

INSPECTION REPORT

St MICHAEL'S C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kingsteignton

LEA area:Devon

Unique reference number: 113407

Headteacher: Ms S Eames

Reporting inspector: Mr B Tyrer
23101

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th October 2000

Inspection number: 224656

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Fr. C Benson
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr L Kuraishi 11450	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs C Richardson 22058	Team inspector	Foundation stage Special educational needs History Religious education	
Mr P Garner 31166	Team inspector	Equal opportunity Science Physical education	
Mr G Tompsett 30717	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has 404 pupils on roll of whom 204 are girls and 200 are boys. The school is bigger than average. The school population is almost entirely white. There are 72 pupils eligible for free school meals which is approximately 18 per cent of the roll. This is broadly average. A similar percentage have special educational needs. The proportion of pupils having statements of special educational need is also average. There is a low proportion of pupils who have English as a second language and none of these are at the early stages of language acquisition. The school roll has risen by approximately 10 per cent since 1995. The socio-economic factors are broadly average and children enter the reception class with levels of attainment that are broadly what might be expected.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school because standards for pupils at age 11 are rising. The quality of education is good and the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory and has dealt effectively with serious problems associated with staff absence. However, during this time standards in some subjects have fallen for pupils at age 11. The headteacher and governing body have responded well to the key issues of the previous inspection report. Attendance and pupil behaviour is good and the school is a happy and healthy working environment. When taking standards, pupil costs which are slightly above average and the quality of education provided into consideration it is judged that the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in art and design are above expectations for pupils at age seven and 11. They are above in mathematics for pupils at age seven and are above in science for pupils at age 11.
- Relationships are very good and pupils show good attitudes and behaviour.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The curriculum is good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The parents have good views of the school.
- The governing body is making a good contribution to the running of the school.
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What could be improved

- Standards in English and music for pupils at age 11.
- The way progress is improved when it is shown to be unsatisfactory by assessment procedures.
- Procedures for improving attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1996. Since that time the key issues of the previous inspection report have been satisfactorily addressed and the role of the governing body has been significantly improved. Standards have been raised in information and communication technology and lesson planning shows better provision for pupils of differing levels of attainment. Steps have been taken to widen pupils' knowledge of cultural diversity and the school takes steps to evaluate the effectiveness of its spending decisions. Disruption has been caused to teaching and learning through staffing absences and whilst standards at age 11 have risen year on year since 1996 in English, mathematics and science they have not always been maintained at the high level with which pupils entered the key stage. Standards in English for pupils at age 11 were good at the time of the last inspection whilst now they are found to be below expectations. Similarly, standards in music for pupils at age 11 have declined since the time of the last inspection although the school is now in a strong position to bring about improvement. The targets the school has set are appropriate and this is confirmed by inspection evidence. The quality of teaching and the curriculum has improved.

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	D	D	D	E
mathematics	E	D	D	D
science	E	E	C	C

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

Standards in national tests have improved since 1996 but results for pupils at age 11 in 1999 remain below national averages. In comparison with similar schools the 1999 results are well below average for English and below average for mathematics. Attainment in science is average when compared nationally and with similar schools. The 1999 results in English and mathematics were close to the targets set by the school as they were for mathematics in 2000. Test results in English for 2000 exceeded the targets the school had set.

Standards for pupils at age seven in 1999 were average in reading, well above in writing and above in mathematics both at national level and in comparison with similar schools.

Inspection shows that standards by age eleven are below expectations in English, in line with them for mathematics and above them for science. Standards for pupils at age seven are average in English and science and are above average in mathematics. These findings confirm the school's targets for tests at year 2001.

The attainment of children entering the reception year is broadly what might be expected nationally and they make satisfactory progress so that by the time they are five they have achieved the standards that are expected. In a small number of cases, these standards are exceeded.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils enjoy school, are well motivated and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; pupils behave well with one another and for adults.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils are keen to take on responsibility and enjoy working independently.
Attendance	Good; above 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	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.

Teaching was satisfactory or better. It was good in 47 per cent of lessons and was very good in 12 per cent. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory with a proportion that is good. It is good in science with some very good teaching also seen. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well although attention needs to be given to spelling for older pupils. In religious education teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own faith and those of others. The teaching of art is very good as a result of the support given to teachers by the coordinators. Pupils with special needs are satisfactorily supported and so make appropriate progress against the objectives in their individual education plans. Planning is usually effective but occasionally does not meet the needs of higher attaining pupils in English. Pupils have good attitudes and respond well to the good teaching. They are fully involved in their learning. They listen carefully and with consideration to what is being said and they are able to work independently as they apply the skills and knowledge they have learnt. Good relationships are a strong feature of the school and so progress is made in a positive and enjoyable way.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; with a strong emphasis on encouraging independence and the use of skills and knowledge in practical ways.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory; pupils make the required progress against their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very Good; this work is at the core of the school's work and is central to the school's aims.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory; there is a need to improve procedures for improving attendance and for using data gathered from the assessment of pupils' progress.

The school's links with parents satisfactorily promote pupils' progress and well-being.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory; There have been difficulties caused by staff absence over a long period during which time standards for pupils in the junior phase have not been maintained.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good; the governors are well informed and play a constructive part in defining the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; appropriate action has been taken in response to evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; funding is used appropriately and best value is sought with good effect

The level of staffing is adequate and non-teaching members of staff make a good contribution in support of the ethos and learning that takes place. The accommodation is good: the buildings, and the care taken with their maintenance, provide a good environment within which learning can take place effectively. Senior managers and governors are providing a clear direction and are effectively steering the school forward.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like school. • That children are getting the right work. • That the teaching is good. • That parents may approach the school without apprehension. • That the school expects pupils to work hard. • That the school is helping pupils to mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about progress. • The range of activities provided by the school. • The way in which the school works with parents.

The inspection team agrees with those aspects that parents find pleasing. The quality of reports was found to be satisfactory and parents, when interviewed, said that the school was open and approachable. A good curriculum is provided including a good range of extra-curricular and sporting activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Children enter the reception class with levels of attainment that are broadly in line with what might be expected nationally. Most children have experienced some pre-school provision. Because teaching is good most children make sound progress and achieve the expected levels for pupils entering Year 1. A small number of pupils exceed this expectation.

- 2 Children make good progress in their personal social and emotional development. They quickly learn the importance of sharing, taking turns and helping one another. Good progress is made in communication, language and literacy where skills are developed as children learn to identify their name in print and after discussion with the teacher show that they are able to remember the correct direction for print as they write a letter. At the same time they are also developing the skills of control that are required in holding pencils and crayons. Children are given good practical experiences and opportunities to learn about numbers for example when they confirm by counting the number of pupils at registration time. Other mathematical concepts such as full and empty are learned and children have the opportunity to reinforce what they have learned through number songs and rhymes. Progress in mathematical development is good. Good use is made of technology as children learn to type / copy their name via the keyboard onto the computer screen and they also develop essential skills like mouse control through the use of programmes such as "Dressing Ted." They make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world as they do in their creative development. Children are learning that mixing primary colours can produce different results and again are able to develop their control of careful movements as they paint their pumpkins. There is much imaginative play and children are encouraged to listen to musical sounds and them to imitate them. There is sound provision and children make sound progress in their physical development. Many opportunities for developing fine control are provided and children are also given good opportunities to extend their control over their bodies where larger movements such as running and jumping are concerned. Access to large outdoor toys, such as trikes, which would extend this development is limited and the school's consideration of how this provision can be enhanced is timely.

- 3 Results for the attainment of pupils at age seven in national tests in 1999 in reading were in line with the national average and were also in line with those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2 and above) was below the national average but the proportion who achieved the higher level (Level 3) was in line with the average. Taken over time, the attainment of pupils in reading has been above the national average although it has dipped against the national trend since its peak in 1997. The attainment of pupils in reading in tests for 2000 showed a continued deterioration with a significant drop in the proportion attaining the higher level. There is no comparative data available yet for year 2000. The attainment of

pupils in writing in 1999 was well above the national average at the expected level and was also well above at the higher level. The attainment of pupils in 1999 in writing was also well above that of similar schools. The trend for writing, when taken over time is similar to that of reading with a peak in 1997. A lower percentage of pupils achieved the higher level in writing in tests in 2000 than was the case in 1999 tests. The proportion attaining the expected level in writing in tests in 2000 was below the average at the expected level for 1999. The attainment of pupils at age seven in mathematics in 1999 was close to the national average at the expected level and was above the average at the higher level. Performance in mathematics when taken over time shows that attainment is always better than average, having a dip in 1998 followed by a rise in 1999. Performance in mathematics at the expected level in tests in 2000 was similar to that in the preceding year with the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level being reasonably maintained.

