

INSPECTION REPORT

REDHILLS COMBINED SCHOOL

Exeter

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113084

Headteacher: Mrs J Iffla

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims
28899

Dates of inspection: 25th – 29th September 2000

Inspection number: 225372

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First and Middle
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Thompson

Date of previous inspection:	26 th October 1996
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Mr G R Sims Registered Inspector 28899	French Areas of learning for children under five	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management Equal opportunities
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Mr P Mann Team Inspector 14509	Science Information and communication technology	Teaching and learning
Mrs H Rask Team Inspector 30266	English	Special educational needs English as an additional language
Mr A Williams Team Inspector 28071	Mathematics Physical education	Curricular and other opportunities for learning
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Redhills is a large combined school for 420 boys and girls between the ages of four and twelve. It is situated in a western suburb of the city of Exeter in a closely built-up area. The socio-economic background of the pupils is generally below average. The school's catchment area contains a mixture of owner-occupied, local authority and housing association properties, with an increasing number of pupils coming from homes where there are social problems. The school is over-subscribed in some year groups. A very small percentage of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds or from homes where English is not the main spoken language. This is below the national average. Almost one quarter of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is just above the national average. Around one third of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, and seven pupils have statements of special educational need. These figures are above average. Children are admitted to the Reception classes in September and January. Many have attended privately run playgroups before they join the school. At the time of the inspection, there were 24 children under the age of five in the school. The attainment of children when they start school varies widely, but is generally well below average. A major building project to improve the school's facilities is shortly to be started.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Redhills Combined School is an effective school which provides a good quality of education. Although standards overall are below average in English and mathematics, the starting point of many pupils is very low and their progress throughout the school is good. The school provides very effective help for the large number of pupils with special educational needs. The pupils' attitudes to work, their behaviour and relationships are good. The overall quality of the teaching is good, particularly for the youngest children. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and a supportive governing body. There has been a good range of improvements since the last inspection. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school provides a particularly stimulating and well-planned education for the youngest children, who receive very good teaching and support from the staff in the Reception classes.
- There is very good, well planned and well co-ordinated support for the large number of pupils with special educational needs.
- Although overall standards are below average, the pupils achieve well in relation to what they already know, and many of them overcome severe obstacles to their learning.
- The pupils' attitudes to work, standards of behaviour and the quality of relationships throughout the school are good. The emphasis given to the pupils' personal development and the care provided by the staff are important contributory factors.
- The attention given to improving the teaching of religious education since the last inspection has resulted in standards which are above average.
- The overall quality of the teaching is good. One-fifth of the lessons observed during the inspection were very good.
- The headteacher's good leadership and the dedication and commitment of the staff have created an environment in which pupils can feel secure and which is conducive to learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in, and the use of, information and communication technology
- The role of subject co-ordinators in leading and managing their subjects
- The way subjects other than English are used to develop pupils' literacy skills
- The structure of the timetable and the balance of time devoted to each subject

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a good degree of improvement since the last inspection, which took place in October 1996. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science at both key stages and are now significantly higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. These improvements have resulted from the school's response to national initiatives to improve literacy and numeracy. The overall quality of the teaching has improved and is now much more consistent across the school than it was.

The school responded effectively to the previous key issues, although more work still needs to be done in some of the areas which were previously identified. The school is now much more consistent in its approach, both to what is taught and to the standards expected of teachers. Much effort has been expended on raising levels of attainment in reading and writing. Curricular planning has improved, and co-ordinators have provided staff with much clearer guidance from which to plan their lessons. The school has improved the way it assesses pupils' work in English and mathematics and now has a clearer picture of pupils' progress through the school. Some aspects of the marking of pupils' books have improved considerably and, in some classes, there are examples of very good practice. The quality of marking is, however, inconsistent and there are weaknesses in the marking of pupils' written work in subjects other than English. Although there has been some effective monitoring of teaching and pupils' work by senior managers, most subject co-ordinators do not yet monitor standards and teaching within their subject areas effectively.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			similar schools	Key	
	all schools					
	1997	1998	1999	1999		
English	C	D	D	C	Very high	A*
Mathematics	D	C	D	C	Well above average	A
Science	D	D	D	C	Above average	B
					Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Very low	E*

Because of the large number of pupils with special educational needs, the overall level of attainment when children enter the school is well below average. The local education authority's policy on admitting children under the age of five to school has a marked effect on the progress of the year group. Compared to those who start in January, a significantly higher proportion of children who start school in September achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. Despite the very good progress made by all children, standards by the end of the Reception year are below average.

The school's results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 were below the national average, but close to the average for similar schools. There has been a steady improvement in the school's results in reading and writing over the last four years, and a recent improvement in mathematics. Results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 show a similar picture; they were below the national average, but close to the average for similar schools. The improvement in standards has been more marked at Key Stage 2, particularly in science. In all areas, standards are higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection.

The range of attainment throughout the school and within each year group is very wide. The school caters adequately for the more able pupils; a satisfactory proportion achieve the higher Level 3 by the age of seven and, similarly, Level 5 by the age of eleven. The school devotes much attention and considerable skill to meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils make very good progress towards their individual targets. Considering their prior attainment, most pupils achieve well, many of them overcoming considerable obstacles to their learning, and some receiving very little help at home. Pupils in Year 7 continue to make good progress in preparation for their transfer to high school. Although some pupils still

struggle with their reading, and a higher proportion find it hard to express themselves in writing, most pupils have sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to cope adequately with their work in other subjects.

The work seen during the inspection confirms that the National Curriculum test results give an accurate reflection of the standards achieved at both key stages, although standards in science are now similar to the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. The pupils do well in practical subjects, such as physical education and design and technology, where standards are above average. They also achieve above average standards in religious education, which has improved significantly since the last inspection. In contrast, standards in information and communication technology are below average. The school sets itself appropriate targets and, in most areas, has been successful in meeting them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to school are consistently good. They concentrate well in lessons, enjoy their learning and show a positive response to their work. Pupils are keen to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good throughout the school. Pupils move around the school sensibly and behave responsibly when moving to off-site locations. A small number of pupils have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, but the school has very good procedures for dealing with these.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are good. A good approach to conflict resolution encourages pupils to become mature in their response to conflict and to reflect on right and wrong actions. Older pupils read with younger pupils and carry out duties in a mature and responsible manner.
Attendance	The level of attendance is satisfactory. It is broadly in line with the national average. The number of holidays taken during term-time presents an increasing problem, which affects pupils' progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-12 years
104 lessons seen overall	Very Good	Good	Good

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

The teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of the lessons seen. It was very good or better in 19 per cent of lessons and good in a further 43 per cent. Three per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. The quality of the teaching in English and in mathematics is good. Most of the teachers have good subject knowledge, are enthusiastic and relate very well to the pupils. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught, although not enough emphasis is given to teaching literacy skills through work undertaken in other subjects. The teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. The teachers plan appropriate work for pupils with special educational needs, and effective support from classroom assistants helps these pupils to make good progress. The teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour; they achieve good standards of discipline which result in an efficient use of lesson time. The teaching of children in the Reception classes is particularly good. In general, pupils concentrate well in lessons and the quality of learning is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, apart from information and communication technology. Not enough time is devoted to some subjects: too much is given to different aspects of English and not enough to developing literacy skills through other subjects. The curriculum is enriched through visitors to the school, visits for each year group, residential visits and trips abroad. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for older pupils, but very little for the younger pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Specialist staff meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs very well. Individual support and lessons for small groups of pupils are well planned and of high quality. Pupils make very good progress towards their targets as a result. Assessment is used very effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. Religious education, residential visits, fund-raising activities and visitors to the school, including performing artists, all contribute to the good provision for the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. The provision for their moral development is very good. Children are taught from an early age about sharing, telling the truth and issues of right and wrong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides a supportive and caring environment, which promotes the welfare, academic progress, personal development and self-worth of all pupils. Much thought has been given to lunchtime arrangements to overcome the problems imposed by the school's site and to ensure pupils' health and safety.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactory. There are very good links between parents and staff in the Reception classes, but links are not actively fostered by the school and become more remote as pupils move through the school. A committed core of parents support the work of the school, but there are also some parents who are unsupportive. The school provides informative reports about pupils' progress and targets, and a good range of additional information.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has provided strong leadership for many years and has done much to create a good working ethos and positive relationships amongst staff and pupils. She works effectively with the deputy headteacher and members of the senior management team. There are good systems of communication, and tasks and responsibilities are delegated appropriately.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They have a good understanding of the school and its priorities for development. Many governors give a great deal of support, time and help to the school. They have been actively involved in drawing up plans for the development of the school site.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Senior staff have taken a greater role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This has led to specific action which has helped to raise standards. However, subject co-ordinators do not yet play a great enough role in monitoring and evaluating their own subject areas.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of its teaching resources, and support staff are well deployed. The staff work very hard to overcome the restrictions of the school's accommodation. Financial management and administration are very efficient. Principles of best value are applied well.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory overall. The school is well staffed. The level of resources is satisfactory. The school's accommodation has significant shortcomings which make supervision of pupils difficult, and affect pupils' progress in physical education and other practical subjects. Some of these shortcomings will be addressed when the new building project is completed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The school is approachable and helpful and has effective ways of dealing with problems. ● Their children enjoy going to school. ● The teaching is good and their children are making good progress. ● The good links with the high school, fostered by specialist teaching. ● They are well informed about their children's progress. ● The way teachers help children starting school to gain confidence and feel accepted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provision for more extra-curricular activities, especially for younger children. ● Better facilities and opportunities for sports and physical education. ● The amount of work children have to do at home. ● The time children have to eat their lunch. ● A few parents feel the school does not work closely enough with them, and is not responsive to their needs.

Inspectors endorse all of the positive views of the parents. They concur with parents' concerns about the school's facilities for sports and physical education, but not entirely with their other concerns. The school offers a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for older pupils, although there is very little at present for the younger pupils. In most classes, teachers strike an appropriate balance in the amount of work given to pupils to complete at home. The school is open and receptive to parents' views and concerns and there are appropriate procedures for parents to consult their children's teachers both formally and informally. Inspectors do not share parents' concerns about the time available for children to eat their lunch. The new lunchtime arrangements have been carefully thought through and have been designed to provide safer and more secure arrangements for all pupils given the restrictions of the school site.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1¹, the pupils' results were below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, when compared to the results of similar schools², they were average in all three areas. The results showed a very wide spread of attainment, with around one fifth of the pupils above the national expectations in reading and mathematics, and a similar proportion below the expected standard. The trend in the school's results is one of improvement. Results in reading and writing rose markedly after the last inspection. Although they dipped in 1999, indications from the Year 2000 results are that they have risen again. The improvement has not been as consistent in mathematics, but the latest results show that the National Numeracy Strategy is having an impact on pupils' learning and is helping to improve standards.
2. At Key Stage 2, the National Curriculum test results in 1999 were below the national average in English, mathematics and science, but were average in comparison to similar schools. The comparisons are somewhat more favourable when the pupils' progress is measured against the standards they achieved four years previously at the end of Year 2. As with Key Stage 1, the variation in pupils' attainment is wide. The proportion achieving Level 5, which is above the nationally expected level, was close to the national average. However, just over a third of the pupils in English and mathematics, and a fifth in science, did not achieve the nationally expected level. Results in all three subjects have improved since the last inspection, quite markedly in the case of science.
3. The school is beginning to use its assessment data to analyse where there are weaknesses in pupils' attainment and to set appropriate targets for the future. Over the last four years, girls have produced slightly better results than boys in reading and writing at Key Stage 1, but the difference is much less significant than the difference nationally. In mathematics at Key Stage 1, and in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2, the boys achieve better results than girls, and the difference in attainment is greater than the national trend. The school is aware of these differences and endeavours to redress the balance by encouraging more active participation in lessons by girls.
4. The range of attainment when children enter the school is very wide. Some children are already well on the way to meeting the targets expected of children by the end of the Foundation Stage, but the attainment of many children is well below this. Overall, the skills shown by children when they start school are well below average. As a result of the very good

¹ The words 'Key Stage' refer to the different stages of learning in schools. Children start school in the Foundation Stage, which caters for children aged 3 to 5 and generally refers to children who are in the Nursery, Reception or Early Years classes. Key Stage 1 is the first stage of compulsory primary education. It caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 1 is also frequently synonymous with the term Infants. Key Stage 2 is the second stage of primary education. It caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6. Key Stage 2 is also frequently synonymous with the term Juniors. At the age of 11, pupils start Key Stage 3, which marks the beginning of their secondary education.

² The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

teaching input, the children learn very quickly and already show a good degree of improvement when they are given their initial assessments after about six weeks in the school. Children who join the school in September benefit from small class sizes and much individual attention from teachers and helpers. By the end of the year, around three-quarters of these children achieve the Early Learning Goals. However, half of the children in the year group enter the school in January and, by the end of the year, only around half of these children achieve the expected level. Overall, therefore, standards are still below average by the end of the Foundation Stage. The curriculum provided for all children in the Reception classes is particularly rich, and the teachers and helpers are skilled in making very good use of every learning opportunity. As a result, all children make very good progress in all areas of learning and are much better equipped to start the National Curriculum than when they first joined the school.

