

INSPECTION REPORT

MOUNT WISE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Devonport, Plymouth

LEA area: Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113300

Headteacher: Mrs Kate Whitehead

Reporting inspector: Fred Ward
18605

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 December 2001

Inspection number: 230740

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 Years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: James Street
Devonport
Plymouth

Postcode: PL1 4LA

Telephone number: 01752 567602

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Christine McCullough

Date of previous inspection: June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18605	Fred Ward	Registered inspector	Science Music Religious education English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
11566	Hilary Smyth	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its pupils?
27284	Anna Grayson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
28132	Wendy Hiscock	Team inspector	English Design technology Equal opportunities Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
14511	Philip Whitehead	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art Information and communication technology Music Physical education	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	22
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	24
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	29
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	30
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	34

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Mount Wise is an average sized community primary school in Devonport, an area of Plymouth being developed as part of an urban regeneration project. Nearly all pupils come from families facing considerable social and financial challenges. There are 264 pupils, including 58 in the nursery, who generally have very low levels of attainment on entry at three-years-old. While most pupils are white of United Kingdom heritage, 18 are from non-European ethnic backgrounds, including Taiwanese, Malaysian and Libyan; all have English as an additional language, most are Muslim and children of parents attending university and have recently joined the school. 55% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above average. 28% of pupils are on the register of special educational needs (above average). Around a third of pupils leave and a similar number join between Year 2 and 6. The school is in the Plymouth Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is becoming more effective as the headteacher, well supported by committed governors and staff, has identified and is tackling what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning further. Standards are rising in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, but pupils' skills in speaking, listening and thinking are not developing fast enough. Considering the low level of attainment on entry, most pupils achieve well and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Most pupils achieve better than expected in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.
- Pupils like school and generally behave well.
- Pupils with special education needs, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress.
- Overall, teaching is good.
- The curriculum provides very well for pupils' personal, social, moral, emotional and health education.
- Pupils are very well cared for and their strengths and weaknesses known and used effectively to help them improve in literacy, numeracy and in their personal development.
- The school has effective links with the community and works very well with partner institutions.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and active governors are good.

What could be improved

- The use of speaking and listening in developing reading, writing and thinking in all subjects
- Pupils' problem solving, investigative and research skills, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Management and provision for music.
- Schemes of work for science, art, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education.
- The use of assessment information in the Foundation Stage, Foundation subjects and information and communication technology

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in June 1998 and has successfully tackled most of the key issues:

- the teaching of writing has improved, particularly at Key Stage 2;
- teachers have appropriate expectations of pupils;

- assessment is linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment and used to inform planning in English and mathematics;
- English and mathematics co-ordinators are better prepared and are becoming more effective in developing teaching and learning;
- the governing body is more involved in development planning and has a long term view on what needs to be done to raise standards.

There are plans in place to deal with most of the outstanding issues:

- assessment and planning in science, particularly for developing investigative and experimental skills;
- development of teaching and pupils' learning by co-ordinators for subjects other than English and mathematics.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E	E	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
mathematics	E	E	E*	E	
science	E	E	E	E	

Children in the nursery and reception class make good progress but only a few are on course to reach the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. They struggle in developing effective speaking and listening skills, a common problem throughout the school. In 2001, results of teachers' assessment of Year 2 pupils in science were well below the national average but the same as similar schools; the inspection found standards unchanged. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics for this age group are improving, but are still below average as they were in national assessments last year. Similar improvements are evident by Year 6 but standards are generally below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in information and communication technology are below average for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils but are also improving. Nearly all 11-years-olds swim 25 metres and are aware of water safety principles. On the limited evidence available during the inspection, standards of work seen in other subjects are below the expected level, apart from physical education in Year 2 where they are around average. The school has now adjusted its targets to raise standards in English and mathematics to a more realistic level. Pupils are generally interested in their learning and work hard but become frustrated in trying to communicate their ideas and thoughts clearly. Generally, pupils acquire appropriate subject knowledge but are not developing skills and understanding of investigation and problem solving satisfactorily as they are not given many opportunities to explore their own lines of inquiry.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils generally like school, try hard when the work is interesting and appropriate and are proud of their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils generally behave well in lessons and when moving around the school and playing. They behave very well on educational visits.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are generally responsible and helpful. Relationships are mostly good although, at times, individuals find it difficult to resolve differences peacefully.
Attendance	Attendance is well below the national average and unauthorised absence is

	twice the national average. This is as a result of a few persistent offenders.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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.

While teachers have a strong focus on literacy and numeracy in English and mathematics lessons, these skills are not re-enforced consistently in other subjects. The strength of teaching is in the attention given to: pupils' personal development and establishing good relationships and routines; managing pupils; team work with classroom assistants; and, the interesting and variety of learning activities. Consequently, pupils feel valued, engage in learning and generally achieve well. Areas for development for teachers are mainly concerned with: not paying enough attention to the development of speaking and listening skills; not matching work appropriately to the stage and rate of learning of pupils in some subjects and providing insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop investigative and inquiry skills. As a result, pupils struggle to communicate their thoughts and ideas clearly, at times find work uninteresting and too hard and rarely try out and test their own ideas. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, particularly in language development, where their work is at an appropriate level.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. While there is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, in some subjects planned work is sometimes not interesting, relevant nor matched to what pupils can do.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are identified early and appropriate help given by teachers and assistants working effectively together.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has made the recently arrived non-European pupils very welcome and, with the help of the local education authority, is providing appropriate support, particularly in developing their speaking and listening in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall good. The school provides many well-thought out opportunities for pupils to develop socially and morally; provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. A strength of the school is the personal, emotional and health education programme.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of pupils, providing effective guidance and personal support that extends to families. Teachers and assistants know their pupils very well and use assessment information effectively in literacy, numeracy and personal development to help pupils improve, but not so well in other subjects

The school uses appropriate ways to keep parents and carers informed and involved in their children's education but only social events are well attended and few help in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a very caring and supportive leader, who works effectively with staff, as recognised by the recent award of the “Investors in People” standard. There is a strong commitment to help children overcome the challenges they face in their everyday lives and give them a love of learning. Co-ordinators are gaining confidence and in English and mathematics are beginning to have a positive effect on teaching and learning; there is no current acting co-ordinator for music where development needs have been identified.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	There is only a small number of active non-staff governors as recruitment and attendance are a problem. These governors know what needs to be done to raise standards and work through an appropriate committee structure. However, often there are insufficient governors to share responsibilities and they feel overloaded.
The school’s evaluation of its performance	The school has identified appropriate development priorities, has clear and realistic plans to raise standards and actions are improving teaching and learning, especially in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology and, from next term, in science.
The strategic use of resources	The governing body spends wisely and operates within the principles of best value.

Learning resources, including new technologies, are good and are generally used effectively. The accommodation is being improved and the library has just been refurbished but the number of non-fiction books is limited.

PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations that pupils work hard • Children like school • Teaching is good • School is easy to approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pupils’ behaviour • Less homework • Range of activities outside of lessons • Use of temporary teachers

Inspection findings agree with all the positive views of parents; a few pupils behave inappropriately but are sensitively helped, homework is appropriate and temporary teachers are difficult to recruit and retain.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Standards are generally below average but pupils achieve well.

- 1 Standards are nearly all below average but pupils generally achieve well because of the predominantly good or better teaching. There has been a decline in standards since the previous inspection but pupils are now achieving better.
- 2 Inspection findings indicate that standards for the oldest pupils in the school are below average in all subjects. For pupils in Year 2, standards are also nearly all below average, apart from in physical education, where they are as expected for their age.
- 3 The three-year-olds make a good start to their schooling in the Foundation Stage but, because of their very low attainment on entry, only a few reach the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. A significant block to learning is their generally well below average speaking and listening skills; this remains an issue throughout the school.
- 4 There was limited recorded evidence in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education to make secure judgements about standards. Discussions with pupils about their available work indicates that standards are below that expected for their age, apart from in physical education for Year 2, where they are as expected. Around eight out of 10 pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they are 11 years of age and are aware of the principles of water safety.
- 5 Pupils are now generally achieving well because teaching overall is good or better. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when learning was more variable and older boys were underachieving. The school reports this is because there has been a 50% change of staff and considerable investment has been made in training, particularly in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and personal, social, emotional and health education. As a result, teaching is more focused on individuals and groups of pupils and learning activities are appropriately matched to their stage, style and rate of learning. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics, information computer technology and, increasingly so in science.
- 6 National assessment results in 2001 show standards at the end of Year 2 were well below average in reading and mathematics when compared to all schools and below average in writing. Compared to similar schools, they were as expected in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Only a few pupils achieved at the higher level 3. Results since 1997 have been below average but increased at a faster rate than the national trend, although there was a dip in 2001 when the year group had a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs than in previous years. Teachers' assessment of science in 2001 indicates that results were also well below the national average but the same as similar schools.
- 7 National test results in 2001 for 11 year-olds show that standards for English and science were well below the national average when compared to all schools and in the lowest 5% in the country for mathematics. When compared to similar schools, standards in English and science

were about the same but well below in mathematics. In mathematics and science, no pupils achieved the higher level 5. The school reports these lower results in mathematics were because of staff changes and the priority given to introducing the literacy strategy. In addition, half the pupils for this year group were on the register of special educational needs and a significant number had emotional and behaviour difficulties, making the class challenging to teach. Since 1997, standards overall have been below the national average and risen broadly in line with the national trend. Results in mathematics have been more variable.

- 8 Setting realistic targets for English and mathematics has been difficult as around a third of pupils leave and join between Year 2 and 6. Those who leave tend to be the higher attainers and new entrants generally have special educational needs. This process has recently been made more complicated with the arrival of 18 non-European pupils, who came with few English language skills, although early indications suggest they have above average attainment. Consequently targets for 2002 for the oldest pupils in school are being revised again and are likely to be lower than originally predicted.
- 9 Children enter school for the first time at three years old with very low attainment, especially in linguistic skills. They make good progress in the nursery and reception class because of the consistently good teaching and rich and varied learning experiences. However by the time the oldest pupils start Year 1, very few have been able to make up for the considerable deficiencies in their early development and nearly all do not reach the early learning goal in any area. Pupils with special educational need are identified early and given appropriate individual and group support and are able fully to participate in activities although their concentration is very short. The recently arrived pupils with English as an additional language are very well settled in the reception class and are rapidly making gains in their language skills.
- 10 Currently in English, standards of speaking and listening are well below average throughout the school. While pupils aged 7 are keen to ask questions, they do not do so confidently as they have difficulty finding the appropriate words to say what they mean.
- 11 By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils still have difficulty expressing themselves and their confidence is further inhibited as they are now aware of their shortcomings. As a result, they are reluctant to speak in front of large groups and are over-reliant on adults for assistance.
- 12 Standards of reading throughout the school are below average but improving. Year 2 pupils benefit from the enjoyable and well planned teaching of phonics and are acquiring appropriate basic skills. However, pupils aged 11 have not moved on sufficiently and still mainly rely on phonic strategies when breaking down unknown words unless supported by adults. They are constrained by their undeveloped speaking and listening skills.
- 13 Standards in writing are also below average at the end of both key stages. Nearly all 7-year-olds can write simple sentences but their use of capital letters and full stops is not consistent. Their developing phonic skills help them to spell common words correctly. Pupils aged 11 are not confident writers. However, recent teaching and learning that focuses on grammar is helping them improve. Generally, pupils are still writing in simple sentences and do not explore ways of connecting their ideas and creating interest in the reader. Again, because of their well below average speaking and listening skills, their vocabulary is limited and spelling rules are not applied consistently. Standards of handwriting vary across the school. When practicing, writing is neat and well formed but for other purposes is generally untidy and badly presented.