- 4 The attainment of pupils in national tests in English for pupils at age 11 in 1999 was below the national average and was well below the average of pupils in similar schools. It was well below at the expected level (Level 4 and above) but was close to the national average at the higher level (Level 5). Taken over time the trend has been upward although at a slower rate than seen nationally since 1997. Attainment in English in tests for 2000 for which there is no comparative national data, shows that attainment improved and was above the average for 1999. Attainment in mathematics in 1999 was below the national average at the expected level and was above it at the higher level. The standard achieved in tests in mathematics in 1999 was below that of pupils in similar schools. Taken over time the trend shows that attainment of pupils has risen at a faster rate than that of pupils nationally. Figures for tests in 2000 confirm this rate of progress at the expected level although attainment for the higher attainers is down slightly. The attainment of pupils in science went down from 1996 to 1998 and was below the national average for those times until 1999 when it made a dramatic improvement to a point where it was average for that year. This attainment was also average when compared to that of pupils in similar schools.. Attainment in science for the year 2000 was similar to that of the preceding year.
- 5 Inspection evidence shows that attainment for pupils at age 11 in English is below the national average, mathematics is average and science is above. Attainment in religious education is in line with what is expected and attainment in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations. Inspection shows that the attainment of pupils at age seven is in line with the national average for English and mathematics and is above expectation in science. The attainment of pupils at age seven in religious education is in line with that which is expected for pupils of their age using the same agreed syllabus. Attainment in information and communications technology for pupils at age seven is in line with national expectations.
- 6 Pupils in the infant classes listen attentively, are keen to contribute and respond appropriately when questioned. By the time they reach age 11 they are able to pay close attention to the comments of others and show from their responses that they have taken the views of others into consideration. Younger pupils at age seven are able to use different strategies for tackling unknown words although more practice is needed with the development of this skill. At age 11 pupils read confidently with expression and have sound skills for tackling unknown words. They sometimes find difficulty in interpreting what they have read and in explaining the intricacies of a plot. Pupils at age seven write legibly and in sentences and are able to use understandable spelling in exercises such as a would-be letter of apology from Goldilocks to the Three Bears. The writing standards of pupils at age 11 are too low. They make errors in the spelling of common words and are not consistent in their use of

punctuation. Pupils generally lack the ability to produce complex and lengthy pieces of writing. Whilst handwriting is practised throughout the school it is not consistently modelled by teachers. The oldest pupils do not show good fluent joined script as a rule.

- 7 In mathematics, pupils at age seven are counting in twos and adding and subtracting numbers to 10. At age 11 they have a good understanding of fractions and are able to relate them to decimal equivalents. They are able to recall multiplication tables and are able to work effectively with areas of common shapes and with angles. In science an understanding of a “fair test” is quickly established and pupils in Year 1 are able to classify materials by different characteristics. Pupils at age 11 show an understanding of the concepts of mass and weight. Pupils at all ages are experienced at applying their knowledge in practical situations so that for example, pupils in Year, 6 are able to demonstrate the effect of weighing a body in air and in water. In information and communications technology (ICT) pupils are able to start and shut down their computers. Older pupils are able to use word processing skills and can include pictures into their writing. They are able to use information from databases but generally lack experience in using technology to control events such as with the programming of a robot or in the use of technology to report physical conditions such as temperature. Pupils at age seven show a sound knowledge of aspects of Christian worship including the symbols and artefacts used. The youngest pupils know about the life of Jesus and can offer opinions on the story of “The Ten Lepers”. The oldest pupils consider philosophical issues relating to the existence of “God.” They look at other religions and study aspects of the various branches of the Christian faith.
- 8 Attainment in the other foundation subjects is good in art and design at both key stages. It is satisfactory at both key stages for pupils in physical education, design and technology, history and geography. It is satisfactory for pupils at age seven in music but is unsatisfactory at age 11.
- 9 Pupils are generally achieving at a satisfactory level although there is clear evidence that staffing absences, and the consequent disruption caused, have had an inhibiting effect on progress in certain areas of the curriculum. Despite this pupils have shown themselves to be willing and active participants in their learning. They are confident and able to utilise the skills and knowledge they possess in practical and independent situations and this contributes greatly to the progress they make. The school has set reasonable targets based on good assessment data for pupils at age 11 in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. They make good progress in the development of self-esteem and confidence, because of the suitability of the targets and the good teaching they receive. The school makes good use of assessment data for target setting on individual education plans and for the formation of groups, so that pupils who need additional support are identified as soon as possible. Pupils of differing levels of attainment make the sort of progress that would be expected. No differences were noted in the rates of progress of boys and girls.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and personal development

- 10 The vast majority of pupils are very enthusiastic about the school. Many name their favourite subjects and activities and give good reasons for their choice. The youngest children have no difficulty in coming to school and leaving their parents or carers. Parents answering the inspection questionnaire strongly endorse the view that that their children enjoy the school and are happy in it.

- 11 Pupils' attitudes to their work are mainly very good. They concentrate very well and listen attentively to the teachers and to each other. Pupils particularly enjoy practical activities such as games and investigations in science and most teachers provide well for these. Only when the tasks they are set insufficiently match their ability, especially in some mathematics and information and communications technology lessons, does their concentration waver and their efforts slacken. When pupils are encouraged to use their initiative, they organise their work well and take pride in their finished product. For example, children in Year 1 confidently show their finished artwork to visitors. The inspection findings closely reflect those of the last inspection, indicating that the school has maintained high standards of attitude and behaviour.
- 12 The school provides a good range of non-class room based activities, such as visits to historical, cultural and residential field trips to Heatree House. Pupils in the junior phase had the opportunity to visit the Millennium Dome. The school teams competed in the inter schools football cup and tag rugby festival. Pupils have the opportunity to join many more out of school sporting and social activities. These all add to pupils' enthusiasm for the school.
- 13 Pupil's behaviour in class is good. There are clear school rules which pupils know well and observe. The pupils appreciate the recognition given to outstanding effort or behaviour through regular praise by class teachers. Behaviour around the school is generally very good. A small number of pupils behave inappropriately in a few lessons and in the last school year seven pupils were excluded for fixed periods. Pupils play well together at playtime and at lunchtime. There is good adult supervision and no unsatisfactory behaviour was observed during the inspection time. Pupils are delighted to be selected to help during the assembly and they carry out their duties with care and pride. Parental comments indicated that their children behave well in the school and inspection evidence confirms this view. The school's behaviour policy is strongly reinforced at every opportunity, especially in personal, social and health lessons and assemblies.
- 14 Adults provide very good role models for the pupils. There is good evidence that pupils respect the values and beliefs of others. They listen carefully to their teachers and other people, particularly in assemblies and in the playground. They show good understanding that other peoples' beliefs may be different from their theirs.
- 15 Many opportunities are available for pupils to assume a wider range of responsibilities with in the school. The range of duties that older pupils undertake is extensive. They help in the school assemblies with setting up music, operating lighting systems and arranging seating for teachers and visitors. Nominations for the newly formed school council have taken place and systems are in operation for the school mediation scheme, which runs smoothly and provides effective support during playtime. There is a strong emphasis on all pupils taking responsibility for their actions and behaviour. Pupils are helpful and polite holding doors for adults and cheerfully undertaking tidying tasks in the classroom and around the school.
- 16 Relationships are very good. Pupils respect their teachers and other adults. They respond to good teaching and are anxious to succeed and make progress. In group work, pupils cooperate well, discussing issues sensibly. They handle and share materials and equipment with respect.
- 17 Attendance registers are completed twice daily and the school meets statutory requirements for safe keeping of attendance records. Pupils are punctual and their attendance rate is above the national level.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 18 The quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory in 41 per cent of lessons, good in 47 per cent and very good in 12 per cent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. The previous inspection reported teaching that was almost 17 per cent unsatisfactory and only a small amount of teaching that was very good or better. The present inspection findings represent a significant improvement over the very recent past and those reported in the last inspection.
- 19 Teaching was good in all key stages including the foundation stage. Very good teaching was observed in both key stages. The highest percentage of good teaching was attributable to the one teacher in the foundation stage followed by teaching in the junior phase and then the infants. Teaching in art is very good, it is good in science, information and communication technology, religious education and history. It is satisfactory in English, mathematics, physical education and music. It was not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching in design and technology and geography, as very little was seen.
- 20 The teaching of English and the skills of literacy is satisfactory overall with a high percentage of teaching that is good or better. The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively introduced and lessons follow the format of the literacy hour. Work in other subjects such as history and religious education was seen to benefit from that done in literacy. Planning is generally effective but occasionally the work does not challenge the higher attainers who are left with tasks that are too simple. Teachers' on the spot evaluation of pupils' work is satisfactory but they have not used their good quality assessments to identify where and why progress for some pupils has not been good enough. The strengths of the teaching lie in the good management of pupils and the good way in which lessons are paced and use is made of support staff.
- 21 The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a beneficial effect on teaching as well as the good work done in developing the quality of mathematics teaching. Teaching is good in the foundation stage and for pupils up to age 7. It is satisfactory for those from seven to 11. Teachers now have a good understanding of what they have to teach and their management of pupils is good. This ensures that pupils understand what is required of them in terms of attitudes and application and so they learn well. Teachers use time and resources well and, as in English, make good use of classroom assistants and other support. Good use is made of homework and parents report that they are satisfied with the way homework is purposefully linked to the work that goes on in class. Planning is good and teachers make their objectives clear with the result that pupils know what they have to do.
- 22 Teachers and support staff take careful account of the targets for pupils with special educational needs in their planning. The targets in the individual education plans are clear and achievable. Pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment and particular needs in numeracy and literacy. This ensures that tasks are matched appropriately to pupils' abilities. Pupils have good support from experienced and committed teachers and learning support assistants, either on an individual or small group withdrawal basis, as well as receiving additional care and attention whilst working with the rest of their class. Support staff maintain careful records and there is good liaison between all support and teaching staff.
- 23 Children in the foundation stage enter the reception year in either September or January. As a result there was only one class for this phase at the time of the

inspection. The teaching is good. This is because planning is well linked to the early learning goals and shows a good understanding of the need of children of this age – many of whom are immature 4 year olds. Praise is given where it is merited and children know why they are being praised. Planning reflects the good day to day assessments that are made of the children's progress and consequently the children make good gains in learning. Equally important is the maintenance of good links with the home which in turn foster good development in reading and number.