5. The pupils develop their skills in speaking and listening to a standard which is in line with national expectations by the ages of seven and eleven, with some pupils in Year 7 starting to listen to and discuss complex ideas with one another. Although a significant number of pupils struggle with writing and, to a lesser extent, reading, the pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment throughout the school. Some pupils receive very little support from home to reinforce the work which is done in school, and the school also has to counter some negative external influences on pupils' learning. In spite of the school's best endeavours, standards in both reading and writing are below average at the end of both key stages. The pupils are taught various strategies to help them read unfamiliar words and, by the end of Years 6 and 7, most pupils read simple texts with confidence and good understanding. The pupils write for a range of purposes, although most pupils find it hard to write accurately using a good range of vocabulary. A small proportion of more able pupils achieve standards in both reading and writing which are above average. Although opportunities are provided for pupils to write in other subjects, these occasions are not used sufficiently well to show pupils how they can develop their writing skills.
6. Standards in mathematics are below average at the end of both key stages and Year 7. However, the pupils are now making good progress at Key Stage 1, where the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a significant impact in helping pupils to acquire numeracy skills and develop confidence in handling numbers. Pupils in Key Stage 2 lack the facility to handle numbers quickly and confidently mentally, although this aspect of their work is improving. The pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. Numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily in other curriculum areas, although insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in mathematics.
7. In science, standards of attainment have improved steadily since the previous inspection. However, at the end of Key Stage 1 they are still below national expectations. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and standards are just in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2 and at the end of Year 7. Pupils are developing good investigative skills and are able to explain the various stages of scientific enquiry, which include making predictions, taking measurements and interpreting their findings. A good scheme of work, which is used throughout the school, ensures that pupils acquire a broad understanding of all aspects of the science curriculum.
8. Standards in art and design are good at Key Stage 1 and exceed national expectations. This shows good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils express themselves well, using a variety of appropriate drawing and painting materials and techniques. A good feature of pupils' early development is the consistent use of personal sketch-books. In Key Stages 2 and 3, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils analyse critically the work of artists from other times and cultures as well as more contemporary artists, but opportunities to combine the knowledge gained in this way with more personal work from their own imagination are few.

9. Standards in design and technology are good across the school and have improved since the previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils produce lively and informative annotated drawings and plans in notebooks to outline their ideas and intentions. They develop independence and confidence in their use of tools and techniques, as needs arise, through well-planned and structured projects. By the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 7, pupils re-design and make familiar products with increasing capability. Pupils enjoy practical tasks and work well together on collaborative projects in an inclusive manner. Work provided for the more able pupils, however, is not always sufficiently challenging.
10. The pupils make satisfactory progress in geography and history, and achieve standards which are appropriate for their age at the end of both key stages and Year 7. Pupils in Year 2 develop satisfactory mapping skills, whilst older pupils learn to understand the effects of different climates on the populace and major cities. Visits within the local community are used effectively to further pupils' understanding of geographical concepts. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of chronology and a knowledge of historical characters. At Key Stage 2, they demonstrate the ability to compare life in different times and to empathise with the living conditions of others, for example, of the inhabitants of Exeter during the war. Special days devoted to history topics enhance the quality of learning, and pupils talk with enthusiasm about these events.
11. Although there has been improvement in the provision for information and communication technology since the previous inspection, standards achieved by pupils at the end of both key stages and by the end of Year 7 are below national expectations. Teachers are beginning to integrate information and communication technology activities within the curriculum, but the full range of software is not yet used to support pupils' learning and develop their information and communication technology skills and capability.
12. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 are taught French. They make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriate standards in both classes. In Year 7, the pupils' response to the subject is particularly enthusiastic. Progress is hampered at present by the way lessons are timetabled and also by the pace during some parts of the lessons.
13. Standards in music at the end of both key stages and Year 7 are in line with those expected. The standard of singing is good, although the pupils' ability to compose is less secure because teachers lack knowledge as to how to develop this aspect of the work. Pupils in Year 7 benefit from lessons at the local secondary school, where they have access to equipment to develop performance and composing skills. The pupils make good progress in these lessons which are very well taught.
14. Pupils make good progress in physical education and achieve standards which are above average. At Key Stage 1, pupils move creatively in their dance lessons. At Key Stage 2, they perform fluent gymnastic sequences on the floor and show above-average skills in controlling a ball and participating in games such as football and hockey. The pupils are self-controlled and very confident when they take part in their games lessons. Progress is affected by the cancellation of some lessons because of the weather, but the school does not always make adequate arrangements to recuperate the time lost.
15. In religious education, standards are consistently good across the school and exceed the levels set by the locally agreed syllabus. This shows very good improvement since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of some aspects of Christianity. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of the more challenging aspects as well as the conventions of religious thought and beliefs.
16. The school has a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. The provision for these pupils is very good. Good collaboration between the co-ordinator for special

educational needs, the staff, learning support assistants and specialist teachers ensures that pupils' needs are identified, and well-targeted work is provided for them. The pupils make particularly good progress when they are withdrawn to be taught individually or in small groups. Individual education plans set clear objectives and targets to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.

17. Although standards overall are below average, the school does much to help the pupils build on the low levels of achievement which many display when they enter the school. Some pupils take a long time to absorb information or learn new skills, but the quality of the teaching is good and pupils are given every opportunity to succeed. Occasionally, the more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently, but a significant proportion still manage to achieve above the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science. Generally, the pupils achieve higher standards in subjects which are practically based, such as science, design and technology or physical education, but because of the improvements made since the last inspection, they are also achieving above average standards in religious education. The school adds value to the education and achievements of all pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. The previous report highlighted the positive attitudes which pupils display throughout the school, and the present inspection findings confirm that pupils show a consistently good attitude to their work. Some parents at the meeting held before the inspection were concerned that pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and special educational needs were disruptive during lessons. Inspection findings revealed a consistent and firm approach within classes to managing any potentially disruptive behaviour. Classroom assistants provide very good support for a small number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and there is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, who show the same good attitudes to their learning as other pupils.
19. Children in the Foundation Stage settle very quickly into the routines of the school, and parents who were spoken to during the inspection were pleased with the way their children had been introduced into the school. One small child was keen to bring his bed in, such was his enthusiasm. Good relationships are established from the start, and pupils show good levels of concentration during their classroom activities, quickly learning to respect one another, share resources and take turns. Older pupils have a role to play in supporting the reading development of younger pupils, which promotes mature attitudes. Older pupils take on responsibilities such as supporting at lunchtimes and organising playtime and games equipment in a sensible manner.
20. Behaviour is generally good throughout the school. A small minority of older pupils display immature behaviour on occasion, but teachers are aware of this and are tackling this effectively. Pupils move around the school very sensibly, and older pupils travel to the West Exe site in a responsible manner. The school has recently reorganised lunchtimes into two sessions, and this arrangement appears to be working well and promoting good behaviour. No bullying or harassment was observed during the inspection, and any incidents of inappropriate behaviour were dealt with swiftly and firmly. Pupils have discussed and agreed their own classroom rules, most of which are linked to respect. Pupils take on responsibilities around the school, such as distributing and collecting in equipment. Older pupils take charge of the tape deck and overhead projector during assemblies in a responsible manner. Exclusions are rare, but two fixed-term exclusions have been imposed this year; this is well documented and governors have been kept fully informed.
21. Relationships throughout the school are good. Staff have established good relationships with their pupils and set high expectations for respectful relationships between boys and girls. Pupils respond well to the care and respect shown towards their own feelings, and this helps

them to understand the thoughts, values and feelings of others. Work undertaken in religious education makes an important contribution in this aspect. Weekly whole-school assemblies focus on celebrating pupils' achievements and successes. Pupils respond eagerly to the well-deserved praise which they receive during their lessons. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the life of the school. The school shows a good degree of tolerance towards pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, a strategy which supports the personal development of these pupils well. Older pupils gain from visits, such as that to Pixie's Holt in Dartmoor, and they comment on how this helps them to get to know one another better. The school's approach to mediation and conflict resolution is very positive and encourages the development of mature and responsible reflection on personal responsibility and the differences between right and wrong actions. An area for further development is to increase opportunities for older pupils to develop more independent study through, for example, individual research.

22. The level of pupils' attendance is satisfactory. It is broadly in line with the national average. The level of attendance dropped after the last inspection. Although the level has improved steadily over the last three years, it is still lower than it was at the time of the last inspection. Most absence is caused by illness and there is very little unauthorised absence, although the number of holidays taken during term-time presents an increasing problem. The school actively discourages families from disrupting their children's education in this way. Pupils' punctuality is also satisfactory. They enjoy coming to school, and most arrive promptly each morning so that lessons can begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. A strength of the school is its quality of teaching. Throughout both Key Stages 1 and 2 and Year 7, the teaching is good, and it is very good in the Foundation Stage. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, where teaching in Key Stage 2 was judged as satisfactory. The best teaching observed was in the Foundation Stage, where all lessons were good or very good. The greatest variation in teaching was found to be in Key Stage 2, where there was a small number of unsatisfactory lessons. However, in Key Stage 2 four per cent of lessons were also found to be excellent.
24. The good quality of the teaching is a direct result of the teachers' good level of knowledge and understanding in most subjects, the effectiveness of the teaching methods they use, especially for literacy and numeracy, their management of pupils during lessons and their good use of time, support staff and resources. The teachers have worked hard to improve and increase their own knowledge of the subjects they teach, and this has helped their teaching of basic skills. They have a good knowledge of the concepts and skills that are to be developed in each subject, and they use this knowledge effectively. As a result, the pupils generally acquire new knowledge at a good rate, concentrating and working well to finish work in the time set. Information and communication technology throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 is the single subject area where teachers' knowledge and understanding is unsatisfactory, with the result that pupils do not make satisfactory progress. Additionally, there are some inconsistencies in expectations of pupils in regard to the presentation of their work, and the effectiveness of teachers' marking varies across the school from very good to poor.
25. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good in the Foundation Stage and mainly good in both key stages and in Year 7. Setting arrangements for both subjects are effective, offering opportunities for more clearly focused teaching. Such sessions are well planned and resourced, accounting for the good progress pupils make in these subjects. These lessons usually have a brisk pace, and teachers encourage pupils to think about and explain their working. This is evident when teachers involve pupils in explaining their plans for writing, in discussing stories and in clarifying their working in numeracy. As a result of the teachers' good management of behaviour, pupils concentrate and achieve well in most lessons.

26. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills within other areas of the curriculum is not always satisfactory. The pupils are provided with opportunities within religious education lessons, for example, to use their written skills, and much scientific enquiry and science content is in written form. However, the teachers do not make use of these opportunities to develop the pupils' writing skills by correcting the incorrect use of English or suggesting ways in which their sentence construction, spelling or range of expression could be improved. The development of number skills is apparent within science lessons. Additionally, the use of graphs to illustrate and interpret scientific information gives satisfactory opportunities for the development of pupils' numeracy skills.
27. The teachers' planning varies in detail throughout the school, but is mostly satisfactory. In general, teachers within the same year group share planning. Whereas pupils are set for English and mathematics lessons, some of the teachers are responsible for teaching particular subjects in order to use their expertise across the year group. These arrangements are effective. In Year 6, for example, the responsibility for teaching science, religious education and design and technology is taken by an individual teacher within the year group. Frequently, teachers display lesson plans clearly so all their pupils can see stated outcomes, and this helps to increase the pupils' awareness of what is being taught. In some classes, objectives are outlined for the whole week, giving pupils good opportunities to organise their own work over longer periods of time. Work for particular ability groups is included within teachers' planning but, at times within both key stages, not enough extension tasks are planned for the more able pupils. Additionally, teachers' weekly plans and individual lesson plans contain exactly the same information just set out in a different format, which is an inefficient use of teachers' planning time. The teaching methods employed in literacy and numeracy lessons have been successfully adapted to other subjects of the curriculum, and this has substantially improved teaching style and the pace of lessons. At the close of lessons, teachers' discussion techniques help to consolidate their pupils' learning, especially where new vocabulary has been introduced. In an art lesson in Year 1, for example, pupils talked about each other's work, and the teacher ensured pupils used the correct art-specific vocabulary in their descriptions.
28. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and use very good behaviour management techniques so they are not deflected from the purpose of the lesson. On occasions when a small number of pupils show challenging behaviour, the teachers apply rules and strategies consistently and fairly so that the learning time is not wasted. In a Year 4 class during a religious education lesson concerning the ten commandments, through the teachers' good subject knowledge, and by ensuring the activity was well matched to pupils' abilities, pupils were highly motivated, and the lesson was very productive. The good relationships that exist between staff and pupils are reflected in the positive working atmosphere throughout the school, where pupils feel confident to discuss and participate. This contributes to their good progress in learning.
29. In general, lessons are well prepared. Classroom assistants make a positive impact on the learning, especially in Key Stage 1, where they are given details outlining how they are to support their pupils during the lesson. They enable group-work to function well and, in certain cases, provide very good support for pupils with special educational needs. Their time is not always used to maximum effect however, especially at the beginning of lessons where they may not be actively involved during the introductory part. The teachers use resources effectively. In a design and technology lesson in Year 6, pupils were able to make good progress in the construction of their fairground ride as the lesson was very well resourced with tools and materials. Similarly, in the information and communication technology session in Year 7, the teacher had carefully prepared both text and graphics files, making them available on the network so the pupils were able to make good progress in their work.

