

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHLEIGH CHURCH of ENGLAND

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Barnstaple

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113386

Headteacher: Mr. Denis Lennon

Reporting inspector: Colin Henderson
(OFSTED No: 23742)

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 December 2000

Inspection number: 224155

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bevan Road Barnstaple Devon
Postcode:	EX32 8LJ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Beryl Down
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Colin Henderson (OFSTED No: 23742)	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
		Geography	How well are pupils taught?
		Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
Margaret Morrissey (OFSTED No: 9769)	Lay inspector		How high are standards ? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Brian Fletcher (OFSTED No: 20457)	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
		Religious education	
		Music	
John Collier (OFSTED No: 7593)	Team inspector	English	
		Foundation stage	
		History	
		Equal opportunities	
Peter Thrussell (OFSTED No: 31029)	Team inspector	Science	
		Art	
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		Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ashleigh C of E Primary School is situated near the centre of Barnstaple in North Devon. It is of average size and currently has 277 pupils on roll (137 boys and 140 girls) with a further 50 part-time children in the nursery. Most pupils live near the school, in an area of mixed housing with a significant level of social and economic deprivation. The pupils are mostly of white, United Kingdom ethnic background. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. This is below the national average. There are 109 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, with a broad range of learning, physical and behavioural difficulties. This is well above average. Twenty-five per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is just above the national average. Assessment information shows that attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average, particularly in speaking and listening and mathematical skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ashleigh Church of England Primary School is an improving school, which no longer has serious weaknesses. Attainment in the core subjects is improving and meets the national average at both seven and eleven. The school is a caring, supportive community in which relationships are good. The school has developed a very good partnership with parents. The teaching is good overall, with frequent examples of very good teaching. The school benefits from the good leadership of the headteacher, supported well by staff and an effective governing body. It gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- It has good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and they make good progress.
- The leadership of the headteacher gives a clear and positive direction to the work of the school.
- Good social and moral provision promotes good relationships and pupils' personal development.
- The school has a very good partnership with parents.
- It effectively monitors and assesses pupils' attainment, so that standards improve, particularly in the core subjects.
- The school benefits from the support of an active and influential governing body.

What could be improved

- Attainment in information and communication technology, particularly at Key Stage 2
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievements are not consistently at a sufficiently high level.
- More consistent management of the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small number of pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in January 1998. Pupils' attainment has improved substantially, particularly in literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 2, and in geography at Key Stage 1. The leadership and management have improved significantly and are clearly targeting school improvement. Monitoring and evaluation procedures have been developed well and are providing good detailed information on the school's strengths and weaknesses. Very good procedures for assessing pupils' work in the core subjects are being used well to inform teachers' planning and to target areas for improvement. The role of the governing body, and their involvement in strategic planning and school improvement, has improved. They now fully meet their statutory requirements. The school is well placed to make further improvements. Attainment in information and communication technology in Key Stage 2 has not been maintained at the level reported previously. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of living in a multi-cultural society has not improved since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	D	C	A
Mathematics	E	E	A	A
Science	E	E	C	A

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

(Similar schools are those which have a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals). Test results show that standards achieved by 11 year olds improved in 2000 in all three subjects. They improved significantly in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 improved to over 30 per cent in each subject, which is above the national average. The school set a target in English and mathematics of 65 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above, based on previous years' results. It considerably exceeded the target in each subject. The school has effectively implemented its strategies for literacy and numeracy. These, together with very good use of booster classes, teaching clearly focused on improving areas of weakness, and preparing pupils carefully for the tests, improved the results.

Inspection evidence shows that attainment meets the national average at eleven. The proportion of pupils currently achieving above average levels is not as high as last year. The current Year 6 has an increased number of pupils with special educational needs.

The results of the 2000 national tests and teachers' assessments at seven show that attainment meets the national average in writing and is well below average in reading and mathematics. The results over the last three years show that standards have been rising. This is confirmed by inspection evidence, which shows that attainment is average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 meets the national average, although the proportion attaining higher levels is below average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. Many children in the Foundation Stage have lower than expected skills, for example, in speaking and listening and in mathematics. They settle happily and, through good teaching and good use of support staff, make good progress. They are likely to achieve their early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and in creative and physical development by the time they start Year 1. Attainment in information and communication technology meets national expectations at seven but is below expectations by eleven. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop and extend their skills in Key Stage 2. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their learning targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes. They are keen to learn and clearly enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Most pupils work and play together well. The occasional disruptive behaviour of a very small number of pupils restricts progress.

Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good and promote good personal development. Older pupils respond very well to the opportunities to take on responsibilities.
Attendance	Attendance in line with the national average.. Pupils arrive into school on time and there is a prompt and efficient start to the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
59 lessons seen overall	Consistently good	Good and frequently very good	Sound overall and frequently good.

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

Teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. Teaching was good in 44 per cent of lessons. It was very good in 15 per cent and excellent in further three per cent. Teaching was sound in 36 per cent of lessons and only two per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. The teaching of literacy is good and it is sound and frequently good for numeracy. It is a significant factor in improving standards. Teachers plan their lessons effectively to give a clear focus to pupils' learning. They use assessment information well to match learning activities to meet the different needs of pupils. There is some variation between parallel classes in teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, which affects standards.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum at the Foundation Stage is good. It is sound at both key stages. It is enhanced well by contributions from the community and a sound range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good. Teaching and support staff work well together to enable to make good progress towards their learning targets .
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision for social and moral development, supported well by a clear code of conduct, promote pupils' understanding of right and wrong and good relationships. Pupils have a sound awareness of their own cultural traditions but their knowledge and understanding of other cultures is not developed effectively.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has a good standard of care for pupils' welfare, safety and personal development. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents?	The school has established very good links with parents. They are kept well-informed about what is happening in school and how well their child is progressing.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well managed. The headteacher gives positive direction to the work of the school, clearly focused on raising standards of attainment. A clearer management structure has improved communications and encouraged an effective team approach.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	A supportive and influential governing body makes a good contribution towards school improvement. Governors fully meet their responsibilities and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher is using an increasing range of attainment data to effectively monitor pupils' performance, identify areas of weakness and target extra support. Teaching and learning in the core subjects are regularly monitored and evaluated, although procedures to share good practice are not effectively established.
The strategic use of resources	Improvements in strategic and financial planning ensure that resources are focused well on priorities for improvement. Good use is made of specific grants to promote standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The accommodation is adequate, although lack of space restricts some practical activities. Resources are adequate, although the current lack of well-organised library is restricting pupils' research skills. Good financial procedures and good use of the principles of best value enable the school to give sound value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parental responses from 66 questionnaires returned (25 per cent) and from the 6 parents who attended the meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The school is caring and supportive. • Behaviour in school is good. • Teaching is good and teachers expect children to work hard • Partnership with parents has improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increased number of extra-curricular activities • Aspects of how the school is managed

Parents' comments were largely supportive. A small number raised concerns, both in written comments and in the meeting, about the good provision for pupils with special educational needs being maintained. Inspection evidence confirms many of the parents' positive views of the school, particularly those relating to partnership with parents and the caring and supportive approach. Although there have been staff changes, the provision for special educational needs continues to be good. There is a sound range of extra-curricular activities, mostly for the older children. The school is well led and managed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievement

1. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. Many children under five in the Foundation Stage have below average skills in speaking and listening, mathematics and aspects of personal development. Good teaching in both the nursery and the reception class, and the effective support of teaching and support staff, enable children to make good progress, particularly in their personal and social skills. Most settle well and are likely to achieve their early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, their creative and physical development. Only a few children are likely to achieve their expected goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
2. The results of the 2000 national tests in English for seven-year-olds show that the proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 2 in reading was in line with the national average. The proportion achieving Level 3 was below average. Standards overall were well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. In writing, the results were in line with the national average at both levels. Standards are similar to all schools nationally and above the average of similar schools. These results are a significant improvement on the 1999 results, particularly in the number of pupils achieving Level 2 or above. Results show a trend of improvement over the last four years in both reading and writing. The results of the 2000 English national tests for eleven-year-olds also show an improvement on last year's results, especially in the proportion of pupils who achieved above average levels. Thirty-two per cent of pupils achieved Level 5 in 2000 compared with 11 per cent last year. Results overall were average relative to all schools nationally and well above average compared with similar schools. The school considerably exceeded its target of 65 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 or above. Results from the last four years show that, although there was a dip in 1998, standards are improving overall. The achievements of boys and girls are similar.
3. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in English are improving, and are in line with the national average at the age of seven and eleven. They are better than at the time of the last inspection. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and, together with good teaching and the effective use of booster classes, this is raising standards. Pupils make particularly good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. Many come into Year 1 with limited skills, especially in speaking. They make good progress to reach standards that are similar to those expected nationally of pupils aged seven and eleven. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities to encourage and enable pupils to apply and improve their skills. Pupils make good progress overall in reading, although some phonic uncertainties restrict progress in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' skills are extended effectively from Year 3 to Year 6 and most eleven year-olds are fluent and confident readers. Pupils' library and reading for research skills are not effectively developed. The lack of a library facility, due to refurbishment, is restricting progress. Most pupils make good progress in developing their handwriting, although there is a significant variation between parallel classes in Years 1 and 2. Weaknesses in spelling and punctuation limit the standards achieved. Most pupils make sound progress from seven to eleven and they develop a fluent style. Many Year 6 pupils write successfully for a variety of purposes, showing increasing accuracy in their use of punctuation, spelling and an interesting range of words.
4. The results of the 2000 national mathematics tests for pupils aged seven showed that, although the proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 2 was just below the national average, the proportion achieving higher levels is well below average. The 2000 results were well below average nationally and below the average of similar schools. The results over the previous four years show that standards are improving and are higher than at the time of the last inspection. They were well below average from 1996 to 1998, although they improved steadily each year. They were just below the national average in 1999, with an average number achieving Level 3. Inspection evidence confirms this trend in test results at the end of Year 2. The number

of pupils achieving Level 2 is close to the national average, although only a small number achieve higher standards. The results of the 2000 national mathematics tests for pupils aged eleven showed a substantial improvement on the results from previous years. Ninety one per cent of pupils achieved the expected level. Thirty-four per cent achieved Level 5. The results were well above average compared both with all schools nationally and with similar schools. The school considerably exceeded its target of 65 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above. Good implementation of the numeracy strategy, sound and often good teaching, and particularly effective procedures to target and improve pupils' weaknesses, improved test results significantly. Inspection evidence shows that standards overall for pupils aged eleven are average: most pupils are achieving nationally expected levels. The number likely to achieve higher levels is broadly in line with the national average. The current Year 6 has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than last year's group. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of number aspects and apply them well in a range of investigations and to solve problems.

