spent has not been monitored to judge its effectiveness.

54. The arrangements for financial control and administration are sound and audit recommendations have been addressed. The school's administrative officer's effective financial procedures provide valuable support to the head teacher. However, she does not attend the

governing body finance committee meetings and thus the information available to governors is restricted. Satisfactory use of information technology supports the management of the budget, but other possible areas of its use are under developed. Specific grants are used for designated purposes. The governing body is in the early stages of considering the principles of 'best value' but the school makes good use of the local authority purchasing arrangements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. To build on the sound foundations laid in the infant classes, raise standards in the junior classes ever closer to pupils' true potential, provide a rich learning environment and make the most of the school's assets, the governors, headteacher and staff of Combe Martin School should:

- (1) Seek to further close the gap between pupils' potential and their current attainments in years three to six by:
 - fully accepting that pupils in years three to six are no different from those in younger classes and with good teaching, will achieve much better standards
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 17, 76 & 82)
 - planning challenging work in English, mathematics and science to meet the needs of the full range of abilities in each year group
(Paragraphs 18, 19, 73, 78, 79, 80, 85, 88 & 108)
 - making better use of assessment information so that the progress of individual pupils against national standards can be tracked easily and regularly
(Paragraphs 36, 37, 37, 81 & 88)
 - setting a school target for each individual pupil in years three to five to achieve at least four terms worth of progress in each of the next two school years
 - significantly improving the way pupils who find learning difficult are helped
(Paragraphs 20, 26, 40, 46, 50, 73, 74 & 92)

- (2) Substantially improve the quality and range of learning opportunities provided for pupils in years one to six and develop a rich, stimulating, well-balanced curriculum covering all the required elements fully with literacy and numeracy appropriately emphasised by:
 - limiting the time spent on learning literacy skills to the levels recommended in the literacy strategy and making the stimulus of work in other subjects a reason for using them for a purpose within those subjects
(Paragraphs 22, 49, 75,
 - using the time this releases to devote more energy to activities which involve first hand experiences or are practical, creative or expressive
(Paragraphs 5, 90, 108
 - making better use of the school's accommodation, staffing and resources by sometimes teaching foundation subjects in the mornings
(Paragraph 108)
 - planning challenging work in the foundation subjects to meet the needs of the full range of abilities in each year group
(See (1) above)
 - making much better use of the school's unique position and the area's special cultural heritage as a stimulus and a resource
(Paragraph 23)
 - ensuring that pupils have enough opportunities to add depth to their learning, and understand and celebrate cultural richness and diversity by looking for opportunities to include these elements when planning work in all subjects
(Paragraphs 27, 31 & 103)
 - doing whatever is possible to increase the range and number of opportunities children have to take part in activities in addition to their normal lessons
(Paragraph 23)

- (3) Evaluate the effectiveness of all existing management systems, procedures and

organisations, change those that are not working well enough and develop a coherent management plan focussed on school improvement and high standards by:

- accepting that to achieve high standards, fundamental change in the culture and management of the school is inevitable and vital
- ensuring that all members of staff and of the governing body have the expertise, knowledge, opportunity and motivation to play their full part in bringing about change in the best interest of the children
- involving the whole school community in agreeing a form of words to state succinctly the school's commitment to high standards and improvement throughout the school - and having done so :

Subjecting all management structures, organisations, procedures and systems to the most rigorous evaluation against the drive for higher standards and the need to develop a coherent and consistent annual management plan especially in the areas of:

- the organisation of classes
- the organisation of the timetable
- the deployment of staff
- management of the whole curriculum including the role of those people responsible for subjects and special needs
- the in-depth analysis of monitoring information
- integrating information gained from the analysis of test results, the monitoring of standards and teaching, performance management, subject and external audits into the process of setting up a long term improvement plan with the most urgent and important actions prioritised
- value for money
- strategic planning cycles, especially in the areas of staffing and finance
(Paragraphs 33, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54 & 109)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- inconsistency in the quality of teaching (Paragraph 3 & 13)
- underuse of the library and information technology (Paragraphs 75, 88, 102 & 109)
- lack of detail in pupil's reports (Paragraph 43)
- lack of a dedicated, safe area for children in their foundation year to fully explore the outdoor curriculum (Paragraph 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		7	22	18	2		
Percentage		14	45	37	4		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		189
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		49

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	14	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	9
	Girls	10	11	9
	Total	18	19	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (53)	79 (59)	75 (81)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	10	9	11
	Total	17	18	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (52)	75 (74)	83 (89)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	11	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	13
	Girls	10	5	10
	Total	19	14	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (35)	56 (56)	92 (68)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	5	6	8
	Total	14	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (35)	69 (44)	72 (56)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	189
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	432607
Total expenditure	441662
Expenditure per pupil	2337
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	-9055

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	189
Number of questionnaires returned	42

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	24	57	17	2	
My child is making good progress in school.	26	62	7	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	14	55	24	5	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	67	10	5	2
The teaching is good.	26	50	10	5	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	55	17	2	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	39	10	2	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	24	60	17		
The school works closely with parents.	22	63	5	7	2
The school is well led and managed.	29	36	12	14	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	24	51	12	5	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	31	19	24	10

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

56. Provision for 'children under the age of five' was said to be satisfactory at the time of the last inspection with consistently good and sometimes very good teaching. However, with the curriculum based on National Curriculum programmes of study, an issue noted, but not listed as an area for improvement, was the need for the curriculum to be changed so that boys and girls could work towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning. Despite this, the report noted that boys and girls were likely to reach, or nearly reach, the equivalent of the early learning goals by the end of the year in each of the six areas.

