

INSPECTION REPORT

SANDY HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

St. Austell

Cornwall

Unique reference number: 111904

Headteacher: Andrew Fielder

Reporting inspector: Peter Kerr
23583

Dates of inspection: 6th - 9th November 2000

Inspection number: 224654

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sandy Hill St. Austell Cornwall
Postcode:	PL25 3AT
Telephone number:	01726 75858
Fax number:	01726 75199
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Tristan Scott
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Kerr 23583	Registered Inspector	Mathematics Music English as an additional Language	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
John McGarry 19730	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Philip Garner 31166	Team Inspector	Science Information and communications technology Physical education Special Educational Needs	
Jeff Calvert 27292	Team inspector	Art and design Geography Religious Education Equality of opportunity	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Carole Cressey 23453	Team Inspector	Areas of learning for the Foundation Stage English Design and Technology History	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

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The Registrar
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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a modern community building set in spacious grounds towards the outskirts of St. Austell with 255 children on roll. The nursery caters for 52 children between the ages of three and a half and five on a part-time basis. The children transfer from the nursery to the reception class during the term in which they their fifth birthday occurs. In the main school, 219 children aged five to 11 are taught in seven classes, most of which contain a single year-group. Thirty children claim free school meals, which is a broadly average figure. There are 47 children on the school's register of special educational needs, which is broadly average, but seven of these have a statement of need, which is more than would be expected in an average school of this size. Four children are from homes where English is not the first language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school with some outstanding features. It provides a very good standard of education overall, with some excellent teaching. It is led and managed very effectively and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Much of the teaching is of a very high quality. In the nursery, and in Year 2, the teaching is very good indeed, and in the reception and Year 6 classes, the standard of teaching is often outstanding.
- The whole staff works together brilliantly as a team. The classroom assistants are excellent. They work closely with the teachers and make an extremely effective contribution to the children's learning.
- The children achieve well in English, mathematics and science.
- Children with special educational needs are identified early and given very good support, especially in the infant classes, enabling them to learn as effectively as they can.
- The school's approach to eliminating bullying and promoting good behaviour is excellent, leading to very good relationships and an exceptionally well ordered and peaceful school.
- The children have very good opportunities to develop their interests and skills in many different areas, and to become mature and responsible members of the school community.
- The headteacher gives the school a very clear sense of direction and purpose. With very good support from the governors, the deputy headteacher and the administrative staff he ensures excellent financial management.

What could be improved

- Although the children have made rapid progress in most aspects of information and communication technology since the establishment of the computer suite, their skills are still below expectations in some areas such as data handling and control technology.
- The children encounter different cultural perspectives in various subjects, such as religious education and geography, but there is no policy or programme specifically designed to develop their understanding and appreciation of the varied ethnic and cultural make-up of present-day Britain.

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 excellent progress since it was last inspected in June 1996. All the key issues have been successfully addressed and a clear agenda for continuing improvement has been established. Standards have greatly improved, especially in English, mathematics and science, meeting the school's targets, and the children are now beginning to achieve their potential in most other subjects. The standard of teaching is much better and more consistent throughout the school. The curriculum is much stronger and much better organised so that the children have much improved learning opportunities. The organisation of provision for special educational needs is organised much better and is more effective. The headteacher has greatly improved the management of the school and gives it a much greater sense of direction. Subject co-ordinators are also now managing their subjects effectively and the governors have a far clearer understanding of the school's achievements and needs, enabling

them to give more active and effective support. The school's finances are in very much better shape and spending is now very closely tied to educational priorities.

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
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	B	A	A*
mathematics	B	C	C	B
science	B	C	A	A*

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The figures given relate to the 1999 tests. Although the results of the 2000 tests are available, they cannot be published because the comparisons with similar schools had not been calculated at the time of the inspection. The 2000 results are lower than in 1999, although they met the school's targets. This is due to factors beyond the school's control, including higher numbers of pupils with special educational needs and a high turnover of pupils. All the children now achieve well, which is an improvement since the last inspection, when higher and lower attaining pupils were under achieving. Standards in writing have improved considerably and are now good, with children writing neatly in a range of styles using correct punctuation and grammar. They also have good speaking and listening skills and read well. In mathematics, the children are much better than they were at solving practical problems. They are also able to explain their thinking, which helps them to improve even further. Attainment in science has improved dramatically over the past two years because the children are now learning mostly through practical investigations, and this leads them to a secure understanding of scientific principles as well as facts. Standards in information technology have also vastly improved, and the children now have expected levels of general computer skills throughout the school. They use computers confidently to write texts and produce graphics, for example and use these skills effectively in other subjects. Older pupils, however, do not yet have the full range of skills required. For example, they are not able to produce tables and graphs from data. In most other subjects, children reach expected standards at each stage. In physical education, Year 2 children excel at swimming and the juniors excel at dance, whilst in design and technology there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards. Attainment on entry to the school is below average, especially in speaking and listening, so the results at the end of Key Stage 2 represent good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The children love coming to school. They are keen to learn and to talk about their work. They concentrate well and are very independent and confident learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good and often excellent. The pupils readily accept the rules of living in a community. The school is a very calm, orderly and civilised. This is very evident during lunch and playtimes, even when it is raining and the children have to stay indoors. There had been one fixed-term exclusion in the year preceding the inspection.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. The children willingly accept responsibility. The year six children in particular demonstrate great maturity. They show care and concern for the younger children and set a good example to the rest of the school. The children get on well with each other, regardless of age, sex or racial origin, and with adults, and they are delightful company.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school's attendance rate has been higher than the national average since 1996 in percentage terms, but by less each year. In 1999 it was not sufficiently higher for it to be classified as above average. The rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The high quality of much of the teaching in the school is the major contributory factor to the children's positive attitudes to learning and improving performance. The teaching was good or better in eighty per cent of the lessons that were observed, very good or better in half of them and excellent in about one in ten lessons. Only a very small amount – less than two per cent – of unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The best teaching is concentrated in the nursery, reception and Year 6, where it is often excellent, and in Year 2. This ensures that the children get a flying start and very good preparation for the national tests at the age of seven and eleven. The teaching of English and mathematics is particularly strong throughout the school, with teachers providing suitable work for children of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs. The teachers also ensure that children for whom English is not their first language receive the best available support to make good progress. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and the children have ample opportunities to use these skills in other subjects. The teachers have excellent relationships with the children, manage them well and set high expectations for behaviour and effort. The children respond by doing their best and enjoying their learning. Only in the very few lessons that do not have a clear focus do the children lose concentration and fail to make good progress. The teachers check the children's progress regularly, especially in English, mathematics, and science, and tailor their lessons to suit emerging needs, facilitating good continuity in learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school ensures that the basic skills of English and mathematics are taught well, while maintaining plenty of opportunities for the children to develop a variety of skills and interests. Music instrumental lessons, visits to places of interest and school drama productions enrich the curriculum and there are ample opportunities for children to partake in sporting and other activities outside school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The teachers and classroom assistants provide excellent quality support to the children with statements of special educational needs and to other children who need extra help with their work. The co-ordinator manages the provision extremely well, with very good support from the school's special educational needs committee.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional	Good. The school works closely with the families of these children and provides good support in lessons. However, the level of qualified support available from

language	outside the school is not always sufficient to meet each individual child's need.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school gives the children a very good sense of their own worth and encourages them to value and appreciate others. All the adults in the school set an excellent moral example to the children, giving them a very good sense of right and wrong and enabling them to develop very positive and fruitful relationships. The children learn about other faiths and cultures in lessons, but there is no specific policy for teaching them about the ethnic and cultural diversity of modern British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school takes very good care of the children and ensures their safety and welfare. The school's approach to eliminating bullying and encouraging good behaviour is excellent. Good formal procedures in place for all eventualities and all members of staff make it their business to know the children well and look after their well being.

The school has a very effective partnership with parents that enhances and enriches the children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership, based on a clear vision of how he wants the school to develop. He has moulded together a very enthusiastic and able senior management team that shares this vision and works very effectively. Subject co-ordinators have brought about very significant improvements in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, providing a secure base from which to extend these improvements to other subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors take an active interest in the school and give it all the support they can whilst ensuring that it performs to the highest standards and fulfils all its legal requirements. They visit the school regularly to look at specific areas of its work in order to ensure that their decisions are based on good quality information.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school's management team is very effective in making regular checks to ensure that these measures are effective.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Decisions are based on very good information gathered about the school's needs so that all spending is directed towards the main educational priorities. The best possible value is sought in all purchases of goods and services.

The school is generously staffed with very effective teachers and classroom assistants. The caretaker and his staff keep the building in immaculate order, making it a bright, welcoming environment. This helps the teachers to make the most of their attractive displays. However, some classrooms, and other teaching areas, such as the school hall, are too small for the numbers of children having to use them. There are good resources to support learning, especially for the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology. The excellent team work and dedication of the staff led by the clear vision of the headteacher give the school a very good capacity to continue improving in the future.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress there. • The school encourages the children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • They feel able to approach the school with questions or problems. • Teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like to be better informed about how their children are getting on.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive comments made by parents. The school provides plenty of information about the children's progress, but recognises that more work needs to be done on how best to present this and to involve families more with the children's learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards have greatly improved since the last inspection. The children now achieve well and attain standards that are in line with expectations in most subjects because of vastly improved teaching and curriculum organisation.
2. When they join the nursery, the children's attainment is below average, especially in the key area of speaking and listening. They make rapid progress in all the six areas of learning that make up the new Foundation Stage, but still have below average attainment in English and mathematics when they take the school's baseline assessment. In the reception class, the children continue to learn at a rapid rate. By the time they start the National Curriculum in Year 1, most of them have achieved all the early learning goals for children of this age and have average attainment overall.
3. In the infant department, the children make good progress overall, and rapid progress in Year 2, so that by the time they take the national tests for seven-year olds, they are achieving to their potential. The school's results in these tests were below average in reading writing and mathematics in 1999, but were improving in all three subjects. The school prepares the children much more effectively for the tests than it used to, so the higher results are a fairer reflection of the children's ability. The results were even better in 2000, and the inspection found that the current year 2 children had achieved expected levels of attainment overall in reading, writing and mathematics. Also, children with above or below average ability achieve to their potential because they receive very good quality support with work that is matched to their needs. This is a vast improvement since the last inspection when both these groups of children were under achieving. The inspection also found that the children's attainment in science was better than the teachers' assessments have tended to show in the past, and is currently in line with national expectations.
4. The children continue to make good progress overall in the juniors and in Year 6 they make excellent progress and reach the standards they are capable of in the national tests for eleven-year olds. These results have fluctuated in the past, largely because of the uneven quality of teaching that was reported on by the last inspection. Although this fault has now been remedied, the results will continue to fluctuate into the foreseeable future due to two other factors that have come into play which are outside the school's control. Firstly, children join and leave the school at an increasing rate, so that fewer of the children taking the tests have been in the school all through the juniors. This means that the school has less influence on the results. Secondly, increasing numbers of those children who join the school during the infant and junior stage have special educational needs. These factors have a negative impact on the overall results because both these groups tend to contain some children who achieve below level 4 in the tests, depressing the average points score on which the school is judged.
5. In English, the results have been above average each year since 1996, whereas in mathematics they were above average in 1996 and 1997, but average in 1998 and 1999. In science, the results were below average in 1996 and 1998, but in 1999 they rose sharply to well above average. Compared to schools in similar social and economic circumstances, the school's results were very high in English and science in 1999 and above average in mathematics. In 2000, the test results were lower in all three subjects, due to the factors outlined above, but were in line with the school's