- 24 With such high percentages of good and better teaching it follows that teaching has a number of strengths. Pupils are well managed and this is achieved by teachers having established good relationships with their pupils. The pupils understand that their teachers care for them, that they take care to plan suitable work for them, that they expect the pupils to be responsible and that the teachers expect their pupils to work effectively. This does not mean in an oppressive atmosphere but in one where there is shared pleasure and enjoyment in what is achieved. Allied to this, teachers take care to display pupils' work well and as this creates an exciting learning environment so it also gives recognition to the value that teachers attach to the work of their pupils.
- 25 Some teachers are very talented and they use these skills to best effect and as broadly as possible. This means that pupils are able to benefit from the singing and musical skills that are to be found amongst the staff. Other teachers who would not claim to be specialists benefit from the support and advice they are given so that, for example, good work is seen in art throughout the school.
- 26 There are areas where teaching needs to be improved. Occasionally the quality of planning does not make satisfactory provision for the most able. The assessments that teachers have carried out have not, in the past, been used effectively to maintain standards for the older pupils and individual subjects report aspects such as the teaching of spelling that need to be given greater attention.
- 27 The learning that was observed during the inspection was good. The good learning is inextricably linked to the good quality of teaching and the good environment and ethos of the school. Pupils respond well to carefully planned lessons and their teachers' requirement that they act in a mature way. The pupils are actively engaged in their learning, they are eager to participate and perform and know that they can do so without embarrassment. A particularly pleasing aspect of the inspection lay in the fact that pupils were being given many opportunities to work independently and that they were encouraged to take responsibility. Because they were trusted in this way the pupils responded very well.

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

- 28 The overall quality and range of learning opportunities is good. This is because of the thought that has gone into the planning of the curriculum. The planning for the statutory subjects of the National Curriculum has been carefully interwoven with many good opportunities to enhance the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of the pupils. These opportunities are taken well and the impact of their teaching can be seen in the good behaviour and attitudes of the pupils. The curriculum provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.
- 29 The school is meeting the statutory requirement to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. There are strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy

which are having a positive effect on teaching and learning in mathematics but which need improving in literacy where effectiveness is unsatisfactory. Long and medium term plans are made for all subjects and give a clear indication of what is being taught and how the needs of the different ability groups are to be met. The skills taught in literacy and numeracy are also being used effectively in other areas of the curriculum such as geography and science. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. It is taught through specific lessons and across the wider curriculum. The school has a satisfactorily planned programme for sex education and drug awareness.

- 30 There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils. These include many sporting activities as well as choir, recorders, dance, art, information and communications technology and drama. Although most the clubs are age restricted, they are well supported by both boys and girls and the school has a good reputation for success in sporting competitions. Provision has been maintained since the last inspection.
- 31 The contribution of the community to pupils' learning and the relationship with partner schools are good. The school has good relationships with the local church and clergy. Pupils visit the parish church and take an active part in the festivals of the church year. Visits from the local community provide other valuable links. There are good links with the local secondary school. Pupils in Year 9 are paired with pupils in Year 6 for visits and discussions about the transition to high school. Pupils from the secondary school visit to write and read books and perform plays. In liaison with the local twinning association the school has developed good links with a school in France and exchange visits are arranged. The pupils in Year 4 have an opportunity to attend a residential centre on Dartmoor for an outward-bound week.
- 32 Provision for special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils receive specific help in most literacy and numeracy lessons, and pupils with emotional and behavioural needs, are supported effectively by carefully planned programmes. Teachers prepare individual educational plans and review these in discussion with learning support assistants and the special needs co-ordinator. There are currently seven pupils with statements of special educational need.

- 33 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. All four aspects are suitably and actively promoted through a range of planned activities across the curriculum. The provision for the pupils' moral and social development has improved since the last inspection. The home/school contract ensures that boys and girls know what is expected of them and they are aware of the sanctions and rewards that are in place. The school rules are prominently displayed in classrooms. The pupils are encouraged to take part in drawing up these rules.
- 34 The recent introduction of a school counsellor with some selected pupils taking part in the mediating and solving of social and behavioural problems is a success. It is having a positive impact on the attitudes and behaviour of all the pupils. It is also giving the pupils involved an opportunity to enhance their own skills and greatly assists them in the process of growing up and learning to be aware of the needs and problems of others. In a similar way pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 develop their sense of responsibility through their participation in the school council. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for routine daily tasks such as collecting books at the end of sessions. The older pupils are asked to perform tasks to help in the running of the school and they do these well. Pupils are encouraged to work together and support each other. The whole ethos provides pupils with very good opportunities to develop their moral and social skills.
- 35 The provision for spiritual development is not only catered for in the good assemblies but across the whole curriculum. Opportunities for reflection were actively planned into lessons for examples in geography, mathematics science and English. Provision for pupils to learn about and appreciate their own culture as well as the richness of others is very good. This was an issue for development at the time of the last inspection and is one that the school has addressed very well. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own culture and that of others as could be seen from work about India and the Amazon rain forest. Art, drama and music also provide good opportunities for cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 36 The school is a very calm and caring establishment, which has well organised procedures for ensuring the well being and safety of its pupils and as a result pupils are very happy to come to school. Child protection procedures are in place and close attention is paid to health and safety issues. Teachers pay good attention to health and safety matters, particularly in physical education and science lessons. General cleanliness of the buildings and up keep of the grounds is of highest standard.
- 37 All staff make it a priority to settle children well, with an established routine. A pre-school meeting between teachers and carers establishes mutual responsibilities in terms of behaviour, attendance and school rules. The procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour are good and understood by pupils and parents. The school pays good attention to pupils' educational and emotional needs and provides good support through a well-organised school counselling service.
- 38 The teachers and support workers know the children well and are sensitive to their needs. They provide suitable opportunities for them to discuss any concern or problems. Account is taken of pupils' medical needs and a caring environment, sensitively supervised by the staff, ensures that sick and vulnerable children are adequately cared for. The school makes good safety arrangements prior to school visits.

- 39 Good behaviour is promoted through a system of agreed classroom rules, which are incorporated in the whole school policy and strategically placed around the school. All pupils know that good behaviour is required for the children to work and play harmoniously. A system of incentive is effective and the majority of parents and their children understand the hierarchy for incentives and the sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. The behaviour policy incorporates guidance on dealing with incidents of bullying and mid-day staff have received appropriate training for dealing with difficult children.
- 40 The health and safety policy is being revised. This needs to be finalised in line with the recommendations made in the recent health and safety survey by the local education authority, ratified by the governing body and appropriately implemented. There are suitable arrangements for first aid procedures but there is a need for additional qualified personnel.
- 41 The school does not formally monitor or evaluate patterns of unsatisfactory attendance or late arrival. The result is that the school, whilst enjoying good levels of attendance, has not effectively improved attendance by targeting those with unsatisfactory attendance.
- 42 There are satisfactory procedures for assessing the achievements of the children in under fives. The school completes initial assessments of children's learning in the foundation stage. Teachers use these assessments to provide work that accurately matches children's varying needs. Teachers use the initial assessment in reception to group children for language, literacy, mathematics and other activities. There are good day-to-day assessment procedures and staff uses these to plan effectively the next step in children's learning.
- 43 Teachers and learning support staff know pupils well. Assessments of pupils with special educational needs are carried out thoughtfully and staff involved with the pupils concerned are aware of the targets and programmes. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good so that learning takes place in a purposeful and supportive atmosphere. Staff work well together to monitor and assess pupils' work and share information gained well. The school complies fully with the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs and there is good liaison with external agencies.
- 44 There are very good assessment systems in place throughout the school for each pupil. There is particular focus on the core subjects where the procedures are well developed. Assessment results are analysed meticulously but teacher's planning does not always reflect needs identified in the assessment and as a consequence standards for pupils in the juniors have not been maintained. This has been recognised as a shortcoming by the leadership and management of the school. The analyses are not used to adjust the curriculum and scheme of work and where necessary, to revise individual targets. The school has worked hard to establish assessment systems which are very detailed. A good start has been made but action now needs to be taken to utilise the data effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 45 Most parents who responded to the questionnaire or who were interviewed during the inspection agree that their children like to come to school – a view supported by the inspection. Parents at the meeting or who were interviewed are generally satisfied with the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by their children. They feel that the teaching is good and most of the children behave well in the school, and that this enables their children to make good progress overall. Inspection showed that teaching is good.
- 46 The majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire were satisfied that their children received the right amount of work. A quarter of parents, felt that they are not well informed about how their child was progressing in the school. A significant minority who responded to the questionnaire indicated that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities out side school hours and a similar number felt that school did not work closely with parents.
- 47 Most parents who were interviewed during the inspection are happy about the information received from the school and they feel comfortable in approaching the school with concerns about their children’s welfare. Inspection evidence suggests that parents are very supportive of the school and the staff are appreciative of this help. The inspectors noted that the school provides a variety of sporting and other activities outside the school hours and pupils support these well.
- 48 Parents’ evenings are well attended. There are many other opportunities for informal meetings between parents and teachers. There are regular newsletters regarding sporting achievements, school visits, diary dates and other school events, and these keep parents/carers informed about the school events.
- 49 There are effective and flexible induction procedures for new pupils. At an introductory meeting, the school establishes an understanding of expectations and responsibilities for school and parents. The school provides satisfactory information for Year 6 pupils as they enter the next stage of learning, and where appropriate, the school arranges meetings with Year 7 teachers from the neighbouring schools. This is much appreciated by the parents and pupils. The school prospectus and governor’s annual report are thorough, written in plain English and contain statutory information. Most parents feel that the annual reports on pupils’ progress are satisfactory; on inspection, these are found to be of good quality.
- 50 Satisfactory links between parents and school contribute to pupils’ positive attitudes to school. This is instrumental in ensuring satisfactory attendance and punctuality. Easy access to the class teachers and the headteacher for parents ensures prompt attention to complaints and suggestions and helps resolves behaviour problems. A small but successful Friends of St. Michael’s organises many school functions for fund raising and social events, and makes a significant contribution to the resources of the school. A significant number of parents and some grand parents are actively involved in the school life. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to supporting their children’s learning.
- 51 The majority of parents have signed a home-school agreement and there exists an effective working relationship between parents and staff. This enables parents to share information about children’s attitudes to learning and the progress made. Some parents are actively keen to be involved in school life, regularly attend events and celebrations, and accompany children on school outings. A small number of parents

regularly help with reading, group activities and information and communications technology lessons.