- 14 Standards in mathematics are below average for seven and 11 year-olds. Pupils in Year 2 count on and back with numbers up to 100. They recognise smaller and larger numbers and understand place value for tens and units as well as odd and even numbers. They have had appropriate practical experiences using non-standard measure and are beginning to tell the time. Most handle small coins and can tender appropriate amounts when required; some higher attaining pupils use larger value coins appropriately. While they can recall knowledge about simple geometric shapes and produce simple graphs, they do not confidently explain their mathematical thinking because of limited language skills.
- 15 Pupils in Year 6 are able to carry out simple strategies for calculating mentally but they do not do this quickly, needing considerable adult support. They have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of place value and can compare and order large numbers. They use standard methods when solving number problems and understand fractions. They can draw and know the properties of a range of geometric shapes and present information graphically. However, they also find explaining their mathematical reasoning difficult and do not carry out independent enquiries confidently.
- 16 Standards in science are also below average in Year 2 and 6. Nearly all seven-year-olds are becoming aware of basic facts about life processes and common living things, everyday materials and their properties and physical processes. While they enjoy carrying out simple experiments, they need considerable adult guidance to record their observations and often make mistakes. By the time they are 11-years-old, nearly all pupils have a sound foundation in scientific knowledge of the topics studied. However, they have particular difficulty with forming hypotheses and are generally not able to devise systematic lines of investigation without considerable help.
- 17 Overall, standards in information and communication technology are below average for seven and 11 year-olds. Pupils in Year 2 are confident when using new technologies and are not afraid of making mistakes. They are generally familiar with computer keyboards and operate controls appropriately. However, they do not easily undertake word processing as their below average literacy skills limit their ability to spell and find the correct letters. They understand how new technologies effect their everyday lives and operate simple control devices, such as television remote controls and telephones. Year 6 pupils are becoming more skilful in using new technologies to support their learning as they are now given more opportunities in most subjects. They know how to access and control information on computers, calculators and overhead projectors. However, like younger pupils, many have difficulties processing written material because of their limited literacy skills although they are aware of how to edit and present text in different ways. They are more confident entering data on spreadsheets and finding out information to support topics from websites and CD-ROMS.
- 18 Inspection findings and national assessments in 2001 confirm that higher attaining pupils generally make good progress and achieve well but do not gain sufficient ground to reach levels higher than expected for their age. The school is providing them with opportunities to attend locally organised courses to help them achieve even better. There are no gifted or talented pupils in the school.
- 19 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are identified early, given individual and small group support and monitored carefully. The governing body has made a priority of providing sufficient classroom assistants to ensure these pupils have ongoing support. In this, they have been most effective as teachers and classroom assistants, with the support of the special educational needs co-ordinator, work very well together. Pupils with

special educational needs are given a variety of interesting activities pitched at the right level and presented in manageable learning steps. As a result, they generally retain concentration, work hard and achieve well. However when work is too hard, they quickly lose interest and are inattentive.

- 20 The recently arrived pupils with English as an additional language have not been thoroughly assessed and their prior-attainment is not known. However, the school reports and inspection findings confirm that in all subjects these pupils engage, show interest and perseverance and generally achieve well. This is because the school has used all available resources, including the local education authority, their parents and staff to provide effective support and overcome language barriers. Every indication is that all these pupils have attainment that is at least as expected for their age or better.
- 21 The school became aware that in Key Stage 2, boys were developing poor self-esteem about their below average levels of attainment, particularly in reading and writing. As a result of changing teaching styles and learning activities, there has been a general improvement in older boys' attitudes and standards have improved. However, their undeveloped speaking and listening skills are still proving a barrier and the school has not yet dealt with this problem effectively.
- 22 Generally, standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are steadily improving and the school has the capacity to raise them higher in these and other subjects, particularly if actions to tackle deficiencies in speaking and listening are successful.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Pupils like school, behave well and mature appropriately; attendance is well below average.

- 23 Nearly all the pupils have a good response to the school and are interested and involved in their learning. Their attitudes to school, personal development and relationships are good. They show concern for each other, their school and the local community. For their age, they demonstrate an appropriate level of personal independence and a mature attitude towards responsibility. Overall, behaviour is good; this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Attendance is well below average; this is a decline since the previous inspection.
- 24 Pupils have good attitudes to school. Almost all pupils are enthusiastic about learning and come happily to school. Overall, they show a good level of interest and are involved in the full range of activities provided. There are many examples of very good attitudes throughout the school. A Year 5 girl said, *"School is excellent, I can't think of anything bad about it."* In a reception communications, language and literacy lesson, pupils waited for their turn and listened carefully to the teacher's instructions. In a Year 1 physical education lesson focusing on choosing and using skills effectively and moving with control, the pupils responded very enthusiastically and sensibly to the teacher's questions and instructions; two boys with English as an additional language were sensitively encouraged to respond and were fully integrated into the practical skill activity. In a Year 4 religious education lesson focussing on the importance of looking after our world, the teacher's clear and expressive voice helped maintain the pupils interest and all listened very attentively and responded eagerly. During the practical activity all pupils took pride in their work and were totally absorbed by the task.

- 25 However in lessons where the work is not matched to the needs and interests of pupils, they quickly lose concentration. This is particularly noticeable amongst older boys as was seen in a Year 5 science lesson. The class spent a long time analysing observations and findings from a previous lesson on 'changing states'. While these boys responded satisfactorily to the teacher's questioning in the introduction and final part of the lesson, they lost interest in the group discussions.
- 26 Where pupils' attitudes are good, or better, it is because of the well-prepared, interesting lessons, with work well matched to pupils' abilities, consistent high expectations throughout the school, and the generally good or better teaching.
- 27 In the calm and very caring atmosphere, generally free from oppressive behaviour, nearly all pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and outside; the school functions as an orderly community. With few exceptions, pupils respond well to the school's clear routines when moving around. On the playground, the majority of pupils mix happily and play well together and, throughout the school, generally show a caring concern to others. During a Year 3 visit to a local restaurant, a pupil said he was cold after looking in the freezer room. Another pupil rubbed his back and arms to warm him up. For the duration of this visit, the behaviour of all the pupils was very good and the restaurant manager said they were a credit to the school.
- 28 When there are instances of unacceptable behaviour, these are quickly, sensitively and firmly dealt with and expectations of good behaviour are reinforced. Overall, the standards of behaviour are good with few examples of unkind and inappropriate behaviour and many examples of very good behaviour. In a Year 6 history lesson focusing on performing a traditional Greek tale, the behaviour of all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, was very good. All staff have very high expectations of behaviour and these are consistently reinforced throughout the school.
- 29 All pupils are very friendly and courteous to visitors and generally the same with other adults and each other. Nearly all pupils are very confident, they introduce themselves politely and even the young pupils ask questions of visitors, such as, "*Are you one of the OFSTED people?*" A Year 3 boy very politely greeted a visitor with, "*Excuse me, are you visiting our class today?*". Generally pupils of all ages demonstrate an awareness of the needs of others. For example, a small group of older pupils recognised a visitor was lost and offered to lead the way to their class assembly.
- 30 Pupils generally show respect for property, particularly their own and the school's, and they handle resources with care. While changing for a physical education lesson, a Year 1 girl very carefully folded her school uniform and put it into a bag. In a Year 2 art lesson while making squares for a patchwork quilt, all pupils handled the range of resources sensibly and with care, especially those using needles and scissors.
- 31 In most aspects, the personal development of the pupils is good. They are eager to volunteer for and accept responsibility. They are fully involved in the daily routines of the school community and fulfil their duties with pride. There are many opportunities for pupils from both key stages to take on responsibilities. Formal opportunities are offered through an extensive range of duties such as librarian, team captain, door monitors, lunch box and register monitors and Year 6 pupils help with the nursery children. Pupils have the opportunity to represent their class on the student council. There are many informal opportunities provided by teachers, such as distributing and collecting resources. Throughout the school, pupils show initiative by spontaneously helping each other. In a Year 5 religious education lesson, a higher attaining girl

helped an average attaining girl with her spelling, and in a Year 1 English lesson, a girl gave encouragement to another, with English as an additional language, to help her read.

- 32 They show a growing independence as this is encouraged from the nursery onwards. However, most pupils lack the initiative to develop or extend their own learning without being told what to do. Occasionally, older pupils have trouble responding to the teachers' questions, as they lack the vocabulary and the confidence to explain their answers clearly. In a Year 4 English lesson, this was overcome by sensitive guidance from the teacher and support assistant.
- 33 Through assemblies, religious education and personal, social and health education and discussion time, pupils have opportunities to reflect on their own experiences, express their feelings and learn to respect, understand and empathise with the feelings and beliefs of others. As a result, minority groups, such as the recently arrived non-Europeans, are fully integrated into the life of the school and generally pupils relate well to each other. During a sharing of news at the start of a session, Year 1 pupils listened respectfully to others despite many distractions outside.
- 34 Younger pupils are helped and guided by the teachers to understand the impact of their actions on others. In a reception communications, language and literacy lesson, the teacher was very insistent on politeness and listening to others. In a Year 3 English lesson when a higher attaining boy was reluctant to be paired with an average attaining boy and was rude, the teacher firmly and gently reminded the one about being disrespectful and the other about co-operation and sharing. In a Year 4 personal, social and health education lesson, pupils sensitively discussed issues based on '*the last time I cried*'. A practical activity in this session focused on learning to trust others. This was a positive experience, particularly for two boys with English as an additional language, who were new to the class.
- 35 Generally, pupils willingly help and support each other's learning, collaboratively in groups or in pairs and offer to share information and resources. In a Year 1 design and technology lesson, a lower attaining boy with emotional and behaviour difficulties offered to share his fruit kebab with a visitor. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson, two higher attaining pupils worked well together, sharing a calculator and giving each other helpful advice.
- 36 Compared with other schools for 2000/2001, the attendance rate is poor and well below the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence is above the national average. This suggests a decline since the previous inspection. However, the data does not reflect that there has been an improvement in the percentage rate for attendance since the previous inspection although this is less than the national trend. There were two fixed term exclusions in 2000/2001, and the same two boys are currently serving fixed term exclusions. Lessons begin promptly and no time is wasted.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

Teaching is generally good as teachers manage pupils very well and make very good use of resources and classroom assistants to provide interesting and well-supported learning activities.

- 37 Overall, teaching is good throughout the school with incidents of excellence. During the inspection, 76% of the teaching was good or better and 40% very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection as the amount of higher quality teaching has quadrupled

and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. 92% of the teaching in the Foundation Stage was good or better. In Key Stage 1, 71% of the teaching was good or better and once excellent. In Key Stage 2, 71% of the teaching was good or better and again in one incident, excellent. Overall, the teaching of English and mathematics is good.

- 38 The consistently good or better teaching in the Foundation Stage is as a result of the teachers and classroom assistants working so effectively together. They have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and of the interests and backgrounds of their pupils. As a result they plan a rich and very appropriate programme of activities.
- 39 In the nursery, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and acquire basic social skills. As a result, they quickly settle and establish routines and enjoy learning. However, they need considerable help to sustain concentration and can easily lose heart when they encounter difficulties.
- 40 In the reception class, there is an increasing emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Here, they benefit from being in a small group and the very effective support given to them by the nursery nurse. Consequently, they are interested in learning but are still very dependent on adult support to sustain their concentration.
- 41 Teaching at Key Stage 1 and 2 has similar strengths and areas for development. This is indicative of the joint training the teachers undertake and the agreed development priorities that have been introduced at all levels.
- 42 The best teaching is characterised by very high expectations, extremely thorough planning, the variety and appropriateness of the learning activities and very effective teamwork between teachers and assistants. Generally, staff manage pupils very well. They handle the small number of potentially disruptive pupils very sensitively and any incidents are very effectively handled. Pupils respond enthusiastically, are productive and acquire the skills being taught.
- 43 Teachers also make effective use of resources to make lessons more interesting and to give pupils greater involvement in practical activities. Following intensive training, staff now use new technologies more in supporting their teaching and pupils' learning across subjects.
- 44 On occasions, nearly all teachers plan activities based on national guidance that are too difficult. As the priority has been developing teaching and pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy, teachers have not always been able to adapt schemes of work sufficiently to take in to account the interests and needs of their pupils. This usually effects the independent learning activities prepared in advance as during introductory and final sessions, teachers adjust their teaching accordingly. As pupils do not have many ways of working things out for themselves, they give up easily when studying on their own. The school is aware of these shortcomings and has development plans to review their use of curriculum guidance to plan more appropriately with regard to the stage, style and rate of learning of pupils.
- 45 Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are generally good, apart from in art and music and speaking and listening. Where shortcomings have been identified, training and professional discussion have usually resulted in appropriate actions being taken. This has occurred recently in mathematics and science and teachers are now giving pupils more opportunities to develop skills of problem solving and investigation. However, pupils are still too reliant on adults for guidance and do not easily follow their own lines of inquiry. Music is an exception. Nearly all teachers lack confidence and, since the co-ordinator was seconded to

another school from the beginning of the autumn term, little teaching of music has taken place. This is unsatisfactory and the school has not done enough to tackle this issue.

- 46 The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well introduced and have a very positive effect on teaching and pupils' learning. This has been particularly evident in the teaching of writing and oral and mental mathematics. Years 5 and 6 are organised into three classes based on pupils' prior attainment for literacy and numeracy. This allows teachers to teach to their strengths as well as provide learning opportunities to a narrower ability range. As a result, pupils find work at a more appropriate level and the learning more easily manageable. However, staff do not always give enough attention to developing speaking and listening across subjects. This has a detrimental effect on pupils' ability to express their views orally and in writing when studying different topics. As a result, pupils are not sufficiently confident in their use of basic skills.
- 47 Very effective use is made of classroom assistants, who are fully involved in all aspects of teaching and learning. As there are so many low attaining pupils, this extra support ensures pupils are given appropriate help when they encounter difficulties. More intensive support is given to pupils with special educational needs and, again, teachers and assistants with the help of the co-ordinator, work constructively together. As a result, these pupils feel valued, want to improve and are given the appropriate learning activities to do so. The recently arrived pupils with English as an additional language have also benefited from this support and have easily integrated in to classes. All these pupils achieve well and make good progress because of the specialist help they have been given.
- 48 Teachers know the individual strengths and weaknesses of their pupils well and use assessment information, gained from observation and questioning, effectively to check their progress. Generally, pupils are productive and know what they have to do to improve as staff give them appropriate advice in lessons. However while marking is regularly completed, teachers are not consistent in providing sufficiently helpful guidance as to how pupils can learn from their mistakes.
- 49 Homework is regularly set and is at an appropriate level and quantity for each year group. Some parents felt there was too much homework but inspection findings do not support this view. However, older pupils do not always complete or return work on time. Pupils who are able to re-enforce their learning in basic skills at home, make good progress. This is particularly evident for pupils with English as an additional language, who often carry out assessment exercises at home in their first language.
- 50 As a result of the considerable amount of good or better teaching, pupils are being better prepared for the next stage of their education when they leave at 11 years old.