57. Two years on, and with a very good nursery trained teaching assistant (TA) to help her, the reception teacher has improved provision to the level where it is the main strength of the school. An additional very important consideration is the fact that, with the local pre-school playgroup on site and the leader a school governor, the relationship with the school's main provider is very good. The reception teacher is a weekly visitor to the pre-school group and the transition into school for those children who attend is very easy. Very good use is made of the available accommodation with well-prepare areas set up for pupils to experience a range of activities leading to the early learning goals. A small outside area is well used for messy activities but the class still does not have a dedicated, safe area for children to fully explore the outside curriculum. However, plans are being made to move the reception class so that this will be possible, funding permitting.

58. With most teaching by the teacher and her assistant very good and the rest good, boys and girls are making very good progress in all the areas of learning despite the limitations of the accommodation. Thanks to the partner pre-school group, when four-year-olds start school their attainments are broadly similar to those in most reception classes. The majority of children, especially the older ones who have been in school two terms, have already achieved the early learning goals and the rest will have done so by the time they move into year one. Many are already happily doing work in literacy and numeracy more usually seen in year one. This represents above average achievement and the good start boys and girls are getting is a major factor in the way standards in the school are improving from the bottom up.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. Boys and girls are more than happy to come to school and the sensible and mature way they come into class and sort themselves out in the mornings is a good indication of their self-esteem and their confidence in their 'teachers'. They all know the various routines and expectations very well and are very capable of looking after themselves and working independently when the opportunity arises. While the teacher and the TA worked with groups inside, two pairs of children very earnestly worked hard at the tasks the teacher had set in the sand play area with large guttering and pipes and then helped to clear them away at the end of the session. Other children shared computers very sensibly, taking turns and helping each other. A key factor in the good progress made is the excellent role model provided by all adults working with foundation children. Relationships are very good and all interactions value what children are trying to do. Consequently, boys and girls are not afraid to put their hands up and make their contribution to any discussion in the knowledge that whatever they say will be taken seriously. As a result, whole class sessions are lively and animated with children listening to the contribution of their classmates attentively and showing their appreciation spontaneously.

Communication, language and literacy

60. High quality provision for developing boys and girls language and literacy skills is seeing them make very good progress in their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Without exception, foundation children listen attentively and are very articulate and confident when speaking. Books are very important and every opportunity is taken to promote the enjoyment of

'reading' such as when the teacher used 'The Toymaker' to introduce a history-based topic.

61. Good use is made of guided reading to explore books further as when the CA prompted a group to find out how many 'are's there were in their shared book - which they did diligently and accurately incidentally giving good counting practice. Each child is read with individually very regularly and this is much more than a simple 'hearing to read'. Boys and girls are encouraged to explore their books with adults using technical language such as title, author, contents etc - and use illustrations to predict the story before actually reading the book. Other activities such as the use of the listening centre and matching animals to their initial sounds all help to create a rich reading environment. This is further enhanced by some very challenging work on phonics leading to spelling and writing. Higher achievers confidently identify 'medial phonemes' using the correct vocabulary and children volunteer the spelling of their favourite toys including 'Po' and 'Lala' in a shared writing session. Even the youngest and least fluent child can write their name in clear recognisable writing and four year olds using their own writing with the teacher were able to write 'trg' for trying when making their own sentences.

Mathematical development

62. Boys and girls are given the opportunity to take part in mathematical activities for an hour long session each day with a good mix of purposeful tasks well matched to the capabilities of the children. They all count up to and back from 20 confidently and recognise these numbers when written down. Estimating how many toys would fit in a box, all show they understand more and less and most make a sensible estimate between five and ten. In the matching activity which followed, three groups of children worked happily together sorting at various levels of difficulty ranging from sorting a range of cut out coats by their colour and number of buttons to sorting out a big pile of plastic shapes by the children's own criteria helped by the chair of governors. In doing so they show that they recognise and can name a range of regular shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. Children are given plenty of opportunity to learn about the world they live in mainly through the current topic, which during the inspection was toys. Hence in a science and design technology based activity, children were given the opportunity to choose whether to make a pulley, lever or winding mechanism to make 'Incy Wincy Spider' go up and down. With the rest choosing, lots of animated discussion accompanied the making and all achieved a working toy. In a history-based lesson, a selection of toys helped children to think about old and new, reflecting on whether some toys were new or just well kept. A visit to a local toyshop was a good stimulus to work in many areas of learning. Several boys and girls chose to work on the computers during the inspection and showed they were able to use the mouse to operate a graphics programme choosing brushes, sprays and changing colours. Many daily routines make a contribution to their mathematical understanding, counting children present, filling and emptying containers in sand and water play, and exploring shapes with construction materials.