30. Some teachers have begun to use group and individual targets effectively, and the quality and use of ongoing assessment are satisfactory. Literacy targets were fixed to pupils' desks in Year 4, acting as a constant reminder for them. Record-keeping of pupils' progress is generally satisfactory, although there is variation across the school. There is also variation in the effectiveness of teachers' marking. Whereas some teachers provide interactive and helpful comments and check whether pupils have carried out their corrections, there are instances where teachers do not provide their pupils with useful feedback, and too many general comments are of little help in bringing pupils on in their learning. The most successful marking is seen in pupils' English books, but the same rigour is not applied to the marking of pupils' writing produced for other subjects.
31. Homework is used satisfactorily to support work done within both key stages. Although it is mostly concerned with English and mathematics, it does cover other curriculum areas from time to time as the opportunity arises. Pupils in Year 7 carry out regular science homework to help consolidate understanding.
32. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of learning is very good, and it is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and in Year 7. Where teachers target particular groups or individuals, the learning is frequently very good. Individual reading support provided by the special needs teacher in Year 3 enabled very good learning to take place through directed teaching and as a result of the teacher's very good teaching methods. Learning is also enhanced where teachers have prepared imaginative resources to support their teaching. In Year 2, learning was good during a 'big book' session where pupils re-ordered text from the story. The teacher was well prepared with imaginative resources and challenged her pupils by good use of questioning. In general, the teachers have high expectations of the way pupils should participate and respond during lessons, and this helps to ensure that pupils are productive. In a design and technology lesson in Year 4, where pupils were entering data into a database, the level of resources was good and the teacher intervened on an individual basis asking open-ended questions, enabling her pupils to make good progress. Pupils' interest, concentration and independence are good throughout the school. Their ability to settle to work is noticeable, especially where they have to organise themselves in pairs or in groups. In Year 6, pupils were able to make good progress during a science investigation as a result of their abilities to organise themselves and their resources.
33. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs through extensive and well-planned additional support from the full-time specialist teacher for special needs and the well-trained classroom assistants. This additional support enables pupils to take a fuller part in the whole curriculum provided within the school and helps them to make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a very good overview of both the needs and the progress of individual pupils on the school's register of special needs, which is constantly updated. The school has the benefit of a trained Reading Recovery teacher, and the work undertaken in these individual sessions is of a high quality, enabling pupils who successfully complete the programme to reach similar standards to their peers over time.

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

34. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good, and for pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 it is satisfactory. The curriculum offered by the school meets statutory requirements. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, and pupils in Year 6 are given the opportunity to learn French. However, opportunities for pupils to acquire skills in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory across the school.

35. The curriculum offered to children in the Foundation Stage is particularly rich. The teachers provide a very good range of learning opportunities and are particularly skilful in relating activities to more than one area of learning. They have embraced and fully use the new curricular guidance provided for educating children in the Foundation Stage. The planning is meticulous and is thought through very carefully indeed. During the week of the inspection, for example, the children received a visit from a blind person. Stories read to the children related to the topic of sight. The children made tactile pictures to help them develop an awareness of the importance of the sense of touch. In a physical education lesson, they engaged in activities in which they simulated lack of sight and relied on another person to lead them around the hall. By the time the visitor came, the children were very well prepared and, therefore, benefited even more from the visit. The range of activities provided is appropriately balanced between all of the areas of learning for children of this age.
36. The curriculum for Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 reflects the school's priorities for improving standards in English and mathematics. Both the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been implemented successfully and the emphasis on training and new teaching methods are helping to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. However, a very large amount of time is devoted to the English curriculum in Key Stage 1 and the early years of Key Stage 2. Some of this time is not as well directed as it could be but, more significantly, its allocation to English has a direct and detrimental effect on the time devoted to other subjects. In contrast, although there are opportunities for pupils to exercise their writing skills when undertaking work in other subjects, the teachers do not use the opportunities sufficiently to develop the pupils' literacy skills. The teachers' timetables do not always reflect what happens in practice. The school needs to review the amount of time devoted to each subject and to the various aspects of English to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum can be covered appropriately and in sufficient depth.
37. Overall curricular planning has improved since the last inspection, which found that some subjects did not have carefully structured schemes of work. The school has adopted the exemplar schemes provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to support the implementation of the revised National Curriculum. This provides teachers with a sound basis on which to plan their lessons. As part of the school's teaching strategy, pupils are arranged in ability groups for English and mathematics. This allows teachers to focus their teaching in a class where there is a smaller range of attainment, and this is beginning to have a positive effect on the pupils' progress. The school uses its staff well to support pupils' learning, and some teachers swap classes in order to make better use of their own subject expertise, for example in subjects such as design and technology, physical education, religious education and French.
38. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for older pupils, run by staff and parents. The activities include sports clubs, such as those for basketball, rugby and dance, residential weekends where pupils have opportunities to rock climb, canoe and learn about living together, and taking part in singing festivals. At present, there is very little extra-curricular opportunity for the younger pupils. The school is aware of parents' concerns about the range of clubs available for all its pupils and, as a result, the school has applied for additional funding in order to increase provision for extra-curricular activities and study support in 2001. For older pupils, there is a French exchange visit, and there is a wide range of visits, local and further afield, to provide further enrichment of the curriculum.
39. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. A recently constructed scheme of work has been introduced to support teachers' planning. Sex and drug education are provided as appropriate throughout the school, with a special emphasis in Year 5 as part of the science and health education programmes of work. The work is well supported by the school nursing service. All classes have timetabled sessions for personal and social

education, and activities such as circle time³ and child of the week, where one pupil a week has good things written about him or her, are well organised and develop the pupils' awareness of one another.

40. The curricular opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Through well-organised and efficiently planned withdrawal group or individual sessions with the specialist teacher or trained classroom assistants, pupils have regular opportunities to develop their skills in literacy and, to a lesser extent, numeracy. This enables them to participate more fully in the whole curriculum offered to all pupils in the school. Assessment is thorough, and the progress which pupils make in withdrawal sessions is well documented and shared with class teachers by the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the specialist teacher. The needs of pupils with a statement of special educational needs are well met, and additional staff appointed to support such pupils show both dedication and care.
41. The school has maintained good links with the community since the last inspection, and these help to enliven the curriculum for pupils and contribute to their personal development. A good variety of visits and visitors opens up new experiences to the pupils. During the week of the inspection, for example, the Reception class children had a visit from a local grandfather, as well as a blind person and his guide dog, whilst pupils in Year 7 listened to a talk by the deputy headteacher of a local school for hearing-impaired pupils.
42. Relationships with partner institutions are very good. The association, or 'cluster', of more than a dozen pre-school groups, recently established by the Reception staff, is a particular strength. This seeks to promote a common approach amongst the different groups and helps the children to settle quickly and successfully when they start in the Reception class. There are also productive links with the nearby high school, whose staff and facilities help provide the full curriculum for pupils in Year 7, and with the university and tertiary college. Students and staff from these institutions work in the school, and this is of benefit to all those involved.
43. The overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has been maintained since the previous inspection. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual development. Religious education gives pupils an insight into the values and beliefs of several religions, including Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity. Pupils' spiritual development is nurtured through whole-school and class assemblies when pupils have the opportunity to reflect on social and moral issues and are able to relate the message of the story to their own experiences. Pupils enjoy assemblies and listen carefully to the message; they also enjoy the singing, which is of a good standard. Pupils' spiritual development is also supported through the weekly hymn practices, with opportunities to discuss and understand the meaning of the text. Pupils visit local churches, and visitors from different religions contribute to pupils' spiritual awareness. There are also occasions for reflection in other areas of the curriculum, such as art and science.
44. The provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. The good relationships that exist and the good example set by all who work in the school support pupils' moral development. Pupils are taught from an early age about sharing, justice and truth. These values are reinforced during circle times, when pupils explore issues such as 'taking responsibility' for their own behaviour. The school's aims for moral development and the code of behaviour clearly displayed in classrooms are consistently applied throughout the school. Older pupils act as trained mediators when there are disputes with other pupils and, in so doing, they develop their understanding of right and wrong. Visitors to the school, such as a blind person

³ Circle time is an activity where pupils are able to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

with his guide dog and a speaker from a children's hospice, help pupils to develop an understanding of how people cope with disability,

45. The school provides good opportunities for the pupils' social development. The youngest children in the school are encouraged to play co-operatively and are taught to use resources sensibly. Older pupils are given responsibilities such as helping at dinner-time and escorting visitors around the school. There is no formal school council for pupils to discuss issues which concern them. There are, however, opportunities during circle time to raise issues that are then referred to the headteacher for action. The range of extra-curricular activities gives pupils the opportunity to mix with other pupils outside their own class. A visit France gives the older pupils valuable opportunities to learn new skills in a different setting. The pupils' social awareness is enhanced through regular involvement in fund-raising activities for a number of national and local charities. Teachers routinely use pair- and group-work as effective teaching strategies which encourage pupils to work well together and share ideas.
46. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. There are opportunities within the English curriculum, the art curriculum and the school's topic programme for pupils to learn about the diversity and richness of their own and other cultures. The planned programme includes visits from an artist from the local art gallery, performers and authors from a range of cultures, such as an African dance and drumming group and a visit from a Buddhist monk. The curriculum also includes festivals and celebrations from many other cultures. In religious education, pupils learn about the traditions and beliefs of the major world religions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school has been successful in maintaining good standards of pastoral care for its pupils since the time of the last inspection. Good policies underpin well-organised procedures, and the school day runs smoothly as a result. The new arrangements for lunchtime are a good example of the way in which the school gives careful consideration to the welfare of its pupils. These arrangements work well and enable the pupils to eat and play in a much calmer and safer environment than was the case when all pupils had their lunch break at the same time. The school's high standards of care begin before the children actually start, with the very good induction programme in the Reception classes, helping the children and their parents to get accustomed to school routines. The school makes very good use of the support services available, and this is evident in the Reception classes, where the outreach worker runs talks for parents on supporting their children and their learning. Throughout the school, there is a positive ethos which makes pupils feel confident and valued.
48. The school manages health and safety well, despite the considerable difficulties imposed by the school's site. A very good policy makes responsibilities and the expected standards clear, and senior staff and governors are very active in monitoring concerns around the school. They are aware of maintenance matters such as the condition of carpets in many classrooms and the unsecured wires in the Year 7 computer area. The health and safety issues arising from the previous inspection, relating to the playgrounds and the pond, have been appropriately addressed. The school is well cleaned. Arrangements for administering first aid are good, and pupils are well tended if they are sick or injured.
49. The school's procedures for child protection are good. The headteacher is the person responsible for this, and she ensures that the local guidelines are followed. Staff receive regular training, and pupils are taught about keeping safe through their personal, social and health education lessons. The school liaises very well with the school nurse, and this is of particular benefit in child protection cases.
50. Pupils' attendance is monitored well, and the school works hard to improve the level of attendance. Office staff make good use of information and communication technology to

check rates of absence, and there is good communication between teachers, office staff and senior staff when dealing with any repeated absence or its patterns. The school is especially active in its efforts to discourage term-time holidays, which are an increasing disruption to the education of many children.