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

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with some very good features but does not meet requirements in music.

- 51 Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. The provision in the Foundation Stage is rich, varied and well suited for the three, four and five-year-olds, who make a good start to their schooling. While there is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy throughout the school, in some subjects planned work is sometimes not interesting, relevant nor

matched to what pupils can do. There were similar imbalances in the previous inspection. A strength of the school is the personal, emotional and health education programme. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with English as an additional language, is good. The music curriculum is not given sufficient time and does not meet requirements.

- 52 The curriculum is planned systematically using national and local guidance. Teachers find they need to adapt this material considerably in order to meet the needs of the pupils in the school and take account of generally lower levels of attainment and slower rates of learning found in all year groups. This work has been completed in literacy and numeracy, design and technology and information and communication technology. While there are plans to review schemes of work in other subjects, currently teachers are using national schemes of work in science, art, geography, history, music and physical education and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Sometimes, this results in learning activities being planned that are not interesting or relevant for pupils and not matched appropriately to what they can do.
- 53 The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well introduced and Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils benefit from teachers' use of this guidance. In Years 5 and 6, work in these areas is planned collaboratively by the teachers involved but taught to classes organised by prior attainment. The school reports, and inspection findings confirm, that learning activities are effectively matched to the style, stage and rate of learning of pupils in these narrower ability ranges and they achieve well.
- 54 Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and given very good support throughout the school. The increase in the number of classroom assistants, their training and the very good range of resources ensures the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very appropriate and they make good progress. The co-ordinator is thorough and systematic in overseeing the preparation and review of individual education plans. As a result, these are detailed and realistic and helpful to pupils and class teachers in showing them what needs to be done to develop learning in specific areas. Every effort is made to keep parents involved but this is not always successful.
- 55 In the very short time since the 18 non-European pupils arrived, the school has been very effective in welcoming them and providing learning activities well matched to their prior-attainment and very low levels of English. Staff have been very inventive in adapting learning material and using the help of pupils' parents for translations and dictionaries. The local education authority has also provided additional resources and regular visits from specialist teachers to provide advice and support to pupils, staff and parents. As a result, these pupils have settled quickly and are making great strides in their understanding and use of English in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- 56 The school prides itself on making sure all pupils have access to learning opportunities in the classroom and beyond. As the school has little additional funds, the school budget is used to support pupils' attendance at events to enrich their experiences. The generally high ratio of adults to pupils ensures that all pupils are well supported in their learning. Apart from those occasions where activities are not sufficiently interesting and too hard, all pupils engage in lessons. There are more girls in Class 6 but the teacher ensures that the boys are able to express themselves and fully participate without feeling dominated. Also, for literacy and numeracy lessons, this class is combined with other Year 5/6 pupils to be set by prior attainment and the resulting groups have an even distribution of boys and girls.

- 57 The curriculum meets requirements in all subjects except music where insufficient time is allocated. Since the co-ordinator was seconded to another school from the beginning of the academic year, in some classes there have only been a few music lessons. The provision for sex, drug and health education is good. The school meets the requirements for a daily act of collective worship.
- 58 The personal, health, social and moral education programme is a strength of the school. Discussion times are a regular feature for all classes where pupils explore a wide range of issues and linked to topics covered in other subjects, such as religious education, geography, history and science.
- 59 The contribution made by the community to pupils' learning is good and effectively enriches and supports the curriculum. Pupils benefit from visits to local branches of a national chain of restaurants and supermarkets to support food related topics in science. There are links with a nearby church and the vicar is a helpful and frequent visitor; there are also links with the Salvation Army. The local environment is well used to enrich pupils' learning. Reception and nursery pupils visit the library and the librarians visit the school in support of the annual book week to present awards. The city museum provides a range of resources for history topics and pupils regularly make visits. In geography this term, with the help of Barnaby Bear, Year 1 pupils explored, photographed and mapped the immediate neighbourhood and spoke to local supermarket staff about their jobs. Other groups of pupils examine the local architecture when studying shapes. Year 3 pupils visited a local education centre in support of their Second World War history topic during the inspection. The school draws on expertise within the area: Year 6 pupils receive basketball coaching, Years 5/6 take part in regular sailing programme and, with other primary schools, receive football coaching, and instructors at a local leisure centre give swimming lessons. Some pupils represent the school in a community arts event and a local after-school club offers pupils somewhere to study and complete homework. The Internet is becoming a valuable tool for researching topic work.
- 60 Links with the wider community also provide enriching experiences for pupils and help them to see their place in society. Their personal development is promoted through themes in assembly, which are reinforced consistently within the classroom and through the coverage of the programmes of study in personal, social and health education and planned discussion time. Throughout the school, pupils are being helped to recognise, and are becoming aware of the importance of caring for the environment. Younger pupils express interest and concern for the local area; they know that litter makes a place look untidy. Older pupils also express similar thoughts on environmental issues but find it hard to articulate their ideas because of undeveloped speaking and listening skills. Younger pupils understand the reason for rules in school; "*They make you behave better*", a Year 2 girl said. However, they were not aware that there were rules for adults; older pupils had better but limited knowledge and understood the role of the police in upholding law and order. The electing of pupils onto the student council has given them some understanding of voting and being able to express concerns. This has helped pupils develop an understanding of rights and responsibilities. For instance, they knew Tony Blair is prime minister and that he is helping America. They understand the difference between fact and fiction and have a basic understanding about good and bad drugs.
- 61 The school has very good links with its partner institutions. It has established good links with the local playgroup/toddlers club, which helps induction to the nursery. There are strong links with other primaries through the academic council, education action zone, sporting links, and groups of higher attaining Year 6 pupils attending numeracy problem solving workshops. There are close links with a local college; students regularly undertake teaching practise in the school

and initial teacher training initiatives are being introduced. Groups of higher attaining pupils from the school are chosen to take part in the mathematic enrichment days run by the University of Plymouth. Productive links with the main secondary feeder school are well established and there are introductory visits for Years 5 and 6 held annually. Also work is in progress to develop aspects of the curriculum across Key Stage 2 –3, with the emphasis on science and technology. Transfer arrangements for Year 6 pupils are effective, following common procedures, and include class visits from secondary teachers and ex pupils.

- 62 The school successfully cultivates the personal development of pupils. The provision for moral and social development is good and satisfactory for spiritual and cultural development. This indicates a slight fall in the provision for spiritual development since the previous inspection.
- 63 The promotion of spiritual development is satisfactory. While spiritual development is not specifically included in planning, opportunities are taken within lessons, assemblies and discussion times to promote knowledge and insights into values and beliefs and allow quiet moments of reflection. Pupils wonder at growing and life processes and physical phenomenon in science. In English, poetry offers the pupils a chance to read about and express their own thoughts and feelings. In art, Year 2 pupils gasped in amazement when the teacher showed them examples of patchwork quilts and tie-dyed squares. One girl suggested that one square looked *“like the reflection of flowers on water”*. Pupils are encouraged to respond sensitively and reflect on what they have heard or experienced. Such activities are appropriate to the pupils’ age and maturity and staff sensitively guide and encourage this reflection. The uniqueness of individuals and the promotion of their self-esteem are given a very high priority by all staff. The consistent use of praise and other rewards by all adults is considered a vital part of boosting pupils’ self esteem. The very many, well-presented displays of pupils’ work, and the general use of plenary sessions reflect the value teachers have for pupils’ ideas and achievements.
- 64 Pupils’ moral development is well promoted and is fundamental to the school’s aims and practices. The principles and recognition of right and wrong are given a high priority. Opportunities are regularly and consistently taken by staff to foster such values as caring and respect for each other, courtesy and fairness. The inclusion of pupils with English as an additional language in the life of the school is providing a positive opportunity to develop respect for the beliefs and cultures of others. The school actively involves all pupils in the forming of class rules. The school’s clearly written mission statement effectively supports moral development. The rules governing sporting activities give all pupils an understanding of fair play. Personal, social and health education, and the ‘theme for the week,’ during the inspection ‘Looking after our world’, provide good opportunities for pupils from all key stages to develop and express moral values and extend their social and personal understanding. Pupils are taught to respect themselves and each other and helped to become aware of issues, such as pollution. The expression of moral values can be seen in the school’s support for a child from Africa, which pupils help fund.
- 65 There are good arrangements for promoting pupils’ social development. There are very many opportunities provided for all pupils to take on responsibility and to develop an understanding of living in a community. The headteacher and all other adults provide very good role models, treating pupils, visitors and each other with respect. Throughout the curriculum and across key stages, pupils have many opportunities to learn how to relate to each other by working in pairs and in small and large groups. In a Year 4 religious education lesson, pupils took turns to write letters in the title of their posters, showing an appreciation of fairness in sharing resources. The

presence of pupils from non-European countries provides good opportunities for all pupils to learn how to relate positively to others with different cultural backgrounds.

- 66 The school provides a wide variety of other activities that promote social development. There is a varied and enriching programme of extra curricular and sporting activities, such as the lunch time games club, football, netball, sailing and swimming that encourages team work, competition and fair play. Shared visits between Year 6 and Foundation stage pupils helps foster mixed age relationships. School productions, assemblies, student council meetings, links with the local community and visits help pupils develop social skills when working with large numbers of people. The school helps all pupils take responsibility by giving them a very wide variety of duties within class and around the school. Pupils have the opportunity to voice opinions through discussions in lessons and more particularly through the student council.
- 67 The promotion of pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school actively supports and teaches pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions through curricular provision and an appropriate range of extra curricular activities. The provision for the appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures has improved since the previous inspection and is continuing to do so. Positive contributions to pupils' cultural development come from aspects of English, geography, history, art, physical education, music and information and communication technology and assemblies. There are appropriate opportunities to compare aspects of other customs and beliefs, particularly through religious education.
- 68 Pupils have the chance to study the works of a range of artists and other cultures and they are developing an understanding of the contribution of individuals and different peoples to current society: in the spring term, Year 1 will be studying traditional stories and poems; Year 2 have explored India with Barnaby Bear; this term, Year 3 are looking at 'children in World War II'; Year 4 has studied the Vikings and examined creation theories in Maori, Aboriginal, Christian, Norse and North American cultures; Years 5 and 6 have looked at the Egyptians and ancient Greece. In English, Year 6 are studying a range of poetry and drama, including a Shakespearean play. Cultural provision has been enriched by 'artist in residence' sessions linking art and literature resulting in the production of large banners to decorate the library and by exploring the culture, beliefs and language of the recently arrived non-European pupils.
- 69 Pupils' learning is further enriched by appropriate visits in support of topics. For example, pupils make regular use of the immediate vicinity and visit the library and a local study centre in support of numeracy and history. This centre is also well used by the school as a base for design technology and information and communication technology activities. Older pupils studying the Egyptians visited the city museum and Year 6 and foundation stage pupils jointly visited the local aquarium. Visitors have added to programmes provided by the school. These have included theatre groups, African drumming, and currently the 'Music Zone' group for a weekly percussion session.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The school takes very good care of its pupils at all times.

- 70 The school provides very good care for its pupils. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when it was only satisfactory. The school ensures the health, safety, care and protection of all pupils, doing all it reasonably can to protect them from harm.