Physical development

64. The lack of a dedicated outside area limits the possibilities for free adventurous play but with timetabled hall time and currently the opportunity for boys and girls to learn to swim, children are not too severely handicapped especially since these sessions are very well taught. A well structured lesson with plenty of activity, coaching and praise helps boys and girls to visibly improve their throwing and catching skills while in the pool, several children progressed from arm bands to floats as they gained confidence in the water. Boys and girls are given plenty of opportunities to practice their fine motor skills while involved in activities such as construction play, cutting and sticking and while practising their handwriting.

Creative development

65. Children have regular planned opportunities to use play dough, paint and draw and they respond well to specific tasks such as drawing pictures of elephants from their 'Elephant Tree' book. Most are able to make recognisable representations of an elephant and colour them appropriately. They are given good opportunities to play imaginatively with sand and water and with a range of construction materials. Boys and girls know a number of rhymes and jingles, enjoy singing and making music and are beginning to develop a sense of time and rhythm. In this, as in all the areas of learning, children will achieve the early learning goals in good time.

ENGLISH

66. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English are as expected for pupils by the end of year two. Although standards are still below average in Key Stage 2, they have improved significantly since the last inspection and evidence from previous test results indicates that pupils in the present year six have made significant progress since their previous standardised tests at the age of seven. Standards in Key Stage 1 have also improved considerably since the last inspection. The introduction of the literacy strategy and other initiatives such as the Early Literacy support for pupils in year one are having a positive impact on standards. The school has had to focus almost entirely on improving standards in literacy and as a result the use of their literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum is very underdeveloped.

Speaking and Listening.

67. Seven-year-olds attainment in speaking and listening is as expected. Pupils listen carefully and are keen to answer questions and contribute to discussions. For example, pupils in year one explain clearly the features of a non-fiction book. In year two pupils discuss a character from 'Puss in Boots' confidently with their partner. They are beginning to use a growing vocabulary and to be aware that a more formal vocabulary and tone of voice is used in some situations, particularly when sharing their work with the rest of the class. However, pupils have few opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through role-play.

68. Year six pupils attain average standards in speaking and listening skills. They talk and listen confidently in a range of situations as during a religious education lesson when pupils were able to raise their own questions about the Easter Story. They were thoughtful, mature and showed a keen interest in the opinions of others. Most are well able to share different points of view regarding the issue of fox hunting in order to produce a balanced argument. Pupils in years three and four achieve less well. They discuss their thoughts and feelings about being behind a closed door, inspired by the poem 'Through that door'. Although pupils listened carefully to each other, few had sufficient knowledge of a suitable range of vocabulary to be able to express their ideas clearly and succinctly. This was also evident during a religious education lesson when pupils struggled to express their thoughts on how they would feel if left alone in a desert. Pupils have very few opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through drama.

Reading

69. By the end of year two, pupils achieve the standards in reading expected of seven-year-olds and are achieving well. Most use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. They talk confidently about the stories they are reading and predict what might happen next. Most can describe their favourite book but only the higher attaining pupil knows the title of her favourite book. Many know that an author writes books but few can name their favourite. Boys and girls understand how the library is organised and many use the local libraries regularly. Pupils in year one know how to find information in non-fiction books and how to use an index. In year two, they talk about the characteristics of traditional stories and describe the setting for 'Puss in Boots'. Most pupils are well supported by parents who hear them read regularly. Good records in the new reading diaries have positive and informative comments from parents, teachers and teaching assistants. This supports pupils' learning well.

70. Standards in reading by the end of year six are in line with national averages but are below in years three and four. By the end of year six most pupils read confidently and accurately for a range of purposes. They talk about their books and are beginning to offer opinions about them, although few are able to make comparisons between a number of different authors. Most can identify at least one favourite author. Pupils in years three and four respond appropriately to a range of poetry but the accuracy and depth of understanding of their own reading material is below that expected for their age. However, there is evidence that this is improving. Pupils in years five and six use information which they have read about fox hunting successfully to enable them to prepare a balanced argument. Most understand how the school library is organised and some make good use of the local libraries to widen the breath of their reading. Book reviews and reading records are kept by the pupils with good practice by some teachers monitoring reading through positive and informative comments, however this is not consistent throughout Key Stage

2.

Writing

71. By the end of year two, pupils' attainment in writing is similar to the national average and they are achieving well. This has improved significantly since the last inspection and is mainly due to good teaching of basic skills in years one and two. Pupils experience a satisfactory range of writing for different purposes such as retelling favourite stories like 'Puss in Boots', writing letters from Goldilocks to the three bears, preparing a 'Wanted' poster for Goldilocks, writing instructions on how to plant bulbs, and writing simple poems. One group of pupils, in year one record three facts they find in their information book. Others sort out a number of sentences correctly and write them in their book. Higher attaining pupils in year two make a comprehensive list of words to describe two characters in 'Puss in Boots'. Average pupils begin to think of ways to improve sentences to make them more interesting and lower achievers use their knowledge of spelling patterns satisfactorily to spell words such as 'fork' and 'cork' using a computer program. By the end of year two most pupils are beginning to demonstrate an awareness of the reader and to use interesting vocabulary. Their writing communicates meaning beyond a simple sentence and both higher and average achievers are beginning to add detail to their work. Punctuation is mainly accurate and spellings are usually at least phonetically plausible and often correct. Handwriting skills have continued to improve and most pupils are using a neat, joined style of handwriting.