- 52 Parents of children with special needs are properly involved in their children's education plans and the school provides them with the opportunity for participating in an annual review. The school has recently established a parent representative group to establish better understanding with all the parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 53 The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. There have been difficult issues over a prolonged period of time involving the disruptive effects of staff absence. Classes have been disrupted as well as aspects of the curriculum. It has been difficult for the school to provide stability of teaching when faced with the uncertainty of when staff might be absent or when they might return. These matters have improved but are not yet completely resolved. The senior managers and the governors have acted, and continue to do so, with the advice of the Local Education Authority. The head teacher and the former deputy headteacher have been involved in extensive support and monitoring of staff concerned and this has also involved other members of the senior management team. Inspection shows that the school, which has a temporary teacher, has a good ethos and is now functioning well. It is also noted that there have been significant improvements since the last inspection in 1996.
- 54 Whilst the headteacher and senior managers were occupied with the problems of staffing, attention was deflected from the effect that the disruption was having on the standards pupils were achieving, particularly those aged seven to 11. The assessment procedures that the school uses show that for many pupils, progress had stalled and that over time standards for those pupils – who were entering the junior phase with high standards – were falling. This picture, whilst very clear, is partly obscured by the fact that since 1996 there has been a year on year improvement in standards in mathematics and English and that there was a dramatic rise in science in 1999 for pupils at age 11. The senior managers and governors were aware of the fact that standards should be higher and initiated improvement measures for mathematics and science that have had, and continue to have, beneficial effects.
- 55 The headteacher is successfully taking the school forward. There are good procedures in place for monitoring teaching at classroom level and the written records of such monitoring provide staff with a clear and accurate picture of the quality of their teaching. Coordinators are now effectively involved in the process of school development planning. Some coordinators have not had the opportunity to observe and evaluate the teaching of their subjects at classroom level. However, they support their colleagues well in the way in which they have produced good policies and schemes of work for their subjects and in the way in which they make themselves available to offer help and advice. They produce a subject overview that shows how their subject has performed and which also indicates future priorities. All staff are required to complete a comprehensive staff development questionnaire as a precursor to a meeting with the headteacher. This, in conjunction with the classroom observations of teaching that have been described, effectively replaces the formal two-year cycle of appraisal. There is a commitment to improve that is shared by all staff.
- 56 The school has responded effectively to the key issues of the last inspection report

and as a result the governing body, ably supported by the school's senior management team, is now much more effective. The work done by individual governors in reporting back on issues and developments is very good and shows high levels of expertise and commitment. The governing body has played its part in dealing with the school's problems and shows, through its effective organisation, that it contributes well to formulating the priorities of the school. The governors have a good clear picture of what these priorities are. There is a special needs governor who is fully involved in the life of the school and ensures that special educational needs matters are discussed regularly at governing body meetings. The school has set reasonable targets and these are supported by accurate data.

- 57 The newly appointed special needs co-ordinator is able and knowledgeable. She is to monitor and develop the provision further. Any additional funding for special education needs is spent appropriately and the school uses money from the general budget to supplement the costs of the provision. Money has been appropriately spent on the provision of additional teaching support staff to work alongside the teachers and the appointment of a counsellor is also of benefit to pupils with special educational needs.
- 58 There is one newly qualified teacher who is being given good support and other new but experienced teachers are also being effectively mentored. The result of this is has been that at this early stage of the school year there is a team of teachers that is functioning effectively. The quality of teaching that was observed during the inspection represents a significant improvement over that which was reported at the time of the last inspection.
- 59 The school development plan is drawn up in consultation with all concerned parties and its priorities established. The document satisfactorily articulates the school's objectives but the success criteria tend to be too general with the result that it would be difficult to know exactly what level of change or improvement was being sought. The finance committee allocates the budget accordingly and successfully monitors its operation. There are clear financial procedures and regulations. The school is aware of the principles of best value - particularly in light of the pressure placed on the budget by staffing absences, and is able to show how the effectiveness of spending is evaluated. There are sound procedures in place for the ordering and receipt of goods and services and school funds are kept properly. Funding is used appropriately. The school is making satisfactory use of new technology.
- 60 The school was adequately staffed during the inspection and all non-teaching members of staff contribute most effectively to the smooth running of the school. A number of teachers are well placed as coordinators to make the most effective use of their expertise and experience. The accommodation is very pleasant and provides a very good learning environment for the pupils. Resources are generally satisfactory with some improvements yet to be made in physical education and design and technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61 The headteacher, senior managers and governors of the school should :-

1. Raise standards in English for pupils in the junior phase by:-
(paragraphs 4,5,6,20,29,54,73,75,78,80,81,86)
 - a. developing pupils' writing skills by building on work done in the extended writing tasks that are used for assessment purposes
 - b. raising standards of reading and spelling
 - c. improving the quality of handwriting by introducing and implementing a systematic approach to modelling and teaching joined script at the earliest opportunity
2. Raise standards in music for pupils at age 11 by prioritising the support and development of the subject
(paragraphs 8,9,124,125,128)
3. Maintain and improve standards in the junior phase by reviewing assessment information which indicates pupils' progress and by acting on that information to take necessary action.
(paragraphs 44,54)
4. Introduce procedures that will raise levels of attendance and punctuality.
(paragraph 41)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	83
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12	47	41	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	404
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	72

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	82

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	30	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	26	28
	Girls	21	25	23
	Total	45	51	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (79)	93 (93)	93(89)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	28	26
	Girls	22	24	19
	Total	47	52	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (86)	95 (89)	82 (82)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	24	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	20
	Girls	19	19	27
	Total	32	34	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (60)	63 (43)	87(38)
	National	70 (63)	69 (62)	78 (68)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	17
	Girls	22	22	21
	Total	36	36	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (67)	67 (51)	70 (61)
	National	68(63)	69 (64)	75 (68)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	351
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	31.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	182

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	7	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	648,078
Total expenditure	638,445
Expenditure per pupil	1,561
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,843
Balance carried forward to next year	17,476

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	400
Number of questionnaires returned	121

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	42	5	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	44	6	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	55	6	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	61	5	0	1
The teaching is good.	44	49	1	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	45	21	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	42	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	35	5	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	36	45	12	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	31	55	6	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	50	5	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	12	12	7	14

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to the nearest integer, sum may not = 100%
Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, EXCLUDING nil replies.

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

- 62 There were 21 children in the reception group at the time of the inspection. Children are admitted in the September or January before their fifth birthday, most attending local playgroups before coming to school. The school has good links with the playgroups and is developing a good home-school programme so that children are prepared well for their entry into school. The attainment of children on entry to the reception class is broadly typical of pupils of this age. They make at least satisfactory progress across the areas of learning recommended for young children. By the time they are five, the majority of children have achieved, or in a small number of cases, are above the expected levels of attainment in reading, writing and numeracy.
- 63 Teaching and learning for children under the age of five is good overall. Adults make good use of praise and encouragement to make clear the reasons why a child has gained success. Day to day assessment effectively ensures that activities are carefully targeted to activities to extend and challenge children without overfacing them. Children respond positively to the attractive and well-prepared variety of activities offered to them.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 64 Children make good progress and show that they enjoy coming to school. Routines within the class are well established and children become used to registering themselves for lunch when they arrive in school. They look forward to the selection of the helper for the day who will sit on a chair and choose two other helpers. This is a very proud moment for anyone who is chosen, but pupils know that their turn will come. The teaching of personal development is good and most children are growing in confidence, developing a sense of self-worth and achievement. Specific activities to encourage children to look directly at their friends and call them by name help them to develop an understanding of the importance of knowing each other's names and sharing things. Children feel secure and valued so they speak freely to adults and are willing to express their concerns. A child who says she has no friends is spontaneously told, "I'm your friend" by the others in the class. Children are interested in their work and the teacher encourages them to make choices of activities during the day, so that not all activities are directed. Children learn the importance of sharing and co-operation, the social rules of taking turns and listening to others. Some find this more difficult than others. They become more independent in remembering routines, changing for physical education lessons and demonstrating suitable levels of initiative and responsibility in their use of equipment and materials. Children's concentration improves and they are able to sit and participate in literacy and numeracy time, paying good attention throughout because of the teacher's skilful presentation of the material.

Communication, language and literacy

- 65 Children make good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing during the time they spend in reception. Children learn to find their own name from a group of names and the adults draw attention to letters and sounds around them in displays. This helps to develop an interest in words and writing. Staff use good questioning

skills to increase children's knowledge and vocabulary and use imaginative strategies to stimulate interest and offer challenge to the children. For instance, good, controlled discussion about birthdays introduces a writing activity, where children write a birthday card for "School Ted." Children remember the teacher's instruction to start from the left and show an awareness that letters go together to make words when they write inside their card. Some children are copying over letters and higher attaining children copy under the teacher's writing, or attempt their own writing. Children are learning to hold pencils, crayons and brushes, correctly and attempt to write their names. Children enjoy books and know how to get information from pictures and point to some individual words. A few children are starting to read simple books and all children know how to select a new book from the display when they have finished the one they had previously.