predictions, indicating the increasingly realistic assessments of the children's potential that the school uses to set its annual targets.

6. The inspection found that attainment is average in the three core subjects of English, mathematics, and science in the current Year 6 class and that the children achieve well in relation to their abilities. A majority of the children are on course to achieve Level 4, the expected level for average eleven-year olds. There are also as many children with above average attainment as would be expected, and these are likely to achieve Level 5. The impact of these above average scores on the overall results will be balanced, however, by the lower than average scores likely to be achieved by the significant number of children in the class with special educational needs.
7. Girls have not performed as well as boys in the tests over the past four years. Their results have been particularly low in mathematics. The school recognised this and has taken measures to address it, including the setting of groups by attainment in mathematics. During the inspection, no evidence was found of girls achieving significantly lower standards than boys in any subject.
8. The most significant gains in English have been in the standard of writing, which is now in line with expectations in content, grammar and presentation. The children write well for a variety of purposes and for different audiences and use imaginative ideas in their stories and poems. Their spelling, handwriting and punctuation are of a high quality, and this stands them in good stead for their transfer to secondary school. They have maintained high standards also in speaking and listening because of the many opportunities they have to practice these skills, including drama, poetry-reading and role-play. Throughout the school children are good readers for their age. They develop their own tastes and preferences and by the time they leave they are effective readers, both for pleasure and for research purposes.
9. Standards in mathematics were unsatisfactory at the last inspection because too many children were not working to capacity. Today, the vast majority of the children are doing as well as they can and reaching a good standard for their age. The current Year 6 class are on course to reach average standards overall, with those who are capable of it going on to higher levels. The biggest contribution to these dramatic gains is the vastly improved teaching, supported by the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy. The children are now thinking mathematically and using their knowledge of numbers to solve practical problems, which they were not doing before.
10. Standards in literacy and numeracy are good throughout the school because the teachers create opportunities for the children to practise and extend their skills in other subjects wherever possible. They give very good support to children with special educational needs, especially in the infants, so that these children do as well as they possibly can. Extra challenge is also available for children with higher levels of attainment so that every child in the school has the opportunity to be as literate and numerate as possible. The children make especially rapid progress in these areas in Year 2 and Year 6 because of the very high quality teaching from the class teachers, additional literacy and numeracy teachers and classroom assistants.

11. The inspection confirms that standards in science have risen dramatically. The children are now learning through practical investigations and experiments and are therefore developing a good understanding of the principles of scientific enquiry as well as increasing their knowledge. The skilled management and leadership of the subject, consistently good teaching from a clear scheme of work and regular assessments of the children's progress ensures that all children work towards their potential.
12. In Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the children have started from a low baseline, but have made rapid progress already since the new computer suite was installed. Their skills in word processing are in line with expectations now and they have developed a general familiarity with the use of ICT. They use computers to generate graphic designs and for desktop publishing, and apply their skills well across the curriculum. However, their skills in handling data on computers, for example to make a graph from a list of figures, is below expectations, as is their ability to use a computer to control or monitor external events. The school is confident, and the inspection team agrees, that the children will quickly catch up with these skills as the teachers and children become more confident with the excellent range of computers and software now available.
13. Attainment in other areas of the curriculum is generally in line with expectations. In physical education, Key Stage 1 children excel at swimming and Key Stage 2 children demonstrate better than expected dance skills. In design and technology, there was insufficient evidence to make a clear judgement about standards. Evidence from teachers' planning and conversations with pupils indicates that attainment in geography is about what is expected; though no pupils' work was seen. In history, although the children have adequate knowledge and skills, there is insufficient scope for higher-attaining pupils to develop their understanding to its fullest extent because some of the teaching lacks sparkle. The children develop their creative skills in art and design and music, and reach expected standards. The school has had to focus all of its energies on more basic requirements over recent years, so the standards currently achieved in these subjects are not as high as they could be. However, the standard of school productions is good, and the children who take instrumental lessons make good progress and reach a good standard. The school is now looking for ways of giving all the children more opportunities to reach their potential in these subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The school continues to promote very good and positive attitudes and values among the children and fosters their personal development very well. Children's behaviour overall is very good. They enjoy coming to a school that offers a secure and pleasant environment under a caring staff. This has a positive impact on their approach to learning and aids their progress.
15. The children express interest in all aspects of the curriculum and respond determinedly to the many opportunities provided by the school. They enjoy lessons and show a keenness to learn. They work with enthusiasm under minimal supervision, assist younger children and co-operate with class colleagues and staff.

16. The children are keenly aware of expected behaviour and school rules. Their conduct is very good at all times, both within the school building and the playground. They mix well and relate to each other in a friendly and collaborative way. The children are taught to respect other peoples' feelings, values and beliefs, and there is no evidence of any racist or sexist attitudes in the school. There had been one fixed-term exclusion in the year preceding the inspection for violent behaviour by a child with severe behavioural problems.
17. No evidence of bullying was seen either. Children are aware from the reception class onwards that the school will not tolerate bullying or aggressive behaviour in any form. When interviewed, they said that if there was any bullying, it would be reported to either a representative of the school's council or the headteacher in the knowledge that firm action would be taken immediately.
18. The children's personal development is very good and they are keen to assume responsibility. Year 6 children, for example, help to supervise infants during lunch break and demonstrate a caring attitude. The class representatives on the school council fulfil their roles admirably and the head boy and head girl and their deputies set a fine example to the younger children. They are models of confidence and responsibility and show genuine pride in their school. The children generally look after the school well and show respect for property and other people's possessions.
19. Both authorised and unauthorised rates of absence are about the same as the national average, and punctuality is excellent in the great majority of cases.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The standard of teaching is very good. It is much improved and more consistent than at the time of the last inspection. The teaching was good or better in 80 per cent of the lessons seen and very good or better in 40 per cent. In ten per cent of the lessons the teaching was excellent. The quality of teaching in the foundation stage for children up to six years old is particularly good. It is very good in the nursery and often excellent in the reception class. Teaching is also very strong at the end of both key stages. In Year 2 it is often very good, reflected in the rapid progress evident in the children's workbooks. In Year 6 the teaching is consistently of a very good standard and is sometimes excellent.
21. In the nursery, the teacher and classroom assistant form a very effective team. They enable the children to learn through play with lots of guided activities in between to teach specific things. They concentrate on speaking and listening because this is the area in which the children generally need most help. They engage the children as much as possible in conversation and provide lots of activities that stimulate the children to talk among themselves. Each day includes a good balance between indoor and outdoor activities, enabling the children to develop rapidly in all the areas of learning for children of this age.
22. In the reception class, this good work is continued and strengthened, so that all the children make very good progress, with most of them achieving the early learning goals in each area of learning by the time they are six years old. The teacher is very skilled at letting the children continue to learn through play, but also in guiding them towards the more formal learning they will encounter in Year 1. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson the children were introduced to three-dimensional shapes. They learned the names and basic properties of shapes like cubes and spheres because the teacher related the new knowledge to the children's experience

and the vocabulary that she knew they already had.

23. Teaching is strongest throughout the school in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Here, teachers give the children a very clear idea about what is to be learned, devise practical ways for the children to learn and then review the lesson to judge how effective it has been. This ensures that the children experience stimulating lessons that continually build on their existing knowledge, understanding and skills.
24. The teachers use the structure of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy very effectively to provide a very good balance between whole-class teaching and purposeful group and individual activities pitched at the right level for each child. This enables them to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy very effectively so that the children have the basic tools for learning in all subjects. The range and quality of writing that the children produce in other subjects reflects the success of the school's emphasis on this area of teaching and learning. The very good mathematics displays and regular practical mathematical work that was observed all through the school during the inspection shows that teachers are now enabling the children to use their mathematical skills in interesting and useful situations.
25. Children with special educational needs make very good progress in the basis skills because the teachers, under the guidance of the special educational needs co-ordinators, identify their needs and provide them with suitable work to do. The classroom assistants are very effective in supporting these children. The teachers go to great lengths to make the class-work for these children interesting as well as pitched at the right level of difficulty and they ensure that the classroom assistants are fully aware of what is to be taught. The classroom assistants are extremely effective, whether helping an individual child with their individual educational programme, or teaching a group. On a number of occasions, classroom assistants were observed teaching to a very high standard, explaining difficult concepts clearly and using their initiative to decide where children need re-enforcement or where they could be challenged further. The teamwork established between the teachers and the classroom assistants is excellent and makes an invaluable contribution to the children's learning.
26. In Year 6, the standard of teaching is consistently very good and sometimes excellent. The class teacher demonstrates an excellent range of subject knowledge as well as an insight into how children of this age can be best motivated to learn. She has established an excellent teaching team with two very skilled classroom assistants and uses this very effectively to challenge the more able as well as to support children with special educational needs. A feature of this teaching is the very positive effect it has on the children's attitudes to learning, which in turn improves their progress. This is a remarkable achievement with over thirty-five children in one class and a wide range of ability to cater for.
27. Since the introduction of the computer suite, the teachers are beginning to make much better use of information and communication technology to facilitate the children's learning. They provide clear, structured teaching of the basic skills and introduce the children to a range of suitable programmes. The impact of this is currently most obvious in the word-processing of writing, whereas in other areas, such as organising and displaying data, the teachers are not yet utilising computers to their full advantage.