72. Standards in writing achieved by pupils by the end of year six are below those expected for their age. Inspection evidence indicates that, although standards are below the national average, these pupils have improved significantly over the last two years. The literacy strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. In years three and four, pupils respond to a range of poems and are beginning to use a variety of adjectives and descriptive words in their work to engage the interest of the reader. Lower achievers write a simple poem about animals, based on the poem 'Monday's child' with adult support. Older pupils in years five and six understand the structure and features of argument writing. Most are able to edit each other's work, highlighting good features and suggesting ways to improve the work. Many are beginning to use words for effect and to use more adventurous vocabulary in their writing. However evidence from samples of pupils' work indicates that this is not yet well embedded in their general writing. They are beginning to organise and adapt their work to suit the purpose of writing but still require adult support and guidance to achieve this. Basic punctuation is mainly accurate but few are using punctuation within sentences. Very few pupils are using paragraphs consistently in their writing. Pupils are generally using a neat, joined style of handwriting and their books show that handwriting skills have improved since the last inspection.

73. The quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils in years one and two and these pupils achieve well. In Years three to six, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and one very good lesson observed during the inspection. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Teachers' expectations are higher in Key Stage 1, although teachers' expectations throughout the school are generally improving. Lessons are mostly well planned by the teachers and they have a clear understanding of what needs to be taught within the framework of the National Literacy Strategy. This is an improvement since the last inspections when much of the planning, particularly long-term, was provided for teachers. However, it is not always clear how the needs of all ability groups are to be met during the activities sessions for pupils in Key Stage 2, particularly those pupils who find learning difficult. Learning objectives are usually shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons and this has a positive impact on their learning. Teachers question well to promote discussions and to assess understanding.

74. Behaviour management is very good in the younger classes and good in Key Stage 2. Teachers use the behaviour management strategies effectively and as a result most pupils behave well in lessons, are enthusiastic and concentrate well. Where teaching is very good, the main features of the lesson are the brisk pace and the very effective use of learning objectives to focus pupils' attention on what their work needs to cover and at the end, to assess knowledge and understanding gained during the lesson. The teacher makes very good use of key words on display to support pupils in their learning and of specific vocabulary in her teaching. Pupils in year one who receive additional literacy support also experience very good teaching. The teaching

assistant uses praise very effectively to support learning and her instructions are clear. Other teaching assistants support pupils well and are usually appropriately briefed before lessons by the teachers. However, in some lessons teaching assistants and the special needs co-ordinator do not have a particular role during whole class teaching sessions. Information from satisfactory assessment procedures is beginning to be used in planning to raise standards with group targets set in most classes to enable pupils to improve. Good marking by some teachers helps pupils to know what they need to do to improve their work but this is not consistent across the school.

75. The school is successfully addressing the key issues in the last inspection and the literacy strategy has been introduced effectively by the recently appointed literacy co-ordinator. However, areas of the literacy strategy being taught outside the literacy hour, for example group reading and word level work, is increasing the time pupils spend on literacy each day. Provision for pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2, when pupils are withdrawn from lessons for additional literacy support, also greatly increases the time these pupils spend on literacy during one day. The emphasis on developing literacy skills is having a positive impact on attainment in English but these skills are used less effectively in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education, mainly because of the very limited time left available for these subjects. Resources are satisfactory and the range of books available for pupils has improved significantly during the last year. The library area is satisfactory, although the use of the library for developing pupils' library and research skills is underdeveloped. However, the coordinator has already identified this in her action plan.

MATHEMATICS

76. There has been a sound improvement in standards in mathematics since the last inspection. While this was not reflected in the national test results in 2001, work seen during the inspection indicates that pupil attainment is now average compared to national expectations at the end of year two and below rather than well below average at the end of year six. Pupil achievement is good in years one and two, while only satisfactory in years three to six due to the higher expectations of teachers and the better match of work to the whole ability range in the younger classes.

77. Pupils in year one have been playing the game 'fast 10' in their mental maths. They quickly hold up a digit card that makes 10 when added to the card the teacher is holding while year two pupils played 'bingo' on a 2 by 2 grid consolidating their ability to add and subtract numbers. In both these lessons, the activities were well paced, all pupils actively participated, and lower attaining pupils were well supported by students on placement in the school. During the main activity both classes were working with money. In the year one lesson pupils identified the coins to £1 and were challenged to find the lowest number of coins for a given sum. Activities were well matched to pupils abilities, some were 'role playing' buying items in the shop, giving the shop keeper the fewest number of coins for an 8p toy, while others were recording the exact coins that would be used for a 16p item. In the year two class, equally well-matched activities saw higher attaining pupils working up to £5. A group of seven pupils were confident in knowing there were 500 pence in five pounds and that the fewest number of coins to make £5 is three. Effective questioning by the teachers encourages pupils to think and enabled good assessment to inform future planned activities.