51. The school promotes discipline and manages behaviour well. A good, sensible policy, based on the principles of safety and respect, is put into practice consistently by staff. As a result, pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them, and most respond accordingly. Those pupils who have difficulties controlling their behaviour are handled sensitively and are well supported by the staff. Any instances of bullying or other oppressive behaviour are dealt with systematically and firmly by the school.
52. The quality of support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Staff are alert to the needs of pupils with particular emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties and take swift action to support such pupils. There are good links with a range of support agencies such as the educational psychologists, the local paediatric clinic, a behaviour support team and speech and language therapists. Targets in individual education plans are regularly reviewed in the light of regular ongoing assessments, and parents are regularly informed of the progress which their children make. Pupils are aware of their own learning targets, and this contributes to their good progress. The school has been selected to take part in the pilot year of an early intervention scheme to target the learning needs of the youngest pupils, as the school has the benefit of a trained Reading Recovery teacher on the staff.
53. Procedures for the assessment of children in the Foundation Stage are very good. The teachers record children's successes and needs on a daily basis, and these records are shared with all Reception staff where appropriate. Identification of special needs is undertaken in the early stages, and effective provision is made for special support. Regardless of attainment, background or gender, all children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Parents receive verbal feedback as required on a regular basis. Annual reports to parents are full, frank hand-written accounts of children's capabilities in all areas of the curriculum and include comments on personal, social and emotional development where appropriate.
54. The school has good policies and procedures for assessment and record keeping in the rest of the school. Class teachers use their assessments to help them to plan appropriately for new learning tasks and take into account pupils with special needs. However, higher-attaining pupils are not always identified through assessment. In religious education, the school has adopted good locally agreed systems, and in art and design and technology there are appropriate systems to retain pupils' work in folders as a record of their progress. Teachers pay due regard to the analysis of National Curriculum assessment data to modify their practice. Analysis of other annual assessments in English and mathematics has helped the school to refocus some of its practice and provide teaching which is more appropriate to the pupils' needs. Target setting is well established and is helping pupils to become aware of what they need to do to improve their work. Some subject co-ordinators use portfolios of pupils' past work, which are updated from time to time, to moderate their assessments and plan for improvement. There is disparity across the school in the quality and detail of teachers' marking, which ranges from a simple tick or, in the case of best practice, an encouraging sentence, diagram or commentary, giving a judgement with advice for improvement. Such good practice is, however, rare.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The school has continued to build positive relationships with its parent community since the time of the last inspection. Many parents are very pleased with the school, especially the approachability of the staff and the high expectations they have for their children. Parents

rightly believe that the teaching in the school is good and that their children are achieving well. They also feel that their children are happy at school, and that the school is helping them to become mature individuals. The findings of the inspection endorse these positive views of the school. Some parents also have some criticisms of the school. Nearly half of those replying to the parents' questionnaire, for example, felt that the school's range of extra-curricular activities is inadequate. This is not fully justified. The school has an average number and variety of activities, although there is little available for younger pupils. Some parents too were unhappy about homework, information on their children's progress, the school's efforts to work closely with parents and the way the school is led and managed. The evidence of the inspection does not support these views. Reports on children's progress have improved since the last inspection, for example, and teachers are readily accessible to parents at the beginning and end of each day. The school encourages parents to become involved in its work, for example through the Friends' Association, or as classroom helpers.

56. The school has sound links with its parent community as a whole. They are especially strong in the Reception classes, where parents are welcomed in every morning to read with their children and chat to staff. Throughout the school, there is a good system of meetings for parents, which enables them to find out about the curriculum their children will be covering and how to support it. Information for parents is good. In particular, reports to parents on their children's progress now contain the necessary data on information and communication technology and so meet requirements. They are detailed and specific and contain clear targets for improvement. They do not, however, indicate the standards the children have attained, so parents do not know exactly how well they are doing for their age. Parents are given good opportunities to become involved in their children's target-setting process at termly parents' evenings. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not contain all the information required by law. The prospectus is well presented and easy to use for reference, but the governors' report is not very imaginative or readable. In contrast, the booklet for children on starting school is very good, with straightforward text and eye-catching photographs aimed at interesting and motivating the children.
57. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the specialist teacher have established and maintain good links with parents. Communication is good, and arrangements for review meetings are well organised. Parents of children with special educational needs are regularly invited into school to discuss their children's progress and are kept well informed of the progress which their children are making towards the targets in their individual education plans.
58. Many parents make a sound contribution to the work of the school and to their children's learning. They take an active interest in their children's education, ensuring that homework is completed and hearing their children read at home. Some have the time to help in class or through the Friends of Redhills School, and this provides the staff with practical help and extra resources. The playground equipment recently provided by the parents' association, for example, has added to the success of the new lunchtime arrangements. Other parents show less interest in their children's learning and this lack of support has a negative impact on the children's achievement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The school benefits from good leadership and has maintained the good features noted during the last inspection. The headteacher has provided strong leadership for many years and has done much to create a good working ethos and positive relationships amongst staff and pupils. Over the years, the staff have come to work together more effectively as a team. The headteacher is firm in her leadership and provides a clear vision of the way she would like to see the school develop. She works well with the deputy headteacher, and there are effective arrangements for involving other senior members of staff in day-to-day decisions, as well as

the major ones made by the management. Senior staff have taken a greater role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This has led to specific action which has helped to raise standards.

60. The school's response to national initiatives to improve literacy and numeracy is proving to be effective. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science at both key stages and are now significantly higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. The overall quality of the teaching has improved and is now much more consistent across the school than it was. The school responded effectively to the previous key issues, although more work still needs to be done in some of the areas which were previously identified. The school is now much more consistent in its approach, both to what is taught and to the standards expected of teachers. Curricular planning has improved, and co-ordinators have provided staff with much clearer guidance from which to plan their lessons. The school has improved the way it assesses pupils' work in English and mathematics and now has a clearer picture of pupils' progress through the school. Some aspects of the marking of pupils' books have improved considerably and, in some classes, there are examples of very good practice. The quality of marking is, however, inconsistent and there are weaknesses in the marking of pupils' written work in subjects other than English.
61. Management tasks are delegated appropriately, and subject co-ordinators have taken greater responsibility for managing their subjects. However, they now need to extend this role by ensuring that they lead their subjects by providing staff with clear direction and ensuring that opportunities are provided for staff to develop their expertise. Mechanisms exist for all subject co-ordinators to monitor what happens within the classroom, but either the system is not understood or co-ordinators have been reluctant to carry out their monitoring roles. Firmer expectations and clearer guidance in this direction from the headteacher and governors would be helpful. The school's main energies have been directed towards its main priorities of English and mathematics, and more work now needs to be done to evaluate what is happening in other areas of the curriculum and to use the findings to improve the quality of teaching and ensure that pupils are learning as effectively as possible. The co-operation and positive attitudes of most staff show that there is good capacity for further improvement in this direction.
62. The school development plan has proved to be a useful tool in helping to move the school forward. It identifies appropriate areas for development. The plans for a major building project to improve the school's facilities have consumed much of the leadership team's energies in recent months. The new facilities should go a long way to remedy the inadequacies of the current accommodation.
63. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They have a good understanding of the school and its priorities for development. Many governors give a great deal of support, time and help to the school in various practical ways. They are very hard working and committed to improving standards. Some offer practical support in classrooms or at lunchtimes and make a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school. This enables them to gain useful first-hand insights into developments and issues. They take a sensitive interest in the welfare of teachers and pupils and have a very good working knowledge of the school's day-to-day activities and a clear understanding of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. They have been actively involved in drawing up plans for the development of the school site.
64. The school's financial planning is good, with careful attention given to linking the development plan to budget costs. The governors' finance committee, in consultation with the headteacher, sets a balanced budget based on the school's priorities. The day-to-day management of finances is good. The school's finance officer has good procedures, providing the headteacher and the governors with up-to-date information to enable regular monitoring of the

budget. Subject co-ordinators are consulted about their budgets and are provided with regular statements of expenditure.

65. Money obtained through the standards fund is used effectively to target and support teachers' professional development. The school has taken appropriate action on all the recommendations of the recent auditor's report. The budget allocated to support pupils with special educational needs is targeted effectively. The governing body makes comparisons with other similar schools and reviews building and maintenance contracts, inviting competitive quotations when required. Costs of educating pupils at this school are close to the national average. Given the good quality of education provided, the school provides good value for money.
66. The leadership provided for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator and specialist teacher manage this provision in an effective and efficient way, through good communication and systematic assessment procedures. The school's good leadership and management structures enable the co-ordinator to be released for a half day each week in order to maintain contacts with parents and other agencies involved in supporting pupils with special educational needs. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is very well informed and maintains frequent contact with the school. The school's report to the governors is comprehensive. However, the governors' report to parents is too scant and requires expansion under a separate heading.
67. The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers who are committed and hardworking. As a team, they have the skills and a wide base of experience to meet the needs of the ages and abilities of pupils, including children in the Foundation Stage. Teachers are suitably deployed, enabling the curriculum to be taught effectively, and the majority have a subject management role, which is matched well to either their personal interests or their subject expertise. Classroom assistants provide good levels of support, are well briefed and appropriately deployed. They make a valuable contribution to the work of the school, and pupils benefit from their support.
68. The arrangements for the professional development of teachers are good, well managed and documented. Newly qualified and recently appointed staff are allocated mentors and are supported through an effective induction programme. The appraisal cycle and review process are established and well accepted by staff. Priorities are suitably matched to the school development plan. All staff are made to feel valued and are encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school, including support staff who are invited to attend training days.
69. Individual classroom accommodation is good. It is well maintained and contributes to the welcoming ethos. However, there are some notable constraints on the effective delivery of the whole curriculum because of the limitations of the school site and the layout of the buildings and this is unsatisfactory. The school encompasses four key stages of pupils' development, but it lacks some of the necessary specialist teaching accommodation for performing arts, such as drama, music and dance, and for science and technology, including food technology. Facilities for physical education are poor. The school has no integral facilities for outdoor games and sports, and pupils have a long walk to get to a sports field which the school hires for games lessons. Weather conditions frequently cause games lessons to be cancelled. The hall is inadequate to cope with all of the needs of the school. Cancelled games lessons can rarely be transferred to the hall, because it is in use for other classes. Tighter timetabling of the hall, however, would make it possible to cover more of these cancelled lessons.
70. Accommodation inside the Reception classes is good and supports the children's learning effectively. Outdoor play areas are unsuitable for the range of play activities required and make it difficult for the staff to cater effectively for all aspects of the children's physical development. Opportunities for aspects of social and physical development as well as

creative role-play are lost because of inappropriate surfaces and spaces. The children do not have opportunities to play with large ride-on toys, or use climbing and balancing apparatus and role-play equipment such as prams and pushchairs.

71. Dining arrangements restrict access to the school library and resources area for two hours during the middle of the day. Although the school has a computer suite, it is located in an enclosed area which lacks adequate ventilation, thus affecting pupils' ability to concentrate. A major building project is shortly to be started. When the project is finished, some, but not all, of the present deficiencies will be rectified.
72. Suitable resources to support learning needs are available for all curriculum subjects and areas. Appropriate supplies of good quality specialist materials are monitored effectively by subject co-ordinators either in centrally held, clearly labelled storage areas or in classrooms. There is appropriate access for teachers and pupils. The school's library is appropriately stocked to support all areas of learning and is regularly reviewed to match the demands of the curriculum. Resources are generally well maintained and used wisely to support learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

- Raise standards of attainment in information and communication technology. *[paragraphs 6, 11, 134-137]* In particular, attention should be given to:
 - Improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for information and communication technology and their familiarisation with appropriate software; *[paragraphs 24, 136]*
 - Ensuring that there is effective planning for the subject throughout the school and that all aspects of the curriculum are covered; *[paragraphs 134-137]*
 - Ensuring that all pupils have sufficient access to the subject and that sufficient time is devoted to the teaching of information and communication technology skills; *[paragraph 134]*
 - Making greater use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning in all subjects of the curriculum. *[paragraphs 6, 11, 89, 102, 110, 117, 127, 132, 136, 162]*
- Provide more effective leadership in each area of the curriculum. *[paragraphs 61, 97, 111, 123, 128, 133, 154]* Particular attention should be given to the role of subject co-ordinators in:
 - Monitoring, evaluating and developing the quality of teaching within their subject area;
 - Ensuring that there is consistency across the school in monitoring the quality of pupils' work and the range of opportunities offered to them;
 - Producing appropriate plans for developing and improving their subject areas.
- Improve the range of opportunities for developing pupils' English skills through other subjects. Particular attention should be given to:
 - Making fuller use of opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills when producing work for other subjects; *[paragraphs 5, 26, 36, 94, 127, 133]*
 - Ensuring that the marking of pupils' work in every subject also focuses on the accuracy, range and use of English. *[paragraphs 24, 26, 30, 54, 96]*
- Provide a more balanced curriculum. *[paragraphs 36, 123, 127, 133, 134]* Particular attention should be given to:
 - More efficient timetabling to ensure that maximum use is made of the time available each day;
 - Reducing the amount of time dedicated to different aspects of English, but placing greater emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy skills through other subjects;
 - The importance of foundation subjects within the whole-school curriculum.

74. In addition to the key issues for improvement, the school should consider the following areas for improvement:

- The challenge for more able pupils; *[paragraphs 9, 17, 27, 54, 92, 95, 106, 116, 120, 132]*
- The development of independent study skills; *[paragraphs 21, 89, 132]*
- Simplification of teachers' planning procedures; *[paragraphs 27]*
- More efficient use of the school hall; *[paragraphs 69, 155]*
- The external provision for children in the Foundation Stage; *[paragraphs 70, 82]*
- The way French is timetabled; *[paragraphs 141, 143]*
- Alternative arrangements for physical education when outdoor lessons have to be cancelled because of adverse weather conditions. *[paragraphs 152]*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	104
Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils [In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	17	43	35	3	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	443
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	105

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	118

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	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
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	30	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	24	23
	Girls	25	25	26
	Total	47	49	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (85)	82 (88)	82 (90)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	26	25
	Girls	24	26	23
	Total	46	52	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (85)	87 (85)	80 (88)
	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	27	31	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	16	22
	Girls	20	16	21
	Total	35	32	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (52)	55 (63)	74 (57)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	22
	Girls	21	17	24
	Total	38	34	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (54)	60 (70)	81 (72)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	391
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6
Average class size	27.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	231

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	4	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
	£
Total income	728,952
Total expenditure	719,579
Expenditure per pupil	1,610
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,150
Balance carried forward to next year	40,523

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	420
Number of questionnaires returned	125

Percentage of responses in each category⁴

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	49	46	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school	43	53	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good	33	52	9	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	32	55	10	0	3
The teaching is good	50	46	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	40	46	13	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	51	41	3	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	51	47	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents	33	46	14	4	2
The school is well led and managed	39	44	10	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	43	49	3	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	20	22	25	19	15

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents raised other concerns. These included the feelings that:

- The large number of pupils with special educational needs and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties cause problems for other pupils;
- Not enough time is provided for pupils to eat their lunch;
- The school's facilities for sports and physical education are inadequate.