Mathematical development

- 66 Children make good progress in the development of numeracy skills because of the regular opportunities the teacher provides to consolidate their learning of one to ten and understand the need to find "more than" and "less than." The teacher makes good use of the numeracy strategy and children confidently find the numbers that have been misplaced on the number line. "Swap it over, please," they request. The teacher has established the routine after registration for children to count the number in the circle. They touch heads to make sure they do not miss anyone, and then try to match the number with the children who are present. Children add on the number of missing children to make the total they know they should have. In other counting activities most children demonstrate that they are able to count to 15, but counting and matching is only secure for most children to 6 or 10. Children match spots and shapes on a dice when playing games and roll out dough to cut out a number of shapes. Most pupils understand "full" and "empty" when working with sand and water and they are learning how to add one more to a group. The teacher uses songs and number rhymes well to reinforce learning. Children know that one more is needed when there are only four bears in the bed for a number song. They know that five was the number they started with before they worked backwards to zero during the song.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 67 Children make sound progress in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world. From a variety of well-planned and stimulating experiences children learn to explore and experiment. When building with construction materials careful questioning by adults helps children think about what they are making. There are opportunities for structured play and exploration during the sessions. Children respond well to these. Well-chosen activities help children to extend their attention span and they wait very well for their turn to taste food and make their decision about whether it is a good or unpleasant taste. They find the activity fun and try hard to identify the foods they taste. When using the computer children try hard to copy their name from their name strip and, with adult support, learn to sequence the dressing of the bear by dragging items across the screen.

Creative development

- 68 Children make sound progress overall in creative development. There are regular, well-planned opportunities for children to paint and learn how to mix colours. They know that when red and yellow are mixed together they will have an orange colour and the teacher's demonstration of the correct use of the paint and the brush gains children's attention well. They follow the routine she has established when doing their painting and work very carefully to paint an orange pumpkin with a blue background. The skilful questioning and prompting by adults enables them to think about their task and improve their concentration. Children play in the home corner and read stories to toys, enjoying the opportunity to participate in imaginative play. In music lessons the teacher encourages children to improve their listening skills as they learn about long and short sounds. Children learn to distinguish between a long and a short sound when it is clapped or made on an instrument. They enjoy making music and singing songs.

Physical development

- 69 Children make sound progress in physical development, learning new skills in lessons and developing an awareness of others when using equipment. They are learning to use tools, materials and equipment with increasing dexterity and demonstrate a good level of co-ordination when emptying and filling containers. Children use a variety of construction materials to build and make objects, which develops their manipulative skills. In the hall, children are learning to use the space properly and to understand the instructions to be still or stop. The teacher makes good use of pictures from the story used previously in a dance lesson to help children recall what happened. They make strong heavy movements as they make good attempts to be elephants. They climb and swing as monkeys, gallop and jump around the hall. Children are enthusiastic and are very interested when the teacher explains to them the effects of exercise on the heart. The teacher ensures that children have opportunities to stretch and move around between sessions on the carpet and this helps them to settle more quickly to different activities. Opportunities for outside play with wheeled toys and vehicles are currently limited. The school is rightly considering further development of the outside play area to provide more stimulating opportunities for physical, personal and social development, as well as imaginative play.
- 70 The provision for children under five is satisfactory and is being developed imaginatively and well. Children make good gains in learning because the planning is thorough and takes good account of children's needs, as well as identifying links with the National Curriculum. The teacher has a good understanding of the needs of children under five and is given valuable, good quality assistance by support staff, parents, and students. There are suitable arrangements for assessing children's attainment on entry into the reception class and the teacher keeps useful records of academic and social achievement. Relationships with parents are good and they are kept well informed through informal discussions, the home school diary and reports. The dialogue maintained between home and school is extremely helpful in the development of early reading skills and the target setting for numeracy is a very useful aid to learning.

ENGLISH

- 71 At the last inspection standards in English were judged to be broadly in line with the national average for pupils aged seven and good in relation to national expectations for pupils aged 11.
- 72 The results in national tests in 1999 for seven-year-olds show that attainment in reading was in line with the national average. Attainment at the expected level (level 2 and above) was very close to the national average as was attainment at the higher level (Level 3). In comparison with similar schools the attainment of pupils was average. The attainment of these pupils in writing was well above national average. It was above the national average at the expected level and was well above at the higher level. In comparison with similar schools this performance was well above average. Taken over time the performance of pupils has been above the national average in both reading and writing since 1996. However, whilst standards have always been above the national average, the trend in school results has been a downward one since 1997. Results for tests in the year 2000 for which no comparative data is currently available show that in reading and writing this trend is continuing. These latest results represent a significant decline over the previous year, particularly at the higher level.
- 73 The results of the 1999 national assessment tests for 11-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 2, in English, were well below the national average at the expected level (Level 4 and above) although they were close to the average at the higher Level 5. The results were very low when compared to those attained by pupils from similar schools. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together the performance of pupils at age 11 in English was below the national average. Although the school's results have improved over that time, they have only matched the improvements nationally. In national tests in 2000, 76 per cent of pupils aged eleven attained at the expected level 4 or higher, with twenty-seven per cent attaining at the higher level 5. These results represent a marked improvement over the previous four years, although the national comparative data for 2000 is not yet available.
- 74 There are no significant differences over time in the performances of boys and girls in English at either key stage.
- 75 The inspection found current standards in English for pupils aged seven are in line with national expectations, but in Year 6 they are below national expectations. There are proportionally fewer higher attaining pupils at both key stages than one would expect. The school is aware of this and plans to put in place booster classes for pupils in Year 6 in the near future. The school has identified weaknesses in spelling and writing and has good plans to address these shortcomings, with the intention that pupils should achieve at expected levels by the time they leave the school.
- 76 Standards of speaking and listening skills are sound throughout the school. Younger pupils listen attentively, respond appropriately to teachers' questions and are keen to contribute their thoughts and opinions. Most older pupils speak clearly and confidently, paying close attention to the comments of others, although in some classes there are a few pupils who find this difficult. Many pupils offer contributions that indicate that they have taken account of the views of others. They demonstrate maturity and responsibility in their thinking about various issues when studying texts, showing awareness of the differing points of view.
- 77 In the infant phase, pupils read at appropriate levels. They are taught to use a range

of strategies including phonics for tackling unknown words, but a significant number of pupils have not yet learned to combine letter sounds effectively when reading unfamiliar words. Most pupils understand and respond to characters and themes in fiction, and can sometimes predict what will happen next in stories. All pupils take home books from the structured reading programme, and parents' contributions to pupils' reading are valued and appreciated.

- 78 The standards attained by the majority of the oldest pupils in reading are below those expected for their age. The school effectively promotes the value of books using a range of interesting texts for shared reading in ability groups in each year including poetry and non-fiction. They read confidently, with expression, and have sound skills in de-coding text. The oldest pupils use an index confidently, are able to access an encyclopaedia, and have good dictionary skills. Although pupils read accurately at appropriate levels throughout the school, some older pupils find difficulty in explaining the complexities of a plot, interpreting a storyline and making judgements about characters in books they have read.
- 79 Standards in writing are satisfactory for pupils at age seven. In Year 2, pupils write legibly in sentences and are beginning to use simple punctuation accurately. They structure work well, use a balance of accurate and phonetically plausible spelling and write increasingly complex sentences. During the inspection, higher attaining pupils in Year 1 produced some good free writing of a letter of apology from Goldilocks to the three bears. They are beginning use full stops and capital letters accurately and within this assignment made good use of appropriate and interesting vocabulary.
- 80 Currently standards in writing attained by the oldest pupils in the school are below those expected for their age. Pupils experience a range of styles and forms of writing as they progress through the school. Pupils write stories, letters, character analyses and poems. They consider two points of view and debate the relative merits of each, for instance comparing a movie such as 'Babe' with the original book 'The Sheep-pig', and write accounts of events they have experienced such as a recent visit to the school by the 'Explorer Dome'. Written work shows good structure, a sound knowledge of grammatical convention, and effective use of vocabulary. However, pupils regularly make errors in spelling common words or those that conform to accepted spelling rules, and are not consistent in their use of basic punctuation. Each month they undertake a piece of extended writing within a set time. These tasks give valuable practice but pupils rarely write at sufficient length to develop their piece to the depth expected for their age.
- 81 Handwriting is practised regularly in all classes, but is not developed consistently throughout the school, with the result that pupils are not confidently joining their handwriting by the time they reach Year 6.
- 82 Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall and they show sustained concentration in most activities. They behave courteously to adults and to other pupils. Pupils co-operate well during shared tasks, such as group reading and discussion, and work hard. Occasionally, some pupils are reluctant to contribute to class discussion and take a rather passive role in the lessons.

- 83 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Of the fourteen lessons observed, seven were good and one was very good. No unsatisfactory teaching of English was observed. Teachers have secure knowledge of the subject and many use questioning effectively to encourage and extend pupils' contributions to lessons. Classroom assistants work closely with teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning in all classes. Teachers aim to match assignments to the differing abilities of their pupils and do this effectively. Occasionally, work is not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs, particularly for those of high ability, resulting in some pupils spending too much time rehearsing basic skills. The learning needs of pupils with special educational needs are met appropriately within English lessons.
- 84 The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively introduced and literacy is used well to support work in other subjects. For example, younger pupils write extensively about the Great Fire of London within their history project. Older pupils write thoughtfully, for example within religious education lessons about the existence of God, and write clear factual accounts, for instance within history about life and events in each decade since the 1950s.
- 85 The school has a good system for assessing pupils' extended writing regularly each month. These assignments are carefully and accurately assessed against national criteria at each level of attainment. However, this data is not used rigorously to monitor the progress of individuals nor to aid planning. The quality of marking is variable. All staff give praise and encouragement generously, but only a few make extensive suggestions as to how pupils can improve future assignments.
- 86 The English co-ordinator has observed many of her colleagues teaching literacy and has made appropriate judgements, giving suggestions for development specific to each teacher. Resources for English are satisfactory overall, with a good range of texts for shared reading at all levels. There are separate fiction and non-fiction libraries. Although the pupils know that the fiction library is arranged alphabetically, they do not use an author's surname to guide their search, tending to search according to the author's first name. Non-fiction books are appropriately classified and pupils have a clear understanding of how to use the classification index. During the inspection it was pleasing to find small groups of pupils using the library effectively to undertake independent research tasks.