78. Years three and four pupils responded well to the introductory mental maths, adding multiples of 10 to different starting numbers. Pupils in both classes were responsive and confident in explaining their strategy. However, in the main activity which involved adding and subtracting 2 and 3 digit numbers, the match of work to pupils in one class was unsatisfactory, some being unchallenging while a higher attaining group became confused as there was no possible answer to some questions. In this lesson, the teacher insisted that pupils worked individually, although the task was suited to collaborative work, and had to constantly nag pupils who were discretely trying to work together which disrupted the flow of the lesson. In the other lesson, work was appropriately matched to pupils' abilities.

79. Pupils in years five and six were equally confident in their mental maths when finding

questions to the answer 25. Answers such as $200 \div 8$, 0.5 of 50 and 12.5×2 were well explained. However, in both classes work on reflective symmetry lacked challenge to most ability groups. Teachers introduced the lessons well focusing on 'key vocabulary', such as perpendicular, parallel, quadrants and mirror lines but most pupils were able to complete the subsequent activities quickly. Year six pupils were more challenged when in their maths set for one hour per week. The higher attaining pupils worked at questions on reflective symmetry of more complex shapes on a diagonal axis and looked for lines of symmetry in a range of shapes while lower attaining pupils focused on using a perpendicular mirror line.

80. Teaching of mathematics is good in years one and two and sound in years three to six with the main difference being in the planning of well-matched work to the whole ability range in each younger class. The older classes contain two year-groups, and while this is not uncommon, apart from the introductory mental maths, much of the work seen during the inspection was pitched too low and most pupils were insufficiently challenged. When pupils in year six are set for mathematics during one session per week the challenge is much higher and pupils make greater progress during the lesson. Even here, to make best use of the opportunity, more rigorous assessment is needed to ensure that pupils are put into sets according to their current attainment and that the size of the set is not the determining factor.

81. The co-ordinator is experienced and has introduced the national numeracy strategy well. Medium term planning is secure, with detailed weekly planning. Teaching has been regularly monitored, a clear policy for pupil assessment is implemented and national test results have been analysed. However, while pupils have general targets, they do not have specific short-term achievable targets based on their individual weaknesses, such as, to learn a specific multiplication table by the end of the week. Nor, in monitoring, has the school identified the inconsistencies in the quality and quantity of work, marking and expectations between the parallel classes. To raise standards to the expected level, teaching needs to reflect higher pupil expectation and challenge by more closely matching work to the full range of pupils' abilities.

SCIENCE

82. In 2000, standards in science were said to be below average throughout the school but with improved teaching, progress was sound from a low starting point. The report also stated that pupils scientific knowledge was sound but poor writing skills limited their ability to write down what they had done and what they knew. Inspection evidence suggests that, in common with the other core subjects, standards are much improved in the infant classes and up to at least the national average in year two with standards improving in Key Stage 2 but still below average in year six. Improved literacy standards are seeing better quality work in pupils books but, in the older classes, this still does not match up to the quality of work seen in other schools.

83. At the time of the inspection, pupils in year six were involved in ability grouped 'booster' classes while their year five classmates joined together to work with a temporary teacher. This gave teachers the opportunity to work in smaller groups on revising for the national tests in May. The particular topics being studied were light and sound and the main focus of the lessons was the material in a commercial revision book aspects of which pupils were expected to do for homework. The properties of light were rehearsed and discussed at different levels with the good use of demonstrations prompting animated discussions made more possible by the small groupings. In each group, pupils understood that darkness is the absence of light and that light travels in straight lines, casts shadows and can be reflected round corners. Most of the work is specifically about knowledge and understanding but some references were made to fair testing and higher attainers knew to keep all but one attribute the same for a fair test.

84. Although this will definitely improve the school's results in national testing, the fact that the three groups were roughly the same size does not reflect the attainment profile shown in previous testing. As a result, some pupils who might reach national levels are in the lower attaining group while the top 'set' could have been challenged much more had only the potential level fives been in it. It could also be argued that it would have been a better use of the subject coordinators knowledge and expertise if she had stretched this group.

85. Evidence taken from books shows that pupils in year six, and their year five classmates, have covered all the topics listed in their rolling programme which match to the national scheme. Experiments such as on the capillary system in celery using a dye and investigations on electrical circuits - What happens when you put two bulbs in a circuit? - are written up using a pre-set format which shows satisfactory attention is given to scientific method. However, it is difficult to see any difference between the expectations for pupils of different ages or abilities in the two age group classes before the booster classes were set up.