5. Attainment in science is average for pupils aged seven and eleven. The 2000 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 were close to the national average for the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2. It was also average for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 3. These assessments were a good improvement on last year's results. The results of the 2000 national tests for eleven year olds also improved on the 1999 results. Ninety-four per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 or above, which is above the national average, and a considerable improvement on the 70 per cent achieved last year. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 increased from 13 per cent to 36 per cent. Standards overall were average nationally, and well above average compared with similar schools. Improvements have mainly resulted from closely monitoring pupils' attainment to identify areas of weakness. Teachers focused effectively on these areas and, combined with improved preparation for taking the tests, raised standards. Inspection evidence shows that standards in Year 6 are average overall, as there are more pupils with special educational needs in this group. Pupils' investigative skills, knowledge and understanding are developed soundly, particularly at Key Stage 2.
6. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those expected nationally for pupils aged seven. They are below expectations at eleven. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their skills soundly and show an increasing knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are given some opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, for example, in word processing and data handling. These opportunities are not consistent or sufficiently frequent to enable pupils to apply their skills regularly to achieve expected standards. Resources have recently improved, although pupils' keyboard skills are not sufficiently well developed to ensure that these are used effectively to support standards in other subjects.
7. Attainment in religious education is in line with the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils at both stages have an above average knowledge of Christianity. They show an increasing understanding, especially at the age of eleven, of other beliefs and practices, for example, Judaism. Many pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of how religious beliefs influence the way people live.
8. Standards in geography at seven and in some aspects of other subjects, for example, in dance and in singing, are above expected standards. Standards in art and design, design and technology, history, geography at Key Stage 2 and in other aspects of music and physical education meet expectations at both seven and eleven. The school has focused strongly on promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and these are improving. They are being used well to support work in other subjects, for example, in history and science.
9. Pupils' learning is developed well overall at Key Stage 1. It is soundly developed at Key Stage 2. Teachers know their pupils well and use assessment information effectively to match learning activities closely to pupils' different needs in mixed-age and mixed ability classes. There is some significant variation in teachers' expectations, which does not always ensure consistent progress in pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully assessed and tasks are planned to match their attainment. They make good progress, both in class and in withdrawal sessions, in relation to their prior learning and their learning targets, particularly in literacy and

numeracy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to their work. Nursery and reception children make a confident start to school and progress well, quickly establishing effective relationships with adults and with other children.
11. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to come to school. They often contribute well in lessons; examples of this were seen in physical education in Years 3 and 4 and in literacy in Years 5 and 6. During the inspection, there were good examples in all years of pupils sharing their work with the class. For example, during the plenary of a Year 3 / 4 literacy hour, pupils offered each other critical analyses of their work. They listened carefully and readily accepted ways in which they could improve its quality. Parents believe that pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them; this was evident when lessons were observed. When teachers' expectations are high and classroom routines managed well, pupils sustain concentration. They have good attitudes, persist with their tasks and begin to develop a capacity for independent work. However, this is frequently interrupted in a small number of Year 5 and 6 lessons when disruptive and challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils results in unsatisfactory attitudes to learning. This is also affecting the education of other pupils in the class who despite the interruptions continue to have good attitudes to their work. Overall pupils were keen to show and discuss their work. Older pupils understand their literacy and numeracy targets and what they have to do to improve and meet these targets.
12. Behaviour in lessons is mostly good and often very good. However, there was a small but significant number of lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6, in which the behaviour of one or two pupils was unsatisfactory. This affected their own learning and attainment and restricted the progress of others. Pupils' behaviour around the school is good, although it is often boisterous in the playground areas and restricts the space for pupils wanting quieter activities. The school works hard to deal with any minor issues of oppression and parents agree that any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. One pupil has been permanently excluded in the last year, having previously been excluded for fixed term periods.
13. The personal development of pupils is good. They respond keenly to the good opportunities that they are given to accept responsibility. They are involved in daily routines: for example, in nursery and reception classes, children clear away after work and play. In all years, pupils respond well as monitors for general duties and take an active part in class assemblies. Prefects in Year 6 clearly understand their role and what is expected of them. They are confident and responsible in carrying out their duties. Pupils are helpful and supportive to each other, especially to younger children. Parents valued this. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils share resources effectively, take turns and listen to one another carefully.
14. Attendance is in line with the national average for similar schools. Authorised absence is below the national average. However, the level of unauthorised absence is above the national average and the education welfare officer is working with specific families to improve this. Pupils are generally prompt into school and there is an efficient start to the day. Parents confirm that their children enjoy school and are keen to attend and arrive punctually.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. It is good at the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. It is sound overall at Key Stage 2. There were examples of very good and excellent teaching in both key stages. During the inspection, teaching was good in 44 per cent of lessons. It was very good in 15 per cent, and excellent in a further three per cent. Teaching was sound in 36 per cent of lessons. It was unsatisfactory in only two per cent of lessons. The teaching of English is good throughout the school. Teaching in mathematics is sound overall with many good features. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are improving and are being used with increasing effectiveness to promote standards in other subjects. Teaching is

good in music and physical education throughout the school and geography at Key Stage 1. It is sound in history and religious education. There was insufficient evidence to give an overall judgement on information and communication technology, design technology and geography at Key Stage 2. The good quality of teaching is a significant factor in encouraging pupils to adopt a positive approach to work and improving standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

16. Teachers plan their lessons to a high standard throughout the school. They clearly identify specific learning objectives, and the key skills to be developed as pupils move from year to year. Teachers make good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks and national subject guidance. This gives a clear focus to pupils' learning and enables skills, knowledge and understanding to build effectively on prior learning. Teachers plan and organise a good range of learning activities, which are matched closely to the different needs of pupils in mixed-age and mixed ability classes. For example, in a literacy lesson for Years 3 and 4, the teacher carefully planned different learning objectives and matched them well to four activities. These included more difficult work involving the use of a thesaurus and play scripts to challenge more able pupils, as well as the use of phonic activities to support pupils with special educational needs. Pupils of all abilities were helped to make good progress.
17. Teachers regularly assess pupils' work and use good constructive marking to indicate ways in which the standard could improve. They make effective use of assessment information to inform their teaching plans. For example, teachers analyse tests and other assessments to identify any areas of uncertainty in their pupil's mathematical knowledge and understanding. They ensure that these areas are then included in lesson plans to enable pupils to improve the accuracy of their work. This is a considerable improvement on a weakness reported in the last inspection and is contributing to raising standards.
18. Teachers have good relationships with their classes. They manage them successfully, particularly in Key Stage 1, to enable pupils to sustain interest and concentration. Teachers use a broad range of teaching methods to encourage their pupils' active involvement. For example, in a geography lesson for Year 1 and 2, the teacher used photographs of the local area to gain pupils' attention and to build on their knowledge from the walk around the area in the last lesson. She asked questions well to ensure that they were all closely looking at the photographs. The teacher used follow-up questions very successfully to extend pupils' initial replies. This improved the quality of their answers. For example, when the teacher challenged a pupil to explain why he did not like the town's ring-road, this led to a discussion on noise and pollution problems caused by cars.
19. Where teaching is excellent, teachers use interesting and lively introductions to lessons to capture pupils' interest. They use good subject knowledge effectively to promote pupils' understanding, for example, of correct scientific terminology. Teachers organise a range of interesting activities to maintain a brisk and challenging pace and encourage pupils' enthusiastic involvement in their learning. For example, in an excellent science lesson for pupils in Year 3 and 4, the teacher used a humorous poem, *I wish I'd looked after my teeth*, to capture pupils' imagination. The teacher used questions very effectively to extend pupils' understanding. He used his good subject knowledge, through word lists and detailed explanations, to promote pupils' knowledge of the use of teeth. The teacher organised six well-planned activities to enable each group of pupils to complete each activity in turn. He ensured a brisk pace by regularly reminding pupils what he expected to be achieved in the time available. This resulted in pupils maintaining a lively, enthusiastic approach to their learning throughout the lesson. They co-operated very well to enable them to complete the different activities. The teacher used questions successfully in the plenary activity to ensure that pupils had made excellent progress in their learning.
20. Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' standards of work and behaviour. This does not enable pupils to make consistently good progress in their learning. Not all teachers expect pupils to present their work neatly, consistently using a clear handwriting style. A significant minority does not challenge pupils to develop their written answers in more depth. This leads to considerable differences between parallel classes, both in the accuracy and the amount of the work achieved. There was evidence, both in lesson observations and in work analysis, of different expectations resulting in variation in standards. For example, in Years 1 and 2, teachers

did not consistently expect pupils to use their improving literacy skills to support standards in other subjects, such as science and geography. Where expectations were high, pupils produced accurate, detailed and well-presented work. Where they were not so high, pupils did not achieve so well, both in the detail and accuracy of their work. Teachers do not always manage the behaviour of a small number of pupils effectively to enable them to stay focused on their learning. This results in teachers having to limit the time they give to other pupils and significantly disrupts the learning within the class. For example, in an unsatisfactory history lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teacher planned an activity, which was not matched well to the needs of all pupils in the group. This led to a small number of pupils not being involved effectively in the activity and behaving in an unacceptable and disruptive manner. The teacher had to spend considerable time in trying to ensure that these pupils did not affect others. This resulted in less work being achieved and lower standards of attainment.

21. Teachers use homework soundly to consolidate and extend the work covered in school, particularly in literacy and numeracy. They provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills in class and group discussions, for example, in a Year 1 and 2 lesson on the theme of 'supporting others'. Teachers make some use of pupils' skills in information and communication technology, for example, word processing in literacy and data handling in science and mathematics. However, teachers do not consistently develop these opportunities to support standards sufficiently in other subjects.
22. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and enables children under five to settle quickly and happily into school life. It is good in both the nursery and the reception class. Teachers plan in great detail to ensure that they provide activities to cover all the required areas of learning. Teachers work very well with support staff to establish good relationships with children and encourage them to get actively involved in their learning. Teachers have high expectations of children, for example, in developing their writing skills. The children respond very well and this enables them to make good progress.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well supported. Any problems are identified quickly, and individual educational plans are established which enable pupils to achieve as much as possible. They are well supported in class and in withdrawal groups, including additional literacy support and reading recovery. Teachers and support staff have a good knowledge and understanding of how to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, which helps to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have full access to the activities being taught. Realistic and specific targets in their individual education plans are used in planning their work. Where pupils have behavioural targets, although teachers have sound strategies for managing pupils' behaviour, there are disrupted lessons where these are not effective and classroom support is not available.

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

24. The curriculum has been maintained soundly since the time of the last inspection. The school has acted upon the recommendations made at that time. The school offers a curriculum that is broad and balanced. Subjects are systematically planned and taught. The school has successfully implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies. All pupils are given good opportunities to acquire the basic skills that give full access to a wide range of learning experiences. All subjects have detailed plans to clearly outline what is to be taught. In the core subjects, targets for pupils' attainment are an integral part of the teaching plans and provide a sharp focus for learning.
25. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good and focused well on improving their weaknesses, particularly in speaking and listening. Teachers plan their work collaboratively, identifying learning objectives and opportunities for assessment of pupils' progress. This enables a clear focus for different activities in mixed-aged classes. The school continuously reviews the ways in which pupils are grouped for learning and, for example, has recently considered grouping pupils by prior attainment in mathematics.

26. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, including religious education. Sex education and drugs awareness are now taught as part of the school's science curriculum and in personal and social education lessons. 'Circle Time' and class worship provide a good opportunity for pupils to discuss their concerns, of whatever nature, with their teachers in a safe and secure environment. Pupils' questions are encouraged and factual answers are promptly given. While the programme for personal, social and health education is contributing soundly to pupils' personal development, the school plans to extend this contribution by providing more consistent opportunities throughout the school.
27. The teaching of English and mathematics is well supported by the successful introduction of the national strategies. Each subject is given a prominent place in the curriculum and the time allocated is well used. Teachers plan lessons in detail and give a good balance to the different aspects of the strategies. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their expressive and creative writing and there are many examples of this on display. Pupils have benefited significantly from the emphasis placed upon the acquisition of core skills such as numeracy, speaking and listening. Additional help is provided for Year 6 pupils in preparation for the national tests. This has been supplemented by the provision of a course for parents on the numeracy strategy.
28. The school provides a curriculum in which all pupils enjoy equality of access and opportunity. There are no barriers to self-improvement. Indeed, all staff actively promote it. The school constantly evaluates its own performance and frequently asks what more can be done. Ambitious but achievable targets are set for improvement in mathematics and English. Progress towards the achievement of the targets is carefully monitored. Governors and staff share the determination to continue to offer a curriculum that takes into account the needs of all pupils and seeks to raise standards of attainment.
29. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their needs are generally well met by the school. Well-qualified support staff provide sensitive and effective support for pupils both in class and when they are occasionally withdrawn for extra help. Teachers and support staff work hard to ensure that learning activities are matched closely to these pupils' learning needs and that they are given effective help, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
30. The range of extra-curricular activities is sound, particularly for older pupils. The provision for competitive sport is strong. For example, there are several soccer and netball teams, organised by parents and teachers, who successfully represent the school in cup and league competitions. At lunchtime pupils may join the computer, or a chess club after school. The school choir is of fine quality and any pupil may join. The school makes very good use of environmental and adventure centres that provide residential experiences for senior pupils.
31. Community links are good. Pupils make regular visits to places of worship and links with the local Church are strong. The local clergy are regular visitors to the school, leading assemblies and taking part in school activities. The choir sings in the nearby home for senior citizens. The school was a key contributor to the town's millennium pageant. The school is in good contact with the secondary schools to which most pupils transfer. Information is carefully exchanged and there are joint activities in sport and music. Relationships between the schools are constructive and make a good contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.
32. The school makes good provision overall for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. This is similar to the last inspection. However, this time, the spiritual provision is judged sound rather than good. Requirements for a daily act of collective worship are met and they provide opportunities for pupils to pray and reflect on what they have heard. However, during the inspection week, teachers did not spontaneously exploit opportunities for pupils to quietly think about or wonder at their experiences during lessons. An example was in a Year 3 / 4 English lesson, when a girl's exceptional vocabulary in describing the moonlight was highlighted by the teacher. This had a stimulating effect on the class. Similarly, in a Year 1 / 2 lesson following a discussion about what makes pupils feel scared, music was played and time was given for them to think about what had been said. These are isolated examples observed in a

small number of classes however and do not reflect the overall provision.

33. Provision for moral development continues to be good. There is a clear code of conduct that pupils comprehend, helping them to appreciate right from wrong. Rules are displayed in every classroom. All pupils sign them to say they agree with them and the consequences of disobeying them are universally understood, even by the minority of disruptive pupils at the upper end of the school. There are rewards too in the form of certificates that are earned by receiving merit points for good work, behaviour or effort. Certificates are also awarded for good behaviour at lunch-time on the recommendation of the supervisors. Charities are regularly supported. During the inspection, pupils enjoyed a 'Number Day' raising money, through sponsorship, for the NSPCC. An annual sponsored bicycle ride to Instow also raises money for a national charity and contributes towards an awareness that others, in this country and abroad, are less fortunate.
34. Provision for developing pupils' social skills also continues to be good. Almost 90% of parents believe that the school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible. This is achieved because teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to co-operate and work together, particularly in mathematics and science lessons, where practical and problem-solving activities require a high degree of collaboration and common sense. Outside lessons, there are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop social skills, particularly during the residential experience that is offered to Years 5 and 6 and through a series of educational visits that all pupils enjoy. Many of them contribute also to pupils' cultural development as when the Reception children visit the Guildhall. Competitive sports and activities outside school, such as the choir, also offer chances for pupils to interact in different settings. Pupils are given responsibility for jobs within their classes and the oldest pupils have duties around the school. There are librarians and prefects whose job it is to help younger pupils and sort out minor squabbles. They admit, however, that they are not equipped to deal with the occasional more serious arguments.
35. A criticism in the last report was that there were limited opportunities for pupils to gain an awareness of our multi-cultural society. Little has been done to improve provision and while cultural development overall is soundly promoted, this aspect of the school's work is unsatisfactory. The programme of work in religious education *does* introduce pupils to the beliefs, traditions and values of other faiths besides Christianity, noticeably Judaism and Hinduism. Although the school has received visitors from the Islamic faith, there is limited contact with people from other cultures. Visitors come to school – an author during 'Book Week', the local nurse for 'Nurse's Week', a local artist who helps them with their Millennium Mosaic, a 'time traveller' in connection with a history topic. They contribute successfully towards a developing awareness of the make-up of society now and how it has evolved through time. Work in geography when pupils explore their local environment, in art when they study the work of famous artists and in music when they listen to a variety of recorded music, also contributes to this. However, this aspect is not as well developed as in many schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the good standard of health and safety and care for pupils' welfare, safety and personal development. Child protection arrangements are good and comply with statutory requirements and local guidelines.
37. Procedures for monitoring good behaviour and for ensuring that oppressive behaviour is eliminated are good and well known to pupils and parents. Information on the school policy is provided in the school prospectus and parents' role in supporting the school behaviour policy is an integral part of Home School Agreements. The schools open door policy encourages parents to play a full part in pupils' welfare both at home and in the school.
38. The health and safety provision is good, well used by all staff and monitored by the governor with responsibility for health and safety, the premises committee and subsequently the full governing body. Risk assessment is up to date and all equipment is well maintained with recorded checks. During the inspection no health and safety concerns were noted; however a small number of pupils often run through the outside corridor between the two playgrounds. This can be a danger

to other pupils.

39. There are clear notices to support procedures for fire evacuation and fire drills are taken regularly and logged. A number of adults have a current first aid certificate and first aid provision is good. All serious accidents and head injuries are reported and recorded. The school promotes healthy and safe living through a programme for personal social and health education, circle time and across the curriculum. Pupils have recently discussed healthy eating. The display of pupils' work in classrooms and discussion with pupils shows they are clearly beginning to understand what constitutes a good healthy diet.
40. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory and are adhered to. Registers are correctly completed both morning and afternoon. There is informal daily monitoring each day by class teachers and formal monitoring by the education welfare officer.
41. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science are very good. In addition to national testing in Years 2 and 6, optional testing is used for English and mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5. In core subjects, teachers make assessments of pupils' competencies at the end of each unit of study; a more rigorous assessment is made of a core group of pupils in each class, in order to track the progress made by classes. Assessment is starting to be developed in other subject areas with the introduction of national schemes of work, through the recording of competencies at the end of units of study. Pupils' work is generally marked consistently, often showing comments on attainment and aspects for pupils to work on.
42. Assessment data in English, mathematics and science is analysed very carefully. It is used effectively to monitor pupils' academic progress and to set both individual and school targets in English and mathematics. Where these targets are not being met, further support is provided through groupings within lessons, extra classroom support, additional literacy support, and booster classes for pupils in Year 6.
43. The use of assessment to guide curriculum planning is very good in core subjects. When particular strengths and weaknesses have been identified, planning is modified to take account of these. Where assessments are being made in other subjects, planning is starting to be adjusted accordingly.
44. There is a good liaison between teachers and staff who support pupils with special educational needs, which ensures that support is directed to those who need it most. Detailed individual education plans are kept and used effectively to target support in classrooms and teaching groups, including additional literacy support and The Reading Recovery programme.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The partnership with parents is very good. Parents are encouraged to support children's learning at home and given good support and information from the school to do this. Parents are pleased with the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by their children.
46. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents is very good. Through a broad range of methods including the school prospectus, school policies, the mathematics programme in partnership with the local college, parents' curriculum information evenings, parents-in-partnership group and regular meetings with teachers, there is clear communication between home and school. Pupils' annual reports give good information on pupils' attainment but do not provide targets for improvement. Parents are well informed of school events by regular newsletters. They have recently been surveyed on the decision to change the time of the school day and whilst the governors did not decide to go along with the majority's wishes parents still appreciated being asked. Parents say the school is welcoming and is always willing to listen to them. Parents are invited to class assemblies and value this opportunity to be part of the school day.
47. The school has thorough procedures for the annual review of the progress of pupils with

Statements of Special Educational Need, and works closely with the parents of these pupils. Parents are kept closely informed of the targets on children's individual educational plans and of the support they can give at home.

48. Parents are very supportive of the school. They help during the school day and on school visits and trips. Parents give freely of their time to support the school. A crossing patrol has just started and this is at present run by four volunteer parents. Parents are also making toy sacks. Parents either run or are involved in at least three successful after-school clubs.
49. Friends of Ashleigh School Association work closely with governors and teachers to support the school. They are extremely successful in raising funds and amongst many things they have provided for the school are carpets, seating in the main corridor, curtains for the hall and Millennium books. They also provide good social occasions for both pupils and parents, for example, Christmas discos. Their support is a real bonus to the school's resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The leadership and management of the school are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school no longer has serious weaknesses in its management. The school has made good improvement in establishing a sound structure to the senior management team. Job descriptions clearly outline areas of responsibility. Developments in the roles of year group leaders and the co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy have all contributed to improved communications and a more effective team approach, focused clearly on raising standards. Good improvement has been made on the key issue of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. Regular and systematic monitoring of classroom practice by senior management and core subject co-ordinators evaluates its impact on pupils' learning. This contributes to improving standards. It enables the senior management to identify the strategies that are most effective, although procedures to share good practice are not fully established. The school has made good progress on developing assessment and recording procedures, particularly in the core subjects. These are being used very effectively to inform teaching plans and target areas for improvement.
51. Significant improvement has been made in the leadership of the school. The headteacher gives a clear and positive direction to the work of the school, clearly focused on raising standards of attainment. He is supported well by key staff and a supportive governing body. The headteacher has been especially successful in developing an effective link with parents and the community to work in partnership with the school and contribute to improving standards. The aims of the school are clearly set out in its prospectus. Most are reflected clearly in its work, particularly those relating to Christian values, relationships and effectiveness. These are supported well by parents who value how much their children like school and how it helps them become mature and more responsible.
52. The headteacher has a good overview of the school. Improvements in the procedures by which the school evaluates its own effectiveness enable the headteacher, key staff and governors to be fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses. More frequent monitoring and evaluation, increasingly effective analysis of attainment information and the development of core subject curriculum teams all contribute to recognising strengths and identifying areas for development. They are used very well to inform the school improvement plan. This detailed plan targets areas for improvement effectively, although issues are not always clearly linked to sources of funding to enable governors to evaluate their cost effectiveness. The headteacher, supported well by literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, uses an increasing range of attainment information to effectively monitor standards and identify strengths and weaknesses. This was used particularly successfully, for example, to target additional literacy support and booster classes in mathematics for Year 6 pupils before the 2000 Key Stage 2 national tests. This resulted in significant improvements, particularly the number of pupils who achieved above average levels.
53. The governors make a significant and influential contribution to the effectiveness of the school. Their role has improved substantially since the last inspection when they were not effectively involved in strategic planning and did not fulfil their statutory requirements. Governors now meet

statutory requirements fully. They work closely with the headteacher and staff to gain a good knowledge and understanding of school strengths and priorities for development. They work effectively through their committees, for example, the Development Overview Committee, and have established good procedures to allow the school to evaluate its success. These enable governors to keep well informed, to be fully involved in establishing and implementing the school improvement plan and in setting targets for improvement. Regular weekly meetings between the headteacher and the influential chair of governors have established a good constructive working partnership, which closely monitors standards and gives good direction to managing the school. Many governors have benefited from good quality training from the local authority's support services to make them increasingly aware of their roles and responsibilities. They have reported back to other governors to keep them informed about recent or future developments. All governors are linked to particular classes and some governors have observed lessons, particularly in literacy and numeracy. They have a good overview of the school's effectiveness.