- 71 Very good relationships have been developed between staff and pupils, and the needs of the pupils are put first. This has created a very supportive, caring and happy ‘family’ community. The headteacher’s and class teachers’ knowledge of pupils is very good. They are aware of their pupils various needs and respond to them in a positive and supportive way. There are well-supported breakfast and lunchtime clubs originally organised for pupils for whom social mixing and playing were difficult times of the day. Prompt informal support is consistently given to children showing distress during daily routines and lessons. Consequently, pupils feel they are well cared for and have confidence in adults in the school community for advice and support. The school takes very good care of all pupils with particular special educational needs and works closely with parents and other agencies, when appropriate. This ensures vulnerable children are fully included in the life of the school.
- 72 Very good child protection measures are in place. Procedures are discussed at staff meetings and all staff have received appropriate training and are aware of their responsibilities. The school places great importance on the personal, social and health education of all pupils and has agreed and implemented a timetabled programme. Aspects of this are also covered in science and religious education.
- 73 The school has a very good working relationship with the education welfare officer and the school nurse and has regular weekly visits from both; where appropriate; they also support families by home visits. The school also draws on the expertise of a school counsellor who visits weekly for confidential sessions with older pupils. The day-to-day work of the school, in terms of supervision and awareness of hazards within and beyond school, shows a good level of responsibility for the health and safety of pupils.
- 74 Regular health and safety inspections of the buildings and grounds are carried out. Staff stress safe working practices to children in order to avoid hazards. They stress the need to be careful when handling resources, such as scissors and needles, as seen in a Year 2 art class.
- 75 Formal and informal procedures to monitor and support attendance are very good and consistently applied, . The school, with the help of outside agencies, has worked very hard over the past few years to raise the level of attendance above 90%; this work continues to try and maintain and improve on its current rate of attendance. The registers are accurately kept and monitored daily by the administrator and headteacher, and weekly by the education welfare officer. Home visits are made when appropriate. The home/school agreement also reminds parents of the importance of regular attendance and ensures that pupils arrive on time for the start of lessons. There are currently two fixed term exclusions and the correct procedures have been implemented.
- 76 There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. All staff have very high expectations, which are consistently and sensitively enforced so pupils know very clearly what is expected of them. Generally, there is a climate of good behaviour in this orderly community, with clear routines and class rules agreed between pupils and teachers. Class teachers regularly and consistently give praise and thanks to pupils for their good, and often very good, attitudes and behaviour. Each class has a team point system, which is consistently used to encourage positive behaviour, personal development and good work. The head teacher uses weekly award assemblies to give out ‘Good Work ‘ certificates and ‘Pat on the Back’ awards for personal development. When incidents of bullying or aggressive behaviour occur, they are dealt with immediately with a quiet, sensitive but firm approach. There are good formal and informal procedures to follow up any incidents. There was a perception by a parent that the “bully” receives more support. However, the findings of the inspection do not support

this concern. Staff discreetly speak to individual pupils to check that the problem is still satisfactorily resolved and staff regularly remind parents to share their concerns with them.

- 77 The inclusive ethos in the school ensures that all minority groups are fully integrated and pupils are valued as individuals. The induction of the recently arrive 18 non-European pupils with English as an additional language has been most effective and is having a positive influence upon the school.
- 78 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The school believes that personal development is as important as academic progress and therefore both are celebrated. Pupils' achievements for effort, attitude and behaviour are acknowledged. Pupils, who experience difficulty with a specific area of personal development, are encouraged to improve and rewarded when they are successful. Teachers and assistants support these pupils well and help them set their own targets.
- 79 At the previous inspection, systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress were unsatisfactory and did not inform teachers' planning. Currently, assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics and the Foundation Stage and satisfactory elsewhere. However in nearly all subjects, assessment information is not used effectively to set individual pupils' targets for improvement, apart from in English. In mathematics and science, new approaches are being tried out but are not yet being used by all teachers.
- 80 The school has procedures to check pupils' attainment termly in English and mathematics, when new targets are agreed. Pupils' work in these subjects is regularly looked at by co-ordinators to ensure that teachers' judgements are consistent and linked appropriately to National Curriculum levels. All pupils have books, in which to record samples of their work at termly intervals so as to check progress. Results of national assessment tests and tasks are thoroughly analysed to identify trends and common weaknesses. These are discussed fully by staff and result in agreed actions to improve teaching and pupils' learning overall in identified areas. Current priorities include speaking and listening, writing and oral mathematics.
- 81 Class teachers with the support of the experienced co-ordinator effectively check the progress of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements. Individual education plans are up to date and include helpful and specific advice on what pupils need to do to make progress. These are well used by teachers and classroom assistants when planning learning activities. Annual review procedures are carried out effectively with the involvement of parents and outside specialists where possible. Currently, the co-ordinator is working with local authority support teachers to carry out the assessment of the recently arrived pupils with English and an additional language.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Parents are generally pleased with the school but not many actively support their children's learning.

- 82 The parents have positive views of the school. The school has good formal and informal contact with parents and, overall, the quality of information provided by the school is good. This shows an improvement since the previous inspection. However, parental involvement in the work of the school is minimal and has no impact on pupils' learning. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection.

- 83 Nearly all parents are supportive of the school and satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. Nearly all parents find the school very approachable and welcoming and willing to listen to their concerns.
- 84 The quality of the information provided by the school is good. There are regular half-termly newsletters to parents and more frequently, when appropriate. The school uses an informal approach to seeking out parents' views, as response to letters and questionnaires is poor.
- 85 The school prospectus is well presented and provides useful information for parents, however it does not meet statutory requirements as there are some omissions. The governors' annual report to parents is informative and also has minor omissions. Appropriate curriculum meetings are held but these are not well attended.
- 86 The school works hard to promote and encourage the involvement of parents in their children's learning and in the life of the school by running family workshops. This recent initiative, with small groups of parents and their children, has proved popular. A 12-week course for parents and children from Years 3 and 4, learning together with computers, is due to start in the spring term. It is too soon to evaluate their effect on pupils' learning and parents' attitudes.
- 87 There are very good induction procedures with a "Welcome to nursery" course for new parents involving staff and the family education worker. Non-European pupils, with English as an additional language, were supported by a 'buddy' system, when they first arrived, and two meetings were held for their parents. The school continues, through a good range of formal and informal arrangements for sharing helpful information, to encourage parents to support pupils' learning.
- 88 Parents have two formal occasions to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress. Key Stage 1 and Year 3 sessions are very well attended. The end of year reports evaluate pupils' strengths and weaknesses and indicate what pupils need to improve, and parents are offered the opportunity to make a follow-up appointment, which few take up.
- 89 Although parents' involvement in the life of the school is actively sought and welcomed, very few parents help in the school but visits and educational trips are well supported.
- 90 There is patchy support by parents to help their children's learning at home, with most support at Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Home/school books are used by a minority of parents, who listen to their children read. For these parents, they form a useful communication link between school and home.
- 91 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to be involved from the earliest stage. They are invited to make informal contact and report that they value the advice and support they receive. They appreciate the quick response of the school when a specific concern arises.
- 92 There is no active parents' support group. However, pupils and parents support events organised by the staff. The school endeavours to work closely with all parents, informal contact is encouraged and views sought and valued. The limited parental help has little impact on pupils' progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The leadership and management of the school are good.

- 93 Overall, the leadership and management of the headteacher, supported by a few committed governors and all staff, are good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- 94 The headteacher is a very caring and supportive leader who works effectively with staff and governors and has a clear vision of the school and its future. This has been recognised recently by a national award: the “Investors in People” standard. There is a strong commitment to help children overcome the challenges they face in their everyday lives and give them a love of learning. There is a climate that values and acknowledges each individual, both adults and pupils, and their contribution to the life of the school. Everyone is encouraged to consider how they can improve and, wherever possible, given the appropriate means to do so. This has resulted in most pupils achieving better than expected in literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technology and staff becoming open to professional discussions on improving their performance. However, leadership and management have been less successful in tackling some important areas: pupils are still being held back in their learning by their unsatisfactory speaking, listening, thinking and problem solving skills; staff are not always using national and local curriculum guidance and assessment information on pupils’ progress effectively to plan teaching; and, not enough music is being taught.
- 95 The role of subject co-ordinators has developed considerably since the previous inspection when it was a key issue for action. The headteacher regularly meets with co-ordinators to review progress and amend development plans for their subject. All co-ordinators are expected to take a lead in developing policies and schemes of work as well as managing and purchasing resources, for which they have a designated budget. Currently, there is no acting co-ordinator for music, this is unsatisfactory. As the implementation of the national Literacy and Numeracy initiatives has been a priority, the development of teaching and learning in other subjects has not yet been fully introduced. In English and mathematics, co-ordinators have successfully helped teachers raise pupils’ attainment in writing and carrying out mental calculations with numbers. Similar developments are taking place in information and communication technology, although without the support of the co-ordinator, who is seconded to another school. However, the school is benefiting from training and the specialist help of a classroom assistant and the headteacher has temporary overview of the subject. From next term, science is a development priority.
- 96 The management decision to organise Year 5 and 6 into classes set by prior attainment for English and mathematics has been successful in ensuring effective use of teachers’ strengths and providing appropriate learning opportunities for pupils.
- 97 The governing body is mainly inexperienced and there have been difficulties recruiting and retaining governors. Currently only a few of the non-staff governors are active. Consequently, while there is an appropriate meeting structure, often committees are poorly attended and the remaining governors feel over loaded. These governors are well informed as they receive regular and clear reports from the headteacher, senior management team and co-ordinators and have begun to undertake classroom observations to increase their understanding of the way literacy and numeracy are taught. As a result, they are more aware of what needs to be done to improve the quality of education and provision and raise standards higher.
- 98 The school continuously monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of its actions; this is as part of a well thought out performance management strategy involving governors and staff. Pupils’

achievement is thoroughly analysed in English, mathematics and science, weaknesses are identified and appropriate plans drawn up and actions taken. Assessment procedures in other subjects are to be reviewed over the next year. These and other development priorities to improve the quality of teaching and learning and provision are included in the manageable school improvement plan for 2001/02, which also contains a three-year over view. While most actions have realistic time-scales, tackling shortcomings in music is not planned until 2003/04; this is unsatisfactory. However, plans include specific measures by which the governing body can evaluate the effectiveness of its spending decisions.

- 99 The headteacher and senior managers carry out an annual performance review with all teachers when objectives linked to the school improvement plan are agreed. They are given very good support for their professional development and expected to share their newly acquired expertise with colleagues. Currently, the science co-ordinator is attending a three day course in preparation for the planned development of the subject from next term.
- 100 Classroom assistants are deployed very effectively and are fully involved in the life of the school, being invited to attend training with teachers. Those involved with special educational needs meet weekly with the co-ordinator to discuss important aspects of their role. Other assistants meet half termly with the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator. The headteacher runs regular training sessions for all assistants during their employed time. Communication between teachers and classroom assistants is very good; they understand the work to be undertaken and this has a very positive effect on the progress made by pupils.
- 101 Induction of new staff is very well organised with the use of non-contact time and mentoring by an experienced member of staff. The school has a newly qualified teacher this term and she reports that the school have made her very welcome and provided her with effective advice and support.
- 102 The school has very close links with the local university and initial teachers training institution. Members of staff are trained mentors and, during the inspection, two students were observed being very well supported.
- 103 The school finds it difficult to attract and retain temporary teachers to provide cover for staff absence and release. This causes problems in keeping to planned timescales to allow co-ordinators to carry out monitoring and development of teaching and pupils' learning during the school day. Some parents were concerned about the effect of too many different temporary teachers on their pupils' education and, to this extent, inspection findings support their view.
- 104 The school is introducing and using new technologies as equipment and resources are purchased. All teachers have undergone intensive training and some assistants are currently following similar courses. These initiatives have not yet had time to take effect fully. For instance, assessment data for Key Stage 2 is still not analysed technologically. However, generally staff make good use of new technologies to support their lesson preparation and in the production of learning resources. While senior management endeavours to reduce the amount of administration required, consultation on local and national initiatives has recently caused considerable bureaucracy for staff.
- 105 The governing body has ensured funds for special educational needs are targeted appropriately by providing a high level of support from classroom assistants; this has a significant positive effect on pupils with special needs, who as a result, make good progress. The recent arrival of 18 non-European pupils with English as an additional language has been managed very

effectively although this has required the redeployment of assistants to provide additional support. Some parents were concerned that other pupils were receiving less help and to a limited extent during the first few weeks this happened. Now, local authority advisory teachers are giving additional support.

- 106 The school provides a welcoming environment and is well maintained by the site manager and cleaning staff. The library has recently been refurbished and plans to develop the family room are in hand. Accommodation for the reception class is unsatisfactory but bids have been submitted for an extension to the nursery to create a single Foundation Stage building. The grounds are well laid out and include a flat, grassed area as well as a large paved playground. Pupils have recently helped plan improvements and during the inspection, new trees were planted as a result of a school council proposal.
- 107 Resources are generally of good quality and sufficient to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage. The library has deficiencies in areas of non-fiction, particularly in art, design and technology, music and world religions. Currently, the library is under-used as it has been unavailable for some months. However, there are very well organised resource boxes that are well used to support learning in most subjects. Resources for special educational needs are very good.
- 108 The headteacher and governors are aware of the principles of best value and apply them when making major spending decisions, such as the refurbishment of the library and the provision of the new computer suite. In making decisions, governors compare their school with others. They seek to gain value for money through competitive tendering, using the guidance of the local education authority, and are able to account for their financial decisions. Financial planning is focused on supporting priorities for raising standards and provision. Last financial year, governors retained a large surplus to cover planned improvements to the building and the considerable increase in the deployment of classroom assistants. Financial control and administration are very efficient, as confirmed by the recent external audit, when only a few minor recommendations were made that are being carried out. The headteacher has very efficient support from administrative assistants, which enables her to carry out her everyday duties in developing teaching and learning.
- 109 Taking into account the low attainment of pupils on entry, the considerable success with their personal, emotional and social development and the generally good levels of achievement, the school uses its funds wisely to provide satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, headteacher and senior management team should:

- (1) improve pupils' speaking and listening skills in order that they can think, read and write more effectively in all subjects by
 - supporting teachers in developing teaching and pupils' learning and thinking in speaking and listening as a prior activity to reading and writing;
 - planning learning activities in all subjects that give pupils the opportunity to discuss with each other and adults what they are studying using an appropriate vocabulary;
 - creating a learning environment that celebrates the spoken word and encourages pupils to want to talk and listen.