28. The main features that make the teaching so effective throughout the school are excellent relationships with the children, very good classroom management, very good planning, based on regular assessment of the children's progress and the use of a wide range of interesting methods and resources in lessons. The teachers make it clear to the children what is to be learned and why, and encourage them to check their own progress. They expect very good behaviour and maximum effort in lessons, and because the relationships are so good, this is what they generally get. Most lessons get off to a prompt start and proceed at a good pace, keeping the children interested and learning throughout. The teachers encourage independent learning, for example by directing children to the library to look up information, and collaboration, which the children are particularly good at. They work together successfully to develop ideas and solve problems. Usually, the conversations overheard by inspectors during group-work were about the task in hand because of the high level of motivation and good work habits engendered by the teachers.
29. In the few lessons that were not so successful, the children were unclear about what they had to learn and why. This was because the teacher did not have a clear enough understanding of the skills that the children needed to learn in each subject. In these lessons, the teacher also spent too much time in talking to the children instead of guiding them through purposeful active learning. The lessons that were observed in English and mathematics were not as affected by these shortcomings because of the structure provided by the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy.
30. The quality of teaching in science is good overall and very good for the oldest children. The teachers plan their lessons so that the children learn as much as possible through practical experiments and investigations. This ensures that the children learn the principles of scientific enquiry, such as fair testing, and is a vast improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is also now good in information and communication technology. The teachers systematically teach the children specific skills, and how to apply their skills in other subjects, enabling them to make rapid progress. Lessons are sometimes slowed down because of the time taken for all the children to log on to the system, but this process is becoming less of a problem as the children get more used to it.
31. The quality of teaching in other subjects is more variable across the school because there is relatively little structure to guide the teachers. In all subjects, teachers make every effort to ensure that boys and girls are given equal opportunities to participate and make progress in lessons, and that children for whom English is not their first language are not disadvantaged. During the inspection there was no evidence of discrimination or lack of opportunity because of gender, ability or ethnic origin.

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

32. The nursery offers a high quality, comprehensive curriculum where the breadth and balance are very good. The curriculum for the infant and junior departments is also very good and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the local Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. Since the last inspection the curriculum is much stronger and far better organised so that the children have greater opportunities to develop a variety of skills. Acts of worship meet statutory requirements both in terms of frequency and content.
33. A co-ordinator has been appointed for each subject with a brief to oversee planning and produce an appropriate action plan to guide developments. Due emphasis is placed on the teaching of English and mathematics, and arrangements for teaching these skills through other subjects are very good. In other subjects, planning is based on national schemes of work, and the school recognises the need to adapt these in order to ensure that the children systematically build on their skills. Planning documentation indicates noticeable improvement since the last inspection overall and especially in catering for the needs of children with differing abilities. Children in mixed year classes are also provided for by the use of a two-year planning cycle to avoid repeating topics. There is equal access to the curriculum for all children regardless of gender, ability or race, and provision for children with special educational needs is very good. They are very well supported, especially in Key Stage 1, with their individual educational programmes and with class-work generally.
34. Procedures to identify gifted children have recently been established and there is an intention to provide those children with an "Able Child" individual educational programme. The children are prepared well for their secondary education. For example, provision for ICT has vastly improved and the curriculum for Year 6 children includes French and German lessons.
35. Very good provision is made for personal, social and health education. A full audit has taken place recently and a scheme is in place, which includes opportunities for the children to talk about their thoughts, feelings and concerns, for example in Circle Time. The school recognises the importance of developing health education, and has implemented some innovative ideas to meet the children's emerging needs. Sex education and drug education are included from Year 4, and are very successful at raising the children's awareness of important health issues. For example, in their study of drugs and smoking misuse Year 5 children produced striking computer generated posters to convey their messages.
36. There is an interesting and full range of extra-curricular opportunities, which, during the week of the inspection, included choir, football and netball. The children also have plenty of music and drama opportunities and the whole school, staff and children take part in an annual 'Big Production'. During the inspection, the Music and Art group "Totality Productions" came into school to demonstrate how art and music can be linked – this is another facility the school is considering providing to enrich the curriculum. Year 5 and 6 children are also offered the opportunity to experience a week's residential visit to an outdoor centre on Dartmoor.
37. The school, primarily through the headteacher, has established a host of contacts within the local community, including fruitful business links. The school has the Investors in Education Business Partnership Award and overall the contribution of the community to children's learning is very good. Children throughout the school enjoy

and make use of the local area, for example the visits to churches undertaken by Key Stage 2 and more recently by reception children. Relationships with partner institutions are good. The children participate in sporting tournaments organised by the local secondary school. There are links with another primary school within Year 6.

38. Overall the provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, although provision for cultural development is the least effective. Provision for children's spiritual development is very good and is promoted well through planned daily collective worship. The majority of children show an interest in assemblies and there is a healthy level of participation. They sing with enthusiasm and there is always a prayer and a time for quiet reflection, which is re-enforced by calming music. In religious education, spiritual values are emphasised through the study and comparison of the practices and traditions of different religions. At a personal level, thought-provoking issues are raised such as what makes a good leader, and attention drawn to famous examples, such as Martin Luther King, to give good role models.
39. Provision for children's moral development is very good. The school promotes an understanding of the principles of right and wrong. There is a positive behaviour code of conduct throughout each key stage. The school cultivates a positive climate, which encourages children to examine their feelings, their responses to situations and the implications of their actions. Children are encouraged to develop empathy and to support each other in the classroom and around the school.
40. Provision for social development is very good. Children are encouraged to take responsibility. There is much evidence of collaborative opportunities, for example in ICT, science, mathematics, art and design and religious education lessons. The School's Council, constituting the Head Boy and Head Girl, year group representatives and staff representatives functions well to encourage responsibility and citizenship. This has an impact on the overall atmosphere, which is very calm in the school. The school provides opportunities for independent learning and self-discipline, which have a positive impact upon learning. Year 6 children, in particular, show great responsibility and maturity and set a very good example through their exemplary behaviour.
41. Provision for children's cultural development is good. Generally there has been an improvement in the celebration of Cornwall's own heritage since the last inspection. For example, children in Key Stage 2 have been involved actively in the Eden Project for two years and will play a part in its official opening. Improvements to the curriculum have also extended the opportunities the children have to learn about other cultures. For example, nursery and reception children dressed in traditional clothing whilst enjoying Diwali celebrations and in so doing learned something about another way of life. Because the school is geographically isolated, children cannot readily gain first hand experience of the various cultural influences in modern-day life in Britain. The school is addressing this issue, for example by use of Internet connections with different communities in other parts of the country. However, there is currently no policy document specifically aimed at developing the children's awareness of the contributions that different ethnic groups make to contemporary British culture.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school is a caring community and provides well for its pupils. All teachers know the children well and relate positively to them. This strong and valuable relationship contributes to good learning and teaching. Good procedures are in place for Child Protection. The Governing Body has recently updated the policy after a period without review. It is important that the policy is now reviewed at regular intervals, and that all

members of staff are kept up to date with the Local Area Committee's Child Protection Code.

43. The school operates a valuable Mentoring Policy as a complement to the child protection procedures, whereby children can talk comfortably and confidently in private with trained and sympathetic adults/teachers on any matter that is troubling them. The school has established a mentor system whereby any child who is identified as a concern can pair up with an adult other than their immediate class teacher.
44. The school makes good provision for the health and safety of its pupils and staff. Lunch breaks are well supervised. Accidents, injuries and illness suffered by children, however minor, are dealt with appropriately in a caring and supportive way. Advice on health matters is given in lessons that are part of an overall Health education programme. For example, healthy eating is taught from Reception onwards. Drug awareness is taught from the onset in the context of their curative qualities and their dangerous properties. Police and other experts regularly visit the school to talk about health and safety, drug abuse prevention and road safety.
45. Attendance registration and related procedures comply with statutory requirements and are currently in the process of being computerised. There are stringent procedures to deal with unauthorised absence and the school maintains close contact with the Local Education Welfare Officers. Merit marks are awarded for consistently good attendance and rigorous follow-up procedures are in force to investigate unreported absence from school. Great care has been taken by staff to ensure that a delegated person is clearly identified when a child is to be picked-up at the end of the school day in the absence of parents or guardian.
46. The school has a very effective policy for promoting good behaviour for the benefit of all. This involves a simple code "Be Cool, Follow the Rule". The School's anti-bullying campaign has been effective in deterring any outbreaks of bullying.
47. The school's assessment policy operates effectively, providing good systems for the assessment and improvement of children's work, especially in English and mathematics. These are used consistently and constructively and are continually being reviewed and improved. Every child in the school has a Target Card, for example, which provides a clear focus for individual's learning in Literacy and Numeracy. In other subjects, assessments take place so that lessons can build on skills, but these procedures are informal and do not give as detailed a picture. Children receive individual feedback on their work in the form of constructive comments by their respective teachers. The recorded data is used to identify where additional teaching support is required and also to provide high attainers with more challenging work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop and improve its strong and purposeful relationship with parents. The school appreciates the efforts parents make towards their children's learning by hearing them read and helping them with their homework. The very limited response to the questionnaires sent out before the Inspection indicates firm levels of support for the school and demonstrates the respondents' overall satisfaction with the way their children are taught. The confidence that the parents have in the school contributes significantly to their own children's perception of the school with consequent benefits to teaching and learning.