54. The governing body, working closely with the headteacher and school secretary, has established good procedures for financial planning and management. These were confirmed by the very recent report from the County Auditor. This identified a few minor points for improvement, which are being addressed. The budget process is efficiently managed. Governors monitor the budget each month through an analysis of spending levels, together with explanatory notes from the school secretary, where needed. They target any carry-forward in funds to enable it to be used effectively to support staff numbers or action plan issues. The school improvement plan, which is better in quality than at the last inspection, provides a clear focus for the current school year. It also identifies issues for a longer, three year period to enable governors to establish a more strategic aspect to their planning. Specific grants, for example, those in the Standards Fund, have been used effectively to target areas for improvement, for example, literacy and numeracy. These have contributed substantially to improving pupils' skills and knowledge. The school makes good use of the principles of best value to ensure that it makes efficient use of its funds. For example, the headteacher and governors use financial information from the local education authority to compare spending levels with those of similar schools and identify ways in which the governors can improve efficiency. The good quality financial administration and regular monitoring of spending levels contribute to the efficient running of the school, which gives sound value for money.
55. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed soundly. The school fulfils the requirements of the Code of Practice in having a special needs register, consulting parents and holding annual reviews. The special educational needs coordinator, who also has a class responsibility, has only recently been appointed to the post. She is enthusiastic and has already produced an action plan for developments in this area of the school's work. The previous coordinator did not have a class responsibility and wrote the individual education plans. She was able to withdraw pupils from literacy and numeracy lessons and give effective support in this way. The school has yet to monitor the effects of this change in provision on pupils' progress, which now relies far more on classroom based support with class teachers writing the individual education plans for their pupils.
56. There is an adequate number of teaching staff with a sound range of experience and expertise to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are taught effectively. There is a good number of well-trained and knowledgeable support staff who are used effectively to support less able pupils, and those with special educational needs. This contributes well to pupils' attainment. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is good. Governors have agreed annual performance targets for the headteacher and are preparing appropriately for implementing performance management. The headteacher, supported by his deputy, have established an effective staff appraisal system, which contributes well to staff development. This is enhanced further by the very effective support given by the professional development co-ordinator. She analyses training requests and enables staff professional development to link closely to the needs of the school. The results of training are monitored carefully, particularly in relation to their impact on standards. This aspect of management is handled very effectively and contributes positively to school improvement.
57. The accommodation is adequate overall, although the lack of space in the small classrooms

creates difficulties for teachers organising practical activities, for example, science investigations. Facilities for physical education are limited and restrict the opportunities for the development of pupils' skills. The school uses the accommodation efficiently, for example, to provide rooms for pupils to receive additional support with literacy skills. The library area is currently being re-organised and improved, and the school is planning to improve facilities for information and communication technology. Learning resources are adequate. Improvements in the range of resources for literacy and numeracy have been used well to improve pupils' skills. The range and quality of books in classrooms are satisfactory, although they are not supported by adequate library resources. These are planned for improvement. Resources for information and communication technology have been improved recently and are adequate overall. They are not being used consistently to ensure all pupils have frequent opportunities to extend their skills. This restricts standards. Development planning indicates that these resources are planned for further improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. To improve the effectiveness of the school, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards in information and communication technology, particularly at Key Stage 2 by ensuring that all pupils have regular and frequent opportunities to develop their skills and use them to support work in other subjects.
(paragraphs 6, 120, 123.)
- (2) Raise the expectations of pupils' achievements by a very small number of teachers to achieve a consistently high level in all year groups.
(paragraphs 20, 88, 101.)
- (3) Ensure that teachers consistently and effectively manage the incidents of inappropriate behaviour from a small number of pupils, ensuring that they do not restrict progress.
(paragraphs 12, 88, 101, 118.)

In addition to the issues listed above, the following less important issue should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. This is indicated in paragraph 35.

- further develop pupils' appreciation of the benefits of cultural diversity.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	15	44	36	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	277
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	109

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	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.6

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	21	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	19
	Girls	18	20	18
	Total	34	37	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (67)	88 (76)	88 (87)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	17
	Girls	18	16	18
	Total	34	33	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (74)	79 (87)	83 (80)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	30	17	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	28	27
	Girls	17	15	17
	Total	36	43	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (72)	91 (57)	94 (70)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	25	21
	Girls	14	13	15
	Total	35	38	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (63)	81 (59)	77 (59)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	264
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27.7

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12.5

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	44

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
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	£
Total income	544929
Total expenditure	556188
Expenditure per pupil	1980
Balance brought forward from previous year	16299
Balance carried forward to next year	5040

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	265
Number of questionnaires returned	66

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	40	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	51	8	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	51	5	2	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	54	6	5	17
The teaching is good.	54	43	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	49	8	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	45	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35	60	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	31	54	11	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	23	54	15	5	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	60	3	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	26	18	9	29

Other issues raised by parents

Some concerns were raised, both in written comments and in the meeting, about the good provision for pupils with special educational needs being maintained. Inspection evidence shows that, although there have been staff changes, the provision for special educational needs continues to be good.

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

59. The good provision for children in the nursery and reception classes, noted in the last inspection report, has been maintained. The programme of work takes proper account of recent changes in the curriculum for these children and planning is properly focused on the early learning goals. Children make good progress towards meeting these goals due mainly to good teaching, which is particularly effective in promoting the development of social skills in the nursery and creative skills in the reception class. Both teachers are experienced and acutely aware of the way that young children learn. They continue to make good provision for their needs.
60. Many children begin nursery with poorly developed skills in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal independence. A group of children enter the nursery at the beginning of each term and a number then move on to the reception class. The children in the current reception class have below average social skills. This is confirmed by the baseline assessment that has just been completed. There has been noticeable progress in developing personal and social skills and other areas of learning are beginning to improve. These particular children are likely to achieve the expected goals set for their personal, social and emotional development and for their creative and physical development. Only a few are on course to achieve the communication, language and literacy goals and those for mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
61. Fifty children attend the nursery, experiencing morning and afternoon sessions on a rotational arrangement. There are currently twelve children in the reception class. A number of children have special educational needs, mainly physical, and one child has a formal statement of his needs. Provision for these children is good and the class support staff in the reception class is very skilled at supporting the statemented child. The nursery is still housed in a standard-sized classroom but, at present, the room next door is not occupied and so activities range through the two rooms. Accommodation is therefore satisfactory. There is still no outdoor play area with a safe surface. There is nowhere to develop such an area and the teacher has to allow children to experience the large play equipment, such as the scooter and tricycle, in the spare classroom. This is not ideal but does enable children to benefit from these opportunities to extend their physical and social skills.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Nearly all children enter the nursery with immature skills in personal and social development but most children currently in the reception class are on target to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. This represents good achievement and is due to consistent teaching where standards of behaviour are clearly established. Children are taught to be polite when answering the register saying "Good morning/afternoon". They say "Thank you," when taking their snacks are ready for playtime. Children are given many opportunities to explore the wide range of activities that teachers provide in their classroom and they learn to co-operate and play well together. They know the routines of the classroom, for example that those in the reception class shop should put their names on the door so that there are not too many at a time. Occasionally there are minor disagreements, as when two boys want to operate the computer at the same time, but the problem is quickly resolved when the teacher says, "We have to take turns".
63. Pupils are generally very keen to learn but their concentration span is limited. Teachers recognise this and are sensitive to the needs of the children. For example, the nursery teacher is able to spend a good amount of time in a morning session, teaching phonics to the children who will be entering the reception class after Christmas. With a similar group in the afternoon, she realises that they are not as responsive and postpones the main activity until the next morning. It is during these group and class teaching sessions that rules for correct behaviour are taught. There are good relationships in both classes and adults are good role models, showing genuine pleasure, for example, when celebrating a birthday. The adults in the reception class are

particularly sensitive to those children with special educational needs and the other children learn from them how to look after these classmates and care for them.

Communication, language and literacy

64. Many pupils enter the nursery with poorly developed speaking skills. It is difficult to understand what some are saying. However, teachers are skilful in encouraging children to contribute to class discussions as they sit in their circle. Only a couple are reluctant to share their news and others, who do not speak clearly, have their news sensitively interpreted. This promotes good progress, though clear communication is still a problem in the current reception class where most of the children are not expected to reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Some still do not speak clearly and many find it difficult to talk at length, using sentences.
65. Teachers concentrate well on teaching basic skills and plans are very detailed for the term and for each week's activities. There is a suitable concentration on phonics and children enjoy learning the sounds of the letters and their associated actions. Most reception children know nearly all the individual letter sounds as the teacher holds up cards. A minority uses this phonic knowledge to identify the initial sound of words but very few can hear correctly the last sound in a simple word. Though only a few reception children write their own name, most find their name card without difficulty. In the nursery, some older children are beginning to form a few letters correctly and the teacher provides opportunities for them to practise.
66. The majority of children need help to write, although most soon learn to hold a pencil correctly. Much of their work needs interpretation and the teacher has to act as scribe for those who can only draw pictures to represent their news. An above average child is beginning to write with letters that are correctly formed and words that are suitably spaced. However, the words contain upper and lower case letters and the meaning of a few is not clear, e.g. 'pet' turns out to be 'played'. The teacher has high expectations and continually encourages children to remember correct practices, for example, to leave a finger space between words. During all activities, teachers skilfully engage children in conversation to encourage their use of language. In a physical education lesson, for example, the nursery teacher draws attention to vocabulary to describe the parachute that the children will be using.
67. Children are at the early stages of reading but they enjoy books. A few older children recognise up to twenty simple words and read simple texts. One such child recognises 'jam' and 'fish' by the first sound and uses the pictures to help her tell the story. Another child at an earlier stage uses the pictures entirely to tell the story of 'The Pancake'. He too knows the letter sounds but cannot use them to 'have a go' at the words. A below average child turns the pages but is reluctant to talk about the story, has poor concentration and wants to go off to another activity. All children in the reception class have regular opportunities to look at and talk about books, sometimes with a classroom assistant, and this promotes their learning.

Mathematical development

68. Teachers take every opportunity to encourage children to practise their mathematical skills. For example, at the start of each nursery session, children count together to discover how many are present and begin to use larger numbers. In the reception class, children playing in the shop are asked to change four pennies for the correct number of 2p coins. Mathematical skills are not well developed when children enter the nursery and the current group in the reception class are not expected to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Most children are gaining in confidence in their recognition of numbers up to 10. In the reception class, children are less confident about using numbers. For example, in a fishing game where they have to match the spots on a fish to the correct number, many are confused. Few can calculate the total number of spots on two fish. Only a small number is using mathematical language such as 'more' or 'less' when talking about numbers.
69. Children in the nursery class also have some difficulty matching the dots on a dice to the number on a card but, in a simpler activity, most correctly find matching pairs of coloured hands. The teacher therefore skilfully promotes learning through a series of activities that build on one

another. She makes good use of various games during a 'Number Day' when money is raised for a national charity through sponsorship. Children are very keen to take part and are encouraged to have a go at finding the correct shape that fits a space in a jigsaw puzzle. Most name a square and triangle correctly but are unsure over the circle.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Children enter the nursery with limited general knowledge but they are keen to learn. They are especially interested in using computers. Many become adept at using the mouse. For example, one boy in the reception class is particularly skilful at moving small fingers to the correct location on the giant he has constructed from various shapes. In the nursery class, an assistant gives clear instructions and good guidance to children as they learn to use the 'Dazzle' program to make interesting pictures and patterns. She realises that one boy needs her guiding hand to help him control the mouse and sensitively assists him. However, she does not use every opportunity to challenge the children to type their own name before printing their picture and does it herself.
71. In the reception class, children explore 'light'. One uses the word 'transparent' and shows how cellophane filters make different colours when held up to the light. This child also knows that you can see through a window but not through a door. Children are hampered in their explanations by underdeveloped language skills and the use of correct scientific terms is rare. They speak knowledgeably however about the features on the town map that they use when they play with cars and recognise the park, church, school, shops and houses. Nursery children are helped to know about the wider world by having a 'rainforest' in their classroom and models of many animals that might live there.
72. As Christmas approaches, most children know the story of Jesus' birth and about the characters in the story. They know the traditions associated with the festival. One girl in reception, colouring in a picture of a Christmas tree, observes that 'it is growing because it is in the ground'. Her teacher has introduced the 'signing' action for a Christmas tree during registration and she remembers this too. Adults continuously talk to children during activities to extend their learning asking such questions as "How do you know this is a camel?" and the reply comes, 'Because it has a hump.'