(Paras 3,10-15,17,21,32,45,46,53,60,94,112,119,123-125,127,128,139,143, 148,152,163,166,180, 183,185,193,228)

- (2) develop pupils' problem solving and investigative skills, particularly in mathematics and science by:
 - providing pupils' with more opportunities for discussions and trying out and testing their own ideas when carrying out experiments and investigations.
 - Helping teachers develop their teaching of those skills

(Paras 14-16,32,39,40,45,53,94,134,146,168,169,172,188)

- (3) identify an acting co-ordinator for music, develop teaching and pupils' learning and provide sufficient music opportunities in order to meet requirements.

(Paras 45,51,57,94,211,213,214)

- (4) adapt existing schemes of work in science, art, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education to make learning activities more suitable to the interests, stage, style and rate of learning of pupils.

(Paras 19,25,44,51-53,56,94,162,163,165,173,216,224)

- (5) Use assessment information more effectively in the Foundation Stage, foundation subjects and information and communication technology to identify and tackle specific weaknesses in individual pupils' learning

(Paras 79,94,98,117,174,209,229)

The governing body may wish to consider including the following minor shortcomings in their action plan:

Teachers' subject knowledge in art (45,182)

Consistency in marking (48,154)

Planning for spiritual development (63)

Omissions in prospectus and governors' annual report (85)

Deficiencies in non-fiction books and fiction book displays (107,141,159,188,230)

Handwriting and presentation (135)

Climbing apparatus for physical education (222)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	23	19	14	0	0	0
Percentage	3	40	33	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	37.5	204
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8	129

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	66

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	20	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	17
	Girls	9	12	12
	Total	24	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (70)	83(83)	83 (73)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	17
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	25	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (77)	74 (70)	77 (73)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	13	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	Under 10	Under 10	Under 10
	Girls	Under 10	Under 10	10
	Total	13	Under 10	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (52)	27 (48)	73 (76)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	Under 10	Under 10	Under 10
	Girls	Under 10	Under 10	10
	Total	13	10	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (68)	38 (68)	73 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	18

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	310.74

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65.45
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	613,813
Total expenditure	587,537
Expenditure per pupil	2,192
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,877
Balance carried forward to next year	54,152

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	260
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	45	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	45	45	6	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	48	23	6	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	45	19	10	3
The teaching is good.	52	42	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	29	16	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	29	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	42	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	48	13	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	35	39	13	6	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	32	13	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	48	13	13	10

Despite small number of returns (12%), there is a clear indication of parents'/carers' positive views and concerns.

Other issues raised by parents

- Effect of supply teachers on pupils' education

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

110 The 78 children in the Foundation Stage are accommodated in a purpose built nursery and a reception class. They make a very good start to school through an effective induction programme. Children enter school at three-years-old with nearly all having very low levels of attainment. This goes right across the Foundation Stage areas, but children's abilities in speaking and listening are particularly weak. Children achieve well during this stage and make considerable improvements in all aspects. The good progress made is because of the generally good teaching they receive. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, because of the very low attainment on entry, very few children attain the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are caring, they learn to be supportive of each other, are respectful to adults in school and they are enthusiastic learners.

Personal, social and emotional development

111 Children develop their personal, social and emotional skills effectively through a broad and well-organised range of opportunities provided by the teachers and nursery nurses. By the time children leave the reception class, very few will have reached or exceeded the early learning goal for personal, social and emotional development. Staff know their children very well and successfully help them to begin to develop self-esteem and confidence. Children's efforts are praised and rewarded by staff in a quiet and effective manner, using positive reinforcement and stickers as appropriate. They develop a sense of right and wrong because staff expectations are clear. A small number of four-year-old boys and a girl, who were noisy during a session on number, were quietly spoken with later about their behaviour. This calm and reflective approach was effective in helping the children consider their actions. Children interact appropriately with each other and the adults in the class. At the start of each day, the children in the nursery choose their first activity and show increasing independence in moving to their next one. They share and co-operate with each other in the wide range of interesting activities planned for them. When working on the computers they are generally able to take turns with the mouse. A group in reception experimenting with breads from around the world waited patiently for their turn to spread tomato sauce or humus. Children in both the nursery and in reception class with special needs and English as an additional language are well supported by staff and are included in all activities. Staff work well in helping most children develop a sense of belonging in the school.

Communication, language and literacy

112 Children respond well to the early emphasis on learning songs and nursery rhymes to help develop their language skills. Two, four-year-old boys, using a computer, had to manipulate the mouse to follow the 'Once I caught a fish alive' rhyme. They did this accurately and enjoyed the activity. The children are relaxed and happy to talk with adults. Many of the youngest children greet visitors with a friendly 'hello' and inquire about their name with interest. However, the speech of many children in the nursery is not always clear, expression is poor and the range of vocabulary limited. Listening skills are not well developed by many. The teachers and nursery nurses set up interesting opportunities for all children in the Foundation Stage to develop and practise language skills. Role-play activities and regular discussion times encourage children to join in themes such as food. The children learn new vocabulary and improve their expression but staff do not always structure the teaching of speaking and

listening as effectively as they could in this crucial area. Children enjoy books staff share with them, handle them carefully and know that print carries meaning. A small group of children in reception were not overly enthusiastic readers of the books they had to read in their book bags. They recognised a few key words and were beginning to learn initial sounds. Only a few reception children are supported regularly at home by their parents in reading and this helps them make better progress. During a shared reading of the text 'We are going on a bear hunt', children listened with interest and were able to retell the main parts of the story. Children are generally well supported by staff in their language activities, they gain in confidence and make good progress by the end of the Foundation Stage. The environment in both the nursery and the reception areas provides a good resource for all aspects of language. Although the experiences the children receive are rich, few children starting in Year 1 reach or exceed the early learning goal for communication, language and literacy due to the very low starting point.

Mathematical development

- 113 Mathematics is a focus for all children and routines are regularly used to reinforce their understanding. The older children in reception are able to use a number line and the highest attainers count to ten confidently and are able to use apparatus to make 5 in different ways. A reception boy thought hard to come up with $5 + 0$ and was rightly praised and given a sticker for his efforts. Opportunities to link this important number work to real life activities are not always utilised by staff. However, an excellent example of this happening was when a small group of English as an additional language learners worked very effectively in the role play shop with a learning support assistant. They were learning the names of fruits and counting using the fruit. The reception class children were also learning how to count to 5 in Arabic and Chinese, reflecting the diversity and inclusion practices in the class. There were good links in mathematical development to other areas of the curriculum. Older three-year olds, engaged in outdoor play in the nursery, drew chalk pictures of the Hungry Caterpillar from a story they had read together. The children then wrote numbers on the caterpillar segments and jumped along them, chanting the sequence to 10. Children in reception worked on the same story, reinforcing pattern and sequence; "*on Monday he ate 1 apple and he was still hungry*" added a boy. The majority of children achieve well but by the time they start Year 1 only a few will have attained the early learning goal in mathematical development.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 114 Many children enter the nursery with a limited experience of the wider world. They struggle to name common foods such as some fruit and vegetables but they are interested in the world in which they live. Staff work hard to present a wide variety of rich, first hand experiences to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the time they leave the reception class, they have achieved much but again few reach or exceed the early learning goal. They are developing an understanding of their immediate environment and show an interest in the people around them. They are eager to learn using information and communication technology and know how to use simple programs on the computer. Children in reception demonstrated their interest in objects during a lesson on food. They had to grate cheese for a pizza base and although they did not know the name for the grater they were keen to learn the word and use it.

Physical development

- 115 Teachers make optimum use of space available to enhance children's physical development within the classroom areas and in the outdoor play area. The reception children have regular time in the designated nursery outdoor play area. Nursery children have every opportunity to explore space in the safe areas that form part of the purpose built nursery, both indoors and outside. Children move confidently, are aware of their own and others' space, follow simple commands and respond to a range of signals. During an outdoor play session, young three-

year-olds were well supported by a nursery nurse, who organised a chalked-out road system. 11 children, all on three-wheelers or scooters, followed the road, stopping on the traffic light commands issued first by the assistant and then by a child. Children showed a good awareness of space, confidently using the range of climbing, sliding, jumping and wheeled equipment available. Children's skills develop well using this larger equipment but they struggle with the finer skills of cutting and colouring carefully, for example. They make both a physical and mental effort to listen carefully and respond correctly to adult requests and instructions. Children again make good progress, especially in their movement, but few fully attain the early learning goal in this area.

Creative development

- 116 Children are given a wide range of creative development opportunities often within cross-curricular themes. The food topic in the nursery allowed three-year-olds to experiment with cooked and dry pasta, investigating how it feels and making pictures with it for Christmas decorations. A variety of stimulating activities are well planned to match the age and maturity of the class. They carry out creative tasks sensibly, handling potentially messy materials with care. A lesson in reception using clay, plasticine and play-dough enabled four-year-olds to explore the different qualities of each material. The actual quality of the children's work was not of a high standard for their age but they had the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills. Staff provide a range of musical experiences for children. A nursery nurse used bells during discussion time to give the children practise in keeping to a rhythm. As part of the food theme, staff planned for three-year-olds to make musical instruments using pasta and pulses. A super example of children experiencing musical sounds took place at the end of a session in the nursery. The nursery nurse showed the three-year-olds a violin and asked them how it made sounds. The children experimented with holding the violin and drawing the bow across the strings. The assistant then played a short piece of violin music to illustrate the musical potential of the instrument. Children fully engage in the activities prepared for them. However, by the end of reception most do not attain the range of goals in this area because of their low prior-attainment.

Teaching

- 117 The teaching in the Foundation Stage is generally good; this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers and nursery nurses work very well together forming a strong team. The planning of activities for the children and the organisation within the nursery and reception classes are particularly effective elements. The planning makes full use of published resources and sessions are very well organised around the full range of early learning goals in the nursery and with a strong lesson focus in reception. Children's attainment on entry is checked and recorded using several schemes but this information is not yet being fully analysed by staff to identify accurately specific weaknesses. Progress is monitored and records kept on individual pupils, which are regularly reported to parents at appropriate times during the year. This stage of education is well led by an experienced team leader. The school's early year's plan appropriately identifies the need for continuous staff training. Within the school plan is a proposal to build a new reception base alongside the nursery one. Staff have created a positive working environment in the reception area. However the current accommodation is poor and very shabby from the outside. This is the only blight on an otherwise very good start to school life for the children.

ENGLISH

- 118 Since the previous inspection there has been satisfactory progress overall in raising standards at both key stages, although these remain below average.
- 119 Standards in writing and reading for seven year olds have improved faster than the national rate. This is because teachers have effectively used the National Literacy Strategy and expectations of pupils are appropriate. They are taught a wide range of literacy skills systematically. Results for eleven year olds show a steady rise overall in line with the national trend. Whilst all Key Stage 2 teachers have implemented the Literacy Strategy, there are still gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, teachers know their pupils well and use assessment effectively to identify these deficiencies. Standards in speaking and listening at both key stages have not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection and are well below average. The school has identified this as a development priority.
- 120 The quality of English teaching is good overall. It is never less than satisfactory, is often very good and in one instance excellent in Year 2. The National Literacy Strategy has generally helped teachers to become more secure in many aspects of English, particularly writing. Most teachers show a good understanding of how their pupils learn successfully and in the best lessons provide a balance of class, group and individual teaching. They demonstrate and explain clearly how to apply new skills before asking pupils to do so independently. Resources are generally well used and most activities provided are appropriately matched to the pupils' needs.
- 121 Some teachers are effectively making links between reading and writing in other areas of the curriculum. For example a Year 3 class studying World War 2 in history were asked to write about what it would feel like to be an evacuee. The class read "Sid's War" and then used the information to support their own writing. A boy wrote: *"I think it would be horrible to leave your mum and dad. I would cry my eyes out"*.
- 122 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of speaking and listening are less secure. Too few structured opportunities are planned for pupils to develop these skills at both key stages. For example, teachers do not consistently model effective talk or give pupils time to discuss their work before writing.
- 123 By the time they are seven, pupils are keen to talk about their experiences and respond enthusiastically to questions. However, many have a limited vocabulary and find it difficult to select words to express themselves effectively. Consequently, they do not extend their ideas and their explanations lack detail, as when explaining how to solve a mathematical problem. Year 2 pupils need a high level of teacher and classroom assistant support to help them to develop their answers.
- 124 Similarly by Year 6, many pupils do not express themselves well, explain their ideas clearly or clarify their points of view without a lot of teacher prompting. Whilst at both key stages, good questioning by teachers helps pupils to respond appropriately, on occasions, Key Stage 2 pupils are not given enough time to think before answering. Although Year 3 pupils were given the opportunity to raise their own questions for their history projects, this practice is not consistent across the school. As a result, discussions and lines of enquiry are often over-directed by teachers.