⁴ Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

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

Personal, social and emotional development

75. The teachers in the Reception classes are highly skilled, and the quality of teaching to help pupils develop personally, socially and emotionally is consistently very good. The teachers plan detailed and systematic schemes of work which ensure that children develop appropriate skills of social interaction. Children begin to share, take turns and give each other a sympathetic hearing. They learn to display appropriate forms of behaviour to suit different occasions. The teachers ensure that children develop a positive attitude to themselves and to learning by encouraging them to build upon their natural inclinations to play and explore, both individually and in pairs or groups. Children encounter a rich and varied programme of structured activities, which integrate all aspects of learning in a familiar play setting. To sustain their interest and understanding of shape when children's mathematical learning is linked to ideas and beliefs in their time for religious education, the teachers make children use gesture and singing to describe the inclusiveness of God's love. They memorise the words of 'God's love is like a circle' and sing with understanding and joy. Pupils in the Reception classes make very good progress and are set to reach the Early Learning Goals for personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Communication, language and literacy

76. When they enter the school, a significant number of children have had very limited literacy experiences, and many are still consolidating their use of spoken English and their expressive language. During the Foundation Stage, children make very good progress in developing their language, communication and emerging literacy skills as a result of the very good teaching and thorough assessment and monitoring procedures. However, despite this very good progress, and because of the short amount of time they spend in the Reception classes, many children are still at an early stage in developing their literacy skills by the end of the Foundation Stage, and overall attainment is below national expectations for this stage.

77. The high quality of attention and care commented on in the previous report remains a significant strength. The teaching remains of a consistently good quality and many lessons are very good. Children have rich opportunities to talk about, and listen to, a wide range of stories, songs and rhymes. They learn through well-planned play activities which enhance their knowledge and understanding of the sounds and patterns in spoken and written language, for example whilst making a class book of rhyming sentences, such as, "I'll have a bees / cheese / trees sandwich please". Storytelling sessions focus well on discussion of the author, the directionality of print, overall content and the likely story-line of the text, all of which establishes good early reading habits. Well-organised early book-making activities help children to see the connection between written and spoken language. Visiting adults extend the children's opportunities to play with language through enjoyable language games in which they engage with glee and evident delight.

78. The school has established very good links with the many professional agencies involved in the care of young children and, as a result of this good communication, provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Thorough and detailed record keeping ensures that pupils' specific learning needs are carefully identified and progress is appropriately monitored.

Mathematical development

79. The standards of mathematical development achieved by the end of the Foundation Stage are below average. However, this masks the fact that children make very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals during their short time in the Reception classes. Although a good number of children achieve the Early Learning Goals, many children enter the school with poor numeracy skills. The quality of the teaching in this area of learning is very good, and the teachers and support staff are skilled in making good use of every opportunity to extend pupils' understanding of number and their mathematical vocabulary. The teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the teaching of basic skills, and they encourage the children to talk about what they are doing to develop concepts of number and one-to-one correspondence. Children co-operate well with their teachers and with one another when doing joint work such as building three-dimensional shapes from construction kits and then playing a game with the teacher about naming the shapes. The teachers' records of what children can do and have learned are very good and lead to helping children achieve well by careful planning of the next stage of learning. The very good quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Pupils in the Foundation Stage make very good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. A good number of children achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning by the end of the key stage, although the attainment of a significant number of children and the overall standards are below average. The quality of the teaching is very good. The teachers understand the needs of young children and plan their activities accordingly. The assistant staff also make a very good contribution to the children's learning, offering them a very good degree of support, care and help in a sensitive manner. The classroom is organised to support children making their own choices in order to encourage their independence. The children are offered a wide variety of stimulating activities to widen their horizons and extend their understanding of scientific matters. From this early age, they are introduced to the language of making predictions and offered interesting things to describe and compare. Through their natural curiosity, this builds up their early observational and investigative skills. The children receive a good introduction to a variety of computer software to support their learning. Through the use of various programs, they are beginning to sort, match and order patterns. This acts as a good introduction to their early understanding of mathematics.

Creative development

81. The children's ability to work creatively is well below average when they enter the school. However, they make very good progress and are set to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. The quality of the teaching in this area of learning is very good. The children enjoy a wide range of carefully structured activities which encourage them to explore the use of tools and materials such as dough, paint, clay and crayons. They learn to express their ideas and feelings in ways which help them to overcome reticence and develop a wider communicative expertise with adults and their peers. Imaginative use of resources helps to stimulate children's sensory exploration and understanding. For example, in one activity the children used orange-scented dough which prompted new vocabulary and conversation. Good opportunities are provided for the children to develop musical skills. They listen to music and talk about its effect. They use a suitable range of musical instruments and engage frequently in singing activities

Physical development

82. Of all their skills on entry to the school, the pupils' physical skills are the most advanced, although in many respects they are still below average. Through a varied range of activities, they make good progress in their physical development in the Reception classes and most children achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The quality of the teaching is good. Lessons are managed and planned well. In physical education lessons, the teachers give clear instructions and make clear their high expectations of behaviour. The children respond very positively to these lessons, for example, receiving warm-up activities with enjoyment and enthusiasm. The teachers stress the importance of safety and the dangers that exist in the hall. The children are developing an awareness of space around themselves and others. Although most children move with confidence and safety, they have not yet developed the ability to move with imagination. When skipping and hopping some children co-ordinate their movements well, whilst others are still unable to do so. A wide range of activities is provided within the classroom to help children develop their fine motor skills. As a result, many children are able to handle scissors and glue brushes skilfully and carefully, and some can colour within boundaries. Opportunities for the more informal development of pupils' physical co-ordination are restricted by the poor outdoor facilities for children in the Foundation Stage. There is no secure outdoor play area for the children, and some of the larger apparatus for physical activities is lacking. These shortcomings should be rectified once the school's new building project is completed.

ENGLISH

83. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national average, although they were broadly in line with the average for similar schools. Seventy-eight per cent of the pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 2 in reading, and 82 per cent achieved Level 2 in writing. One-fifth of the pupils reached the higher Level 3 in reading, but only two per cent achieved this higher level in writing. Despite a dip in standards last year, overall standards reflect an improving trend over the past four years.
84. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were below the national average, although they were broadly in line with the average for similar schools. Sixty per cent of the pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 4 and twelve per cent of the pupils achieved the higher Level 5. Despite a dip in standards last year, there has been a gradual improvement in the school's results over the last four years. The school exceeded its targets this year and has set appropriate targets for the next year and beyond.
85. The performance of the majority of pupils in Year 7 is below average overall, although higher-attaining pupils achieve standards above the nationally expected level in both reading and writing.
86. The present inspection findings are that overall standards have improved since the time of the previous inspection, when standards were well below the national average at age seven, and very few pupils, if any, achieved the higher Level 5 by the age of eleven. Although standards in reading and writing are below average by the ages of seven and eleven, this nevertheless represents good progress, considering the much lower than average entry levels of a significant number of pupils and the above average number of pupils with special educational needs in the school. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully introduced into the school and provides a consistent approach to the teaching of language and literacy. The school's present setting arrangements for English, together with the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, help to promote a positive learning environment in which all pupils make good progress. The curriculum for pupils in Year 7 appropriately incorporates the draft framework for this stage into modules agreed by the Exeter Academic Council.

87. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their personal targets owing to the very good specialist teaching and good support from well-trained classroom assistants. This includes an additional literacy support programme for lower-achieving pupils from Years 2 to 7 as well as structured reading support and handwriting support programmes. The school also uses the specialist teacher's skills to provide the reading recovery scheme for four pupils in Year 2 throughout the year. Detailed individual assessments, systematic record keeping and regular joint monitoring of pupils' progress are a feature of the very good support provided for pupils with special educational needs.
88. Pupils develop their skills in speaking and listening to a standard which is in line with national expectations by the ages of seven and eleven, with some pupils in Year 7 starting to listen to and discuss complex ideas with one another. For example, pupils in Year 2 displayed confidence and empathy as they talked and listened during plenary sessions discussing work linked to the story 'This is the bear and the scary night'. Pupils in Year 6 engaged in lively paired discussion at the start of a lesson using the illustrations from a mystery text, 'Hook'. A group of more able pupils in Year 7 discussed the characters encountered in group reading texts, such as 'The Day Dreamer' by Ian MacEwan, with thoughtful insight and maturity.
89. Progress in reading is good, and many parents make a valuable contribution when they regularly share reading books with their children at home. Some parents, however, do little to encourage their children to read. Pupils are given many opportunities to read at school and have access to a good range of well-chosen texts. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build on the very good language and literacy experiences which they have in the Reception classes and increase the range of strategies they use to read. All pupils are encouraged to build up their knowledge of basic words which they recognise by sight, and they learn to use their knowledge of letter sounds as well as picture and context clues to attempt unknown words. They also learn to read even the most elementary texts with expression. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 express clear views on their favourite authors such as Jacqueline Wilson, C S Lewis and J K Rowling, showing interest in the main characters and plots of stories, and, to a lesser extent, poetry. They know how to use factual books, such as the 'History of the Roman Empire' to find out about life in the past, and they know how to use a dictionary and thesaurus. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 7 are able to discuss group texts with confidence. Lower-attaining pupils in both Years 6 and 7 show a genuine interest in their reading books and read simple texts with confidence and good understanding, demonstrating a growing ability to self-correct using phonic knowledge when tackling unfamiliar words. Skills in using information and communication technology to research information independently are not yet as well developed as they might be. The library has a satisfactory range of both fiction and non-fiction books, in addition to an Internet facility. However, only limited use of the library was seen during the week of the inspection, and lunchtime arrangements make it difficult for any pupils to use the library at this time for independent study or research.
90. Pupils make good progress in writing, since many start school with very limited early experiences of literacy and need to spend considerable time in Years 1 and 2 learning both the mechanics of legible handwriting and ways of independently recording ideas in standard written English. There is a consistent approach to teaching handwriting across the school, although pupils often need to be reminded of the importance of accuracy and presentation during written tasks. For example, a significant number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 show only limited grasp of phonic knowledge when attempting to spell unknown words, and they display many inaccuracies when copying down words which teachers have scribed during whole-class shared writing. By the age of eleven, many pupils know how to write for a range of different audiences and purposes, such as letter writing, storytelling, factual accounts and poetry. Pupils in Year 7 enjoy their explorations of Shakespearean English, for example, when they write letters from Lady Macbeth and they gain from their study of Chaucer.

91. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour during literacy lessons are consistently good. Pupils concentrate well during whole-class sessions, are eager to offer ideas during discussions, and show genuine enthusiasm and interest in their tasks. Boys and girls usually work together collaboratively and share resources well. Pupils are aware of their own learning targets, which are recorded on their desks or in their books and are regularly reviewed. Pupils with special educational needs work hard to reach the regular small and achievable targets identified in their individual education plans and take pride in their achievements.
92. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is consistently good, and there are some very good lessons. Teaching is very good when lessons proceed at a lively pace, learning objectives are shared with pupils and teachers have high expectations of what pupils will achieve. In these lessons, learning is fun and pupils of all abilities have very good opportunities to share reading and writing processes together. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is consistently at least satisfactory, and many of the lessons are of good quality. Where teaching is good, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and make good use of resources to promote reading and writing development. In these lessons, teachers set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour, and good management enables teachers to focus on direct teaching, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning. In a few lessons, the planning is insufficiently detailed and the teaching lacks pace because of this. As a result, pupils do not concentrate fully on the tasks in hand. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is good, as pupils of all abilities have appropriate opportunities to develop their literacy learning. However, the most able pupils continue to require even more challenge in their reading texts and through extended writing tasks.
93. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs during lessons with the specialist teacher is very good. Her very good subject knowledge and regular assessment of pupils' capabilities result in meticulous and exemplary planning. Every opportunity to extend and develop pupils' literacy learning is seized and very high expectations of both participation and achievement result in very good progress for all pupils towards their targets. This very good progress extends into the classroom because of well-structured individual education plans and the very good communication between staff.
94. The development of literacy skills across the curriculum needs to be further promoted throughout the school by extending the range of pupils' writing. Some subject areas, such as religious education and history, already provide some opportunities for older pupils to undertake extended writing and to develop their research and referencing skills. However, coverage is inconsistent and the teachers do not make enough use of these opportunities to help pupils to improve the quality of their writing.
95. Resources for the teaching of English are chosen well and organised appropriately. Good use is made of enlarged texts in Years 1, 2 and 3 during literacy lessons. The school continues to build up the range of texts suitable for use in guided reading sessions, but needs to increase the variety of factual texts and challenging fiction texts for older and more able pupils. Although frequent use is made of overhead projectors in literacy lessons for older pupils, the lack of screens and poor lighting lead to distorted viewing on occasion, and this detracts from the quality of the learning experience for some pupils.
96. Assessment and record-keeping procedures are good. The school has a systematic approach to record keeping and assessment, and this involves teachers, classroom assistants, special needs staff and the pupils themselves making regular contributions. These good assessment procedures alert staff to pupils in need of additional learning support, and appropriate action is taken to support specific identified learning needs. A strong feature of the school is the very good communication between the specialist teacher for pupils with special educational needs and other teachers. The marking of pupils' work is, however, inconsistent.