Creative development

73. Children's creative skills as they enter nursery are not as limited as in some other areas and they are expected to meet the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Classrooms contain attractive displays of a wide range of art work, using a broad variety of materials. Nursery children have mixed paints successfully to make a colour wheel. Most recognise all the basic colours. Teachers take good advantage of the excitement of Christmas to make cards and calendars and to practise skills through practical activities, such as printing and collage.
74. Nursery children sing 'Happy Birthday' confidently and they know the names of some musical instruments. Many of them sing along with favourite nursery rhymes that they call up on the computer. In their role-play activities, they often become absorbed in the activity. In the nursery, Postman Pat's delivery van is particularly popular and children act appropriately when driving it. In the reception class' post office, a girl speaks unselfconsciously on the telephone talking about what she is doing.
75. In this aspect of learning, as in all others, teachers and assistants are very observant and informative notes are regularly made about children's progress. These are formally recorded on 'detailed tracking' sheets that provide very good evidence of what children understand and can do.

Physical development

76. Children entering the nursery have lower levels of skills than are expected. They make good progress and are on course to achieve the early learning goals by five. Younger children have already developed this term a satisfactory sense of space, not bumping into one another, for

example, when crawling underneath the parachute. They run with control, although up to a third are rather flat-footed in their running technique. Many maintain a balance effectively. Nearly three-quarters dress themselves independently after physical education.

77. In the classroom, children in both classes build models from blocks that do not fall over and use tools and materials with increasing control. Reception children, for example, cover their sponges with paint and press them on to paper to make a print, realising the necessity to exert pressure. Teachers use praise particularly well to encourage children and boost their self-esteem. This encourages them to be adventurous and teachers have high expectations that children will be successful when trying out new techniques.
78. Within the confines of the classroom, children show good control of the large wheeled vehicles and sensibly negotiate a pathway when riding the scooter or the tricycle. The lack of an outside play area to use this equipment and to play on climbing apparatus does not appear to be hindering progress and teachers are doing their best in difficult circumstances.

ENGLISH

79. The attainment of seven and eleven-year-olds is in line with the national average. This represents considerable improvement since the last inspection, particularly at the end of Year 2. The results of national tests in 2000 show that the proportion of seven-year-olds achieving the required level (Level 2) is similar to national average but that a smaller proportion than is found nationally gained the higher level (Level 3). In writing, these pupils achieved results that reflect the average national figures. Eleven-year-olds matched the results found nationally both in the number gaining the expected level (Level 4) and in the number gaining the higher level (Level 5). When compared with similar schools, these results represent well above average standards. The school exceeded its target for these pupils and has revised the figure for 2001 with 81% now expected to achieve the expected standard. This is a more realistic, yet appropriately challenging figure.
80. These improved results are due to the cumulative effect of the Literacy Strategy which is now well established in the school and which is being taught effectively by most teachers. In addition, booster classes in the Spring Term were focused on Year 6 pupils. This enabled concentrated work, particularly in writing, to be planned for them and directed to improving specific elements of their work. Since 1997, there has been steady improvement in the results for seven-year-olds and the gap has gradually closed between the school and the national results, noticeably in writing. To close the gap entirely in reading, more pupils will need to achieve the higher standard. Except for a slight dip in results in 1999, standards for 11-year-olds have also steadily improved since 1997. They are now broadly in line with the national average. The school has done well to achieve these results. The school now analyses its results closely and areas for improvement are clearly identified in each aspect of English.
81. Pupils coming into Key Stage 1 have limited speaking skills, although most have learned how to listen carefully to the teacher. They make good progress so that by the age of seven, the standard of speaking is at the expected level. Steady progress is maintained through Key Stage 2 and standards are satisfactory by the time they reach eleven years of age. Teachers include many opportunities in their lessons for speaking skills to be practised and separate drama lessons are included on the timetable. This enhances the range of opportunities for pupils and enables them to extend their skills effectively. At Key Stage 1, discussions in 'circle times' and class assemblies give opportunities for pupils to express thoughts, for example, about what makes them scared. A five-year-old, who has composed an impressive poem at home about Jesus' birth, reads confidently and clearly to the class. At Key Stage 2, the oldest pupils take on rôles to read a script about 'The Emperor's New Clothes', adapting their voices to suit the character and speaking expressively. Many literacy lessons conclude with pupils reading out their work and teachers correctly encourage them to speak loudly and clearly enough for the class to hear. This promotes learning and gives good opportunities for the development of speaking skills.
82. As pupils enter Key Stage 1, they have a satisfactory understanding of letter-sounds and an

interest in books, but have limited early reading skills. They make good progress and, by the age of seven, the expected number is achieving the required standard. Above average pupils read accurately and expressively and are usually able to decode an unknown word by building it up, accurately using the letter sounds. However, a significant number has difficulty in explaining the story or expressing an opinion about it. The school has identified this weakness. Strategies are being developed so that these skills can be practised to improve standards and achieve the higher levels in tests. Average pupils do not always read fluently because of the need to decipher words and occasional uncertainties about phonics. For example, a word such as 'proud' presents problems because of uncertainty about the 'ou' sound. Below average pupils sometimes guess words using the initial sound to help them. Occasionally they reverse words - reading 'was' for 'saw' - but generally they have a reasonable sight vocabulary and cope with their books.

83. Many pupils make good progress through the Key Stage 2. Most eleven-year-olds are fluent readers, and employ a good range of strategies to decipher words, including self-correction. A few pupils quote favourite authors such as Anne Fine or Jacqueline Wilson, although their interest in reading is not always enthusiastic. They indicate that they often find other school subjects more appealing. Hardly any pupil explains how to locate a book in a library using its classification system and this is general throughout the school. The lack of a school library is having a detrimental effect on standards but there are plans for refurbishing and re-stocking a room that will become the library. Pupils know the purpose of the index or contents page but information books are by no means as attractive to them as fiction. Most Year 6 pupils have a free choice of reading material and occasionally they pick unsuitable books. A below average pupil, for example, struggles with a 'Harry Potter' book and an average pupil who has the technical know-how to read the words does not understand what some of them mean – including detour and pinnacle. However, an above average girl clearly understands the story and reads expressively. Pupils throughout the school keep a reading diary in which books are recorded as well as notes made by parents and sometimes by teachers. These are well maintained.
84. Many pupils struggle with writing when they enter Key Stage 1. Some of their work needs interpretation by the teacher well into the first term of Year 1. They make good progress in handwriting and, by seven of age, most pupils produce correctly formed letters that are consistent in size. A few are joining their letters accurately. However, there was a noticeable variation in the quality of the work that was submitted for scrutiny by the inspectors. In one class, there was an obvious difference in the volume, quality and neatness of work and this teacher sets higher standards for pupils to attain. The above average pupil in this class, for example, is writing lengthy stories showing good understanding of sentences, is using speech marks, apostrophes and a range of connecting words other than 'and' or 'but'. The above average pupil in another class does not reach this standard. The work instead is similar to that of the average pupil in the better class. These pupils write in simple sentences and use appropriate words to convey meaning. Spelling however presents problems, especially for below average pupils. They struggle to hear the middle sounds of words like *went* – writing *want* – or *park* – writing *prak*. Again, the school has identified this as an area for development. All Key Stage 1 pupils have a target card containing words that they should learn to read and words that they should learn to spell. This is a useful strategy so long as the target words are reviewed regularly.
85. Pupils continue to make sound progress at Key Stage 2 and a wide range of formal work is practised by them in accordance with the Literacy Strategy. However, teachers do not enable pupils to extend their independent writing skills consistently through a broad range of writing opportunities. By eleven, most pupils have developed a fluent, legible style of handwriting and produce work that interests the reader, whether it is a story, a letter or a report. Above average pupils are beginning to write in complex sentences using exciting vocabulary. In one lesson, for example, pupils suggested a number of words like *obscure* and *secretive* as alternatives to mysterious and in a piece of writing, adverbs like *sarcastically* are used to describe how a speech is delivered. Average pupils write in paragraphs and include correctly punctuated direct speech but their sentence construction and vocabulary is less adventurous. Below average pupils continue to find spelling difficult though they do convey their meaning successfully by using phonetically recognisable attempts. As in Key Stage 1, all pupils have targets written into their books on which they must focus. Teachers mark individual books with these targets in mind and marking is generally good. Teachers are not only supportive in their comments but include

suggestions of how to improve. A Year 5 pupil is urged to 'describe the pain of your hunger' in a story and the teacher writes an example of how this can be achieved. Pupils are used to re-drafting their work and links are successfully made with other subjects to enhance literacy skills. In a religious education lesson, for example, looking at 'The Parable of the Sower', pupils recognise alliteration in a poem that the teacher uses to illustrate the story – 'softly the scattered seed sank to earth'. Word-processing programs are used by teachers to present work – some of it is attractively displayed in classrooms.

86. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others. A particularly effective programme of 'reading recovery' is having a dramatic effect with the poorest readers in Year 1. Through one-to-one lessons every day, these pupils are making very good progress. This is promoted by very good teaching that boosts their self-esteem and provides a planned programme of work that is entirely suited to their needs. In classes, teachers use assistants well to record pupils' responses during whole-class sessions and then to help groups of below average pupils during the activity sessions. Year 3 pupils, for example, are withdrawn to an adjoining room to compile a list of 'ae' words. This enables them to have the attention that they need and extends their knowledge and use of phonics.
87. Teaching is good overall throughout the school but it differs in quality within each set of parallel classes. In the three Key Stage 1 classes, the contrast is dramatic with one excellent literacy lesson, one good and one satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, the range is from satisfactory to very good. This variation affects how well pupils react to the subject and how well they learn. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and are aware of the importance of teaching basic skills. This is particularly important with the younger pupils and, in the excellent lesson, pupils are shown in great detail how to form a letter including the 'flick' needed to join it. The teacher chooses pupils to demonstrate this to the rest of the class thus reinforcing learning. Lessons are planned thoroughly and teachers clearly identify the learning that they want to take place. Some, but not all, share this learning intention with the pupils and return to it at the end of the lesson to assess whether it has been achieved. This helps pupils to become aware of their own learning and gives a clear purpose to the review time. Often, this time is not used to take learning forward and simply involves pupils describing what they have done during the activity session. Where there was a discussion about how work could be improved, as in Year 1 and 2 literacy session, this extended pupils' learning and promoted higher standards.
88. The greatest contrast in teaching relates to what teachers expect from pupils and the pace at which lessons are conducted. The best teachers set high standards. Pupils in one class know, for example, that they must present work neatly by writing the date and underlining the title. These good teachers also plan challenging work that differs for each ability group but which extends the learning of everyone. A minimum of time is spent explaining the tasks and pupils quickly set to work and sustain concentration throughout. Most teachers manage their classes well. A small number does not consistently use clear behavioural strategies to ensure pupils are settled and concentrating before lessons can continue. This is a distinguishing feature of the three sound lessons compared with those of good quality. In a Year 5 and 6 class, for example, there was a small number of particularly difficult pupils. The teacher managed to hold their interest with a play-reading session at the start of the lesson but struggled to maintain a 'working atmosphere' during the subsequent written work. Most teachers have good relationships with pupils. They use praise appropriately to boost self-esteem and engender confidence so that pupils have a secure atmosphere in which to learn. Teachers' questions are used well to effectively encourage pupils to think, for example, about the feelings of the soldiers inside the Trojan horse as they wait for battle. Appropriate homework is set throughout the school. All pupils know, for example, that they are expected to read regularly at home for a set amount of time.
89. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator who is fairly new to the post. She has made a remarkable difference in a short time and effectively monitors the subject by observing lessons and by scrutinising planning and pupils' work. A portfolio of assessed work is well maintained and offers clear examples against which teachers assess the work of their pupils. Assessment systems are much improved since the last inspection. A range of standardised tests is taken, and the results are analysed to discover areas of weakness. Samples of pupils' independent

writing are regularly assessed and these provide useful evidence of progress. Special events, such as Book Week, promote interest in English and, at the same time, raise money to supplement resources.

MATHEMATICS

90. The results of the 2000 national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 show that while the large majority attains the average standard nationally, relatively few attain higher levels. Overall, the results are well below the national average and below those achieved the previous year. Until this year, results had shown a steady improvement. The inspection findings broadly support the improving trend in test results. Standards are average for pupils aged seven. Most pupils are attaining the national standard but only a small proportion attains higher levels.
91. Standards among pupils aged eleven have improved considerably. The results of the 2000 national tests show a very significant increase upon those of the previous year. Almost all pupils attained the national standard and a substantial proportion attained above it. Overall, the pupils' results are well above average both nationally and for similar schools. Until this year pupils' results had kept pace with the national trend but were well below it. The inspection findings confirm the marked improvement since the previous inspection. Standards are average overall. Most pupils attain the national standard. A significant number are on target to attain above it, although not as many as last year. The current Year 6 contains a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
92. By the age of seven, most pupils count sets of objects reliably, and use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to at least 10. Pupils know the multiplication tables for 2, 5 and 10. They put this knowledge to good use in solving simple problems, which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. For example, pupils collected class information on bedtimes and displayed this on a tally chart, which gave good practice in counting in fives. They then illustrated this effectively on a pictogram or bar chart and developed a good awareness of shape and line measurement. Some pupils find it more difficult to recall simple number facts and need much more practice. A good example of this was seen on 'National Number Day' when pupils played a variety of board games to reinforce their understanding of number and its uses. Most pupils know the names of two-dimensional-shapes and count corners and sides accurately. A few pupils name shapes from their description or by touch, when blindfold.
93. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a secure grasp of place value and the four operations of number. They understand and use factors and multiples effectively. They know about prime numbers. Pupils use what they learn in mathematical investigations, which confirm and extend knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils investigated the most commonly used letters in the alphabet and illustrated their findings on a computer drawn bar chart or pie chart. They show a good understanding of the rotational and reflective symmetry of plane shapes, and use mirrors effectively to check their results. Pupils gain good practice in the use of number by studying television schedules and deciding the optimal programming for the video recorder. Pupils have a good understanding of the rules of probability and accurately place events on a probability line. In anticipation of the holiday, pupils calculate the cost of giving a party. This provides a good test of their problem solving and number skills and relates numeracy to every day life.

94. Pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6 a good foundation has been laid for mathematics in the secondary school. Pupils' progress is enhanced by daily practice in mental calculation. Pupils are asked to explain their thinking and so confirm their learning. They are encouraged to use mathematical language. Pupils with special educational needs are given sound support in all classes but they cannot always get help when they most need it. Generally, these pupils make sound progress towards the achievement of their personal targets. All pupils have the opportunity to confirm their knowledge of number and shape by using computer programs.
95. Numeracy skills are used well in other areas of the curriculum. In history, pupils correctly place historical events on a time line. In design and technology, they accurately measure the materials needed in construction and in religious education, pupils draw rangoli patterns to demonstrate their knowledge of Hindu festivals. In science, pupils measure accurately in conducting experiments..
96. Throughout the school the quality of teaching is sound and it has many good features. Teachers plan their work well together and share good practice. This allows all pupils to have equal access to the curriculum. Teachers manage pupils sensitively and take individual needs into account. Relationships are often very good and always based on mutual respect. This has a profound effect upon pupils' confidence and their ability to learn. Some older boys take advantage of the creative learning environment, distract the teacher and spoil the learning for other pupils. Teachers deal promptly and effectively with such interruptions but the overall effects are to lessen attainment. They explain carefully and sequentially what pupils have to do and build well on pupils' prior learning. They organise mental and oral work effectively, although the pace is sometimes not brisk enough and does not motivate pupils in the way intended. Teachers are well aware of what pupils know, understand and can do. Formal assessment procedures are well developed and provide a strong basis for informed planning.
97. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements. All attainment targets are given appropriate time and focus, to a greater extent that was apparent at the previous inspection. There is a commendable emphasis on the application of mathematics to solving practical problems. The subject is well managed and this promotes good quality learning and greatly improved levels of attainment in Key Stage 2. The co-ordinators' role in monitoring standards and reviewing the effectiveness of teaching is well developed. Consequently teachers work as a team and share the commitment to further improvement in attainment. The school has set ambitious targets for future attainment. There are very good displays of pupils' work in the classrooms and corridors that stimulate learning. Pupils' positive attitudes consistently underpin the teaching and learning of mathematics.

SCIENCE

98. Assessment by teachers at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 showed that the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels of attainment was in line with the national average. These results are also in line in comparison with similar schools. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000, the attainment of pupils was in line with the national average but well above average in comparison with similar schools, both for those achieving the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. Until 1999, the results at Key Stage 2, although following national trends, remained consistently below the national average but rose to meet the average in 2000. This shows a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards of attainment at both key stages were below average and the raising of standards was a key issue. This improvement has been due to the setting up of a science working party across the school, which has monitored the progress of each year group by carefully assessing and tracking a selected group of pupils within each year group. They identified and focused on weaker areas within science. An analysis of national test results has also been used to identify areas of weakness. Teachers also sample pupils' work each term and ascribe levels, so keeping a further check on progress. In Year 6 pupils use previous test papers to revise their work in science, prior to national testing, so helping to raise their performance. From the work seen of the current Year 6 pupils, standards overall are in line with those nationally but with a lower proportion likely to achieve the higher level than in the

previous year. This is due, in part, to a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

99. Pupils throughout both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress overall. By the age of seven pupils recognise that living things grow, and that the food people eat can affect their health and growth. They have a satisfactory knowledge of sound and hearing, knowing that sound waves travel through the air and are picked up by the ear. Many know that some animals have more sensitive hearing to aid survival. More able pupils identify the parts of the ear, and that the brain translates vibrations into recognisable sounds. They begin to make and record investigations, for example that sound fades over distance. By the age of eleven pupils carry out more scientific investigations, making predictions and understanding the need for fair testing. They have a satisfactory understanding of materials and their properties. They know that some changes made to materials are irreversible and that there are different methods for separating substances, including evaporation. When studying physical processes they have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of light, being able to explain how shadows are formed. A small minority generalises effectively about the angle of reflected light. In Year 3/4, pupils demonstrated a sound knowledge of magnetism by comparing, through investigation, the strength of different magnets. They have a good knowledge and understanding of teeth, what they are made of, the various types of teeth and their functions within different animals, and how diet can affect them.
100. The quality of teaching overall is sound. Teachers plan lessons well, with clearly identified learning objectives. They share these with pupils so that they know the purpose of the lesson. Scientific vocabulary is shown in planning and carefully introduced during lessons. Teachers prepare activities effectively and help to maintain pupils' interest and enthusiasm. This was clearly demonstrated in an excellent Year 3/4 lesson, where pupils had six well-planned activities on the subject of teeth, which they studied in turn. From these activities, they gained a good deal of knowledge about teeth and, by carrying out their own investigations, developed good understanding. In the better lessons, there were effective introductions with pupils being involved in discussions, and teachers skilfully questioning pupils about past and present learning. Teachers carefully target questions to assess the progress being made both by the class and individual pupils. This was evident in a very good Year 1/2 lesson where pupils were discussing sound.
101. Teachers do not have consistent expectations of pupils. This is evident from the range of progress made in lessons and from pupils' recorded work. For example, in one Year ½ class the work produced by pupils is clearly of a higher standard and reflects higher expectations. Some unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes have an effect on learning, particularly at the upper end of Key Stage 2. Teachers spend considerable time managing the behaviour of a few pupils. This stops the flow of the lesson and restricts the time that teachers can give to the rest of the class. In other classes there is occasional restlessness and lack of concentration which teachers do not always manage effectively, for example in a Year ¾ lesson on teeth, where pupils did not fully settle to the planned activities, at times wandering around and off task. In the more successful lessons, teachers have very good relationships with their classes and these promote successful learning. Pupils listen carefully and want to do their best for the teacher; they work well in groups, sharing resources and discussing the tasks set. Classroom assistants provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs. At the end of each unit of study, teachers record how well pupils have achieved, showing whether they have failed to reach, reached or exceeded learning objectives. Teachers use these records effectively to inform lesson planning. Literacy and numeracy skills are well used in science, for example when writing up investigations and measuring, recording and analysing results. The developing use of information and communication technology is part of the current school improvement plan.