- 125 Throughout the school, teachers are successfully helping pupils to become more aware of new subject vocabulary; for example in science and history, this is displayed in classrooms. Whilst teachers identify opportunities for speaking and listening across the curriculum in their planning they do not yet share a consistent school practical approach to developing these skills as pupils progress through the school.
- 126 Whilst standards in reading are below average in Year 2 and 6, they are improving overall. Key Stage 1 pupils are taught in an enjoyable and systematic way through well- planned literacy hours. As a result of teachers' lively and structured approach to teaching phonics through games, pupils are making good progress in acquiring basic skills. Class and group teaching is particularly effective in developing pupils' reading. A group of Year 2 average ability pupils were well supported in locating information from a book to answer the question 'What does a hamster eat?'
- 127 Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils are developing skills for reading information books and know the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils can use a contents page and a boy explained, "*the index is in alphabetical order*". Although the majority of pupils can apply a range of word attack strategies when supported by an adult, they are less secure in doing so independently. As a result, Year 1 and 2 pupils are using mainly phonics to work out unfamiliar words. Only the higher attaining Year 2 pupils could explain how to use context clues. A girl said, "*You can leave the word out and keep going and then you know it*". Most pupils are able to retell stories in simple terms but their limited speaking and listening skills prevent them from providing additional detail or predicting what might happen next.
- 128 Similar attention is given to developing reading skills throughout Key Stage 2. However a significant proportion of pupils do not reach the average levels expected by age 11 because poor speaking and listening skills hinder their progress. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 use a limited range of word attack strategies and depend on breaking words down into syllables and using their knowledge of phonics. Few use meaning to predict words they do not know. In Years 5 and 6 many pupils are unable to 'read between the lines' or to deduce meaning from their reading. Teachers are aware of these shortcomings and are effectively concentrating on developing pupils' understanding. A Year 6 class were challenged to compare a video version of 'The Secret Garden' with the written text. Through skilful teacher questioning, they made good progress in understanding that reading is more than decoding words accurately. A boy explained, "*You find out what is happening by reading what people say and how they say it*". A girl added, "*In the film you had sad music but in the text you had to imagine it*". By Year 6, nearly all pupils can explain how to use the library and higher attaining pupils understand the classification system.
- 129 Writing standards are below average at both key stages. The school has recognised the need to raise standards in writing and this has been a development priority. As a result, standards are improving and in the 2001 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 a high proportion of pupils achieved better results than expected.
- 130 Year 1 pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to explore writing through practical activities. In the hospital role play area, they demonstrate their knowledge of letter sounds by attempting to label body parts using letters they know. In Year 2, pupils learn how to organise different types of writing. They achieved particularly well when the teacher effectively demonstrated how to write instructions for making jam tarts. Pupils helped select appropriate vocabulary to start each sentence and explained, "*You need bossy words, like cut, put, get.*

You don't say please". Throughout the lesson there was a strong emphasis on talking before writing. As a result, pupils were successful in writing their own instructions for unusual sandwiches. They could use bullet points, sequence their ideas and select appropriate vocabulary.

- 131 By Year 2, most pupils can write simple sentences but do not consistently use capital letters and full stops. They are beginning to apply their phonic knowledge to spelling and spell some common words correctly.
- 132 In Key Stage 2, the recent nationally initiated "grammar for writing" training is beginning to have a positive effect on teaching. Teachers are now placing greater emphasis on basic skills, including grammar. As a result, pupils achieve well when they explore the language and style of different texts in class reading sessions. They are helped to imitate these features in their own work. In a Year 4 class, the teacher helped pupils to identify a checklist for writing play scripts by exploring a published play. This supported them in successfully organising their independent writing.
- 133 Many pupils throughout the key stage have a limited vocabulary and this is reflected in the quality of their written work. They are more adventurous in their word choice when teachers draw their attention to those used by authors. A Year 3 class looked at texts to identify vocabulary for introducing and concluding dialogue. They identified 'said' as Mr Boring and successfully referred to alternatives such as laughed, shouted, exclaimed and screamed. This way of working is helping pupils make better progress in the organisation and content of their writing. However, some aspects remain unsatisfactory. Generally pupils write in simple sentences and do not add sufficient detail to help their writing flow. There are gaps in their phonic knowledge and many do not consistently apply spelling rules in their independent work.
- 134 Teachers generally have appropriate expectations of pupils' productivity, concentration and behaviour in literacy lessons. Consequently, the majority of pupils behave well but lack independence and self-motivation. As a result of the good support and consistent behaviour management by teachers and classroom assistants, most pupils work hard and achieve well. All staff have very good relationships with pupils. This gives them confidence in contributing in lessons because they know they will be encouraged and supported. Consequently, pupils are effectively helped to learn from their mistakes.
- 135 Pupils generally enjoy their work because teachers plan interesting and varied activities, which ensure all are actively involved. A Year 4 class was challenged to change words to the past tense; they quickly recorded their answers on individual white boards and showed them to the teacher enabling her to quickly assess learning. Most pupils concentrate well because they are told how much time is available for tasks; consequently good pace is maintained. However, too many pupils do not take enough care over the presentation of their work. Although there is a new handwriting policy and pupils' handwriting practice is neat and well formed, they are not transferring these skills to their independent writing.
- 136 Assessment is systematic and good use is made of valid and reliable tests. Results are analysed and identified areas of weakness are addressed through setting clear curriculum targets for improvement. Writing progress books have been introduced in which pupils produce a half-termly sample of unaided writing. This is marked against clear objectives and checked by all teachers for consistency in judgements. Individual pupil targets for improvement are identified and pupils are helped to evaluate their own progress against these.

Throughout the school, all work is marked often with encouraging comments, which are helpful in giving pupils further guidance on areas to develop.

- 137 Pupils with special educational needs benefit particularly from these effective assessment procedures and the high level of support from the co-ordinator and classroom assistants. Pupils' individual weaknesses are identified early and appropriate plans are devised to meet their needs. They are often taught in small groups through very well planned and organised learning activities. Consequently, pupils are encouraged by their success and their self-esteem improves. A Year 4 boy said, *"I like the small group. They help me learn and I'm getting good"*. Pupils at Year 5 and 6 are organised into ability groups for literacy. Overall, this ensures that work is generally well matched to their stage and rate of learning. However on occasions, some pupils in the lower attaining set are not given clear enough explanations to help them understand their work and activities are not broken down into small enough steps to help them succeed.
- 138 Overall, pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by class and local education authority teachers and classroom assistants. As a result, they make good progress in learning to speak, read and write English. Year 6 pupils have subject vocabulary dictionaries in their first language. They are encouraged to write in their first language and translate this into English at home, often with support from other members of the family. The school's careful attention to these pupils' needs ensures that they are included in all lessons and are well motivated to succeed.
- 139 Literacy skills are developed to some extent in other subjects but there is not a consistent approach, particularly in focusing on speaking and listening before introducing written tasks. As a result, most recorded work is limited and not well presented. Pupils rely heavily adult guidance and do not willingly pursue their own lines of inquiry.
- 140 English is well managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator who is well supported by the headteacher. Her monitoring role is developing and involves evaluating teachers' planning and standards of pupils' work. As she was only recently appointed, she has not yet had opportunities to observe teaching and learning but this has been carried out by the headteacher. Most significantly, the co-ordinator has thoroughly analysed the 2001 assessment test papers and has produced a detailed report on her findings. As a result, she has a clear view of what needs to be done to raise standards and has set clear priorities for improvement.
- 141 Resources for teaching literacy are good overall. The library has very recently been refurbished and, as yet, contains a limited range of fiction and non-fiction books. The school is aware of this and is working with the Plymouth Library Service to improve provision. Whilst a suitable range of books is available in classes, these are not well displayed. Classrooms do not provide a stimulating environment for reading. Consequently, pupils are not encouraged to browse or practise their reading informally. Whilst there is some evidence of the use of new technologies to support English, this is underdeveloped. However, there are plans to establish information and communication technology resources in the new library.
- 142 The school receives additional literacy support from the Education Action Zone that has proved effective. It is well placed to tackle identified weaknesses in English and has the capacity for further improvement.

MATHEMATICS

- 143 Standards in mathematics are below average at the end of both key stages. This has remained unchanged since the last inspection. However, pupils generally achieve well apart from when their undeveloped speaking and listening skills limit their ability to reason out problems and deter them from undertaking investigations for themselves.
- 144 Teaching is good overall in mathematics; in a Year 3 lesson, the teaching was excellent. Teachers have a thorough knowledge and understanding of mathematics and as a result lessons are well planned with a strong focus on the acquisition of basic number operations. Teachers employ a good variety and range of methods in their lessons. Learning intentions are made explicit to pupils and they clearly understand the purpose of lessons.
- 145 Teachers and classroom assistants work well together particularly to support pupils with special educational need and those with English as an additional language. As a consequence, these pupils make good progress.
- 146 Teachers manage pupils well in lessons. Pupils listen and work hard in the introductory oral session as teachers ask appropriate questions well matched to the stage, style and rate of learning of individuals. While pupils show interest when working independently, some, particularly the low attainers, have insufficient practical strategies for solving problems when they get in to difficulties. Overall, there is a good level of achievement.
- 147 Most pupils in Year 2 can count from 1 to 100 mentally. They understand two digit numbers, can count in two's forward and backward, recognise smaller and larger numbers and their place value as well as odd and even. They can measure using some standard units and tell the time using o'clock and half past. Pupils recognise and use pence and some are starting to understand larger denominations. Simple two-dimensional shapes are recognised but not always named correctly. They can collect and interpret data using block graphs and Venn diagrams. Pupils also recognise simple fractions. They have some difficulty with explaining their mathematical thinking using appropriate mathematical vocabulary.
- 148 Pupils in Year 6 can use simple strategies to carry out mental calculations. They use written methods to 10,000 and can calculate to two decimal places. They compare and order large numbers. Pupils multiply by 100 and divide two digit numbers by a single digit. They are able to double and halve numbers. Pupils understand the language of probability and can record equivalent fractions and change mixed numbers to improper fractions. Most recognise reflective and rotational symmetry and name types of triangles and find the areas of simple shapes. Pupils collect and organise data using appropriate graphical representation. They can plot four way co-ordinates. They also have difficulty in explaining their methods due to their limited everyday and mathematical vocabulary.
- 149 Teachers' planning is good as it makes sure that the work builds on pupils' earlier learning. In a Year 1 class, pupils with English as an additional language were given visual signals to enable them to take part in the mental activity. More able pupils in a Year 2 class were challenged by very good questions. In Year 3, pupils worked hard and enthusiastically at problem solving; the lower attaining pupils were encouraged to draw picture clues after excellent modelling in the mental and oral start to the lesson while more able pupils were able to work out the same problem mentally. In Year 4, pupils were helped to understand fractions by the teacher's good use of visual aids at the start of the lesson. A treasure map fascinated Year 6 pupils. The clues for finding the treasure were prepared by the teacher in advance and

were very effective in helping low attaining pupils complete the task. In all lessons, where classroom assistants were present, pupils were well supported by further explanation, use of a small whiteboard, careful explanation and targeted questions.

- 150 Teachers use mental and oral sessions effectively and re-enforce work already covered. The most useful sessions are where teachers direct questions at named individuals by carefully matching the level of difficulty appropriately.
- 151 Classroom assistants effectively support pupils with special educational needs enabling them to participate and succeed. As a result, they make good progress. Pupils are organised into three classes by prior attainment Teachers report that this has helped them teach to their strengths and provide more appropriate learning activities and support when teaching to a narrower ability range. Inspection findings confirm that pupils generally achieve well in these classes.
- 152 Generally teachers make an effective link between the introductory oral session and the main teaching focus. In a Year 6 lesson on co-ordinates, the independent work was just at the right level to enable pupils to practice and consolidate their recently acquired understanding and they sustained their concentration and interest. Tasks are generally sufficiently challenging and groups and individuals are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants working effectively together. Pupils with this support work hard and achieve well. In Year 1, low attaining pupils enjoyed estimating numbers of counters and, by gradually increasing the difficulty of the tasks, the assistant ensured that each challenge was appropriate. However, when pupils are given problems to solve that demand discussion to clarify their thoughts, they do not confidently reason out their approach. In a Year 4 lesson, average attaining pupils finding fractions of numbers were not sure how to attempt this work and found it difficult to say why.
- 153 Teachers use the closing session of lessons effectively to check how things have gone and explore pupils' difficulties. Pupils are encouraged to say what went well and what they would like to do better. In a Year 6 lesson on co-ordinates, pupils confidently demonstrated their understanding and a higher attaining pupil was able to apply this in different ways and helped others to see the possibilities.
- 154 Teachers know their pupils very well and regularly check their progress using standardised tests. They analyse this information effectively to identify general strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and set appropriate targets for year groups but not yet for individuals. While pupils' work is marked regularly for accuracy, little guidance is given to help pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- 155 Homework is at an appropriate level and quantity but many pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, do not regularly complete work on time. When parents encourage their children at home and tasks are completed and returned, learning is more effective.
- 156 Pupils frequently use information and communication technology to support their learning in mathematics, usually as part of a subject topic. For instance, a Year 6 class used computers to explore different shapes in art and produced a wide range of symmetrical and non-symmetrical patterns. Other new technologies are also well used, such as calculators and overhead projectors, to make learning easier and more accessible. However, there are insufficient programs to cover all aspects of the programme of study.