49. Parents are welcome as helpers in the school, and the Head Teacher strives to attract more parents in this role with a view to their being constructively involved in their children's education. The school provides good quality information to parents. The school brochures and the Governors' annual report to parents fulfil statutory requirements and parents benefit from informative weekly newsletters about school activities. They are clear and well presented. Reports to parents on their children's progress are also clear and informative. Formal evenings for parents to meet their children's teachers are held each term and parents can arrange to talk to teachers and the Head Teacher at any time to discuss their child's progress.
50. Parents of children with special education needs are closely involved with the school and often assist in the classroom. The large number of parents that come in to school to hear children read also make a valuable contribution to children's learning.
51. The Parent-Teachers' Association has evolved into the Friends of Sandy Hill School; it continues to thrive in its slimmed-down form and contributes much needed additional funding to the school. The business community and local organisations continue to be involved in the life of the school. The excellent computer centre and the donations of sports outfits are examples of contributions which not only assists teaching and learning but also enhance the strong links between the school community and its neighbourhood.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The vast improvements that the school has achieved since the last inspection have largely come about during the last two and a half years under the skilled and determined leadership of the current headteacher. He has created and sustained an agenda for positive change and built a strong team to maintain momentum towards continuing improvement. Each member of the management team understands and shares the educational aspirations that the headteacher has established and the school now functions coherently as a unit towards common goals. As a result, any areas that need attention are identified and placed in order of priority in the school's development plan in the secure knowledge that everyone will pull together to implement the required improvements. The school has clear aims and values that are reflected in its policy documents and underpin all its work. However, policies on some aspects are located within broader policy documents and are not easy to find, while other important areas such as cultural development do not have a separate policy statement.

53. The deputy headteacher has a clear role at the centre of communication channels within the school and with parents. The foundation stage in the nursery and reception classes and each key stage are managed very effectively and very good links exist between them so that the children experience strong continuity in their learning. The appointment of a Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator has given subject co-ordinators a clear structure in which to operate that has empowered them to do their job more effectively. The impact of this has been felt already in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. In other subjects, the co-ordinators have not yet had the opportunity to develop their subjects fully, but appropriate plans are in hand for this to happen in phases.
54. The governors fulfil all their responsibilities very effectively. They support the headteacher in the overall management of the school and in finding ways of developing useful contacts within the community. They are conscientious in ensuring that the school fulfils all its statutory duties and all take an active interest in different aspects of the school's work. Their visits to the school keep them informed about the impact of various initiatives on the pupils' education. The very good management structure within the school enables the governors to establish a clear focus for their visits and to gather any background information they need for their deliberations.
55. Within the school, the headteacher has established very clear procedures for evaluating and improving teaching and learning. All the members of the management team observe lessons as part of their role in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. The excellent team spirit that prevails enables good practice to be shared throughout the school and problems to be sensitively but rigorously addressed. This clear framework is of particular benefit to staff joining the school, including newly qualified teachers, who enjoy an excellent induction into good primary teaching. The outstanding teamwork extends to classroom support assistants who also receive very good quality support for their professional development, enabling them to make an excellent contribution to the children's learning. Every member of the staff has access to appropriate appraisal procedures and the school is well prepared to meet all the new performance management criteria. The school is now very well staffed, both with teachers and classroom assistants, to fully meet the needs of all the children.
56. The priorities that the school has identified over the past two and a half years under the current headteacher have been exactly right for the school. This is why there have been such noticeable improvements in so many areas of its work. It was necessary to concentrate on improving the quality of teaching and raising standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Alongside the improvement of teaching and management, the school has injected funds into resources for these key subjects. As a result, the children have access to a wide variety of equipment and resources for lessons in these subjects, including computers. The current development plan shows how the school intends to gradually extend improvements to management and resources in other curriculum areas at a sensible pace that also allows for consolidation of hard-won gains.
57. The improvements to the building and grounds are another example of good development planning that has made the most of available resources and brought great benefits for the children. The imaginative extensions to some classrooms have enabled large classes of older juniors to be taught in a relatively bright and spacious area. However, this can only be done at the expense of storage and working areas. The school has been very creative in fitting the excellent computer suite into the available space. The teachers use it to the best possible effect, but they are working

against the great difficulty of trying to teach in such a spread-out thoroughfare. The hall also suffers from having to be used as a thoroughfare, and this is especially so when small groups are being taught there. The school has no remedy for these problems because it has to accept thirty-six children each year and has reached the limit of current building and extension possibilities. The improvements to the outside play areas greatly enhance the children's opportunities for social and physical development and extend opportunities for outdoor physical education lessons. The hard play area, however, is still too small to accommodate all the children as well as it should.

58. The school's financial planning is excellent. The budget is planned around educational priorities that are based on the widest possible consultation and the best possible value is sought for all goods and services that are purchased. All the staff are invited to meetings within school to discuss priorities for development, and parents are asked to contribute their views. The children also have the opportunity to be involved through their representatives on the school council. The headteacher and governors then work very closely together to set out the school's spending plans for the short, medium and long term. The excellent quality information about the school's performance that they now have access to is put to good use in setting the priorities for spending. The school also makes the best use of contacts in the community and business world to attract extra funding, and this contributes greatly to the value it gets for its money and the level of provision it can offer. For example, the computer suite was installed through such a connection.
59. The day-to-day administration of the school is also excellent. The school secretary and administrative assistant fulfil their separate duties with calm efficiency. They provide the headteacher with any information he requires, from the children's personal details to the school-fund balance very readily because they have everything so well organised. They also greatly enhance the image of the school by the efficient yet welcoming manner in which they welcome visitors and guests. The excellent teamwork, clear vision of the headteacher and dedication of all the staff ensure that the school has a very good capacity to continue improving.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Continue to develop the good work that has already begun in information and communication technology to ensure that the children are covering all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of studies as quickly as possible. (paragraphs 12,124)
- (2) Provide a policy to guide teachers in developing the children's awareness and appreciation of the various ethnic and cultural strands that make up contemporary British society. (paragraph 41)

In addition to these issues, the governors should consider

- Re-organising and improving policy documents to reflect current good practice so that a separate policy statement is readily accessible for each key area of the school's work. (paragraphs 42, 52)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	40	32	17	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 – Year 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	219
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Year 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		47

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	13	22	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	10	13
	Girls	18	17	16
	Total	30	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (72)	77(70)	83 (75)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	18	16	17
	Total	30	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (69)	83 (72)	86 (75)
	National	82 (80)	86 (84)	87 (85)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	15	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	18	20
	Girls	24	8	16
	Total	32	27	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86(75)	73(56)	97(78)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	20	21
	Girls	14	13	16
	Total	32	33	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92(81)	89(68)	100(71)
	National	6(65)	69(65)	75(71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	2
White	0
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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	27.4

Education support staff: YR – Year 6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	198

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	442,921
Total expenditure	451,518
Expenditure per pupil	1,692
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,385
Balance carried forward to next year	11,788

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

267

Number of questionnaires returned

57

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	33	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	40	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	54	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	49	14	2	5
The teaching is good.	46	53	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	51	14	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	39	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	37	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	32	60	5	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	47	49	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	47	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	47	5	2	4

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents have a very positive view of the school.

Other issues raised by parents

No other significant issues were raised.

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

60. The school's provision for children in the nursery and reception classes has improved further since the previous inspection. It is now very good and is a strength of the school. The curriculum is firmly based on the six "areas of learning" for the Foundation Stage and provides the children with very broad and balanced experiences. The two classes provide a wide range of challenging and focussed activities to promote the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, Communication, Language and Literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.
61. The overall attainment levels of most children entering the nursery are below those expected nationally and a significant number of children have under developed speaking and listening skills. This is confirmed by baseline assessment. Teaching in nursery and reception is consistently of a very high standard with over half the lessons seen being excellent. As a result, most children achieve well and by the end of the reception year are on target to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

Communication, language and literacy

62. In both year groups, communication, language and literacy are given a very high priority. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of effective experiences and activities to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. By the time children move into the reception class they have become attentive listeners and confident and articulate speakers. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and join in familiar ones with enthusiasm. In both nursery and the reception classes children are encouraged to engage in conversations with adults, and are given very good role models to develop their spoken language. Staff are continually interacting in activities and sharing children's play. Challenging questions and comments are used to promote children's thinking. Structured play situations, snack times and "together times" provide opportunities for children to talk about their own experiences and extend their vocabulary. Very clearly labelled displays, alphabet and sound friezes and individual name cards help children develop early reading and writing skills. In the nursery, children are encouraged to write independently from a very early age. This is very effective in developing children's confidence and understanding that words convey meaning. By the time they enter reception many children are able to write their own simple sentences joining their letters easily. They recognise familiar letters, sounds and words and use correct vocabulary such as "alliteration" and "phoneme" with understanding. Before they leave the nursery most children recognise their own names and older children are able to write their names with accuracy using capital and small letters. Comfortable and inviting book corners help to promote a love of books and children are learning to handle books with care. Older children in the reception class read simple books with confidence using letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words. Children choose books as an activity and all children take books home on a regular basis to share with family members. This helps them a great deal in their reading. Appropriate elements of the literacy strategy are implemented for children in the reception class and this has a positive effect on children's achievements. For example, text level work using a non-fiction book introduced children to how books were set out and how to use them. Children rose

very well to a challenging activity learning about contents pages and as a result extended their knowledge of the alphabet to locate information.