Some teachers give pupils clear advice on what needs to be done next in order to improve a piece of work. A few teachers, however, give pupils very little guidance when marking their work. When written work is produced for other subjects, the potential for developing literacy skills is frequently lost, because teachers do not correct the pupils' use of English or indicate how they can improve their writing.

97. The subject is currently co-ordinated by two members of staff, one in the lower school and a newly appointed member of staff in the upper school. Both staff are aware of the strengths and areas in need of development within the subject, and an appropriate action plan is in place to address issues such as the continuing focus on writing development and target setting throughout the school. Although there has been some effective monitoring of the teaching of the subject in the past, there is a need to establish planned release time in order for co-ordinators to monitor the progression of skills across the school with greater regularity.

MATHEMATICS

98. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national average. When compared with similar schools, however, the results were average. Most pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 2. Results have fluctuated over the last four years, but the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is helping the school to raise standards, which are now better than they were at the time of the last inspection.
99. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum assessment tests at Key Stage 2 were also below the national average, but were average when compared with similar schools. Just over half of the pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 4 and 14 per cent achieved the higher Level 5. The results have improved steadily over the last four years, more or less in step with the national trend, and standards are now better than at the time of the last inspection. The school has set appropriate targets in the past, although it narrowly failed to achieve the most recent target. Future targets have been increased to provide a suitable challenge for the future.
100. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy successfully, and this is helping to raise standards across the school, especially for pupils in Key Stage 1, where standards have risen significantly as a result of pupils being introduced to the more effective methods of learning early in their school career. Standards are still below average by the end of Key Stage 1, although the pupils are making good progress and developing greater confidence in handling numbers and performing mental calculations. Progress at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, although, despite the continual improvement over the last four years, standards are below average by the end of Key Stage 2 and by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 7.
101. At Key Stage 1, progress is most notable in the acquisition of numeracy skills. Pupils are confident with their number bonds, recalling addition and subtraction facts up to 20. Higher-attaining pupils use a range of approaches when solving problems and are able to talk about the methods they use. In all classes, pupils use correct mathematical language. At Key Stage 2, they are not quite as secure in carrying out mental calculations, because less emphasis has been given to this aspect of their work in the past. For example, most pupils are unsure of quick mental strategies to subtract numbers from a three-digit number. However, their skills are improving. Standards reached by pupils in Key Stage 3 are below the expected level, but they tackle an appropriate range of tasks with a reasonable degree of accuracy.
102. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and use questioning effectively to extend pupils' understanding. Lessons are well planned, along the lines suggested in the National Numeracy Strategy, and include clear learning objectives, although

these are not always communicated to pupils. The school groups pupils by ability for mathematics, thus reducing the range of attainment in any one class. This helps teachers to target the work more specifically to pupils' needs, and this is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. Particularly good features of the teaching observed include good class control and the brisk pace at which lessons are conducted. Where these features are present, the pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. They behave well and are eager to answer questions, respect each other's attempts at answering and get on well with their tasks. In group-work, pupils co-operate well with each other. Teachers work well with support staff to help pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Daily ongoing assessment is unsatisfactory, however, as pupils' work is unmarked in some classes, and little feedback is given to pupils through the marking on how they can improve their work. Appropriate tasks are given to pupils to complete at home, and these help pupils to consolidate their understanding of mathematics. Numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily in other curriculum areas, although there is very little use of information and communication technology to support mathematics.

103. The mathematics co-ordinator has provided effective leadership in introducing the National Numeracy Strategy and has been well supported by the headteacher and local education authority's numeracy consultant. The school uses tests to check on pupils' progress, and the results of these are analysed and help the target-setting process. There is some monitoring of the quality of planning, which results in clearer and more focused activities to support pupils' learning. Resources are satisfactory, well organised and readily accessible.

SCIENCE

104. Teachers' assessments in science at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 were well below average in relation to the national picture, but they were average when compared to similar schools. Eight out of ten pupils achieved Level 2 or above, compared with nine out of ten nationally. Current standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below average, but limited literacy skills restrict pupils' capacity to record their scientific enquiry and findings. Over the past four years, standards have improved steadily, but they still remain below average.
105. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 were below the national average, but average compared with those of similar schools. The results have improved steadily during the past four years. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 4 and above was 74 per cent, and 19 per cent achieved the higher Level 5. Inspection findings indicate that pupils are now achieving average standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 7 achieve standards which are appropriate for their age.
106. Standards have improved steadily since the previous inspection. Pupils of all levels of attainment, especially those with special educational needs, are making good progress in lessons at both key stages and in Year 7. However, the more able pupils are not always given work that challenges them adequately. Work samples from pupils of the full range of attainment in each year group bear out the judgement that pupils' progress, as a result of the good teaching they receive, has been good overall. At Key Stage 2, the boys' attainment is slightly better than that of the girls.
107. Pupils at Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Their eagerness to learn and the provision by the teachers of interesting activities ensure that the quality of learning is good. Pupils in Year 1, for example, were learning about electrical appliances, the dangers of electricity and how to make a circuit in order to light a torch bulb. Working in pairs, they discovered for themselves how to connect the wires and saw which part of the bulb actually lit up. They were very excited by their discoveries and could demonstrate making and breaking a circuit by holding hands and making a 'human' circuit. Some were able to draw a simple circuit and describe what is necessary to make the circuit

work. Pupils work well together, sharing their findings and the resources. Pupils in Year 2 made good progress in their understanding of pushing and pulling forces. They could describe the effects of different forces on different materials such as playdough, an elastic band and plasticine, and knew that some substances return to their original shape after applying a force. They could describe how forces affect the speeding up and slowing down of familiar objects such as a bicycle. Teachers ensure pupils learn to make predictions, and they use such practical activities to introduce important scientific language. The coverage of activities in pupils' workbooks is satisfactory and includes a number of scientific enquiries where they make scientific predictions, such as the effects of heat on dough, pasta and egg, or classify objects according to their properties such as magnetic and non-magnetic objects. The pupils make good progress in understanding how to use diagrams and tables to set out information.

108. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of science. Work samples in Years 3 and 4 show that pupils are beginning to acquire a clearer appreciation of the investigative process. Pupils in Year 3 were finding out how different materials varied in how waterproof they were, and in Year 4 how to test for the strongest magnet. They were aware of the necessity of keeping the test fair and were beginning to show clearer understanding about keeping certain conditions the same whilst changing only one during their experiment. Pupils are interested and can concentrate for long periods whilst involved in their investigations. Their ability to work together sensibly, not only in their sharing of materials but in their growing ability to talk about and share their findings, helps them to learn. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 continue to make good progress. Their science work includes illustrations that are more clearly labelled and graphs which show patterns in their measurements. The Year 6 classes were carrying out investigations into gravity and forces. These included making predictions and taking accurate measurements using a Newton meter. They showed a satisfactory understanding of what forces were acting on the weight, but had difficulties in explaining why an object should weigh less in water than in air.
109. Pupils in Year 7 continue to make good progress. They are developing good working habits, and homework is a regular weekly feature. They take care over the way they present their work and their workbooks are generally tidily laid out. They are more confident in the use of symbolic diagrams in, for example, electrical circuits and have improved their ability to interpret graphs. Pupils follow a commercial scheme and undertake a balanced curriculum which includes regular investigations. They build on previously learned skills successfully, and this enables them to undertake scientific enquiries with increased rigour. They are introduced to a wider scientific vocabulary such as 'mortar', 'pestle' and 'pipette' in their studies of acids and alkalis.
110. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and explain with care what they want their pupils to do. They ensure that they introduce the correct scientific vocabulary at appropriate times to help develop scientific understanding and impart language skills to their pupils. Opportunities to develop both literacy and numeracy skills within science lessons are satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2 and good in Year 7. The structure of their lessons often includes a discussion session at the end, where learning can be consolidated and successes shared. Pupils' enthusiasm is maintained in lessons that have a good pace, and this affects their learning. Teachers in Key Stage 1 often have assistants to help support activities. This favourable staffing ratio is a major factor in ensuring focused effort by pupils in their scientific enquiry. Other strengths in teaching include careful questioning, especially when pupils are at the prediction stage in an enquiry. Teachers provide good resources for investigative activities, and this allows pupils to use their time efficiently and to widen their experience by handling a variety of science equipment. However, the use of information and communication technology to support scientific enquiries is unsatisfactory. There is good use of commercial material throughout the school to support learning, and teachers have developed a good balance of worksheets and material which they have

produced themselves. The scheme of work is good and provides teachers with very clear details for planning a balanced science curriculum.

111. The co-ordination of science is satisfactory, and there has been clear improvement in the management of the subject since the previous inspection. However, the co-ordinator has not availed herself of opportunities to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school, thus limiting her ability to evaluate the effectiveness of what happens in the school. Recently, a second science co-ordinator has been allocated responsibility for Key Stage 1. This should help in the management of the subject across the school, but, in order to raise standards, regular monitoring and target setting need to be introduced. The school could make better use of its immediate environment to support learning in science and increase the quantity of resources available for regular use within classrooms such as magnifying glasses and sets of magnets.

ART AND DESIGN

112. Standards in art and design are good at Key Stage 1 and exceed national expectations. This shows good improvement since the last inspection. In Key Stages 2 and 3, standards are in line with national expectations and have been maintained since the last inspection.
113. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils express themselves well, using a variety of appropriate drawing and painting materials and techniques. They make simple contact prints and gain confidence in modelling their ideas in three dimensions using dough and clay. Pupils in Year 1 begin to develop skills in selecting and mixing powder pigments to make paint to a consistency which is appropriate to their expressive needs. For example, they know when to use impasto (thickly applied) techniques to make bold statements and when to use a more sensitive fluid style. They begin to compare their own pictures and models with the work of recognised artists selected by their teachers. A good feature of pupils' early development is the consistent use of personal sketch-books, in which they practise drawing skills, make annotated sketches and try out colour-mixing and blending exercises. Pupils collect examples of textures and patterns by making wax rubbings and record specific vocabulary with which to describe their ideas and discuss the work of others. Younger pupils make lively pictures and models of themselves and familiar themes such as home, school and the locality in order to make sense of their environment. This enables them to share ideas, knowledge and feelings more readily with their teachers than by relying solely on the spoken or written word. Pupils extend their knowledge in religious education by drawing mendhi, traditional Indian hand decoration and rangoli patterns to enrich their cultural understanding.
114. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have extended their skills in drawing and rendering to include the accurate representation of figures and objects using shadows and hatching to represent form and shadows. They analyse critically the work of artists from other times and cultures as well as more contemporary artists. They make useful comparisons between these and their own drawings, paintings and models. Pupils in Year 5 used reproductions of Paul Cézanne, Vincent Van Gogh and Pablo Picasso's work to develop and refine their critical appreciation skills. They discussed, wrote about and made accurate pastiche studies of their work to learn more about the social issues and ideas of their times. They also tried to replicate their drawing and painting techniques and used paper viewfinders to isolate details of the work in order to focus more closely on styles and techniques employed. Opportunities to combine the knowledge gained in this way with more personal work from pupils' imagination are few. Pupils work more from direct observation which develops skills of representation effectively, but more needs to be done to support their abilities to explore and express more individual ideas and feelings.
115. At Key Stage 3, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils receive specialist art teaching from outside the school. They competently make glazed ceramic models from

observation, using fruit as a starting point. They paint on fabric in the style of Monet and confidently draw figures in action from direct observation using a range of drawing pencils from 4H to 3B.