- 157 There are number of opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills to support their learning in other subjects. For instance, in Year 6, there is a time line from 3000BC to the present to support the study of Ancient and Modern Egypt; in Year 1 directions and plans of the school are displayed; and in Years 5 and 6 computer generated graphs show aspects of weather. In Year 4 science, pupils used thermometers and stop clocks in their experiments on insulation.
- 158 The co-ordinator has been effective in ensuring that teachers have gained confidence in teaching mathematics and the National Numeracy Strategy is well established. He has been instrumental in establishing regular assessment procedures that have identified pupils' difficulties with oral work and has put in place appropriate actions to tackle shortcomings.
- 159 There are appropriate resources, effectively used by staff. Displays are attractive and helpful to pupils, particularly in developing their mathematical vocabulary and understanding signs and symbols. There are very few books on aspects of mathematics in the library and pupils do not use specialised mathematics books to support their learning through individual study.
- 160 The additional support from the Education Action Zone has proved helpful. Overall the school is making good progress in mathematics and there is a strong commitment from all staff to improve and further develop teaching and pupils' learning and raise standards further.

SCIENCE

- 161 During the inspection, only one lessons of science could be seen at Key Stage 1 and three at Key Stage 2. Judgements have been made using these observations, talking with pupils, examining their work, discussions with teachers and looking at their planning.
- 162 Standards for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are below the national average. This is a decline since the previous inspection when standards were average. The school reports that developing teaching and learning in science has not been a priority until this year. The science co-ordinator has only just taken over responsibility for the subject and has already identified pupils' scientific and investigative skills as a weakness and planned appropriate actions to raise standards. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in science.
- 163 In Years 1 and 2, pupils are making appropriate gains in their knowledge and understanding of science and generally achieve well. Teachers plan interesting lessons with a variety of practical activities that are well suited to the style, stage and rate of learning all pupils. Consequently, pupils find science enjoyable and are able to sustain their concentration as they move from one activity to another. They participate enthusiastically in all aspects of lessons. However, they do not observe and record their findings accurately. Their poor language and literacy skills limit their ability to express themselves scientifically. While teachers are providing appropriate scientific vocabulary, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to try out and consolidate their speaking and listening when discussing experiments and investigations. As a result, their recorded work is often incomplete and gives little information about their views and ideas.
- 164 In a Year 2 lesson on electrical circuits, the lesson was planned well to build on pupils' prior learning and helped them effectively apply and consolidate new concepts. They handled the equipment carefully and knew how to ensure good contacts when attaching wires between batteries, bulb holders and buzzers. The core activity was well matched to pupils' abilities and those with special educational needs were appropriately helped to complete simple circuits and

made good progress. More able pupils were given sufficiently challenging extension activities to stretch their thinking. A higher attaining boy discovered how to connect a parallel circuit using a buzzer and bulb. Pupils with English as an additional language had no difficulty joining in as demonstrations of what they had to do were clear and easily interpreted. In addition, other pupils readily gave help when problems were encountered, such as constructing a makeshift connector for a broken battery holder. There was insufficient time for many to record their findings, and while drawings correctly showed completed circuits, labelling and explanations were limited and inaccurately written.

- 165 Across Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well in gaining knowledge and understanding but do not reach standards of attainment appropriate to their age. They have particular difficulties with forming views about what is likely to happen in different circumstances and how to test out their ideas. However, a great deal of appropriate learning is now taking place through the effect of recently introduced teaching methods that place greater emphasis on prediction and systematic enquiry. Pupils approach the subject with a high level of interest, enthusiasm and desire to understand the natural and physical world and their place in it.
- 166 In a Year 3 lesson on dental hygiene, the teacher used well produced and attractively presented visual aids to show the name and location of different teeth. While pupils had difficulties pronouncing “canine”, “molar” and “incisor”, they understood the different functions. When carrying out the practical work of counting and locating each type of tooth in their own mouths, they did so carefully and systematically. However when recording their findings on a chart, they became confused when trying to name each tooth correctly although the numbers were accurate. In discussions at the end of the lesson, it was evident that pupils, including those with special education needs, had made good progress and had a much clearer idea of how their teeth operate and why they should keep them clean.
- 167 In Year 4, pupils showed confidence in making predictions about what they thought might happen in an experiment on the effectiveness of different insulating materials. They understood the need for making sure all the hot potatoes were of the same size and temperature and that one should not be wrapped in material. As one average attaining boy noted, “*We need a control potato to see if the covers make a difference.*” However, in the five-minute intervals between measuring the fall in temperature, pupils were required to make notes of the experiment. They found this difficult because of poor writing skills and some lower attaining pupils lost concentration and needed considerable encouragement to complete their recording.
- 168 By Year 6, most pupils still have gaps in their knowledge and understanding and do not confidently suggest and test hypotheses independently. They need considerable help and support, particularly to think scientifically so that they can discuss and analyse different suggestions. They are also constrained by their unsatisfactory writing skills and do not confidently record findings and conclusions. However, they are now being given very appropriate activities to help them catch up.
- 169 In a Year 6 lesson on the orbits and relationship between the earth, moon and sun, a practical demonstration outside with individuals holding and moving different sized balls was most effective in helping pupils understand the relative perspectives. As one higher attaining boy remarked, “*As the moon rotates around the earth, the part of the moon the sun can shine on changes, so we see different shapes lit up.*” However, most pupils could not come up with their own ideas without considerably encouragement and questions from the teacher to focus their thinking on specific aspects of the investigation.

- 170 Throughout both key stages, low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are fully involved in practical investigations and are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants working effectively together. The progress of these pupils is constantly checked and adults intervene appropriately to help break down learning into manageable steps. Consequently, they make good progress.
- 171 The recently arrived non-European pupils are able to take a full part in science lessons. Specialist support is given in lessons, sometimes by visiting teachers from the local education authority. Generally, these pupils have little difficulty with the acquisition of scientific knowledge; understanding and skills once they have mastered the key English vocabulary. As a result, they are making good progress in science. In the Year 6 follow-up lesson to the practical investigation on orbits, two Malaysian girls were effectively helped to record their findings in English by the specialist teacher. She also prepared an assessment sheet to be translated into their first language by the parents and completed by the pupils as homework.
- 172 A strength of the teaching in science is the way teachers manage pupils to ensure practical activities are carried out effectively; the very interesting and well resourced learning activities; and the very good team work between all adults involved in supporting and teaching pupils. Pupils consequently generally work hard in these lessons and sustain their interest and concentration. The increasing security of teachers in scientific investigation and inquiry is beginning to have a positive effect but as this is a recent improvement, most pupils still lack confidence in posing and testing their own ideas.
- 173 On occasions, the activities teachers plan do not meet the needs and interests of pupils and they become inattentive, particularly when carrying out independent study. This is because teachers sometime do not adapt national guidance on science sufficiently to take into account the rate and stage of learning of many pupils in their class. In a Year 4 lesson on changing states of substances, the concepts and comparisons were too difficult for many pupils to work through on their own. However, in the concluding part of the lesson, the teacher made good teaching points from their difficulties by simplifying different aspects using effective questioning.
- 174 The subject is well led by the recently appointed co-ordinator who has made a good start in providing staff with appropriate support, advice and guidance. She has monitored teaching and learning and used this information to plan a programme of school-based in-service training to start from next term, using expertise from the local initial teacher training institution. A review of the current scheme of work is planned to produce a broader and more relevant curriculum. Pupils' progress is carefully assessed but individual targets have not been agreed to help them improve.
- 175 Overall, science resources are good, allowing pupils opportunities to engage in an appropriate range of investigations in and outside the classroom. The school library has a satisfactory range of scientific books and is beginning to be used to support topics. New technologies are used effectively; CD-ROM's and the Internet are researched and data processed from experiments. The school grounds and locality are often used to broaden pupils' experiences and raise their awareness of how scientific processes, such as pollution, effect their immediate environment.

- 176 The recent initiatives to improve teaching and learning and focus more on developing pupils' scientific skills through practical activities are beginning to have a positive effect on raising standards.

ART AND DESIGN

- 177 During the inspection, only one lesson of art was observed in Key Stage 1 and two lessons in Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on talking with pupils, examining their work, discussions with teachers and looking at their plans.
- 178 This evidence indicates that the attainment of pupils in the school is generally below that which is expected for their age at both key stages. This is a decline since the previous inspection. By the time the pupils leave the school at eleven, they have experienced a broad range of work including two and some three-dimensional art and design using a range of appropriate media.
- 179 Teachers encourage pupils to express themselves through art, often linking the work to other subjects. Year 5 and 6 pupils made canopic jars using modelling material linked to an Egyptian theme in history lessons. The school has an artist visiting throughout the year working with groups of pupils to produce a series of dramatic wall hangings using batik techniques on a literary theme. Year 6 pupils described their contribution to this enthusiastically, explaining the connection with Macbeth for one of the hangings. Pupils in Key Stage 2 keep sketchbooks although the work in them shows a quite limited range of ideas and techniques. Pupils' sketching and drawing generally are of a poor standard, although they improve slightly when drawing from real life observations rather than using ideas from books. When they draw everyday objects, such as packaging boxes and toothpaste tubes, they enjoy this work.
- 180 Opportunities to reflect on what they have done, discuss improvements and evaluate finished pieces are limited. Older pupils in Year 5 and 6 are not confident when talking about their work and cannot explain how to improve it. They enjoy outdoor visits in the locality when they sketch and they vividly remembered a trip to the Tate Gallery in St Ives. They are not able to talk specifically about artists and craftspeople and have a limited knowledge of materials and processes. However, they gain much pleasure from art and making things. They have experienced working with clay, colour and pattern and some painting. They enjoy using modelling materials to make three-dimensional artefacts such as a crocodile in the library when they were younger, but their knowledge and skills are limited. Pupils use computers and CD-ROMS to research art projects. Year 5 pupils investigated Egyptian art for a history topic and generated patterns linked to a mathematical activity.
- 181 Art and design work is well displayed in classrooms and around the school. There are examples of both two and three-dimensional work. The displays and the resources available to pupils in the library show a lack of attention to the work of artists and craftspeople from different periods and cultures. There are very few books in the library related to art.
- 182 The subject co-ordinator is currently on long-term absence. Teachers are aware of the pupils' below average attainment in art and design and present them with a range of enriching experiences across both key stages. Some teachers report a lack confidence in teaching aspects of the subject and find national guidance on art not particularly helpful in meeting the needs of their pupils as much of the suggested work is too difficult. Resources are sufficient to teach art and design, with the exception of library books.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 183 During the inspection only one lesson of design and technology could be observed. Judgements have been made on this, talking to pupils, examination of their displayed work and in discussion with teachers and looking at their plans. This evidence indicates a decline in standards since the previous inspection as pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 6 is below that expected for their age. This is because pupils' generally poor communication skills prevent them from effectively discussing, evaluating and refining their work.
- 184 Projects are appropriately planned following national guidance. Pupils are provided with enriching practical activities, which provide them with opportunities to practise design and making skills. Good links are made with art, for example Year 2 pupils designed and decorated squares to make a quilt.
- 185 Pupils in Year 1 planned to make fruit kebabs using dough first to design their products and Year 2 pupils used appropriate craft techniques of cutting and folding to weave paper. The showed pride in their finished work but had difficulty in explaining the making process. In Year 6 pupils designed and made fairground attractions. They could explain the process in simple terms and discussed the problems encountered. A pupil said, *"The paper kept falling off, I had to find a way of sticking it"*.
- 186 Good teaching observed in a Year 5/6 class effectively supported pupils in designing, making and evaluating decorated Christmas biscuits. Pupils weighed ingredients accurately and are developing an understanding of their properties in foods, as a pupil explained: *"The egg will stick it all together"*. Through the teacher's clear demonstration of using appropriate vocabulary, pupils learned to use words such as "mix", "combine", "beat" and "blend". Consequently, they repeated their explanations more accurately. Pupils were given clear success criteria to help them evaluate their finished products.
- 187 As a result of the teachers' very clear explanations, pupils are aware of health and safety procedures when working with food and cooking utensils.
- 188 Generally pupils know that the design process requires careful planning. Whilst they are gaining an appropriate range of craft skills they are less successful in developing their ideas through independently evaluating processes and products. Pupils enjoy their work and are well motivated. They make appropriate use of a wide range of resources although there is a limited range of books in the library.
- 189 There are some opportunities for pupils to use new technologies in design and technology. For example, very good use is made of the local resource centre Seymour House where pupils experience making circuits, using electronic programmable toys and control mechanisms.
- 190 The co-ordinator has recently taken responsibility for the subject and is enthusiastic to develop design and technology further. She has a clear view of what needs to be done and is providing informal support for colleagues. However as the subject is not a school development priority, there have not been opportunities to observe design and technology in classrooms in order to monitor and develop teaching and learning further.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

- 191 During the inspection, only one geography and two history lessons were observed. Judgements have been made using these observations, talking to teachers and pupils and

looking at curriculum plans and work. This evidence indicates that most pupils' attainment in Year 2 and in Year 6 is generally below that expected for their age in both geography and history. Standards were below expectations in geography in the previous inspection and satisfactory in history.