Mathematical development

63. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. Children enjoy mathematics and learn to use mathematical ideas and skills in real situations, such as making imaginary telephone calls or weighing out the ingredients for baking. In both classes children have opportunities to compare, match, sort, order, sequence and count using a range of games, routines and experiences. Through well-planned topic work they explore number, pattern, shape and measurement. Reception children are able to join in with the teacher and count in tens to a hundred. Number lines are used effectively to develop an understanding of order and position. Teachers place great emphasis on developing appropriate mathematical language. In the nursery, for example, a candle display promoted children's understanding of shape and size as children talked with the teachers about triangles, circles and squares. This was further built on in the reception class as children named three-dimensional shapes, described spheres as having no sides and counted the sides and edges of a cube. Children further consider size, shape and position when playing with small toys or emptying and filling containers in the water play. Children are encouraged to solve simple problems as they complete difficult jigsaws or make interesting models with cubes. The staff use number rhymes to develop children's ideas of early addition and subtraction. Appropriate elements of the numeracy strategy are implemented for children in the reception class and this has a positive effect on children's achievements.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children are developing a very good understanding of the world around them. The natural curiosity of young children is enhanced as the staff continually encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore made and natural materials. A woodland walk for nursery children, for example, created a great deal of interest as children collected a range of different materials such as birds' nests, nuts and cones. In reception, children observed the changes that occurred as ice balloons melted and discovered which of a set of objects were magnetic. The celebration of festivals such as harvest and Christmas encourage children to develop an understanding of their own community and culture. They learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. Children learn about other cultures and different ways of life. For example, they celebrated Divali and shared typical Indian foods. The teachers and their assistants carefully observe the children and assess their performance, providing them with support and encouragement to help them improve their skills of cutting, folding and sticking. The children are confident and competent in using the 'mouse' with a computer and use different programs to support their learning in mathematics and language and literacy. Construction toys are used well to encourage children to design and make their own models and to discover how things work.

Physical development

65. Very good provision is made for children's physical development. The children's natural exuberance and energy is catered for well. In the nursery and reception classes, the children have structured physical education lessons to promote their physical development. In these lessons children are developing good spatial awareness, control and imagination as they respond to music and ideas. They are learning to run, hop, skip, jump and balance with increasing co-ordination and confidence. A very good range of challenging large equipment is available on a daily basis to help the nursery children to develop their climbing and balancing skills. Confidence and skill are exhibited as the children balance, climb and swing on the good equipment available. There is a wide range of wheeled toys which the children are able to manoeuvre well, avoiding other children and obstacles as they incorporate them into their dramatic play situations. Reception children have planned access to these activities but not as regularly as in the nursery. Children are reminded of the need to eat healthy foods and the importance of exercise to healthy minds and bodies. The children are developing confidence when handling pencils, crayons, modelling tools, construction toys and malleable materials.

Creative development

66. The children enjoy a very good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. Through such experiences, the children are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to develop their use of language to express ideas. A very good range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes helps to develop children's understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. Children enjoy taking part in the many very good role-play situations provided, such as the 'garden centre', 'travel agents' or 'home corner'. During the inspection children had been on a visit to the local church, and as a result, a 'play' church had been established in the nursery to enable children to re-enact their experience and plan a range of services and celebrations. There are many activities available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. Baking is available on a regular basis and children explore different tastes and smells of foods. The staff provide materials with interesting real and made textures from which children can choose to create their own designs, pictures, models and collages. They work with clay, paint wood and junk materials to create two and three-dimensional pictures and models. Malleable materials such as sand and water are available for children to explore on a daily basis.

Social and personal development

67. The children's personal, social and emotional development is given very high priority. The children enjoy coming to school and are learning to respond well to the rules and routines of nursery and school life. They are eager to learn new skills and to explore new ideas. Emphasis is placed on helping children to develop an understanding of appropriate behaviour and what is right and wrong. The staff sensitively explain to children the consequences of their actions, encouraging them to consider the feelings of other children and to say sorry when they upset someone. The children are learning to share and work together in a variety of situations, such as when playing number games, working on the computer, in role-play and in the outdoor play areas. Older children work independently for sustained periods of time and take pride in their achievements. They work hard at difficult tasks such as completing complex jigsaws, making up words with plastic and foam letters or exploring whether materials are magnetic. Relationships are very positive and children are encouraged to reflect on their feelings, actions and experiences. There are well-planned opportunities for

children to develop a sensitivity and awareness of other people, their different religions, cultures and ways of life.

Teaching

68. Teaching in the early years is consistently very good and often excellent. The teachers and classroom assistants have a secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of play and practical experiences. This has a very positive effect on the good progress children make towards the early learning goals and provides a very firm foundation for learning as children move into Year 1. Lesson plans and schemes of work provide a very good framework for learning. They are very clear and detailed with appropriate learning objectives linked to the early learning goals. Experiences are interesting and challenging and are focussed very closely on what children need to learn in relationship to the “stepping-stones” in learning for this age group. Activities are well organised to promote communication, language, literacy and mathematical development.
69. There is a very good balance between teacher directed activities and child initiated ones. The adults provide very effective support for all activities, interacting to check and extend children’s thinking and understanding. For example, in the reception class excellent teacher interaction extended children’s understanding of a ‘ball shape’ as she introduced vocabulary such as, world, globe and sphere all within the space of a few seconds of riveting teaching and learning. The children explored these new words as they played with three-dimensional shapes later in the lesson, ably supported by well-briefed classroom assistants.
70. The adults use praise and encouragement very effectively to promote positive behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. Children are given very clear instructions about what it is they are expected to do. The staff use questions, comments and observations very well to assess children’s progress and to plan for future learning. Baseline assessment is shared with parents and is used very effectively to help teachers plan an appropriate learning environment for the Foundation Stage.
71. Whilst the records that are kept of the children's' progress are useful, they do not relate directly to the early learning goals in order to show progress in the six areas of learning. The teachers and classroom support assistants work very well together and this has a positive effect on the quality of the learning. They are enthusiastic and have high expectations of the children. Parents are actively involved in their children’s learning through sharing story books and early reading scheme books at home, or, whenever they can, working alongside their children in the nursery or reception class.

ENGLISH

72. Standards in English have improved significantly since the last inspection when they were below those expected nationally for children aged seven and eleven. In the four years since the last inspection the trend has been one of improvement, especially in the last two years. The 1999 test results show that children at the age of eleven were achieving standards well above the national average and very high compared to similar schools. Test results in 2000, although not quite as high as the previous year, show a similar picture of above average attainment overall. Inspection evidence indicates that the present year 6 pupils are in line to meet national expectations. The apparent dip in standards is due to the number of children with special educational needs, the high number of children who have recently entered the school and a decline in what children could do when they first joined the school.
73. At the age of seven, the inspection evidence shows that standards are rising significantly and are at least in line with national expectations. This is confirmed by the 2000 results in the national tests. Although 1999 tests showed children were achieving standards lower than those expected nationally the trend was one of sustained improvement. Overall the schools results since the last inspection represent very good progress over time in this age group and for the school as a whole.
74. Literacy is given a very high priority throughout the curriculum, and most pupils make good and often very rapid progress in developing their skills. In this they are building on the very effective foundation for learning provided for them in the nursery and reception class. All areas of weakness highlighted at the last inspection have been addressed with considerable thoroughness and zeal. Emphasis is now placed on writing in a variety of contexts and for a wide range of purposes. In most lessons, higher attaining children are now suitably challenged and are achieving high standards. Children of all attainment levels are developing a rich vocabulary for their age. They use their reading and writing skills well in other areas of the curriculum. For example, when planning, designing and evaluating a 'healthy drink' or writing information cards on animals and their habitats.
75. The school has enthusiastically implemented the National Literacy's Strategy. Recent adaptations to this designed to more readily meet the needs of the children are having a very positive effect on raising standards in creative writing and independent reading. Teachers and children are very aware of the skills they are teaching and learning, respectively, and lessons have an atmosphere of shared commitment to producing high standards. Children are eager to do their best to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. The school has also adopted the Additional Literacy's Strategy and booster classes to provide additional support for those pupils needing extra help to reach the required standards. Support staff are well trained and very skilled, and are very effective in giving additional help to designated individuals and groups of children. Their contribution greatly enhances the learning opportunities available.
76. Children with special educational needs receive very good support and achieve standards in line with their prior attainment. Children for whom English is an additional language make good progress and most achieve the expected standards.
77. The school places considerable emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills and as a result most children make very good progress and reach high standards. The children are confident and articulate speakers. By the age of seven, they are

eager to answer questions and to talk and evaluate their work. By the age of eleven, they are able to discuss texts using subject specific vocabulary. They express ideas clearly and use interesting and grammatically accurate language. Drama and role-play are used very effectively to develop speaking and listening skills across the school. A visit to see Macbeth at a local theatre evidently brought the play alive for children and gave them an introduction to how exciting Shakespeare can be. In a follow-up lesson children in Year 6 took on the roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, whilst their classmates asked them searching and mature questions about the reasons why they acted as they did. Once the children had got over their initial embarrassment they took on the parts with increasing confidence and began thinking and speaking as the characters they were portraying.

78. The children are making good progress in their reading skills. The youngest of children read simple books with increasing accuracy and understanding. They are aware of authors and illustrators and are able to identify the main characters and events in their favourite books. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that the children have a good grasp of sounds and letters. As a result they quickly develop independent strategies for sounding out words they are unfamiliar with. Year 1 children are aware of alliteration and work with their teacher to write their own nonsense sentences. Above average children in Year 2 use a variety of strategies to help them recognise unfamiliar words, such as letter patterns and sounds, context and pictures. They read aloud with confidence and appropriate expression and understanding. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that children whose language skills are under developed fully understand the texts they are reading.
79. As they move through the school, the children continue to make good progress. Most are enthusiastic readers of a wide range of texts and are learning to read fluently and accurately. Older children express a preference for particular authors and they choose books because of particular interests such as humour or adventure stories. Above average and average attaining pupils understand plot, setting and characterisation. They show a mature understanding of different writers' styles and accounts and are able to make deductions and inferences from their reading. The children's love of stories was obvious as one Year 6 child shared his enthusiasm for the latest 'Harry Potter' book, even going to the lengths of saying where the book could be bought and how much it cost. The inspector was informed that once the book was started it would be difficult to put down! Guided reading groups are organised and used very effectively to provide high quality support for the children to develop their reading skills. The children read to their teachers, classroom support assistants and parent helpers regularly. Older children are paired with younger ones, which raises their self-esteem and confidence.
80. The children's love of poetry is fostered across the school. A lower attaining child in Year 2, for example, expressed great enthusiasm for poetry and was very keen to recite her favourite one, which she did, with expression and confidence. In Year 6 poetry from the two world wars captured children's imagination and gave them an insight into the thoughts and feelings of men going into battle. Children take books home regularly and family members hear their children read. This has a very positive effect on pupils' standards and progress.
81. Pupils are developing good independent research skills as they use dictionaries, thesaurus, encyclopaedias, CD-ROMs and non-fiction books to seek out information they need. The library and computer suite are well resourced, centrally located and well used. Books are very well matched to children's attainment and interest levels and carefully chosen to interest both boys and girls. The staff ensure that individual

children who are particularly skilled in reading have a challenging range of books to read and are not limited to the reading schemes. A range of non-fiction books is used within the classroom to support topic work but most rooms lack an inviting reading area where children can choose a book during the day and become engrossed in their private reading.