ART AND DESIGN

102. A limited number of lessons was observed at Key Stage 2 during the inspection. Evidence from these and from pupils' work indicates that standards in art and design are in line with expectations at both key stages, showing that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
103. Pupils practise essential skills and techniques regularly, using a range of materials, throughout the school, although they are not always developed consistently. They are introduced to the work of well-known artists and to images from different cultures, for example through carefully reproducing pictures of ancient Greek vases. They have a sound understanding of tone and texture, often working in tones of a particular colour as in the painted winter landscapes produced by Year 3/4. They are taught to observe closely, carefully drawing what they see, for example when creating portraits or pictures of still life. Many pupils work in clay, producing, for instance, detailed Tudor figures.
104. In the lessons observed in Key Stage 2, teaching and learning were good overall. Teachers have high expectations, preparing tasks that are both interesting and challenging. For example, in the Year 3/4 lessons observed, pupils were reproducing Tudor portraits by pouncing, pricking outlines onto paper using a photocopied image, or by segmenting pictures and reproducing each segment one by one. Pupils work hard in lessons, generally concentrating well on their tasks and accepting suggestions from their teachers on how to improve its quality. However, there is little opportunity provided to evaluate and comment on each other's work as a means of improvement. In a Year 5/6 lesson though, pupils did not concentrate particularly well, and a few needed to be carefully coaxed by the class teacher to continue with activities instead of just giving up. This restricted the time that could be given to other pupils within the lesson. Pupils use their artistic skills to support work in other curriculum areas, for example, the models of Tudor houses carefully made by Year 3/4 pupils. Some use is made of information and communication technology to create pictures and designs, using programs such as 'Dazzle', although this is not consistently developed throughout the school.
105. The school has recently introduced a national scheme of work, to begin to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are built on well throughout the school. The evidence from pupils' sketch books and previous work shows that, although pupils' skills and techniques are of a sound standard, they are not consistently developed in all classes. They do not always show sufficient breadth. Records are not kept of pupils' ongoing development of skills and techniques. A visiting artist has helped to produce a 'Millennium Mosaic' to which all pupils contributed, and pupils take part in interesting community projects, for example the 'Guardian Angels' Project' in Barnstaple.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. Due to the timetable arrangements it was not possible to observe any lessons in design and technology during the inspection. From a discussion with the coordinator and an analysis of recorded work and articles made, standards are judged to meet expectations at both key stages. This shows an improvement on the previous inspection where a key issue was to raise standards at Key Stage 2. A thorough review of the subject and the more recent introduction of a national scheme of work have largely brought about this improvement. They provide a clear structure throughout the school, and increase teacher confidence in teaching the subject. The ongoing development of necessary skills is now taking place, but pupils, particularly at the upper end of the school, have not had the opportunity to fully develop and use the range of skills required.
107. Pupils in Year 5/6 have made a satisfactory investigation of musical instruments, carefully drawing and showing their different parts and the materials used. They have designed and made their own instruments, realising, at the time, their own limitations. This is shown in their task evaluation sheets where they rate their own making skills. However, a few of these sheets are filled in quickly and lack detail, indicating some lack of positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils in Year 1/2 have looked at buildings past and present. They have considered how walls are built and, using construction toys, have made walls, which are stable. They have practised cutting,

scoring and making hinges when making three-dimensional sculptures. In Year 3/4 pupils have recently started to look at 'moving monsters' with a control mechanism based on pneumatics. The time allocated for this project, eleven hours, is part of the arrangements for using blocks of time for design and technology and art and design, to ensure that both are covered adequately. Teachers focus on specific making-skills, which are then built on in more detail in the next term. The subject is due for further review within the school improvement plan for 2001-2.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. This is an improvement at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection when standards were below national expectations. Good teaching, together with very good use of national subject guidance, has improved standards. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 2 due to the half-termly focus being on historical topics. Evidence was gained from an analysis of pupils' work covered earlier in the term and on display, and by talking to staff and pupils. Standards are average at the end of Key Stage 2. There was no judgement on attainment at Key Stage 2 at the last inspection.
109. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of their local area and use correct geographical terminology confidently and accurately. This is a good improvement on the weakness reported in the previous inspection. For example, when a group of Year 2 pupils talk about the River Yeo, they explain that the "large bend in the river is called a meander". Teachers use questions very effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of geographical terms, for example, 'land use' and the site of particular local industry. Most Year 1 and 2 pupils draw good, simple sketch maps to show their route to school. They make effective use of symbols to represent trees, houses and other features. Many accurately name different types of buildings, for example, 'hotel', 'terraced' and 'semi-detached houses'. They have an above average understanding of how pollution affects the environment, for example, some more-able Year 2 pupils confidently explain how the ring road has reduced traffic in the town but made it very noisy for those who live near this road.
110. There was insufficient evidence to see if the good quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 was continued at Key Stage 2. Most Year 3 and 4 pupils extend their mapping skills and their local knowledge and understanding effectively by accurately drawing a map of the school and its location. They show a sound, and often good understanding of the countries of the United Kingdom, its main cities and its location in Europe. For example, many Year 4 pupils accurately locate cities such as Bristol, Liverpool and London on a United Kingdom map. These are built on well in Years 5 and 6, for example, when pupils extend their understanding of the countries of Europe as part of the history topic on Ancient Greece. Many Year 6 pupils know that maps are used to show different features, for example, a more-able pupil explained that physical maps show mountains, rivers, seas and oceans. They explain that 'climate' is "what the weather is usually like in a particular country" and know that the temperature and rainfall in India are higher than in this country.
111. Teaching was consistently good at Key Stage 1 and is a significant factor in improving standards. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it very well to promote pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 lesson, the teacher used good knowledge of the local area, together with good subject knowledge, to develop pupils' understanding of the environmental effects of noise pollution and the importance of location for the local pottery factory. Teachers plan in detail, using national guidelines effectively to give a clear focus to each lesson. They use introductory activities to link pupils' work successfully to the previous lesson. Teachers then use the plenary activity to review what has been learned in the lesson and to prepare the pupils well for their next lesson.. This gives pupils a clear sense of purpose in their learning and encourages them to build on prior skills and knowledge. For example, the teacher used the plenary activity effectively in a Year 1 and 2 lesson to enable pupils to share with each other what they had learnt about Barnstaple. The teacher used a display of pupils' work on the local area to encourage them to think about other factors, which affect the quality of their lives. The teacher informs the pupils that they need to come to the next geography lesson ready to discuss these ideas.

112. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and work to which they readily respond. For example, they challenged pupils to write a list of their favourite and least favourite places in their town and also to give the reasons behind their choice. Teachers enable all pupils, in mixed-age and mixed ability classes, to make good progress in their learning by challenging them to apply their knowledge and skills at their ability level. For example, Year 2 pupils and more-able Year 1 pupils drew particular local places and wrote sentences to explain reasons for liking or disliking them. Other Year 1 pupils drew and named their places, then talked to the teacher about their choices.
113. The subject is managed well. The subject co-ordinator has established a clear well-organised curriculum, based on a two-year rolling programme of geographical topics. It allows for all required aspects to be covered. The co-ordinator has developed a checklist to monitor plans and ensure that skills are built effectively on prior knowledge and understanding. This has improved considerably since the last inspection and enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make at least sound progress in their learning. Opportunities for the subject co-ordinator to evaluate the quality of teaching and share good practice are not established.

HISTORY

114. Standards in history are in line with those expected nationally in both key stages. This is the same as at the last inspection. However, fewer lessons could be seen this time since history was a focus of work for Key Stage 2 only. Judgements about standards at Key Stage 1 are based on a scrutiny of work, teachers' plans, and talking to staff and pupils.
115. Seven-year-olds are gaining a satisfactory understanding that some things are old and that things were done differently in the past. They observe differences in a Victorian house and in the household objects that might have been used, such as a kettle or a telephone. The work is linked effectively with geography and their walk around the streets enables pupils to observe differences in houses, depending on their age. This helps them to develop a questioning attitude and close observation of things around them. By eleven, this realisation that history influences our life today is becoming clearer to the pupils. For example, in their study of Ancient Greece, many of them knew that the Greek language forms the root of many of our words and that Pythagoras' theorem and the doctors' Hippocratic Oath can be traced back to the work of these famous Greeks. Pupils' books show that the topic has been studied in some depth with a wide range of Greek life being explored. The pupils say they have enjoyed the work, particularly the myths and legends surrounding the Gods.
116. Progress is satisfactory across the school for the majority of pupils including those with special educational needs. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 study the Tudor period and particularly the life of Henry VIII to improve their understanding of the past. In one lesson, they developed their historical skills effectively by compiling questions that they might ask to discover information about the King. They have a sound factual knowledge of the period and have benefited, in particular, from a visit by 'Jack Green', a time traveller from the period, who introduces them to aspects of his life and inspires good work that is made up into a class book.
117. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection. One was unsatisfactory and the other two were sound because the teachers were able to provide activities that caught the pupils' imagination. This did not happen in the unsatisfactory lesson. Pupils were not interested in writing notes about Greek philosophers from the information they were given and this resulted in a deterioration in behaviour. The class contains a small number of pupils who have been identified as having particular behaviour problems. Their disruptive actions spread so that up to one-third of the class were not gainfully employed at any one time. The teacher did not deal successfully with the underlying inattention. Not enough pupils had completed their work by the end of the lesson and progress was unsatisfactory. In the other lessons, teachers displayed sufficient skill and knowledge to explain the work and subsequently assess the difficulties that pupils encountered. One lesson was stopped and further explanation given thus helping pupils to learn

without the need to waste time. In this lesson too, pupils used the Internet successfully to download information about Archimedes so that they could continue their research into his achievements. Resources generally were appropriate and used well and time targets were set to enable pupils to work at a suitable pace.

118. Pupils benefit from a planned programme of visits and visitors that enhance pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The curriculum is appropriately planned using a rolling cycle of topics so that work is not repeated. Teachers, rather than the co-ordinator, are responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient resources to teach the topics. The co-ordinator however does provide information about the availability and suitability of resources and improves them where shortages are identified. History is used well to develop literacy skills. The oldest pupils, for example, practise their instructional writing by listing what they must do to make Medusa's mask. Appropriate links with other subjects are also made. There is word-processed work about the Tudors using a suitable, 'archaic' font and an impressive display of clay models of Tudor figures.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils at seven years of age. They are below the standards expected of pupils at the age of eleven. Attainment is similar to the levels reported in the last inspection at Key Stage 1 but just below that reported for Key Stage 2. Although pupils are benefiting from recent improvements in resources, those in Years 5 and 6 have not had sufficiently frequent and regular opportunities to develop and extend their information and communication technology skills. For example, many pupils have weak keyboard skills and these restrict the amount of work they achieve in the limited time they have using the computer.
120. There was only one opportunity to observe the direct teaching of skills during the inspection. Evidence was gained from looking at pupils' work in folders and on display around the school, and by talking to staff and pupils.
121. Pupils' skills are developed soundly in Key Stage 1. Most teachers are secure and confident in their subject knowledge and organise the classes effectively to enable pupils to have regular opportunities to develop their skills. For example, many Year 1 and 2 pupils are beginning to apply their mouse and keyboard skills effectively to create a picture for a calendar. Most load the drawing program confidently. They use the mouse, and an increasing understanding of the program, to create, save and print an attractive picture. They show a sound understanding of how to use the various options to change shapes and colour in creating their calendar picture. Pupils use their early word processing skills effectively in literacy to rewrite stories they have read, for example *Zug the Bug*, and poems to describe 'active and inactive'. Teachers in Key Stage 1 are beginning to use pupils' improving information and communication technology skills to promote standards in other subjects. For example, pupils worked together well, often with support, to find out some information about minibeasts in science. They used information from a mathematics lesson to use a data-handling program to create bar charts and line-graphs on pupils' different stride-lengths. Year 1 and 2 pupils use a microphone and tape-recorder with increasing confidence, for example, to listen to different sounds in science.
122. In Key Stage 2, teachers do not consistently ensure that all pupils are given frequent and regular opportunities to apply and extend their skills. There is significant variation between classes in the use of information and communication technology. Teachers use national guidance effectively to plan to cover all required aspects, although some resource problems have restricted the development of some aspects of control technology. All teachers plan to include some opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, but these are not consistently implemented in all classes. Those pupils who have access to a home computer, or who are in classes where teachers are more confident in teaching basic skills, have a sound knowledge and understanding. A group of Year 6 pupils confidently explained how they used the Internet to get information for their history topic on 'The Ancient Greeks'. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use their word processing skills successfully to produce some good quality poems and prose on *Winter*. Some describe accurately how they used different techniques, for example, spell-checking, creating borders, changing font style and including pictures through scanning and from the digital camera. They

save their work well to their own electronic folders. Some pupils are beginning to use electronic mail, for example, to thank a writer who visited the school. Pupils with special educational needs are given regular opportunities to use programs to enable them to promote their skills soundly, especially in literacy and numeracy. However, there are many pupils who are not confident in using information and communication technology. They have weak keyboard and mouse skills, and below expected knowledge and understanding of how to use their skills to raise their standards in other subjects, for example science and numeracy.