86. Years three and four are currently working on 'Moving and Growing' and both parallel classes worked on constructing an investigation comparing the lengths of bones in the two year groups. A planning board gives the basic structure for the investigation and requires pupils to state the question, predict the outcome and say how they will proceed. Pupils in both classes understand the task and explain the need for a fair test but the quality of written work in one class is much better than in the other. Pupils are very enthusiastic and though expected to be data collectors and bone samples at the same time, they collect enough data for the investigation. Good questioning enables pupils to see how to use the information to construct a graph but the resulting block graph presents little challenge, especially to year four. Once again, pupils' books show good coverage of all the required topics but no evidence of older or more able pupils being required to extend their learning. In addition, there is a significant difference between the quality and quantity of work completed in the two classes

87. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 but pupils' books and displays show that they have been very busy in science since the beginning of the year. Year two's have written about their mini-beast hunt with labelled drawings of ants, slugs, woodlice and worms. They have learned about magnetism and written up their experiment to test whether magnets work through plastic, wood and paper and predicted which bulbs in a drawn circuit will actually light up. The work of pupils of all abilities is still very similar but the great majority are already working at the expected levels and some higher. Year one pupils are making good attempts to record their work in writing and drawing and in conversation are very excited and well informed about the things they have learned in science. They know about living and non-living things and the foods we grow to eat. Magnets fascinate them and they are very good at knowing what materials will be attracted. Experiments into the strongest paper and the best waterproofing medium show how well they are learning about scientific method.

88. The science coordinator is well-established and she provides a good deal of support and practical help to her colleagues. Assessment procedures are in place but, with the big differences between standards in various parts of the school and the lack of challenge to older, more able pupils in the mixed age classes, they are obviously not being used to good effect. With good use being made of the national scheme of work, the subject is planned to ensure coverage and consistency. However, it is difficult to see how progression in the development of scientific skills and methods can be achieved in the mixed age classes when both year groups do the same work. Resources in the form of equipment are adequate but the stock of reference books needs to be built up so that pupils can undertake independent research and less use is made of information technology than in most schools.

89. Standards in science are improving but several aspects of the way the school is organised are hindering further progress, especially in the older classes.

OTHER SUBJECTS

90. With so much time taken up by aspects of literacy, much less than usual is devoted to the foundation subjects and religious education. As illustrated in paragraph five, this can amount to less than five hours per week, all in the afternoon. During the inspection this was further complicated by the fact that two students were on their final teaching practice in the two Key Stage 1 classes. On the four days of the inspection, pupils in at least one key stage were observed learning in most foundation subjects. Even though inspectors visited nearly three-

quarters of the lessons available, the total number of such observations per subject was inevitably small with just two in five subjects and none in history. However, it is worth noting that only one lesson per subject was available for inspection in geography, history and information technology during the last inspection. Where possible, evidence from the total of 17 foundation and religious education lessons observed was supplemented by the analysis of teachers' planning, work completed this school year, and by discussions with pupils.

91. To avoid repetition and provide a solid base for judgements about teaching and other aspects of provision, all the subjects listed below are reported on as a group, with strengths and weaknesses pinpointed.

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

92. Boys' and girls' achievements in these subjects this year are appropriate for their ages in years one and two but, with the exception of art and physical education where pupils are making good progress, standards in years three to six are below what might be expected. Otherwise, pupils are making sound progress through Key Stage 1 but less so in Key Stage. The amount and quality of work recorded in pupil's books or on paper in subjects such as geography, history, design technology and religious education is poor in comparison to other schools, especially in the older classes. In discussion, groups of these pupils could recall covering many of the topics listed in the long term plans but few could remember very much about what they had learned. Pupils with special needs are routinely included and make the same sort of progress as their classmates especially in the more practical aspects of the above subjects. However, it is unfortunate that some miss out on activities they would enjoy and get some success in, such as information technology, in order to do even more literacy work with the special needs coordinator.

93. The short time spent on subjects such as music, geography, history and religious education plus the mundane nature of the activities undertaken and the way work in these areas is rarely celebrated and valued means that pupils' cultural development is inhibited. They have few high quality opportunities to study and appreciate the visual and performing arts, their own unique cultural heritage and to understand and celebrate the faiths and cultural diversity of others. Another consequence is the fact that work in these subjects is rarely used to provide a stimulus or reason for pupils to use their developing literacy skills, especially in writing.

ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. In addition to the lessons observed, good examples of past work in art were seen in displays around the school. Evidence of a range of printing and use of textiles, as for example in the 'Mother Nature Designer' display and the 'Earl of Rone' patchwork collage indicates pupils are investigating different processes and materials. The use of 'paint' programmes allows pupils to explore design and colour using a computer, while sketch books encourage pupils to draw from first hand experience. Following a walk around the village looking at stained glass windows, year one pupils designed a panel in their sketch books, then cut out different coloured pieces of paper to match their design before arranging them on a black square. In a year five and six lesson, pupils used quick first hand sketches from the local beach in preparation for their work on seascapes and considered how to create the movement of the sea using different shading. When analysing each other's work, they showed a high level of interest and a good understanding of perspective and detail.

95. During the inspection, work in design technology (DT) was planned alongside art in year two with some pupils painting a playtime scene while others design a piece of playground equipment or use a construction kit to actually make one. The designing group show a good awareness of safety and label and list the materials they will need to construct the equipment. Another group use fruit pictures completed on paper as a template for fabric versions by choosing appropriate materials. The work of older pupils is planned alongside science activities with good examples being taking a torch apart to look at the electrical circuit and the reflector then designing and making their own torch. This mirrored work on light and electrical circuits in science.