82. Improvements in writing since the last inspection are significant. The children make good progress overall, and rapid progress in Year 2 and Year 6. By the age of seven the majority of children are spelling common words correctly and making good attempts to spell more complex words. They now write for a variety of purposes using appropriate layout and vocabulary in response to the imaginative activities that are provided. For example, some children have written their own 'joke books' using interesting layouts and word processing skills to add interest to their work. The children generally observe the rules of punctuation, using full stops and capital letters, while some above average children use question marks, exclamation marks and interesting vocabulary to enliven their writing. Handwriting is given a very high priority. Writing is almost always very neat and well formed with the children learning to join their letters from an early age.
83. The children progressively develop their ability to write for different purposes using a wide range of styles. Their work shows an awareness of the need for different presentation skills, vocabulary and style and a very good use of well-chosen vocabulary to enliven their writing and capture the imagination of the reader. Children produce diagrams and posters to support their work in other subjects. They write poems, book reviews, character portraits, letters, and scientific and historical accounts. Children in Year 4 write interesting books for younger children showing imagination and an awareness of their audience. Their writing is well organised and by the age of eleven most children show an awareness of grammar and punctuation. Higher attaining children use complex grammatical structures, show an understanding of paragraphing and use rich appropriate vocabulary to enliven their writing. They use computers appropriately to write, edit and display their ideas. By the age of eleven most children have developed a neat, flowing and legible style of handwriting.
84. Behaviour is very good. Children show very favourable attitudes to learning and enjoy very positive relationships with their teachers. The teachers and pupils share the same purpose, and there is an expectation on both parts that learning will be an enjoyable activity. This makes a considerable contribution to their rate of progress and the standards achieved. Most children are very eager to learn. They stay on task and show very good levels of independence and concentration. They work very hard to meet their individual targets, which are set to improve their handwriting, presentation skills and knowledge and understanding. The children show pride in producing work of a high standard and enjoy working collaboratively. They enjoy English lessons and respond very well to the structure of the Literacy Hour.

85. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and in over half of lessons seen, the standard of teaching was very good. All teachers are confidently implementing the 'Literacy Hour', so the teaching is now carefully structured and well-planned to meet the needs of pupils of all attainment levels. The teachers ensure that the children are very clear about what it is they are expected to learn. Speaking and listening, handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar are all given high priority. As a result, the children's knowledge and understanding of basic skills are apparent in their discussions and in their extended writing. Extensive opportunities for extended writing are provided in English and other subjects to ensure that progress is maintained. Teachers use praise, comments and questions effectively to check understanding and extend thinking. When teaching is very good, expectations are particularly high, and the teacher's enthusiasm and explanations, based on secure subject knowledge, have a very positive effect on attainment and progress. In a Year 2 lesson on improving sentences, for example, the teacher's lively questions, explanations and well chosen examples, quickly got over to the children what was meant by adjectives and synonyms. As a result, the children made rapid progress in using describing words and choosing different, more interesting words to improve their stories.
86. The teachers set individual targets, which are effective in reminding the children of the strategies they need in order to improve their work, such as correct spelling and punctuation and clear handwriting. Plenary sessions are used well to check that the children have understood the lesson and also to extend their thinking, pushing them just that bit further. In Year 6, for example, probing and challenging questions extended children's understanding about the aspirations and values of Macbeth and his wife. Once they were given examples such as 'What do you feel about someone killing his best friend?' or 'what do we mean by loyalty?' children quickly grasped the ideas and were able to ask challenging questions themselves.
87. Relationships are usually very good and most teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour and attainment. The result is very good discipline and high standards. Occasionally, when teachers do not challenge the children sufficiently, they become restless and distracted. The children are encouraged to believe in their own ability to succeed. In some lessons however, the teachers do not consistently channel the pupils' eagerness, and this results in them becoming restless and inattentive. In other less effective lessons, the teachers do not have sufficient strategies to help higher attaining children improve and extend their skills and lower attaining children are sometimes left to struggle with difficult tasks for too long.
88. The teachers use a range of appropriate and high quality resources to support their lessons. The over use of worksheets apparent at the last inspection has been eliminated and most teachers are imaginative in the way they present tasks to children. This has a very positive effect on the quality of the provision, making the teaching and learning of English much more challenging and interesting.
89. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Children with English as an additional language are given high quality support.
90. Assessment and record keeping are now very good. The teachers mark the children's work regularly and give them helpful suggestions on how they can improve their work. National and school test results and teacher assessments are carefully scrutinised to improve standards, track the children's' progress and to set targets for the school and for individuals. Teaching and planning are checked regularly, and the teachers are given feedback on how to improve the quality of their lessons. This helps to maintain

the very good standards of teaching and learning that were observed during the inspection.

MATHEMATICS

91. Excellent improvements have taken place since the last inspection in all aspects of provision for mathematics leading to steadily rising standards throughout the school. This is not readily apparent in the school's national test results for three main reasons. Firstly, a significant number of children join and leave the school between year one and year six, so the test results do not accurately reflect the school's input. Secondly, some of the children who were held back in the early stages because of inadequate provision still do not perform to their potential by the age of eleven; and thirdly, the school attracts an increasing number of children with special educational needs. It should also be borne in mind that although the last inspection reported average standards throughout the school, progress was reported to be unsatisfactory in the infants and slow in the juniors, with many children not reaching their potential. These weaknesses have been fully rectified and all children now have the opportunity to learn as rapidly as they can.
92. In Key Stage 1, the school's results in the national tests for seven-year-olds reflect a rapidly improving picture. Standards have been below the national average since 1996, with girls achieving much lower results than boys. In 1999, the school's results were also below those for similar schools. However, there was a dramatic improvement in 2000, when all the children taking the test achieved Level 2, the expected level for seven-year-olds. What was even more significant was the high proportion of children reaching the higher levels – much higher than in 1999 and higher than the national average. These results reflect what is currently happening in the classrooms. The children are all working at levels that match their ability. They are achieving well, and reaching standards that are at least in line with expectations for their age overall. A great improvement on the last inspection is the way the children discuss their ideas and solve problems in practical ways rather than simply practising computations. Children with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve as well as they can because they have excellent support in lessons from the teachers and classroom assistants. This is another big improvement since the last inspection.
93. The trend in the school's results in the national tests for eleven-year olds has been broadly in line with national trends since 1996, but boys have performed better than girls have over this period. In 1999, the school's results were in line with the average for all schools in the country, but better than results for schools in similar circumstances. The school's results in 2000 met the school's targets, but were lower than in 1999 for the reasons stated above. Currently, comparisons with national results are not available. This year's group of Year 6 children are performing in line with expectations for their age and are on course to achieve better results than in 2000. A good proportion of the children have better than average skills for their age and can apply them well in practical situations, such as finding areas of complicated shapes.

94. One or two children have exceptional mathematical ability and are encouraged to work towards much higher than average targets. They have a very good knowledge and understanding of decimals, fractions and percentages and apply their number skills well to problems involving measurement. They also have an excellent understanding of angular measure and solve simple equations in algebra. This is a vast improvement on the last inspection, which found that higher attaining children were not challenged sufficiently and were therefore under performing. However, there are also a significant number of children in this year-group with special educational needs. They are making very good progress under skilled tuition from the teacher and classroom assistant, but are unlikely to achieve average levels, so the overall results are likely to be about average.
95. The children have excellent attitudes to their work. They love the challenges that the lessons provide and are always eager to suggest ideas and solve problems. They listen attentively in whole-class and group lessons and get on with their work in a very independent and mature way, requiring the minimum of supervision. The Year 6 children in particular reflect the vastly improved learning atmosphere in their sheer enthusiasm for and enjoyment of the subject. By this stage the children collaborate very successfully and show great independence and initiative in their thinking. They have very good relationships, both with each other and with the teachers and classroom assistants. Behaviour is always very good because the children are so highly motivated and fully occupied.
96. The quality of teaching in mathematics is now very good overall, and this is the key to the improving standards. The standard of teaching was very good in half of the lessons seen, always at least satisfactory and good or better in 90 per cent of lessons. With very few exceptions, lessons are lively, brisk and informative, and build successfully on the children's existing skills. The teachers use the format of the National Numeracy Strategy very skilfully to continually re-enforce mental skills and challenge the children to think mathematically. They provide plenty of opportunities for the children to apply their knowledge and skills to solving practical problems and to investigate patterns in number and shape. The children also have ample opportunities to apply their skills in other curriculum areas. As a result of all this success, they develop a keen interest in the subject and learn at a rapid rate. These very good aspects of teaching and learning are all in stark contrast to the slow lessons and limited learning opportunities reported by the last inspection. The challenging questions that the teachers ask in the introductions to lessons set the tone for the children in their individual and group activities, that are nearly always well matched to their individual levels of attainment.
97. The classroom assistants make an excellent contribution to the children's' learning in this phase of the lessons because they engage them in discussion and give them opportunities to explore and express their ideas. For example, a Year 1 child who was having difficulty counting in twos up to 20 was making patterns on a number track to 20. The classroom assistant supervising his group encouraged him to continue the pattern until it went past the end of the track. In doing this, the child realised that there was a pattern in the numbers, and that he could predict the next one without any help. This illustrates how the vastly improved provision for children with special educational needs enables them to make very good progress. The teachers make very good use of displays to engage the children's' interest, illustrate mathematical vocabulary and relationships and encourage the children's' efforts – something else that was lacking at the last inspection.
98. Without doubt, the National Numeracy Strategy has brought a structure to the subject

that has helped the teachers to plan more effective lessons. In particular, it has encouraged the practice of useful mental skills and problem-solving rather than repetitive computations. The decision by the school to “set” for mathematics lessons has also been successful because teachers do not have to plan for such a wide ability range as they would with a whole class. Keeping Year 6 together as a class has also worked well, because the class teacher is very skilled and manages to plan for the whole ability range. It would be impossible to implement this planning successfully, however, without the contribution of two very skilled and effective classroom assistants. This illustrates the very good use the school makes of its human and financial resources, as does the ample quantity of good quality equipment that helps to make all lessons more enjoyable and worthwhile.