116. Boys and girls make equal progress and enjoy art lessons, especially when offered stimulating and purposeful tasks. Higher achievers are not always identified or provided with opportunities for more challenging and enjoyable projects. Pupils with special educational needs work as equals alongside their peers; this raises their self-esteem and confidence.
117. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and sound in Key Stages 2 and 3. All teachers take care to instruct pupils in the basic skills of drawing. They encourage pupils to explore line, texture, form, colour and spatial relationships through a suitable range of materials, techniques and tools. Many teachers show that they value pupils' work by giving good oral feedback during lessons, and they display pupils' work to celebrate success and achievement. This helps pupils to improve their work and build upon their best efforts. In a few cases, however, teachers pay little regard to the importance of displays, and the learning environment does not contribute to a stimulating or informative environment. Consequently, opportunities are lost for pupils' good work to be acknowledged or appreciated by others. Little use is made of computers in art lessons, either for generating imagery or for researching works of art.
118. The quality of leadership is sound, and the subject leader has a clear vision for the future improvement of the subject. Recently, time allocation has been shared with design and technology. This has restricted the more adventurous planning and lively work which ensues when teachers get together with a common purpose to plan large-scale activities such as the Millennium project. Co-ordinated by the subject leader, all teachers and pupils used different materials or techniques and selected an artist for their theme. This presented pupils with a purposeful focus, and high quality work was produced. Pupils in Year 4 made an exciting low-relief tiled panel based on the work of Mark Chagall. Plaster and scrim were used well by pupils in Year 3 in response to work by Bridget Riley and Renoir, and Georgia O'Keefe formed the basis for interesting collage work by pupils in Years 1 and 3.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119. Standards across the school are good and have improved since the previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use a good variety of materials to support their designing and making activities. They produce lively and informative annotated drawings and plans in notebooks to outline their ideas and intentions. Pupils follow a 'plan – do – evaluate' system of working, and this helps them to work in a business-like way, focusing attention and building confidence. Pupils learn to manipulate simple tools, such as scissors, staplers and rulers, correctly and safely. They use a sound range of joining techniques and materials such as masking tape, adhesives and paper clips to construct their models and products. Pupils carefully choose the best hinge mechanisms to use when designing simple interactive books with flaps to hide parts of the text. They design and make finger puppets using paper, card and fabrics effectively. Pupils learn to use a good working vocabulary of technical terms. They develop independence and confidence in their use of tools and techniques as needs arise through well-planned and structured projects.
120. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils re-design and make familiar products with increasing capability. For example, pupils in Year 3 made detailed analyses of a torch, evaluated its effectiveness and made their own, combining their scientific and designing skills. Pupils in Year 4 designed suitable packaging for fragile cargo, an egg. They designed and made alphabet books with 'pop up' mechanisms. Pupils in Year 5 used fabrics and threads to make slippers, which involved them in pattern-cutting and seam-stitching techniques. This effectively linked their knowledge of measuring and area in mathematics with practical

designing and making skills. Pupils in Year 6 work with more resistant materials. They measure, saw and join lengths of jelutong dowelling to replicate models of fairground rides, but a few lacked skill when sawing and needed more practice. They construct strong angular structures using corner reinforcements from accurately cut and joined card triangles. However, many pupils found it difficult to make them fit properly when gluing into place, because they had not been taught to score folded parts carefully. They augment hand-made models with technical lego components to make moving parts, using axles, wheels, gears and rubber bands for drive belts. Pupils enjoy practical tasks and work well together on collaborative projects in an inclusive manner. Girls and boys make similar progress. In practical subjects, high achievers are not identified by the school, and opportunities for more challenging extension work are lost. Pupils with special educational needs work as equals with their peers, take pride in their work and improve their self-esteem.

121. In Key Stage 3, pupils in Year 7 are developing sound capability. They receive specialist teaching at a nearby technical college. Work undertaken has included learning how to make explanatory working drawings to show front, end and plan views (orthographic projection) of simple three-dimensional objects. Presently, they are working well and with interest on a project which involves the use of computer-assisted design to make a themed paper clip. Pupils choose from a range of images from which to develop their design, including footballers and fish. Pupils are well motivated and eager to follow the routines outlined for generating a design.
122. The quality of teaching is good at all stages of the pupils' development. A recently adopted national scheme of work has raised teachers' awareness and helped them to develop confidence and expertise. Teachers help pupils to evaluate their own work. They give good oral feedback in lessons, and a few write encouraging comments or draw explanatory diagrams in pupils' workbooks to suggest improvements. Most teachers have appropriate expectations of their pupils and use a good range of teaching strategies.
123. Leadership in the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a good vision for development and has brought about effective improvement since the last inspection. Monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work takes place in order to assess and improve practice, but the co-ordinator has not taken opportunities to monitor teaching within the classroom in order to evaluate and update teachers' skills. The time available for teaching design and technology is shared with art and design, and has been reduced in recent years. This has important implications for the development of the whole child, not least those with special needs, who often do well in practical lessons. Pupils occasionally use food as a material, but facilities for cooking using a mobile cooker are limited by the layout of the accommodation and school site.

GEOGRAPHY

124. It was possible to observe only one geography lesson during the inspection. Therefore, judgements on pupils' attainment are based on a scrutiny of pupils' past work, discussions with pupils and teachers and the examination of photographic evidence. Pupils' achieve satisfactory standards by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 7. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
125. Pupils in Year 2 are developing satisfactory mapping skills. They talk with understanding about the area in which they live and can identify their school on the map. Using a map during a trip within the local environment, pupils recognised the main features and used a key to plot buildings and shops. When observing drawings of the seaside, they are able to recognise how the main features have changed over the years. They know the difference between the countryside and a town and show an awareness of places beyond their own locality.

126. In Year 3, mapping skills are developed further. Using an atlas, the pupils name and recognise continents and the countries of the United Kingdom. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they have a sound understanding of the main features of a river. They can draw the main features of a river from its source to the sea. When describing its journey and the environmental changes that occur, pupils use the appropriate language with understanding, such as 'meander', 'pollution' and 'river spurs'. They show satisfactory knowledge of areas beyond the United Kingdom. For example, when comparing continents, they show an understanding of the different climates, the effects these have on the population and major cities. A range of visits within the local community and beyond helps pupils to acquire further knowledge and contributes well to the development of their geographical understanding. The pupils talk about these visits with enthusiasm, describing the places visited and the activities involved with interest. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and achieve the realistic targets set for them.
127. Judged by the evidence of pupils' written work, the overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is satisfactory. The recently introduced exemplar schemes of work are helping teachers to plan their work more systematically. However, because of the reduction in recent years in the amount of time allocated to geography and the reduced emphasis on the teaching of the subject, some of the areas of study lack depth. Although work is marked on a regular basis, with comments that highlight the effort pupils have made, there are few suggestions on how pupils could improve their work. Little emphasis is given to improving the quality of pupils' writing when they produce written accounts in geography. There are few opportunities for independent research, which restricts the progress pupils can make, particularly the higher attainers. Little use is made of information and communication technology as a tool to promote personal research. Where teaching is less effective, the planning of the work lacks clear objectives, resulting in pupils getting restless and confused, and leading to slow learning.
128. Within the constraints of a reduced curriculum and time allocation, the subject has been well managed, and the co-ordinator has done much to update the documentation. The assessment of the subject is not formalised, but a portfolio of pupils' work is assisting teachers to moderate work and raise standards. The co-ordinator has not used the opportunities available to monitor teaching and share good practice.

HISTORY

129. The standards achieved by pupils in history are similar to those expected for their age at the end of both key stages and in Year 7. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress, benefiting from the extra in-class support provided.
130. At Key Stage 1, the pupils develop a sense of chronology. In their observations of old and new toys, they place them accurately in the appropriate sections. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of famous people and some events from the past. They can describe in detail what happened in the Great Fire of London. They know the significance of historical characters such as Guy Fawkes and can talk in elementary terms about Florence Nightingale's contribution to nursing. Pupils know how to find out about the past by talking to older people or by looking at books.
131. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show a satisfactory understanding of past periods and societies. Pupils in Year 4 compare ways of life in Tudor times, describing differences between rich and poor children and the games they played. By the time they reach Year 6, they have developed a secure sense of chronology and can place events that have happened in the past in chronological sequence. They are beginning to develop empathy. For example, pupils have a clear insight into what life was like during the Blitz, how the destruction of the

local environment affected the people of Exeter, and what life must have been like for evacuees and families who needed coupons to buy food and clothes. Older pupils develop an understanding of primary and secondary sources by examining evidence and drawing conclusions. In a Year 6 class, for example, pupils were given incomplete drawings of artefacts and, using the evidence at hand, interpreted the missing parts. Learning is enhanced with days devoted to history topics. On these occasions, pupils wear costumes in the period and partake in a series of role-plays to emphasise the way that people lived and acted. Pupils enjoy these sessions and talk with enthusiasm about the experience.

132. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and some of the teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, introduce topics carefully and use effective questioning to deepen pupils' historical knowledge and maintain their interest. A particular strength of the teaching is the teachers' good management of pupils, enabling lessons to move with pace in an atmosphere where pupils feel confident to ask questions, which contributes well to their learning. Teachers provide tasks that are generally matched to the lower- and average-ability pupils, but more could be done for the higher-attaining pupils with more challenging tasks and the opportunity for independent research. Information and communication technology is not included in teachers' planning and is an under-used resource.
133. Because of the emphasis on literacy and numeracy in recent years, the time allocated to the subject has been restricted and pupils have not developed a wide breadth of historical knowledge as a result. However, the co-ordinator has shown good leadership in introducing initiatives to promote pupils' interest in the subject. She has a clear vision of how to raise standards but has not yet taken opportunities to monitor pupils' progress or observe colleagues' teaching in order to share good practice and improve the quality of teaching. At present, there are no agreed procedures for assessing pupils' progress as they move through the school. The subject provides opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills, but teachers do not make the best use of these opportunities by showing pupils how to improve the quality of their writing. However, the teachers do encourage pupils to use the appropriate vocabulary and use 'skimming' techniques to highlight relevant information.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology at the end of both key stages and Year 7 are below those expected nationally. These findings represent a decline in standards since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations throughout the school. However, there has been an improvement in resources since the previous inspection through the provision of a computer suite. This serves as an excellent facility to support pupils' learning. However, the school does not yet use computers to support learning in all subjects, and pupils' progress in the development of information and communication technology capability is unsatisfactory. The school development plan has highlighted information and communication technology as an area for improvement as a result of national developments, and the school realises that it has to work more rigorously in order to raise standards to expected levels.
135. The satisfactory start pupils are offered in the Foundation Stage is not built upon. Throughout the later key stages, there are weaknesses in the quality of pupils' learning, and most pupils make insufficient progress in the acquisition of essential knowledge, skills and understanding. Classes are timetabled to use the computer suite, usually on a weekly basis, although no check is kept on the amount of time each class devotes to the subject. This access is good and enables pupils to gain in skills and understanding efficiently. For the rest of the week, computers in classrooms are not used sufficiently to support learning in other subjects or to help develop pupils' information and communication technology skills. When the suite is utilised, learning is usually good, and pupils concentrate well and collaborate with each other

to support one another's learning. For example, pupils in Year 7 were learning to mix text with graphics. The teacher had prepared files for them to load, and the lesson was very successful. Similarly, when pupils in Year 5 were using the suite for a mathematics lesson, data they had collected about themselves was used to give them an understanding of graph-plotting using information within a database. In a design and technology lesson in Year 4, a database was being used within the context of a questionnaire on sandwiches to give pupils experience of using a database and ordering information in a variety of ways.

136. In the few lessons observed in the computer suite, the teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. However, across the school and taken over time, the teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. This judgement is based on the use of classroom-based computers, scrutiny of teachers' planning, samples of pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils. There is great variation in teachers' skills and confidence. The co-ordinator has worked hard to organise software-specific training, and this has raised teachers' skills with particular programs. In order to offer the expected range of activities in this subject, the school needs to ensure pupils have access to Logo software, an improved Internet access and monitoring resources for Key Stages 2 and 3. The adopted scheme of work does not yet form a rigorous base from which teachers can plan their pupils' access to information and communication technology activities.
137. The school has a good development plan for the subject, and there is a shared commitment to raise standards. The co-ordinator's knowledge is good and has been instrumental in many of the recent initiatives for improvement. The school must embrace the national training in order to raise teachers' understanding of the place of information and communication technology within the curriculum and to develop their skills and confidence. Important decisions have to be made with respect to additional hardware and networking to ensure all pupils have an acceptable provision.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

138. In addition to providing a modern foreign language, as required, in Year 7, the school teaches French to pupils in Year 6, thus providing a learning experience which goes beyond statutory requirements. As the inspection took place very early in the school year, the pupils had had very little time in which to build up oral and aural competence, but standards observed during the inspection were generally appropriate for the time of year in both age groups.
139. Pupils in Year 6 are starting to acquire confidence in recognising numbers up to 20 in French, although they are still hesitant in speaking the numbers. They understand the words for a number of classroom objects such as 'un stylo', and 'une règle', and respond appropriately to simple questions requiring an answer 'oui' or 'non'. They do not yet have the ability to speak simple phrases in French without prompting.
140. In Year 7, the pupils recognise numbers up to 30 quickly and, generally, accurately. One class responded rapidly and with great enthusiasm when using number cards to display the number spoken by the teacher, and the other class responded equally positively when playing Bingo in French. Some pupils are confident in speaking these numbers, whilst others are more hesitant to speak in French. The pupils show a satisfactory understanding of words for parts of the body and for various items of food and drink. Using simple opening phrases such as 'j'adore', 'je déteste', they can speak simple sentences to express their like or dislike of items of food.
141. In Year 7, the pupils have a very positive and enthusiastic attitude to their French lessons. This results from the very good relationship between pupils and teacher, their enjoyment of humour and the teacher's ability to inject a sense of fun into their lessons. This produces an environment in which the pupils are eager to learn and in which they respond positively to the

activities provided by the teacher. Pupils in Year 6 did not display the same degree of enthusiasm, although they responded very positively to a noughts and crosses game played in French. However, despite a positive learning environment, the pupils' progress is hampered very significantly by the way lessons are timetabled. In Year 6, the pupils have a one-hour French lesson. In Year 7, they have a lesson of an hour and a half, followed the next day by a half-hour lesson. This timetabling prevents pupils from consolidating what they have learnt at regular intervals during the week. With the lapse of almost a week, much of what they have learnt has been forgotten by their next lesson. The lessons are also too long for the pupils to be able to sustain their concentration during the early stages of learning a foreign language and for the teachers to maintain the brisk pace which is essential to maximise the use of the time in profitable learning activities. This was particularly evident in Year 6, where pupils became somewhat restless during the middle part of the lesson after their initial oral activity, and also in Year 7 where the written tasks led to little new acquisition of language and only very slow consolidation of what had been learnt orally.