96. In a year three and four DT lesson, pupils were continuing the task of making mini-beasts

to match their design by choosing, combining and joining various materials. The outcomes ranged from beautifully finished 'bugs', largely completed at home, to a complex diagram with some instructions but with little actually made so far. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the chance to be active and creative but actual levels of design and construction are low with fairly basic techniques being used. Years five and six displayed plenty of energy and enthusiasm but not a lot of finesse or learned techniques using tools or working systematically making wheels for their vehicles. To make this possible, the teacher has to give very specific instructions to produce a 'strong, round, durable' wheel, which makes the activity a little mundane but this is obviously necessary from the pupils' response. Most completed at least one wheel but the levels of understanding and basic skills are well down.

GEOGRAPHY

97. By the end of year two pupils are beginning to describe and compare the physical and human features of different localities showing an awareness of places beyond their own locality. Year one pupils identify different types of houses found in their area and compare the weather in Combe Martin with a cold place. They begin to develop their mapping skills by identifying features on a map of the isle of Struay. Boys and girls in year two recall Martin Bear's visit to France and Belgium and know that to get to these places Martin Bear travelled either by boat or aeroplane. Pupils know that the quickest form of transport to Australia would be by aeroplane. They identify the different types of clothing they would need to go on holiday in different parts of the world. For example they know that they would pack summer clothes if they were visiting Australia now.

98. Pupils in years three and four can correctly name some places on maps of the United Kingdom and a world map. They record the weather in different parts of the world and know the types of clothes they would need to take to the beach in Australia. Some have looked at the leisure and recreation facilities in their local area and also made a survey of employment in the area. In years five and six pupils have investigated rivers both in their local area and further afield. They have made studies of rivers such as the Nile and Thames and the effect they have had on the lives and activities of people living near them. Most recently pupils have undertaken a field study of the River UMBER in their local area. Many confidently used their information to discuss how rivers erode, transport and deposit materials, producing particular landscape features. They used geographical language such as 'middle course', 'meanders' and 'mouth' appropriately. Most are beginning to use their knowledge of the local area to complete a 'Walkers' Guide to the River UMBER'. However, year six pupils have gained limited knowledge of physical and human features of different localities.

HISTORY

99. Year two pupils show their developing sense of chronology and show knowledge and understanding of aspects of the past beyond their living memory. They compare toys and know that many old toys were wooden and often dull. They think that many toys today are bright, colourful and many are made of plastic. They sequence bikes from 1920 to present day correctly. Pupils in year one compare Victorian houses with their own and compare cooking utensils used in the past with ones used today.

100. By the end of year six, pupils have some knowledge of historical facts but show little understanding that aspects of the past have been represented and interpreted in different ways. They have had little opportunity to select and combine information from different sources. In years three and four pupils recall some aspects of life in Ancient Greece and features of Greek theatres. They compare the towns of Sparta and Athens at the time of the Ancient Greeks. This term's work is linked with famous people from the past who went on pilgrimages. In years five and six, most pupils can identify important periods in history on a timeline correctly. They briefly study the life of Obe Eware and know the significance of the Romans coming to Britain including the introduction of Roman roads. However, this does not amount to a satisfactory level of knowledge or understanding of history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ITC)

101. Three teachers have managed the subject since January 2002 and have drawn up a

realistic action plan. Nationally recognised staff training, through the new opportunities funding, is on line for all teachers in the summer term, and hardware and software needs have been identified to deliver the curriculum particularly for the older pupils. At present the computers are located in three clusters of four computers in areas adjacent to classrooms, and have very recently been upgraded to provide internet access but few pupils have made use of this facility. Year one pupils word process, use a 'paint' programme to draw shapes and pictures and programme a floor turtle to move in a pre determined path. Year two pupils have collected information on pets, eye and hair colour and favourite foods and used a simple programme to handle the data in the form of bar, line and block graphs. In research into frogs they have accessed a CD-ROM, and they can operate a yes/no decision tree programme. Most pupils use a mouse to open files and folders, and select from on screen menus, delete and insert letters and words and save and print their work.

102. The recently introduced two year rolling programme of study for pupils in years three to six, if appropriately resourced and taught, should ensure that they cover the expected curriculum. By the end of year six pupils word process their work with reasonable accuracy but few examples of changes of font style, colour and size or the use of imported pictures to enhance text were evident. Data handling by pupils in year three and four used limited fields when considering destination and seasonal climate change. Year five and six pupils used a graphics programme well to recreate a repeating pattern in the style of Mondrian, using rotation, resizing and moving shapes. However, many aspects of ICT such as control and monitoring and the use of the internet have not been taught systematically as pupils progress through the school and thus standards remain low.