SCIENCE

99. Attainment of children in both key stages has presented a variable picture in recent years with some notable improvements in Key Stage 2 test results and very pleasing comparisons with similar schools. From the evidence gathered in visiting lessons, looking carefully at work and talking to both staff and children it is likely that test results in 2001 will be in line with similar schools although children in Key Stage 1 may improve their results as teacher assessments are moderated more stringently. Results in 1999 were above national expectations as were those for 2000 but it is expected that results in 2001 will be in line with national expectations. The emphasis on practical work and problem solving together with the focus on planning, target setting and booster classes is likely to continue the trend of improving standards. The children’s scientific understanding is evident in the way they present their work in a scientific style, using appropriate scientific vocabulary and showing an understanding of the principles of ‘fair tests’.
100. The children are most enthusiastic about their work. They enjoy the practical nature of the lessons and show good understanding of the scientific principles being taught. Year 5 children were observed deep in philosophical discussion, for example, about the place and value of drugs/medicines in our society. An interesting difference of views concerning the value of insulin developed in one group and the use of some drugs as painkillers, although they could also be misused by some members of our society. Year 1 and 2 children were engaged in finding out why we need to eat and drink to stay alive and the relative values of a number of foodstuffs. Year 2 children were observed creating simple electrical circuits, discussing the inherent dangers of electrical items and discovering the role of battery cells in a number of everyday items. Year 6 children were setting up an experiment to find out why food decays and what causes decay to occur more quickly.
101. The standard of teaching is good overall and very good in Year 6. Detailed planning for each lesson gives clear information about what the children are supposed to learn and how this is to be achieved. A generous amount of time is given to practical and investigative work with the result that children will acquire a much greater understanding of scientific principles. Teachers are confident in their teaching of basic skills and know what level to pitch their teaching at in each class. This means that the children are given a clear picture of the fundamentals of scientific enquiry appropriate for their age. The teachers manage the children well resulting in very good behaviour, good use of time and thoughtful use of available resources.
102. In all the lessons observed, children with special educational needs were fully involved and very good use was made of the classroom assistants. The children are able to work together in discussions, practical work and problem solving and are developing

well as independent learners.

103. Work is carefully reviewed at the end of each lesson giving the children an opportunity to reflect on what they have done and how it could have been improved. The regular assessments at the end of each unit of activity, together with numerous other forms of assessment, are methodically recorded and used to track individual children and monitor their progress. More specific comments on children's work leading to some individual target setting could further enhance the valuable work that is already being done in assessing the children's progress and making the information gathered even more useful in planning.
104. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic, conscientious and talented subject leader. She has been instrumental in improving the planning and resourcing of the current programme of work, contributing enormously to the improvement in test performance scores in science over the last three years. She monitors children's work, observes science lessons, reviews planning and has produced a folder to aid moderation of science work. There is a robust, evolving programme of staff development in science aimed at further improving teaching and learning.
105. There have been many improvements in the provision for science since the last inspection, including investigative science, planning, monitoring performance and resources. These have all contributed to higher standards of achievement across the school. The present focus the use of assessment to guide individual child improvement and target setting should ensure continuing improvement in this subject area.

ART AND DESIGN

106. A very small number of lessons was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based upon these observations, scrutiny of children's work, including that on display, the scheme of work used and teachers' planning. Attainment at the end of both key stages is broadly in line with national expectations. All the artwork seen around the school has been displayed thoughtfully and well presented to celebrate the children's effort, talent and achievement, as well as to add to the aesthetic value of the school. Art and design is reflected in examples of work across the curriculum and includes a range of examples of three-dimension work. For example, Year 2 geography work is enriched by the illustrations of jungle and polar regions. In each key stage there are examples of computer generated pieces of art.
107. All the children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Key Stage 1, and achieve standards in line with expectations for their age. They develop and practise their basic skills, producing pieces of art from a variety of media and materials. For example, the Nursery's stimulating environment includes painting with balloons, vegetables and fruit prints and leaf collages; reception children create their own interpretations of famous artists from Hockney to Van Gogh and Year 1 children use Paint, the computer program, to create self portraits. In Year 2, children design mirror-pictures, and develop a range of drawing techniques in producing portraits of a high standard.
108. In Key Stage 2, the children make good progress and extend the range of their skills. In the lessons o, the older children compared the effectiveness of the cutting out techniques they had chosen and talked about the relevance of proportion. These discussions enabled individuals to modify and improve their work further.

109. Teaching was good overall in the lessons observed. In a very good lesson in Key Stage 1, the management of the children and relationships within the purposeful working environment were very good. The tasks were matched to the children's prior attainment and opportunities were provided for all children to choose, create, design and undertake their piece of work. Expectations were high, because the teacher was clearly well informed and enthusiastic about the subject and showed genuine interest in each child's learning. The expertise of the classroom assistant was fully utilised and resources were suitably extensive, stimulating and fully accessible. The clear focus on art and design skills appropriate to the children's age and abilities was not so evident in all lessons. For example, in one lesson in the juniors, the children all worked on a given design with given materials. They practised their making skills, but did not make good progress in developing their skills of choosing materials and designs for themselves.
110. The last inspection identified a lack of systematic planning in art. Since then, attention has been given to developing art and design in school. A co-ordinator has been appointed and all the staff are involved in structured planning. The positive effect of this is evident in the way that the long-term and half-termly planning set out the skills to be developed. The planning is personal to the school and meets National Curriculum requirements. The action plan outlines realistic areas for development, which include a school scheme of work based upon the current national documents in use and a policy to be formulated this year. Monitoring is currently informal and a portfolio of work is being established but assessment remains a priority for development in the future.
111. Leadership of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator has identified the overall level of resources as only satisfactory, with a need for central storage to improve access for all. Specialist resources for activities such as printing and marbling need to be developed. Although there is no kiln in school, some clay work is undertaken. Accommodation within the school is adequate and children make good use of the local area for sketching. Visits are organised to extend the children's artistic appreciation and develop their skills. For example, Year 3 children have visited Truro Museum. During the inspection, Year 4 children enjoyed the challenging approach and input from a visiting Art and Music group that got them painting a large group canvass that they then used as a musical score. Such opportunities stimulate staff and children's interests in art and design and develop confidence and competence in teaching and learning. The teachers and support assistants are enthusiastic and show a willingness to share ideas. This bodes well for further improvements in provision and standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, there was insufficient evidence available to judge standards in design technology. However, scrutiny of a very limited sample of work produced by the pupils, and an examination of schemes of work and teachers' planning, indicates that there have been some improvements since the last inspection. There is now an effective curriculum, which places emphasis on developing pupils' design technology skills, knowledge and understanding. There are also opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work in order to help them to improve further their designing and making skills.
113. The curriculum co-ordinator is very experienced and enthusiastic and is working with the staff to improve their confidence and skill in teaching the subject. The school's action plan includes opportunities to monitor the teaching and learning to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject in order to improve standards.

GEOGRAPHY

114. There is insufficient evidence upon which to make judgements about standards because the subject was not being taught in Key Stage 2 during the period of inspection. One lesson taught by a supply teacher was observed at Key Stage 1. At the time of the last inspection attainment was reported as in line with national standards at the end of both key stages. Examination of planning, discussions with children and an analysis of the work on display indicates that attainment remains broadly in line with expectations.
115. The teachers' planning provides a structured framework for covering the National Curriculum programmes of study, and the school has planned discrete teaching of the subject, whereas previously it was taught within a topic. A policy and school scheme of work is to be formulated this year. The co-ordinator has plans to observe one lesson in each year group in the summer term and to establish a portfolio of work in order to keep track of standards in teaching and learning. This represents a good improvement in the management of the subject. The co-ordinator has also recognised that Geography is under resourced and that there is a need for substantial improvement. Maps and atlases at Key Stage 2, resource packs for specific areas of study and a range of general equipment are identified as priority requirements. A range of visits make good use of the locality as a geography resource.

HISTORY

116. Attainment by the age of eleven is in line with that expected nationally. Children in Year 6 have a secure understanding of chronology and can name significant events and people from the past. They discuss the Tudor period confidently and can name the different Tudor Kings and Queens. They also know how to use different sources of evidence to learn about the past and consider the effect different periods had on the people living at the time. Due to the school's timetabling arrangements, there was insufficient evidence available to make a judgement on standards at the age of seven.
117. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is sometimes good, but sometimes unsatisfactory. Some very good teaching in Year 6 provided children with rich opportunities to study different aspects of the Second World War. An imaginative use of role-play helped children get under the skin of what it really was like to be an evacuee in their own home town of St Austell. The children wrote very emotional letters to their parents expressing sadness, longing and misery as well as excitement and anticipation. This was a good example of the way the subject is used to develop the children's writing as well as their skills of historical enquiry. The children respond very positively to the good, lively teaching. When the opportunities are provided, they are keen to explore new ideas and exchange these with each other. Year 6 children, for example, talk sensitively about the Holocaust and believe history can teach us about how we ought to behave in the future.
118. However, some lessons for younger key stage 2 children do not move learning forward at an acceptable rate. They are not planned in sufficient detail to make it clear exactly what is to be learned and there is a distinct lack of interesting resources to capture the children's imagination.
119. A scrutiny of teachers planning and pupils' work indicates that most teachers have a sound understanding of the subject. They no longer rely on commercially produced materials and most now encourage children to organise their own work. Children

research information using CD ROMS, books and artefacts and record their findings in their own words, helping them to improve their study habits and literacy skills. The history of Cornwall now has a place in the curriculum and children visit local historical sites such as the clay mines and the nearby Study Centre.