142. Until a year ago, French teaching had been undertaken by language specialists from the high school. It has not been possible for this arrangement to continue, so the work is undertaken by two teachers who do not have language qualifications but who show a keenness to teach the subject and a willingness to learn how to do so effectively. The overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory. There are some very positive features, but also some weaknesses which could be rectified quite easily with some appropriate training. Both teachers have worked hard to acquire the necessary range of vocabulary and linguistic structures for the groups they are teaching and, with a few minor exceptions, use and pronounce this language well. Their lessons are carefully planned to include a range of teaching techniques, many of which motivate the pupils and provide good methods for them to acquire an understanding of new vocabulary. However, too much emphasis is given to the passive recognition of the target language and not enough to active production. In order to develop the pupils' ability to speak French, the teachers need to build into their lessons more opportunities for pupils to speak in French, using methods such as choral repetition, quick-fire question-and-answer sessions and paired speaking activities. Pupils who find it hard to remember should be encouraged by being given the opportunity to follow the lead given by the teacher or other pupils. The pace of some activities is too slow, as the teachers allow the pupils too long to reflect on their answer, rather than using quick-fire questioning to help pupils to give answers spontaneously. The teachers use some resources very effectively. In a lesson in Year 7, digit cards of the type used for mental mathematics sessions proved a very effective resource to help pupils consolidate their understanding of numbers, whilst the use of simple everyday classroom objects helped pupils to focus their attention in a lesson in Year 6. However, the teachers need to acquire and use a good bank of flashcards and other realia which are readily to hand in order to provide frequent revision and consolidation of vocabulary and structures which have been taught earlier in the year. At this stage of the year, as is appropriate, little emphasis is given to writing and reading in French.
143. The co-ordination of French has been taken on enthusiastically and capably. Guidance provided by the local authority, together with a published course, provides a sound basis from which teachers can plan their lessons. An annual trip to France for pupils in Year 7 not only reinforces the purpose of learning a modern foreign language but also makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. In order for the pupils to make greater progress, however, the school needs to give urgent consideration to the way the subject is timetabled. The pupils need to have shorter, more frequent lessons in order to have opportunities for regular repetition and constant consolidation of language. The provision of in-service training from qualified language teachers would help the teachers to improve their language teaching skills and become more aware of other effective teaching strategies which would help them to increase the pace and productivity of their lessons and also to develop a deeper awareness of how young children acquire language speaking skills.

MUSIC

144. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages and Year 7 are in line with those expected for pupils of their age. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school, although progress in Year 7 is good as a result of the specialist teaching pupils receive at the local secondary school.
145. Regular whole-school singing sessions help pupils to develop singing skills well. They sing tunefully and, by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 7, they sing well. This was very noticeable in a Year 7 class. When singing a hymn as part of a personal and social education lesson on deaf awareness, they sang an unaccompanied hymn tunefully, maintaining good pitch whilst learning sign language. Pupils in Year 5 are developing rhythms and can perform their own sequences using a combination of graphic and formal notation, but group performances are less well established.
146. In composition, pupils are beginning to establish their creative skills, incorporating dynamics into their group composition. However, the performances lack overall pulse, losing the overall ensemble effect. Pupils in Year 7 benefit from lessons at the local secondary school, where they have access to a range of resources to support their skills in performance and composition. Pupils are developing compositions that have structure with a variety of musical ideas and appropriate endings. They appraise one another's creative work and contribute sensible comments on its quality and ways to improve, often followed with spontaneous applause for good effort. Performance skills are progressing well. They know and recognise the notes on keyboards and tuned percussion, and perform short pieces of music with a theme and an accompaniment sequence. Pupils have the opportunity to listen to music during assemblies, but their overall knowledge of a range of styles is limited. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and achieve the targets set.
147. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and is better where teachers have good knowledge and understanding. Teachers have good management skills and encourage reluctant pupils to participate, which results in satisfactory progress and lessons moving with pace that pupils enjoy. Learning is more effective when teachers give clear demonstrations, explaining terms such as syncopation, which leads to pupils quickly developing a sense of ensemble with established pulse. Teachers use a commercial scheme of work that provides a variety of musical activities, but it gives limited guidance for the development of composition for the non-specialist.
148. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has had responsibility for the subject since the beginning of the term. In this short period, however, she has developed a clear vision on the raising of standards. A clear development plan includes the monitoring of teaching and a review of the schemes of work to give better support for the non-specialist to help with the teaching of composition and to re-establish opportunities for pupils to learn a musical instrument. Opportunities to sing in a local music festival, musical productions and extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum for pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

149. It was not possible to observe all aspects of physical education during the inspection. However, judging by the disciplines which were observed, standards of attainment are above national expectations at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and Year 7. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress, and those pupils who have special educational needs are supported appropriately and encouraged by their peers, which enables them to also make good progress.

150. Pupils in Key Stage 1 move creatively in dance. In one lesson, they created an imaginative dance about toys in the classroom such as a musical box and toy soldier. The pupils listened carefully to their teacher, who gave clear instructions and good demonstrations of some of the movements expected. A toy robot was used effectively to encourage pupils to talk about the types of movement toys make, and they were allowed to practise these movements in a sequence with obvious enjoyment.
151. At Key Stage 2, pupils perform fluent gymnastic sequences on the floor, varying the level and direction of the sequences. The standards achieved in outdoor games are above average. Pupils in Year 4 learnt and practised well the skills of bouncing a ball with a tennis racquet. In a lesson in Year 6, they showed enthusiasm and determination in learning and practising defending and attacking skills, including dribbling and shooting, in football and hockey. The pupils follow the rules and work well together and achieve a good standard of performance. The pupils are self-controlled and very confident when they take part in their games lessons. All pupils take a high level of responsibility for setting up and putting away the equipment they use with the minimum of supervision.
152. The progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 is affected by the cancellation of some games lessons when there are adverse weather conditions. A games lesson with pupils in Year 7 was affected in this way. The pupils watched a video about tag rugby, a game recently introduced to them, with enthusiasm and keenness, and they asked questions about the game in preparation for their next practice and matches against other schools. However, lost sessions are not always used as effectively, and the school does not have consistent practice in ensuring that there are appropriate contingency plans or alternative provision to ensure that pupils do not miss important aspects of their physical education programme during the year.
153. The quality of teaching in physical education is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attainment, and pupils respond with positive attitudes. The teachers' plans have clear learning objectives and contain a variety of good activities. Teachers join with pupils in the warm-up exercises and encourage and praise good work. Pupils behave well and respond well to the teachers' clear and detailed instructions. They are encouraged to respect the skills of others and are always given opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of their peers. This helps them to develop a better understanding of how to improve their performance. Teachers consistently emphasise safety issues. Both teachers and pupils are dressed appropriately and use equipment and apparatus safely.
154. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management of the subject. She is enthusiastic and has a good knowledge of the subject and of related health and safety issues. However, the monitoring, evaluation and development of the teaching in physical education is currently unsatisfactory. The scheme of work gives teachers a good basis to plan a full range of activities which helps to ensure a logical progression in the way pupils acquire skills and knowledge. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular sporting clubs for older pupils and the opportunity to play competitive fixtures against other schools.
155. The school makes good use of its teachers and support staff during physical education and has a satisfactory level of resources for the subject. The accommodation for physical education, however, is poor. The school does not have its own playing field, although older pupils are able to walk to a games field which provides good facilities for outdoor games when weather conditions permit. The school has some hard-surface areas, although these are inadequate for the number of pupils in the school. The hall is too small and has too many impediments, such as two columns in the middle, to provide an effective venue for indoor games or gymnastic activities. It is inadequate in meeting the needs of so many pupils, and cancelled games lessons cannot be transferred into the hall, because it is already timetabled for other purposes. However, more efficient use could be made of the hall during the morning, which would alleviate some of the problems experienced during the afternoons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

156. Across the school, standards are consistently good and exceed the levels set by the locally agreed syllabus. This shows very good improvement since the last inspection.
157. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of some aspects of Christianity. For example, they know about the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan and through this they become aware of the significance of symbols in religious practices. They know that water and light are used to signify purification and enlightenment. Pupils use this knowledge when making comparisons with other major world faiths such as Islam and Hinduism as well as Christianity. Younger pupils use their skills in drawing to illustrate their stories and other written work. They take pride in neat handwriting and artistic expression.
158. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of the more challenging aspects as well as the conventions of religious thought and beliefs. They sensibly discuss important ideas about the origins and destinations of life. Pupils in Year 5 deliberated over the complexities of creation. They exchanged ideas and posed hypotheses about the scientific explanations of the 'big bang' theory as well as the Biblical version found in Genesis. Some were torn between logic and faith, some concluded that the truth might lie somewhere between the two versions. Pupils in Year 4 develop good social and moral understanding. They consider the ten commandments, the Christian moral code, when discussing and writing about 'what matters to me'. They write out their own ten rules for 'what makes a good friend?' Pupils in Year 6 learn to empathise with those less fortunate when learning about Jesus' miracles of healing. They read versions of the Bible story, engage in role-play, taking first the part of Blind Bartimaeus and then the role of his carer to develop ideas of dependency and responsibility. After considering how Bartimaeus might have felt, they record their own feelings in comic strip form to sequence events and tell the story in their own words.
159. At Key Stage 3, pupils in Year 7 extend their understanding of some earlier learning. They revise their prior understanding of symbolism and meet more complex ideas found in contemporary illustrations, advertising and symbolic expression. Pupils make simplified drawings to convey concepts such as hope, peace, evil, war and love. They learn about the Five Pillars of Islam and the related symbols. They know that the Qur'an is divided into surahs (chapters) and that Arabic is read from the top right hand to the bottom left of the page. They know about the events of the Christian calendar and link learning in history to find out more about early monastic routines and practise medieval illuminated script. Pupils also learn about the lives of inspirational people such as Gandhi and Mother Teresa. When considering difficult concepts such as the Trinity, they relate the issues to themselves and try to envisage the perceptions of other people towards them. This provides an opportunity for some illuminating individual insights into their own developing personalities and ideas of self-worth.
160. Boys and girls work equally well, though at Key Stage 3 some gender stereotyping went unchecked, and nothing was done to challenge choices made by pupils when selecting themes on which to focus. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress and engage well in class discussions, which helps to raise their self-esteem.
161. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have good and, in some cases, very good subject knowledge. More confident teachers help older pupils to begin to develop personal philosophies based on discussion, Biblical research, tolerance for the ideas of others and rigorous self-searching. Some teachers use role-play and drama as part of their teaching strategy, which encourages pupils to take a more active part in their own learning. In lessons where this was observed, consistently good behaviour patterns ensued, lessons kept up a purposeful momentum and learning was more enjoyable and effective. Teachers value, and have worked hard to implement, the locally agreed syllabus and use the related assessment procedures to good effect. Teachers plan effectively to promote pupils' personal, social, moral

and cultural development through religious education lessons, and this is a very good feature of pupils' all-round development in the school.

162. The subject is very well led, and this represents good improvement since the previous inspection. The subject leader has a clear vision for the development of the subject and, through leading staff in a focused religious education week and personal enthusiasm for the subject, has encouraged higher expectations in teaching throughout the school. However, little use is made of computers to enhance pupils' research skills in the subject. Effective use is made of the Old and New Testament as well as the Qur'an and other major religious documents to support pupils' understanding. There are few opportunities for pupils to visit places of religious worship, though they have had a visit from a Buddhist monk and local clergy.