MUSIC

103. Despite having a music room and a good stock of instruments, music does not play a big part in the life of the school or play a significant part in pupils' cultural development. The headteacher runs a guitar club and one of the students currently on practice is taking a recorder club but otherwise no musical 'extras' such as instrumental tuition or a choir are available to promote the love of music in older pupils. To compound this, years five and six only have music half the year since it is blocked with design technology. The most recent music year fives could remember was a television programme, 'Infinity Diner', and they were not very clear about what they had learned other than it was about highs and lows. Younger pupils do better with regular music lessons such as the session on pitch and high and low notes taken by a student in year one. They thoroughly enjoy standing up for the high notes and sitting for the low and most can do it with ease. Year twos showed how well they have moved on by composing, playing and ultimately setting down in pictorial form their compositions to illustrate sections of the 'Noah' story. Performance levels were good with very recognisable sea sounds and pupils able to explain their musical 'scores' confidently. Pupils in one year three and four class continue this trend producing music to match their mini-beast theme but with a supply teacher having taken music for most of the term, pupils confidence and performance levels are not as high.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

104. A sound programme for physical education includes a rolling programme of dance, gymnastics, games and swimming and for years three to six athletics. While pupils in years one and two have two sessions of physical activity per week, older pupils only receive one, and during the inspection week it was noted that in a year five and six gymnastics lesson 8 pupils did not participate as they had forgotten their kit. The school makes good use of the local swimming pool on a regular basis. In a year five and six lesson, pupils in three ability groups, were well challenged, practising all strokes and using floats well to improve their performance. By the end of year six most pupils can swim the expected 25 metres.

105. In gymnastic lessons, teachers paid due attention to pupils warming up before the main activity. Good use was made of pupils to demonstrate movements and due attention was given to quality and performance. In a year two lesson, the teacher quickly established through effective questioning that 'balance' means no movement and good use was made of peer appraisal to

discuss balances observed. In a year three and four lesson pupils worked well collaboratively at three point balances, sensibly discussing each other's movement. In the final challenge they sequenced a stretch roll and a three-point balance. Year five and six pupils achieved good performances in sequencing movements by they end of the lesson, although at the beginning the teacher gave them insufficient time to practise before introducing new elements. Overall the lessons showed good progression in gymnastics throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

106. By the end of year two pupils are just beginning to understand some of the beliefs of Christians. They talk about their families and have recorded a simple family tree. They recall the story of Noah and know why he built his ark. Some pupils know this story can be found in the Old Testament of the bible. Evidence from samples of pupils' work indicate that pupils have retold stories about Joseph, the favourite son and Moses but were unable to recall much of the stories when asked.

107. In years three and four pupils begin to understand the significance of Lent and the time when Jesus was in the wilderness. Some pupils describe how Jesus might have felt during the forty days and nights he spent in the wilderness. They begin to understand the importance of pilgrimages to Christians and compare some Christian bible stories with those found in the Torah but few have any understanding of Judaism. Older pupils in years five and six recall how Christians remember Jesus and back their ideas with evidence from the bible. They listen carefully to the story leading up to the eventual death of Jesus on Good Friday and are encouraged to reflect on some of the questions and issues that the story raises for them. Questions raised by individuals included: 'What would have happened if Jesus had not been betrayed? Why did Jesus forgive his enemies? Why did Jesus not save himself?' Last term pupils in these classes studied Hinduism but few can recall any details of Hindu beliefs and customs. They know Hinduism is practised in India but few know that this is a religion practised by people in Britain today.

TEACHING AND OTHER PROVISION IN THE FOUNDATION SUBJECTS

108. Teaching in all these subjects is mainly a mixture of good and satisfactory with one unsatisfactory religious education lesson and no very good teaching observed. At least one good lesson was observed in each subject except music with three out of four PE lessons good. Teaching was 'generally satisfactory and often good' in most subjects at the time of the last inspection so apparently, little has changed. Several factors account for this, notably:

- with the foundation subjects and RE definitely on the back burner, very little time or energy has been devoted to developing teaching and learning in these subjects
- the monitoring of teaching has concentrated on literacy and numeracy so coordinators have no way of knowing what is going on in lessons in their subjects
- with two year groups in each of the Key Stage 2 classes, the activities planned do not provide enough challenge for average and more able pupils in the older age group
- all these subjects are taught in the afternoon after at least three hours of fairly pressurised work in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are definitely not at their best and learning suffers with teachers having to work much harder to motivate and manage their classes.

109. The school is making good use of national schemes of work, the local agreed RE syllabus and some commercial schemes to ensure coverage and coherence and the various topics have been organised into two two-year rolling programmes in Key Stage 2 to cope with the mixed age group classes. However, no indication is made in planning as to how the school ensures that skills such as geographical enquiry and evaluating processes and products in design technology are taught progressively throughout the school and especially in the mixed age group classes. A form of assessment involving highlighting key objectives is being used but there is little evidence that the outcomes of this are being evaluated to bring about improvements in the relevant subjects. Coordinators are required to audit their subjects and draw up a form of action plan but this is not yet incorporated into whole school improvement planning. Resources are adequate for most subjects though the range of books in the library is barely enough for pupils to use for

research purposes in subjects such as science, geography, history and religious education. The existing computers are approaching their sell-by date and will need upgrading and the range of software in use is limited when compared with many schools.