MATHEMATICS

- 87 The attainment of pupils in national tests in 1999 for pupils at age 11 was below the national average at the expected level (Level 4 and above) but was above the national average at the higher level (Level 5). Taken overall, this performance was below the national average. This performance was also below the average for similar schools. Taken over time, the level of attainment has risen in successive years at a better rate than that seen nationally and in tests for the year 2000, for which there is no comparative data, this trend has continued. The attainment of pupils at age seven in national tests in 1999 was above the national average and was also above the average for similar schools.
- 88 Inspection evidence is based on lesson observations, work seen in pupils' books, discussions with pupils and teachers and the results of national tests. From this evidence the inspection concludes that current standards are above what is expected at the age of seven and satisfactory by the time the pupils leave the school at eleven. This conclusion appears to point to a drop in the pupils' rate of progress in mathematics between the age of seven and 11. This decline is attributable to the

school's considerable difficulties with staffing for pupils in the junior age group. The school also identified low expectations and lack of subject knowledge in teachers amongst other contributing factors. There has been significant change and improvement. The effect of training and staff development work is already showing good results. Pupils' work is extensively checked for progress and accurate targets for their future learning are being set. The teachers are being frequently observed and constructive evaluations of their performance are made. This has contributed to greater progress. The teaching and learning that was seen indicates that such progress is being made. Standards at the time of this inspection are similar at age 11 and better at age seven than those that were reported at the last inspection.

- 89 In Year 1, most of the pupils know number bonds to 10 and can add and subtract at this level. Year 2 pupils can count in twos and recognise odd and even numbers to 50 - some to a 100. In Year 3 pupils' can sort, describe and picture 2-dimensional shapes. They are learning the properties of shapes and the correct mathematical language that is used to identify them. In Year 4 pupils can explain the methods of working out the area and perimeter of a shape. Correct methods of addition and subtraction to 100 have been understood and the reverse link between adding and subtracting is known by most of the pupils. Most of Year 5 pupils know a majority of their tables and can multiply and divide 2 digit numbers. They are able to add and subtract three digit numbers and know place value to 10,000. The oldest pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of fractions. Most of the pupils know their tables and have a sound grasp of the four rules and place value up to 100,000. This enables them to be able to calculate long division and multiplication successfully. The link between fractions and decimals is also known, with many pupils being able to add, subtract and round up and down decimal calculations to 2 places. Good work was also seen on handling and using data; area and the formula needed to help calculate it accurately; shapes, angles and measurement. The pupils are able to use the correct mathematical language when dealing with problems in the subject.
- 90 The National Numeracy Strategy has been satisfactorily implemented and all staff have received effective training. Numeracy lessons are well structured and give the opportunity for mental mathematics, concept development and the opportunity to reflect on what has been learned. Homework is set and this supports learning satisfactorily. However there is little evidence of information technology being used to support pupils' learning in this subject.
- 91 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teaching in the foundation stage and for pupils up to age seven is good. It is satisfactory for pupils aged seven to 11. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and half of the teaching was good or better. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when one in four lessons seen in the upper part of the school was unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good, the mental sessions are lively, have good pace and all pupils participate fully. In the best lessons, the teachers have a clear idea of their objectives and set realistic, achievable and challenging targets. They use the correct mathematical language.
- 92 There is a good range of resources that are well used and this has a good impact on teaching and learning. Planning is good and the teachers have recently adopted an extensive system of assessment, tracking and targeting pupils' progress. Initially this system seemed to be unsuccessful in its aims to raise standards as it was not targeting the pupils correctly. This has recently been addressed. There has been extensive monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, co-ordinator, governors and the local education authority and this has had a positive impact on standards. The pupils experience the full coverage of the mathematics curriculum with good emphasis now

being placed on their understanding and ability to explain and apply their calculations. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and well-experienced co-ordinator.

SCIENCE

- 93 Inspection shows that attainment at age seven is what might be expected for pupils of that age. The attainment of pupils at age 11 is above the expected standard. There is some very good work at both Key Stages, particularly in relation to investigative science. The work is presented neatly and in a scientific style demonstrating that pupils are able to use appropriate scientific language and set out their work in a scientific way. In national tests in 1999 at age 11, the percentage of pupils who attained the expected level (Level 4 and above) was above the national average. The proportion who achieved the higher level (Level 5) was also above the national average. The school's performance when judged against similar schools in the 1999 tests was broadly average. Taken over time, the pupils' attainment, which was at the national average in 1996 fell below that standard for the next two years but, because of the focus then given to the subject, rose dramatically in 1999. Tests for year 2000 for which there is no national comparative data were broadly similar to the preceding year with a slight decrease in the proportion that attained the higher level.
- 94 The regular assessment of pupil's work at the end of each topic, together with numerous other forms of assessment which are methodically recorded, indicates that the pupils are expected to attain good test results in tests in 2001.
- 95 Pupils are most enthusiastic and very positive about their work. They enjoy the practical nature of the lessons and show good understanding of the scientific principles being taught. Year 6 pupils are clear in their understanding of the difference between 'mass' and 'weight' and the effect of gravity on determining weight. They show an ability to predict successfully the changes in weight when a body is immersed in water whilst recognising that the mass remains the same. Year 1 pupils are able to group materials according to a variety of characteristics including texture, appearance, density and content. All classes show an appreciation of the need for 'fair-testing' and the importance of accuracy when measuring different aspects of the investigation. Year 3 pupils are able to follow quite complex instructions when undertaking a series of activities demonstrating the effect of forces and motion, making small machines which change the direction of a force and demonstrating the effect of equal and opposite forces. In all the lessons, pupils are given the opportunity to suggest what might happen during the practical sessions, to discuss with partners and groups what has happened and to record, accurately, their findings and conclusions.
- 96 There is clear evidence of meticulous planning with each lesson following a structured programme with all aspects of the National Curriculum given appropriate coverage. A generous amount of time is given to investigative work and practical problem solving. The quality of teaching is generally good and some of it is very good. Teachers are confident in their teaching of basic skills and this means that pupils are given a clear picture of what science involves and how they can use their knowledge and skills to solve problems. Teachers show satisfactory subject knowledge and are thus able to plan for their pupils to make suitable progress and for them to be able to help their pupils to reflect on their work by asking them searching questions. All teachers manage their classes well and good relationships, being a strong feature, ensure that pupils and teachers work harmoniously towards the declared objectives of the lesson. The good management of classes and the quality of planning indicate the high expectations that teachers have for their pupils.

- 97 The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and talented subject leader. She has undertaken much of the work involved in the planning of the science curriculum and for the resourcing of the subject. She has been primarily responsible for the creditable improvement in test performance scores in science since 1998. She monitors the pupils' notebooks and all the staff meet to ensure that they are marking work to a similar standard. The coordinator does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching at classroom level and this inhibits her knowledge of teacher performance, pupil response and denies her the opportunity to demonstrate good practice before others.
- 98 There have been many improvements since the last inspection in areas such as planning, resources, standards and pupil enthusiasm. There are clear priorities for future improvements with a group of staff looking at assessment, individual target setting, investigations and record keeping. Although assessment is rigorous and meticulously recorded, the information is insufficiently used to guide individual pupil progress and to ensure that appropriate targets are set. The intention is to improve resources and focus on learning through practical experimentation. Spirituality features as a key strength of the work in science giving pupils an opportunity to reflect on the magnificence of the world around them and the universe in which they live.

ART AND DESIGN

- 99 Standards in art are above what might be expected from pupils at the ages of seven and 11. The previous report identified good standards and a quality of teaching that was satisfactory or better. Inspection now shows that these standards have been maintained and in some cases improved. The quality of teaching is now very good whereas before it was described as satisfactory or better in the substantial majority of lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Five lessons were observed and pupils' work was scrutinised. The coordinators were interviewed and the quality of artwork in display was noted.
- 100 Pupils by the age of eleven have a good range of experience. They are able to talk about the work of Andy Warhol and of some of the recognised great masters of European art. They have had the opportunity to produce large works in collaboration and they have their work on display in different places such as Exeter cathedral. Pupils have good skills because these are taught well and strengthened as time goes by. They can produce artwork using many different tools and materials. Their drawings of still life such as plants and other objects, are of a very good standard and those in the art club are able to take a theme such as fish and adapt their work as they use different approaches such as drawing or printing. That pupils have acquired these skills is due in the main to the effectiveness of the art coordinators. Pupils have sketchbooks and whilst the content is often good the books themselves tend to be of a disappointingly low quality. Much of the value of the sketchbook as a permanent record or diary is lost as these books are renewed each year.
- 101 The quality of teaching is very good. Five lessons were observed. Two were very good, two were good and one was satisfactory. This is made possible by the support that teachers get from the scheme of work, the support they receive from the coordinators and the quality of display of art. The very best lessons are characterised by very good understanding of how skills are taught. A spiritual atmosphere was created in a Year 6 classroom through the use of light and music and this enabled pupils to concentrate well on their designs for soup can labels. Young pupils in Year 1 are very well supported. They are given a well-planned and resourced set of tasks,

which are just at the right level for them. Because of the good provision and the ability of teachers and others to look critically and constructively at pupils' work the teachers are able to suggest ways in which the pupils might develop or improve what they are doing. All lessons show that there are very good relationships between teachers and their pupils and pupils, in return for the quality of provision that is being made, respond very well. They are actively involved in what they are doing. They respond sensibly and with care and enthusiasm. All teachers have high expectations that their pupils will act in a mature manner and pupils respond well to this responsibility.