123. The school is aware of the weaknesses and has implemented an information and communication technology action plan to raise standards. The teaching staff are receiving training to improve subject knowledge and confidence. Many are using good quality software, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to promote these key skills. Each class has at least one good quality computer and the detailed action plan clearly indicates how the school plans further improvements in resources. The subject co-ordinator gives positive leadership and is actively and enthusiastically implementing the action plan. She uses a lunchtime computer club to enhance the range of opportunities for pupils, particularly those with no home computer, and has involved pupils successfully in creating a school web-page. She has had some opportunities to observe in classrooms other than her own, and there has been some progress in encouraging teachers to keep work portfolios as evidence of their own improving expertise. However, the school has not closely evaluated the impact of inconsistent learning opportunities on pupils' learning in order to clearly target areas for development.

MUSIC

124. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their age and enjoy a good range of music making activities. The school emphasises performance and, as a result, the standard of singing in the school is particularly good and above the standard expected nationally. This was most in evidence in assembly as the pupils prepared for the end of term concert and at the weekly choir practice. During the inspection week the choir entertained local senior citizens with a wide variety of songs beautifully sung. Good quality tuition provided by visiting specialists in keyboard and string instruments offers support to the curriculum, although relatively few pupils take the opportunity to learn to play. Pupils enjoy listening to music and are asked to say how it makes them feel. Composing is not as strongly developed as other parts of the curriculum but some pupils have had practice in working from a simple score.
125. Younger pupils learn to sing a variety of songs, skilfully directed by the teacher and accompanied by a well-produced commercial tape. They sing confidently and with evident enjoyment. They are aware of the pulse of the music and they keep a steady time and put the emphasis in the right places. They sing rhythmically and expressively and understand the difference between loud and soft. Pupils are aware that music creates a particular atmosphere and respond well to the 'shimmering sounds of a moonlight scene'. They carefully select percussion instruments and gently accompany themselves as they sing 'Moonlight'. Pupils make good progress in this early part of their musical education.
126. Older pupils continue to progress and perform accurately and confidently. They show a good awareness of phrasing and also of other performers. They sing songs in unison and practice control of pitch and musical expression. Pupils sit in a large circle and clap rhythms accurately. They know the names of the musical notes and their relative values. Pupils make a good, rhythmic response to a 'rock and rap' *Shooby Shoo* and perform energetically. Pupils cleverly interact, singing four rhythms simultaneously. They finish the lesson with an impressive version of a Tudor dance, which neatly complements work in other areas of the curriculum. The senior class works hard to form its own orchestra and choral group to perform *American Pie*. Pupils quickly establish a lively mood and a rumbustious performance. Pupils sing robustly and accompany themselves vigorously on percussion instruments. Pupils evaluate their performance and identify ways in which it can be improved. A few boys, who lack the creative discipline demanded by the lesson content, spoil the enjoyment of others.
127. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The music co-ordinator

teaches all classes in Years 3 and 4 and here teaching is very good. Teachers work well together and share good practice in year group planning. The co-ordinator guides the teaching of music very well and, on the whole, the teachers are secure in their musical skills and in their ability to teach the subject. They make skilled use of the available resources. Teachers and pupils make music together, which provides a creative environment in which pupils are pleased to demonstrate what they know and can do. Teachers manage their classes well and usually find an appropriate balance between creativity and control. Although, teachers are well aware of what the pupils know, understand and can do, there is no formal assessment of pupils' skills, although this is planned for the near future.

128. Music is in a stronger position than at the previous inspection. The policy for music is clear and is reflected well in the scheme of work. All pupils have sufficient time to enjoy music. There are regular concerts in school that are well attended by parents. The school choir has sung in Exeter cathedral and has combined its talents with those of the local secondary school. Music is enthusiastically led by the subject co-ordinator and is strongly supported by teachers and pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Standards are average at both key stages and have been maintained at a similar level to that reported in the last inspection. Attainment in dance is above expected standards. It is promoted by good teaching and pupils' consistently positive approach. Boys and girls are equally enthusiastic in both dance and games activities. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their skills in dance. They make sound progress in learning games skills and their knowledge and understanding of how to apply these skills in a competitive activity.
130. Pupils in Key Stage 1 worked very enthusiastically to create a short dance sequence linked to their work in literacy. They showed good control, and linked their movements well to the music and to the words of the story. Most remembered the sequence well when asked to perform it to an audience of Nursery children. Some more-able pupils used good changes in pace and direction, for example, in developing a spiral movement and in interpreting an ice-skating sequence. The teacher managed the class very well and maintained a good pace to the activity to retain pupils' interest and active involvement. She encouraged higher standards effectively by reminding pupils of the correct techniques, for example, position and extension of the arms, although pupils were given few opportunities to evaluate their performance and suggest ways in which they could improve its quality.
131. Pupils build on these skills successfully at Key Stage 2. In a Year 3 and 4 dance lesson, pupils recalled specific dance steps from the previous lesson. They linked them effectively with newly learnt steps to create a short Tudor dance sequence. The teacher used pupil demonstration effectively to clearly show how to develop their movements, closely to the rhythm and beat of the music. Pupils in a Year 5 and 6 lesson co-operated very successfully together to create a dance based on the Greek legend of the Battle of Marathon, linked to their history topic. Boys and girls worked very well together. They listened carefully to the music and discussed and developed their ideas effectively. They included a good range of movements to clearly reflect the changes in the mood of the music and the physical aggression of the battle. The lesson had a very positive, vibrant and lively learning atmosphere. The good relationship between the teacher and the pupils ensured that everyone tried very hard and was very keen to succeed. Pupils listened carefully to any points, which would improve the standard of their performance. They worked well together to try to use them. This enabled a high quality to be achieved.
132. Pupils' games skills are soundly developed at Key Stage 2. Most Year 5 and 6 pupils controlled a ball successfully with their foot when dribbling it around a series of cones. They showed a sound body position, especially when moving slowly to ensure good control. Few pupils were aware of the need to ensure that the ball is kept ahead of the body when increasing their speed. This led to lower standards of attainment. Most Year 5 and 6 pupils have a good understanding of the need to use space well to create more opportunities for successfully passing and receiving

the ball. Their knowledge of individual defensive principles is sound and they applied them well in partner activities. Pupils' understanding of how to defend well in larger group or team activities is not fully developed. For example, most Year 5 and 6 pupils were successful when required to mark in one-on-one football and netball practices. Most were not able to use this skill in a team activity as they were not able to co-operate with other team members to restrict opponents' space. Some uncertainties in teachers' specific subject knowledge and pupils' enthusiasm to 'play a game' rather than focus on their skills limited standards in team activities.

133. Year 2 and 3 pupils are timetabled for weekly swimming sessions, but they have been postponed till later in the year due to the current refurbishment of the local authority's swimming facilities. Certificates and other swimming awards indicate that standards are generally in line with those expected for their age, although Year 4 pupils are now included in this year's plans as a higher than usual number did not achieve their 25 metre certificate.
134. The quality of teaching is good. It was good in 60 per cent of the lessons observed. Teaching was never less than sound. Good teaching promoted high standards in dance. Teachers manage their classes very well and encourage pupils to participate enthusiastically and try to achieve a high standard. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, the teacher had high expectations of pupils' attitude and involvement in developing a dance sequence based on a Greek legend. Pupils responded very positively, and the teacher used her good subject knowledge well to remind pupils over ways in which they could improve the quality of their performance. Teachers plan and organise their lessons well to ensure that activities link together effectively. They maintain a good pace to lessons, which ensures that pupils are fully and actively involved. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 games lesson, the teacher organised a good range of individual and group activities to allow pupils to practise their skills then apply them in partner and team competition. This ensured that pupils used the time well to extend their games skills. Where teaching was less effective, although still sound overall, teachers did not consistently encourage pupils to evaluate their own performance or that of others. They did not focus on ways on which the standards could be improved. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 games lesson, the teacher enabled pupils to practise their skills effectively in a good range of activities. The teacher did not take the opportunity to stop the activities in order to encourage pupils to identify some of the reasons for their lack of success. This did not enable pupils to attain higher standards and apply their skills more accurately and in co-operation with others.
135. The school has reduced some time for teaching physical education since the last inspection, due to the increased focus given to literacy and numeracy. However, the subject co-ordinator has made good use of national and local education authority guidance to ensure that teachers plan to cover skills in all required aspects. The co-ordinator has arranged for additional staff training, for example, in the 'Top Sport' and 'Top Play' schemes, to improve staff confidence and subject knowledge. There have been no opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and identify areas for improvement. The small size of the hall, a poorly drained field and a sloping playground do cause some organisational difficulties and impact on the range of activities and standards attained. A sound range of extra-curricular sporting activities, for example, in football and netball, enhance opportunities and enable pupils to participate in competitions against other local schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. Religious education has retained a firm place in the curriculum since the previous inspection. At the ages of 7 and 11 years, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Most pupils progress well and their knowledge and understanding of Christianity is better than that which is usually found. Pupils complement this knowledge by a study of Judaism and Hinduism and, significantly, by an understanding of how religious belief influences the way people live in communities. There are attractive displays of religious education work in all classrooms and this serves as a reminder that religious principles form part of every day life.
137. Younger pupils spend their lesson talking about angels and giving their opinions in an atmosphere that encourages free and open discussion. One pupil gave a vivid description of the Bible story in which the angel appears to Mary. Pupils are stimulated by a wide range of classical art representations of angels and were eager to point out the ways in which these pictures differed or were the same. They moved on to draw their own pictures of angels and the lesson ended with the lighting of candles and listening to 'angel chimes'. A pupil offered a brief prayer of thanks. This provided an excellent moment for stillness and reflection for adults and children. The impact upon learning was that of silence in a noisy world.
138. Older pupils continue to use art as a stimulus. They looked at the use of religious language and expression through the study of a Renaissance portrait of *The Annunciation*. The pupils were very interested in the detail of the picture and discussed whether the artist had captured the meaning of the story. They compared contemporary beliefs with those at the time the picture was painted. In another class, pupils learnt the meaning of the word 'parable' and discussed several from the ministry of Christ. Pupils then wrote alliterative poetry to show that they had understood, which effectively links the study of religion and literature and gave pupils an experience of the holistic nature of learning.
139. Teaching throughout the school is sound with many good features. Teachers are knowledgeable about world religions and create a climate for healthy debate. They listen well to the pupils and make use of what they say, which helps to develop their confidence and encourages their oral contributions. The work set is appropriate and relevant and builds upon what the pupils already know. The linking of religious education with art and literature is a particularly strong feature of lesson planning. Relationships are good and provide a secure base for the interchange of ideas and opinions.
140. Although the focus for learning during the inspection week was Christianity, there are many displays around the school that demonstrate the commitment to the study of comparative religions. There are, for example, three-dimensional displays of the Hindu festival of Divali and the Jewish festival of Sukkoth. The subject co-ordinator leads by example and plans the outline of all lessons, which provides for very good continuity in learning. Pupils visit local places of worship and the school has strong links with the local Church. A missionary has recently visited the school to talk of her experiences and judged by the quality of pupils' writing did a great deal to inspire the younger generation.