- 192 In geography, pupils in Year 2 have some knowledge about countries in the world that a toy, Barnaby Bear, had visited with teachers and friends. These visits are identified on a map of the world and pictures further help their understanding. They know that India is a hot country and that elephants live there. They also know that Barnaby Bear has visited China and Australia. Pupils understand that the internet and atlases can help them find out more about these countries. They know that they live in Plymouth and are able to identify places they have visited on a large-scale map.
- 193 In Year 6, pupils are aware that there are many other countries in the world and they also know that maps can be used to plan journeys. They know that temperature, weather and the type of terrain varies but do not use geographical terms confidently when describing the differences and similarities between places. They are able to point out the relative positions of some countries on a large atlas and have some knowledge of Afghanistan from television news reports. They also use the internet and appropriate computer programs to expand their knowledge of the world.
- 194 In history pupils in Year 1 are developing a sense of sequence and chronology. They know that history is about things that have happened in the past and are using appropriate vocabulary. Year 1 pupils were particularly enthusiastic about their visit to a Victorian school. *'They whipped you if you got it wrong in school,'* stated one girl.
- 195 Year 6 pupils have studied a range of historical periods and remember facts about ancient Egypt, Vikings and Tudors. They are able to compare ancient and modern Egypt and relate events to a time line. They are also learning research skills and how to present their findings. As a result, they can explain why clothes and houses were different in the past and what they were made with.
- 196 In a Year 6 lesson on Ancient Greece, the pupils enthusiastically gave dramatic presentations of different myths. The teacher had prepared the class well through careful questioning and explanations. She encouraged them to think beyond the facts of the stories to think how the different characters might have behaved. The group work was very well managed when pupils were practicing their short plays.
- 197 In Year 3, pupils posed and answered questions about the Second World War after visiting a local museum. In Year 4, they have explored reasons for Vikings settling in Britain and produced posters to display their findings.
- 198 The co-ordinator for geography has an overview of the subject mainly through looking at teachers' plans. Development priorities are discussed with staff and have resulted in agreement on the content and order of teaching units; next to be considered are mapping and fieldwork skills. The co-ordinator for history has only recently taken responsibility for the subject and has produced a draft policy. Neither co-ordinator has yet had the opportunity to observe and support the development of teaching and learning in geography and history.
- 199 Both subjects have well organised resources for each unit of work. These resources are further enhanced by loan packs from the Devon Museum Service. Effective use is made of

the local area for educational visits to support topics, such as to museums and field centres. New technologies are increasingly being used to enrich and support pupils' learning. The library has an appropriate range of books for both geography and history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 200 Only two group sessions of information and communication technology were seen during the inspection. Judgements have been made based upon these observations, discussions with pupils, interviews with teachers and examination of curriculum plans and pupils' work.
- 201 There has been some improvement in raising standards in aspects of information and communication technology since the previous inspection, particularly in control technology. Computer hardware has been considerably updated, a networked computer suite established, each classroom has two or three computers and teachers have become far more secure in their knowledge and use of new technologies.
- 202 The school has very comprehensive development plans for the subject, including the further upgrading of hardware, extending software and the further improvement of teachers' knowledge and skills. Curriculum planning is now comprehensive and monitoring and assessment procedures are in place. As a result, pupils now have good opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills and although standards in both key stages are below national expectations, pupils achieve well.
- 203 Pupils use a range of appropriate information and communication technology resources to help them in their learning. Year 6 pupils are fully aware of the use of modern technology in everyday life, such as mobile telephones and text messaging, using remote control devices in the home and the importance of the internet in communicating and getting information. In both key stages, pupils are experiencing a range of applications to help them find things out. They use CD-ROMS on various topics such as the Egyptians, rhyme and story, confidently. They are able to store and retrieve data on computers using spreadsheets and word processing packages. Some lower attaining Year 3 boys completed a spreadsheet using data about their friends covering name, age, gender, birthday, hair, eyes and favourite food. Year 5 pupils designed their own bedrooms on the computer and were able to produce bar charts to show where people in the class went on holiday.
- 204 Many activities set for the pupils are very challenging and require a good deal of adult support. Pupils in Year 2, exploring the use of control technology, had to program a device to move forwards and turn to reach several destinations. They were able to make it move forward but had difficulty programming the turns at the appropriate time. Although the task was engaging and challenging, it was not broken down into sufficiently manageable learning steps.
- 205 Year 6 pupils effectively learned how to log on and search for very specific comparative information between Plymouth and London. The explanation was clear, the resources and technology accessible and the pupils' collaboration and behaviour was very good. However, pupils needed adult support to complete the task and, although their mouse skills were competent, keyboard skills were slow and were a barrier to the speedy completion.
- 206 Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make good use of information and communication technology. Specific language programs, such as one supporting the teaching of phonics, help pupils consolidate their learning.

- 207 All pupils enjoy using new technologies and they work well individually and in pairs. Two Year 4 boys helped each other to log on and bring up a selected file of a play script to work on, highlighting text, changing font, colour and making bold. There is a very positive attitude to the subject and pupils are keen to take part in sessions in the computer suite and use the technology in their classrooms.
- 208 Whilst staff are generally beginning to be more confident in their knowledge and understanding of the subject, using technology does lead to some frustration when computers break down and the internet link does not function. However, they are trying out more technologies to support teaching and learning. In this, they are helped by a well thought-out curriculum guide that shows clearly the type and range of activities for each year group. Sometimes planned work is too hard but staff are reviewing and amending schemes of work in the light of experience.
- 209 Although there are clear and detailed monitoring and assessment procedures in place with weekly monitoring of groups and individuals, this information is not always used to inform planning. Currently, the headteacher is leading the subject with tremendous support from a classroom assistant. The assistant has specific technical subject knowledge that is benefiting pupils and staff alike. The headteacher provides the overall direction and thrust and this makes for a good team that is effectively moving the subject forward.
- 210 The school is well placed to build on recent improvements in information and communication technology by further improving resources, adapting curriculum plans, using the assessment data effectively and by continuing staff training.

MUSIC

- 211 Only one lesson of music could be seen during the inspection. There was little further first-hand evidence available. The school has had difficulty providing opportunities for music since the co-ordinator was seconded from the beginning of the autumn term. The school reports that standards are below average for seven and 11-year-olds. This is a decline in standards since the previous inspection when pupils' attainment was as expected in Year 2 but below for the oldest in the school. The curriculum does not meet requirements as insufficient time is allocated for music. This is unsatisfactory.
- 212 A part-time teacher takes Year 2 and 3 for music each week when the class teachers are released to undertake their co-ordinator's role. In the Year 2 lesson observed, the introductory session was well planned and organised to help pupils respond to changes in pitch. Pupils listened attentively, handled and played pitched percussion instruments carefully and sensitively. The average and higher attaining pupils were able to follow and repeat a short melody pattern, the first line of 'Mary had a little lamb', by raising and lowering their hands. However during group work, they found the task of putting together and playing individual chime bars to repeat a melody with four notes too difficult. They did not have sufficient understanding of notation and became confused when required to select the appropriate chime bars from an octave of eight.
- 213 Currently, there are too few opportunities for pupils to enjoy listening to, making and performing music. On one afternoon a week, pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5 are able to make music together as part of a percussion band, organised by the Education Action Zone. In the first half of the term, they used junk materials and now are playing a range of un-pitched percussion instruments. All pupils enjoy take part in school productions held at the end of terms, which involve singing. Key Stage 2 pupils attend the local arts education festival held in

the spring term, where they experiencing a wide range of different types of music. No pupils take advantage of the Education Action Zone's subsidised instrumental tuition.

- 214 The school reports that nearly all teachers are insecure in their knowledge, understanding and skills in music and find the national guidance and existing schemes of work not particularly helpful to non-specialists. The development of teaching and learning for music is not planned until 2003. This is unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 215 Only three lessons of physical education in Key Stage 1 and none in Key Stage 2 were seen during the inspection. Judgements have been made on these observations, talking to pupils and discussions with teachers and looking at their plans. This evidence indicates that attainment by pupils in Year 2 is generally as expected but by Year 6 is below national expectations.
- 216 Physical education continues to be well taught in both key stages. Pupils achieve well and learn at a good pace. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when levels of achievement were only satisfactory. Good support from the co-ordinator is helping to improve teachers' confidence, for example in the area of dance. Eight out of 10 pupils leave school aged 11 being able to swim 25 metres and they are aware of the principles of water safety.
- 217 In the games, gymnastics and dance lessons seen, the teaching was generally good. In a Year 1 lesson developing skills of receiving and sending a ball, pupils worked co-operatively with good control so that they made good progress. Year 2 pupils in a dance lesson worked hard to explore the space in the hall and create simple sequences to music. Teachers planned their lessons well with a clear focus for the pupils. Attention was paid to warm up activities so that pupils learn about the effects of exercise on their bodies. A Year 2 girl, *My heart is now really going fast after my dance.*"
- 218 Pupils take part in lessons with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They are well behaved, persevere and co-operate effectively with each other. A group of 4 boys and 2 girls in Year 6 were keen to talk about the clubs they attend for football and netball. They generally enjoyed all aspects of physical education lessons.
- 219 Pupils with special educational needs, including those with English as an additional language, are fully involved in activities, benefiting from good support from classroom assistants. Consequently they are able to make good progress.
- 220 The school has a balanced programme of activities covering athletics, dance, games, gymnastics, swimming and outdoor activities that meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator.
- 221 Extra-curricular activities are arranged by staff for the pupils and are much appreciated by those who participate in them. Activities include football, netball, athletics and plans for tag rugby.
- 222 The school hall is adequate for indoor activities. The apparatus and equipment are generally of sufficient quantity. An exception to this is the range of climbing apparatus, which is somewhat limited. The issue of storage of some of the larger equipment was noted in the last inspection and this is still not satisfactory. The outdoor play area is a good-sized hard surface area. There

is a grassed area for summer games that is of adequate size. Pupils out of school hours make effective use of this.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 223 During the inspection, three lessons of religious education were seen at Key Stage 2 and none at Key Stage 1. Judgements have been made based upon these observations, discussions with pupils, interviews with teachers and pupils and examination of curriculum plans and pupils' work.
- 224 Standards in religious education in Years 2 and 6 are below that expected in the locally agreed syllabus. This is a decline since the previous inspection, when standards were as expected. The school has found the new, locally agreed scheme of work difficult to adapt to meet the needs and interests of pupils in the school. Its revision is a school development priority
- 225 In both key stages, pupils have some knowledge of Christianity and Judaism and at Key Stage 2 are beginning to understand aspects of Hinduism and Islam. Pupils in Year 2 know and can recall parts of Bible stories from the Old and New Testament. They know the names and reasons for some of the principle Christian festivals. Pupils in Year 6 know some of the similarities and differences between world religions. They are being helped considerably by the recent arrival of non-European pupils, who are Muslims. The school is effectively using these pupils and their families to raise awareness of the everyday customs and festivals associated with Islam. A very well presented display on the first floor corridor has stimulated much interest in Islam.
- 226 When teachers select interesting topics supported by well-chosen learning resources, the differences and similarities between different religious custom comes to life for pupils. In a Year 6 lesson on important events in people's lives, the teacher compared a video of her own marriage with a film of a Hindu wedding. The pupils were fully engaged throughout the session and joined in enthusiastically in discussions. They observed carefully and most could recall important features and explain what was happening and why.
- 227 While older pupils do not have much understanding of why people follow organised religions, they are more aware of how spiritual beliefs effect values and human actions. This is because the school makes effective links between pupils' personal, social and emotional development and topics in religious education. During the inspection, the school theme was about ways of protecting the world. Each day during acts of worship, whether in class or key stage, this theme was explored through stories and activities and pupils were invited to think quietly about the issues raised and a prayer was said. In related lessons, particularly in science and discussion times, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the beauty and wonder of the natural world and think about how they could help to protect it from human destruction.
- 228 In a Year 4 lessons on "looking after our world", again the teacher had chosen very interesting resources to stimulate pupils' thinking. She presented the class with a series of photographs and illustrations ranging from exotic holiday locations and beautiful natural and made scenes to pictures of pollution and squalor. They were eager to discuss in pairs and share their views with the class before sorting the resources into those that pleased God and those that did not. They also sustained their interest when making posters to show their ideas on how to encourage others to be more thoughtful about protecting the world. They shared these with the school in the Friday assembly but lacked the confidence and skills to speak clearly about what they had done.

- 229 Teachers generally find it difficult to use the recently arrived locally produced schemes of work, as the learning stages are too broad. The co-ordinator, who has a secure knowledge and understanding of religious education, is planning to work with a colleague to produce more helpful guidance in the spring term. She is also working on making assessment procedures more related to what pupils' strengths and weaknesses are so as to be more effective in showing what they need to do to improve.
- 230 There are very useful topic boxes covering the main world religions and other related themes. While the main library includes sufficient books on Christianity, there are only a few on other religions. The local vicar is a frequent visitor to the school and helps extend pupils' experiences about all aspects of religion, not just Christianity. Classes visit her church and homework classes she organises locally. As a result, she is well liked and respected and provides a good role model to pupils of a person who practices her religious beliefs.