- 102 The subject is well led by two well- experienced and qualified coordinators who have produced a very good policy and scheme of work for teachers and pupils. Because of the high levels of skill possessed by the coordinators they are also able to support effectively those of their colleagues who would not regard themselves as specialists in art. The coordinators are well organised and their plans for the future are appropriate. They have given the school a position in the community by having schoolwork displayed in public and have also contributed greatly to the appearance and atmosphere of the school with the quality of work that has been displayed. The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and is a great strength of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 103 Design and technology is planned in blocks each term, and as a result no lessons in design and technology were timetabled during the inspection. Judgements are based upon scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with staff and pupils.
- 104 Pupils in both key stages attain standards commensurate with their age and develop the relevant skills appropriately. The school has a sound policy, and has adapted the nationally recommended scheme of work to fit their own requirements and interests. This gives pupils suitable experience of the full process from design and planning to making, modifying and evaluating their creations.
- 105 Pupils at age seven use an appropriate range of materials and tools. They make moving pictures using simple levers and sliders, and make puppets in a range of different ways, practising stitch-craft and exploring different ways of joining fabric. They study 'Homes', considering the features of different types of buildings and make models using a range of joining techniques.
- 106 Older pupils investigate mechanisms and structures, considering the shapes that give a structure strength. They design and select materials to make freestanding structures that will support a given weight. Others investigate box construction, investigating nets and hinging mechanisms before designing and making their own. Many of the projects in design and technology support work in other subjects. For instance, pupils have designed and made shadufs (elements of an irrigation system) as part of their study of Ancient Egypt, and others as part of a project on India, have considered how functional their designs for well-bucket winding mechanisms are.
- 107 Pupils can explain their methods and findings clearly. Pupils also have sufficient experience of designing, and select for themselves the materials and tools they need to realise their designs before evaluating their success. Pupils enjoy design and technology projects and talk with enthusiasm about their models and how they made them. Older pupils were very keen to explain their last project when they designed and made decorative boxes.

- 108 The coordinator is new to the school. She has considerable experience of leading the subject in other schools and has a clear vision for the future development of the subject. Resources are unsatisfactory. The range of tools is limited and many of these are elderly and blunt.

GEOGRAPHY

- 109 The standards achieved by the pupils in geography are what might be expected nationally. Only three lessons were taught and observed during the inspection week. Inspection findings are therefore based on the work seen in pupils' books, displays, samples of past work, and interviews with teachers and pupils. Because of the nature of the timetable little geography has been taught this half term consequently there was not much previous work for scrutiny.
- 110 In Year 4, the pupils study the reasons people chose a site for settlement. They are aware of the needs for water, fertile soil, wood and defence. Pupils have a good understanding of the location of some of our villages through the study of place names.
- 111 Year 2 pupils are looking at differences and similarities between two settlements. By using secondary source material such as aerial photographs they are able to compare and contrast the two places effectively. They can describe the different types of buildings, facilities, and man-made and natural features in their own village. They can draw accurate comparisons with a larger nearby seaside town. Work on Dartmoor which followed a field trip by Year 5 was of a good standard and indicated a thorough investigation of life in a national park and the environmental problems that exist there. Good use was made of art when pupils produced landscapes as part of this topic. A display of work on the Amazon rain forest by older pupils showed a good understanding of the environment, climate, people, location and effects of deforestation. Year 6 pupils have a sound geographical knowledge of the UK, the continents, maps and their local area.

- 112 Teachers' planning indicates that good use is made of local resources and visits. There are also good, planned opportunities for the links between geography and numeracy through map work, and literacy through the written presentation of ideas. The recently revised pattern of topics allows for geographical skills and work to be taught in such a way as to build on what has gone before. This represents an improvement on the last inspection when the planning was found to be unsatisfactory. Of the lessons observed one was good and none were unsatisfactory. The pupils enjoy their geography and work well together. The subject makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by extending their knowledge of the world and its peoples.
- 113 There is a satisfactory range of resources in the school and they are well used. The subject is well led by a keen and enthusiastic co-ordinator.

HISTORY

- 114 Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are typical of pupils aged seven and 11 nationally. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in learning. Pupils achieve appropriately and their knowledge of different historical periods enhances their understanding of change over time. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and teaching is consistently good.
- 115 Pupils successfully develop the use of a variety of evidence to find out about the past as they carry out research. Year 2 pupils speak excitedly of the Fire of London and recall the events vividly because of the artistic and visual images the teacher helps them to create during their work on this period. The teachers use role-play well to reinforce pupils' learning about Florence Nightingale. They present their findings about her life in an assembly and assert, "Hospitals were not as good then as they are now. There was a lot of disease and she made the hospitals better." Pupils in Year 1 examine a range of interesting toys sent in by their parents. They are enchanted when the teacher pulls a string on a toy to produce a voice and the teacher encourages them to work out the differences between this toy and their own toys. Pupils consider the signs of wear and tear and the fact that the soft toys feel harder. When the teacher explains carefully that many were filled with sawdust, one pupil proudly adds, "You get that when you use a chain-saw." Teachers capture pupils' interest and arouse their curiosity as they give pupils the opportunity to feel and discuss the textures and purposes of the toys. Teachers' skilful questioning and encouragement enable pupils to compare the general features of the toys and this helps them to fit them appropriately on a time-line.
- 116 Year 6 pupils prepare a five-minute talk about Britain since 1940. They plan how they will structure the talk to other groups. The teacher has high expectations of what the pupils will achieve and gives very good guidance on how to build a team to research the topic. Team leaders are given the responsibility of delegating jobs within their group and pupils grow in confidence as they realize that they may make use of the overhead projector to present their findings, just as the teacher uses it to present some of their lessons. Pupils use books, the Internet, original sources and photographs, developing skills of historical enquiry enthusiastically whilst they learn the important skills of working purposefully together and presenting their findings to an audience.

- 117 In Year 3 pupils respond well, with thoughtful, relevant answers when the teacher “demonstrates” the mummification process used by the Ancient Egyptians. The teacher make the lesson fascinating, not gruesome, and pupils acquire a good understanding of how, and why, people prepared so carefully for the “Afterlife.” Pupils are very enthusiastic about the Egyptians because teachers provide them with a wide range of stimulating experiences and interesting challenges during the lessons.
- 118 Teachers’ enthusiasm for history is conveyed to pupils so that they enjoy the subject and are keen to learn. Year 5 pupils, “Can’t wait to do Ancient Greece after half-term.” They work hard and concentrate well on the interesting activities provided. Activities are thoughtfully organized and are matched well to the abilities of the pupils, although there is always a considerable level of challenge within them. The curriculum has been revised since the previous inspection and the enthusiastic and energetic co-ordinators have worked hard to ensure that there are now opportunities for pupils to build on their skills, knowledge and understanding well as they move through the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Research work includes use of computers to find out additional information to support learning and to display projects attractively. Literacy is incorporated well as pupils write about events and carry out research. Very attractive displays of pupils’ work on each topic show that that there are well-established links between history and art and these enhance the quality of learning for pupils. Visits and visitors provide opportunities to enrich learning further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

- 119 Raising standards in information and communications technology (ICT) was an element within the key issues identified at the time of the previous inspection and the school has made considerable progress towards addressing this. Investment in new hardware and the creation of an ICT suite ensures that pupils have regular opportunities to extend their skills with the result that their confidence grows correspondingly. The scheme of work ensures that all the required elements of ICT are covered and has been updated to include new National Curriculum requirements. Pupils of all ages confidently boot up their workstation, load the selected program from the Windows menu and shut down efficiently at the end of a lesson. Pupils’ mouse control develops rapidly and the speed of their keyboard skills become faster as they have more ‘hands on’ time. This improved provision has raised standards such that attainment is in line with national expectations in all areas of ICT for pupils aged seven and in most elements of the subject at 11. However, pupils have had little experience of using ICT to control events in a pre-determined way or to sense physical data (such as changes in temperature). Nor have pupils experienced the use of e-mail, although now that the appropriate equipment is in place this is planned for later in the year.
- 120 All classes have regular timetabled lessons in the ICT suite and teachers use these effectively to develop pupils’ skills. When teachers are confident with the equipment, they provide good challenge for pupils of all abilities and experience, and extend their skills appropriately. They encourage pupils to solve problems as they arise and insist that pupils complete tasks for themselves. They draw in elements, for example of word processing, desk-top publishing and use of graphics into a single assignment, enhancing pupils’ understanding of the potential of the equipment within multi-media presentations. Pupils listen and observe demonstrations closely, settling quickly in order to try new skills for themselves. They remember instructions clearly and are happy to discuss their work. Many make use of a good range of the facilities of familiar programs to complete an assignment. Pupils in some classes use data-

handling programs to create a range of graphical representations of their data, and some are able to compare the effectiveness of the different types of graphs to represent a range of data.

- 121 Where teachers are less confident tasks tend to be aimed at those pupils whose experience of computers outside school is limited, more experienced pupils spending significant amounts of time rehearsing skills with which they are already familiar. Similarly, where teaching is less successful, teachers are overly helpful and fail to let pupils find out how to extricate themselves from difficulties that arise.
- 122 Some teachers use ICT efficiently to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects. For example, younger pupils have compared self-portraits they have drawn and painted with those they have created using a graphics program; a good display comparing the two media celebrates pupils' achievements in both art and ICT. In some classes pupils use the equipment during literacy lessons to draft assignments directly to the word processor. They vary print styles and sizes to create a range of eye-catching designs and presentations. During the inspection, older pupils used the Internet enthusiastically to research for their project on the Ancient Egyptians. They worked co-operatively and thoroughly enjoyed the activity. However, other teachers are not yet sufficiently confident to adapt the curriculum in other subjects to facilitate the use of computers as a tool. As a result the suite is not used at present for more than fifty per cent of the school week. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to extend the use of the ICT suite and to develop teachers' use of the equipment to support learning in other areas of the curriculum.
- 123 Although extensive evaluations are made of pupils' attainment through sampling pupils' work and discussions with pupils, the school has yet to utilise fully a simple effective system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress in ICT. Such a system is needed to monitor the development of pupils' skills, thereby ensuring good progress and raising standards.