120. The level of provision, teaching and standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained. The co-ordinator is supporting staff in implementing the new curriculum 2000 and is aware that there are areas to develop in the subject. The monitoring of teaching and learning to improve standards is included in the current action plan.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. Raising standards of performance in information and communications technology [ICT] was a key issue in the previous inspection and the school has made considerable progress towards addressing this. Investment in new hardware and the creation of an ICT suite within the central learning resources area ensures that children have regular opportunities to extend their skills with the result that their confidence grows correspondingly. The children can select the appropriate program from the school's home page and they can log off and shut down efficiently at the end of the lesson, although for the younger children, this can be a very time-consuming process. All the children in Key Stage 2 observed during the inspection can save and retrieve information and can modify their work to make improvements. Children's mouse control is improving rapidly and their keyboard skills are becoming faster as they have more time on the computers. This improved provision and subject management has raised standards such that attainment is in line with national expectations in most areas of ICT although older children need to undertake more work using ICT to control events and/or models in a predetermined way. The children should be more able to use the technology to handle and manage data from practical and investigative work.
122. All classes have regular timetabled lessons in the ICT suite and teachers are beginning to use these lessons effectively to develop the children's skills. When the teachers are confident with the equipment and with the program content they provide good challenge for children of all abilities and experience. The children were able to use 'Paint' effectively to draw portraits with the older children using the program to create work in the style of the artist Seurat. Year 6 children were able to use word-processing, publishing and graphics programmes to produce a completed task on the late civil rights leader Martin Luther King. The information and communication technology suite is a difficult space to manage but the children listen to the teacher and collaborate well with each other when working on shared tasks.
123. Some teachers use ICT effectively to support children's learning in other subjects including art, physical education, literacy, mathematics, religious education and science. An excellent display of children's poetry from the Year 5 class, some informative displays explaining comparative fractions in the library and a number of self portraits from children in Key Stage 1, are just a few examples of the range of work seen from other subject areas. The co-ordinator is working hard to ensure that the hardware is reliable, that staff are confident in the capability of the equipment and that the children have plenty of opportunity to use a range of technology to best effect. A detailed action plan has been drawn up to identify cross-curricular opportunities, develop a staff training programme and ensure that the technology keeps up with future developments. Further work remains to be done in the assessment of children's ability to ensure good progress is maintained and that standards are raised

even further.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

124. The school provides French and German lessons for Year 6, which make a valuable contribution to the children's preparation for secondary education. During the inspection, German was being taught. The lesson that was observed was very effective. The teacher provided lively teaching based on conversation that stimulated the children and kept them interested and learning throughout. They have a good basic vocabulary and a very high level of interest in speaking the language, reflecting the teacher's enthusiasm. These lessons enable the children to reach above average standards for their age and gives them an excellent platform from which to build their foreign language skills.

MUSIC

125. The school has maintained the good standards of singing reported by the last inspection. The children sing enthusiastically and reach standards in line with expectations for their age at both key stages. Video-recordings of past school productions show that the children are also good at refining their singing and performing to different audiences. As no music lessons were observed in the juniors, a judgement cannot be made about standards in other aspects of music at key stage 2. From the lessons observed in the infants, it is clear that the children develop awareness of pitch and rhythm, and an appreciation of the dynamics of music and reach standards in line with expectations for their age by the end of Key Stage 1. This was reflected in the performance of the sound effects for a story by Year 2 children in their assembly. They had selected instruments to represent the various animals in the story and the movements they made and showed an awareness of how to change the mood of the story by the way the played their instruments.
126. Brief observations of Year 4 children working under the guidance of a visiting performing arts group indicated that they continue developing these skills as they move through the school. In this session, they selected instruments that they thought would make appropriate sounds to represent the different elements of a large picture they had painted. They were able to get different sounds out of their instruments, for example to represent a stream or a river, and work with others to produce a group composition. These accomplishments are in line with expectations for this age group.
127. Insufficient teaching was seen to judge the overall quality in the school. The quality of the teaching seen in Key Stage 1 ranged from satisfactory to good. In the most effective lesson, the teacher used a variety of methods to keep the children interested and focused on what they were doing. For example, they sat in a circle and took turns at using an instrument to play a word they had chosen, for example "loudly". The other children were motivated to listen because they had to guess the word, and this gave them the chance of being next to play. The classroom assistants played a useful part in this lesson by ensuring that the children whose turn it was understood the instruction word. In the less successful lesson, the teacher did not use such a variety of methods and was less confident in leading the activities so that the children's attention wandered and they made less progress.
128. The school places a high priority on the singing and performance aspect of music in assemblies and school productions, and these are of a good standard. There are also ample opportunities for those children who are interested to learn a musical instrument. The co-ordinator has established a scheme of work that provides for

coverage of the full curriculum, but has not yet established procedures for checking how this is being implemented because the school has quite rightly been concentrating on other priorities. The children's enjoyment of music and eagerness to participate and perform shows that the school has maintained positive attitudes to the subject, ensuring a good basis for the future improvements detailed in the school's development plan.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Levels of attainment are in line with what should be expected at Key Stages 1 and 2 although levels of attainment seen in Key Stage 2 dance and Key Stage 1 swimming were above the national average. The school has made a significant number of improvements since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new subject leader, more detailed planning, improved resources, improved landscaping, playground markings and a move towards reviewing the policy documentation.
130. Year 6 children were seen performing their dance routines in small groups and their friends were given the opportunity to evaluate the performances and make suggestions for improvement. The same Year 6 group undertook a task to produce teaching cards for a year 4 hockey lesson when their outdoor lesson was cancelled due to bad weather. The children produced some imaginative ideas and look forward to the opportunity of trying them out at a later date. The Year 4 children did play some hockey on the playground, showing an ability to dribble and strike the ball, but a lack of time inhibited their progress. Year 1 children combined with those in reception for a movement lesson in which all the children were encouraged to use space effectively, work at different speeds, explore different levels and watch each other working. All lessons seen emphasised the value of warming up and down, attention was given to health and safety issues and the value of exercise and healthy lifestyle were stressed. Nursery children were seen, for a short time, undertaking a lesson exploring their ability to climb, jump, travel at a variety of heights, develop their confidence and work safely. All Key Stage 1 children have the opportunity to swim at the local sports centre once a week, and they reach higher than expected standards for their age.
131. The quality of teaching was always at least satisfactory and often good. The lessons were planned effectively and usually resourced appropriately. Teachers showed good subject knowledge and were able to show the children correct techniques to improve their skills. The lessons moved at a good pace with a good variety of activities and opportunity for children to evaluate their performances. Children were given an opportunity to apply intellectual and creative effort in their work particularly in dance and gymnastics. Children with special educational needs were well integrated into the programme and many made significant contributions to the lessons seen. The children enjoyed their lessons and the majority work hard to improve their standards of performance. They listen attentively to the teacher, work collaboratively in small groups, encourage each other and offer strategies for improvement. Children's demonstrations together with those of the teacher were used to good effect, enthusing the children and stimulating them to try harder. On the odd occasions when the children had to wait too long for a turn, due to lack of equipment or poor organisational strategies, inattentive behaviour and a loss of interest resulted in poorer performances.
132. The subject leader has been in place for less than one term but she is already beginning to make a positive impact upon the subject. The draft policy is due for completion by June 2001, resources have been improved, planning is co-ordinated and liaison with the local comprehensive school has resulted in an increase in sporting competitions, visits from sports experts and enhanced use of sports facilities.

After School Clubs include football, netball, athletics, cross-country, rounders and sports competitions. Monitoring of the subject is due to begin in the summer of 2001 and assessment of children's work should be included in the future development of the subject. Indoor facilities are limited, but the improved playground, the building of an adventure playground, the full size football pitch and use of local facilities enable a full range of activities to be pursued.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. The children's levels of attainment are slightly higher than the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, at the end of both key stages. The planning for coverage and depth of study is good in Christianity, Sikhism, Hinduism and Judaism. The school's scheme, adapted well from the Agreed Syllabus, provides a good structure to the curriculum and the teachers have a framework in which they can extend their own knowledge and expertise.
134. At the time of the previous inspection there was no scheme in place and there was no continuity within the school. Progress was variable and standards were judged to be below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and slightly above at the end of Key Stage 2. The new scheme is well-structured and planned for progression and coverage. The subject has been given a high priority and is now taught on a regular basis for one hour per week.
135. By the end of Key Stage 1 children have developed a good knowledge and understanding of fundamental beliefs of Christianity. They learn about Hinduism. Younger children know why they have studied Diwali and enjoyed the festival, whilst older children compared the Hindu wedding with the Christian wedding.

136. In Key Stage 2, the children benefit from the opportunity to explore their feelings as they study other faiths such as Sikhism and Judaism. They develop their understanding of different faiths and how they can be similar to as well as different from their own. They begin to develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their rights to hold different beliefs, values and traditions from their own. In all lessons observed children were encouraged to share and discuss religious views and experiences. In Year 6 children were able to identify and describe the qualities of a good leader as they investigated the life of Martin Luther King in the context of a wider study of people whose lives have been influenced by religious beliefs.
137. There has been a marked improvement in teaching since the last inspection particularly in Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to satisfactory and is good overall. Confidence is growing and teaching was good or better in 75 per cent of the lessons observed. The teacher's subject knowledge is good and teaching is based upon the assessment of children's prior knowledge and understanding. The teachers handle children's questions and responses sensitively during discussions but also seek their views and challenge their thinking. Where teaching is excellent, children respond extremely positively and maturely, listening sensitively to fellow class members. They demonstrate a capacity for meaningful personal study and volunteer to articulate their thoughts, ideas and feelings.
138. Children's attitudes and response to Religious Education overall are very good. In Year 6 there is a high level of concentration and effort and the children's attitudes towards learning are excellent.
139. Management of the subject is good and a detailed action plan is in place, which includes provision to extend the monitoring. In addition to the monitoring of teacher's planning, the co-ordinator will observe all colleagues teach. A portfolio of children's work is to be developed in order to track the pupils' progress. The impact of the new well thought out approach and procedures has served to improve provision in Religious Education and raise standards. The Religious Education curriculum and provision of collective worship enhance children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, resources are limited and the co-ordinator has identified the areas most in need of updating.