MUSIC

- 124 The standard of music for pupils at age seven is in line with what is expected for pupils of their age but the attainment of pupils at age 11 is below expectations. This represents a decline in standards from the time of the previous inspection when attainment at age 11 was described as good overall. The overall quality of teaching was described as good. Whilst there was some good and very good teaching of music the judgement is that the teaching of music is now satisfactory. The teaching of the subject and the consequent levels of progress that pupils at age 11 have made have suffered because of the difficulties arising from the prolonged absence of the former coordinator for the subject. This meant that he was unable to make an effective contribution as a class teacher and as the coordinator with the result that the rigour with which the subject had been pursued was not maintained. The senior management team have appointed an able coordinator who is now making good progress in returning the subject to its former position as a strength of the school. The new coordinator has overall responsibility for the subject and leads in the junior phase whilst being ably supported by another teacher in the infant phase.
- 125 Interviews were held with the two coordinators for the subject and pupils in Year 6. Assemblies, singing practices and lessons were observed. Most lessons showed pupils learning and practising a good range of skills including musical interpretation

and appreciation, composition and performance and singing. Areas of weakness at age 11 relate to pupils' knowledge of musical terminology, their knowledge of the works and lives of recognised composers and the variety and range of different musical experiences.

- 126 The youngest pupils in Year 1 make satisfactory progress in beating time to a simple song and are able to vary the dynamics in response to signals given by the teacher. The conventions for speaking and listening are not yet satisfactorily developed and pupils are still at the stage where their enthusiasm and eagerness to communicate prevail. Pupils in Year 2 have a good repertoire of songs and carols and are able to suggest songs that might have different effects on the listener. They are able to pitch a phrase accurately and work well together as they listen and sing to each other as the phrase is repeated around the class. Pupils in Year 3 tackle a difficult song well and make good progress in their attempts at two-part singing. Pupils in the junior phase sing well in a whole group session and listen attentively whilst the choir perform in good style.
- 127 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and some teaching was good and very good. Non-specialist teachers are well supported through the planning that is done for them by the coordinators who recognize that pupils need a curriculum that matches their current levels of attainment. All teachers approach their lessons with confidence and enthusiasm and pupils respond in equal measure. The best teaching shows good levels of expertise and experience and so teachers are able to evaluate and improve the responses they get from their pupils. Relationships are always good and this gives pupils the confidence to perform before the class without feeling apprehensive. Because planning is at an early stage of development some lessons have too much content and this results in objectives being met in part. Some lessons in the music room are closely scheduled and it is important that the outgoing class does not eat into the time of the next class. Teachers make good use of the music room and of resources such as percussion instruments and cassette players. Pupils also respond well to the good standards of musicianship offered by teachers and so will attempt successfully some very complex oral warming up exercises and sing well unaccompanied or with guitar or piano. They are actively interested in their lessons and enjoy them: the youngest expressing great enthusiasm when they are given the opportunity to sing the "Wiggly worm" song in assembly.
- 128 The leadership of the subject has just been taken over by the coordinator. He is musically very capable and has a very good understanding of the weaknesses in the attainment of pupils at age 11. He has a very good understanding of what needs to be done and is utilising the skills of other good instrumentalists on the staff to that end. The policy and scheme of work are very good as they comprehensively define the subject and the impact and contribution that the subject is intended to make within the school as a whole. The scheme of work and associated planning is specifically designed to raise standards by providing challenging opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities and is such that it can be taught effectively by all staff. Initiatives such as the choir are already creating interest in the subject for an increasing number of pupils. As a result of the good provision now being made, pupils of all levels of attainment including pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress. The subject is satisfactorily resourced and the pupils benefit from having a dedicated music room.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 129 Levels of attainment are what might be expected for pupils at age seven and 11. They are satisfactory in dance and gymnastics lessons but skills such as throwing, striking and catching a ball are in need of further improvement. The staff are aware of this need and are working hard to improve the pupils' basic skills by focusing on this area in lessons. The previous inspection report noted some shortcomings in physical education but there has been a good improvement since that time. There is now a coordinator for the subject, planning is better and whilst resources have been improved there is still more to be done in bringing them to a satisfactory level.
- 130 Pupils in Year 2 make good progress when music from 'Coppelia' gives them an opportunity to think about body joints, consider how puppets would move and how they could show this by responding to the music. Other Year 2 pupils were able to perform a series of challenging movements in a gymnastics lesson. Those observing made good evaluations and the exercise enabled all pupils to make good progress. Year 4 pupils were observed improving their racket skills and the provision of good resources allowed them good opportunity to improve their ability to throw and hit a ball. Year 6 pupils use diagrams to show how they and a partner might achieve balance in different ways.
- 131 Pupils enjoy their lessons and the majority work very hard to improve their performance. They listen attentively to the teacher and work well with partners and in small groups resulting in much purposeful activity and good progress. In a Year 4 gymnastics lesson pupils were asked to demonstrate their work to the other members of the class to show the important points of the movement and allow all pupils to focus on improving their work. Teacher demonstration during a Year 3 games lesson enthused the pupils and stimulated them to try even harder. The clear objectives for each lesson meant that pupils knew what was expected of them and what they had to do for each activity. Younger pupils found it quite difficult to organise themselves into groups and teams during games lessons resulting in some loss of time and a reduction in the number of activities completed.
- 132 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and in some lessons it was good. The lessons were all well planned and the pupils had access to appropriate equipment, which meant that the lessons were challenging and the pupils were able to improve their skill levels and understanding of the topic during each lesson. Teachers showed a good knowledge of each topic and were able to show pupils the correct techniques to allow them to improve their skills. An example of this was seen in a Year 4 games lesson with the teacher demonstrating good body position and feet placement to allow the pupils to hit a ball with the racket more effectively. The lessons moved along at a good pace but time is limited and this gave little opportunity to develop more complex activities, get out appropriate apparatus or take part in competitive game situations.
- 133 The leadership of the subject has been poorly defined in the past but the appointment of a new, enthusiastic subject leader and the writing of clear schemes of work and lesson plans, together with some improvement in resources, is resulting in improvement. The coordinator is somewhat inhibited by not having the opportunity to observe the teaching of the subject or to be in a position to demonstrate good practice to her colleagues. Collecting and recording evidence about pupil performance and what they have done in previous lessons is currently unsatisfactory and needs to be addressed.
- 134 The hall is adequate for its purpose and the access to a small field on site and a games field nearby together with two playgrounds and a rebound wall mean that the

facilities are sufficient for a wide range of activities. Resources are improving but there remains a need for a wider range of appropriate bats, balls, ropes and small games activities. Physical education makes a significant contribution to the pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 135 Attainment in religious education for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven is broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and teaching is now good overall, which is an improvement.
- 136 Pupils in a Year 2 lesson, which was part of a follow-up to a visit to a local church, demonstrated sound knowledge of aspects of Christian worship. They know that churches are used for prayer and singing and recognize the cross and other symbols. They were able to remember that the church uses these and that the giving out of wine and bread is important. The pupils had prepared a list of questions to ask a visitor, who is not only well known to the pupils but is very involved in the life of the church, about her role and commitment in this special place. The teacher used music to create a quiet, calm atmosphere for the interview and gave it a formality by providing the pupil who asked each question with a microphone. The pupils, guided sensitively and carefully by the teacher, had prepared a very interesting list of questions. They listened very thoughtfully to the detailed responses of the adult. As she spoke, they recalled the lectern where she sometimes reads the lesson and the piano and organ she plays. The explanations of other symbols led to consideration of the importance of light showing you the way forward and were clear and easy for pupils to understand. All aspects of the lesson were managed sensitively and pupils gained additional knowledge and understanding of the work of the church.
- 137 Year 1 pupils participated well in learning about the healing of the lepers, only one of whom says, "Thank you" to Jesus. They discuss sensibly with their partners about when one should say "Thank you." Pupils have become very confident in this method of discussion and understand the teacher's expectations well.
- 138 Year 5 and 6 pupils have spent some time considering the question "Is there a God?" Sensitive and perceptive teaching has led them to produce to some very thoughtful work and raise many questions of their own. Pupils have written letters to God, some saying "Thank you" and others speaking of a personal sadness. Teachers give simple interpretations of the "Hail Mary" prayer and explain the importance of the rosary for Roman Catholics. Pupils ask very sensible and relevant questions before writing their own rosary prayers. Some write with concern about troubles in the world, wanting peace, pollution. Several write lovingly of their family and how they miss grandparents or relatives who have died. In a calm working atmosphere, pupils produce thoughtful work, which reveals care and concern for families and friends and sensitivity to the feelings of others. Teachers' thoughtful planning of the topics enables pupils to develop skills of reflection and a greater depth of understanding and respect for others' beliefs.
- 139 Pupils develop their understanding of religious issues and faiths other than Christianity well. They celebrate a number of festivals during the year and enjoy learning about other ways of celebrating special or significant events. Speaking and listening skills are practised well in lessons and there is good use of literacy and art in writing and illustrating their work. There are good links with music through the

curriculum, which is due to be revised next year. Work is suitably matched to the different age groups. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced well by the religious education curriculum. For example, pupils begin to know more about themselves and about different faith's ideas about an all-powerful being.