

INSPECTION REPORT

ORCHARD VALE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whiddon Valley, Barnstaple

LEA area : North Devon

Unique reference number : 131273

Headteacher : Mrs. Janet Baker

Reporting inspector : Mrs E.B. Camplin
3586

Dates of inspection : 26th – 29th March 2001

Inspection number : 230902

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Westacott Road Whiddon Valley Barnstaple North Devon
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Pastor David Kay
Date of previous inspection:	New school - no previous OFSTED inspection report

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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3586	Elizabeth Camplin	Registered inspector	Music Equality of opportunity	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9652	Colin Herbert	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1193	Gillian Wiles	Team inspector	Geography History Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	
15447	Christine Glenis	Team inspector	English Religious education Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
29378	Ken Watson	Team inspector	Science Physical education	The curriculum and other opportunities
20326	Peter Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Information and communication technology (ICT)	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Orchard Vale Community School is situated in the Whiddon Valley area of Barnstaple. It includes a special centre for up to ten children with speech and language impairment. The school opened in September 1999 because of a successful Capital Challenge Bid for regeneration and competitiveness in North Devon. The number on roll has grown rapidly from the original 130 to 308, including 46 part-time nursery children. As the school has expanded, so has the staff team. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds and are predominantly white. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. There is a similar number of boys and girls. However, class size and the number of children in each age group are very uneven. Many have very different prior learning experiences, including a significant number with a history of disaffection. However, the attainment on entry of children under five is broadly average. There are 67 pupils on the register of special educational needs. Seventeen of these pupils have statements. This is a very high proportion compared with most primary schools and they require very specialised help with speech, communication, behavioural and other complex learning needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is sound and at an early stage of development. Its strengths outweigh weaknesses and its growing reputation as the hub of the local community is deserved. The small group of pupils in Year 6 achieved very high standards in statutory assessment tests in English, mathematics and science, the core subjects, in the year 2000. The performance of pupils in Year 2 was well below the national average. However, it was not an indicator of an under-achieving school when the unique circumstances of high mobility and a well above average percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs are taken into account. The quality of teaching is sound overall and is leading to steadily improving standards at the three primary stages. Standards, overall, are currently below average in core subjects. Learning is less than satisfactory in a small percentage of lessons, mainly because teachers do not yet know all children's needs well enough. The headteacher provides energetic and determined leadership and is very effectively supported by the governing body in shaping the future direction of the school. The school improvement plan is comprehensive and includes everything the school needs to do to move towards educational excellence, a clearly communicated aim. In almost unique and very challenging circumstances, governors are providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The educational partnership with parents and the community is very successfully promoted.
- The school caters very effectively for four and five year olds and also for pupils in the speech and language centre.
- Good teaching in art, music and gymnastics enables pupils to perform well in these subjects.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and helps children with very different educational experiences to develop positive attitudes to school.
- Inspired by the leadership of the headteacher, staff and governors work hard. They share a commitment and capacity to improve the school's effectiveness and achieve their key aim for educational excellence.

What could be improved

- The school should raise standards further in core subjects, through better teaching of science, information and communication technology (ICT), numeracy, reading and writing skills.
- The National Curriculum should be planned and implemented to ensure its full and balanced coverage, particularly in control technology and swimming.
- Efforts should be continued to find more effective ways to help staff with co-ordinating roles monitor and evaluate plans of action aimed at enabling pupils to achieve their best in all their work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION (*not applicable*)

STANDARDS

The table that shows the standards achieved by eleven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests has been omitted because the number of pupils involved was below ten.

The small group of Year 6 pupils reached very high standards in statutory assessment tasks in the year 2000. The attainment of pupils in Year 2 was poor compared with national standards. Their achievement reflected both the high incidence of pupil mobility within the year group and the well above average percentage on the register of special educational needs. Standards have steadily risen by one to two levels since the autumn term 2000, but at both the infant and junior stages are still below average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils attain good standards in art, gymnastics and music and their performance is broadly matched to national expectations in speaking, listening and handwriting, religious education and other foundation subjects. Cross-curricular use of reading, writing and numeracy skills is improving but at a rate that needs to increase. Pupils' overall sound progress is in no small measure due to a significant improvement in their social and personal development. The school's targets for the current Year 6 are appropriately challenging and pupils will do well to reach them. They are based on national averages in the year 2000 as the school has no realistic benchmarks of its own. Children in the speech and language centre and at the Foundation Stage for nursery and reception children make the most rapid gains compared with their prior achievement. The youngest children are likely to reach all the expected early learning goals in the six areas of learning. Reception pupils are already exceeding expectations for social, emotional and personal development, the foundations for ICT and knowledge of the alphabet and its associated sounds.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' enthusiasm for school is good. They display positive attitudes, particularly in the most stimulating lessons and during school assemblies in which children take a lead role.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. It is good or better in two-thirds of lessons, during special events and on educational outings.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Pupils are successfully forging a whole-school identity. Members of the school council, together with the 'ECO' group, sensibly represent pupils' views about how to improve the school and its environment. Some pupils are still over-dependent on adults in lessons.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory compared with all primary schools.

Most pupils respond appropriately to the school's aims, values and high expectations of them. They have a remarkably good understanding of citizenship and the principles of sustainability. Some pupils, particularly in Year 6, are finding it hard to overcome entrenched learning and behavioural difficulties and this sometimes impedes their learning and that of their peers. The very good behaviour of the children at the Foundation Stage accelerates their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Overall, teaching is satisfactory and meets the needs of all pupils though the quality varies between classes, subjects and key stages. In 93 per cent of lessons teaching is satisfactory or better and seven per cent is unsatisfactory. In 68 per cent it is good or better and in 18 per cent, it is very good or better. The best practice occurs in the speech and language centre, the areas of learning for children in the reception year, art in Years 1 and 2, and in music and gymnastics throughout the school. These lessons succeed because teachers plan the content very effectively for all groups and hold children's interest. Pupils then maintain a very good pace of learning throughout the lessons. The teaching of English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, is mainly sound and enables some good use of oral and mental skills, especially at the start of lessons. Pupils' use of writing, handling data and reference skills, in support of other subjects, is improving but is still under-developed. This demonstrates a need for teachers to increase efforts to assess individual needs precisely in order to plan appropriate learning objectives for all pupils. Gaps in teachers' knowledge and understanding in science account for some unsatisfactory teaching and learning. The teaching of ICT is developing well after a year when resources were entirely inadequate to develop all the skills necessary for balanced progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Curricular provision is sound. It is broad based and stimulating but lacks sufficient balance and continuity to be uniformly good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very effective for children in the speech and language centre and sound overall. Facilities for disabled pupils are very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision is very good overall. It reflects the emphasis placed on helping pupils to adjust to their new school. It fosters pupils' self-esteem and supports their all-round learning. The example set by the staff fosters pupils' pride in their school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils and their personal development is managed well. Reports to parents are very good. The use of assessment and marking to aid lesson planning and academic progress is too inconsistent in quality to be fully effective as yet.

There is a very good working partnership with parents. Their involvement, the excellent contribution of the community and the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities add significantly to pupils' quality of learning. Curricular provision for the Foundation Stage is good. Statutory requirements for ICT and swimming at the junior stage are not met. There are inconsistencies in the quality of planning for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are satisfactory, stemming from the good role model provided by the headteacher and predominantly sound support from colleagues with co-ordinator roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have made a good start in setting up this new school. Curricular aims are appropriate and well communicated. Personnel and financial management procedures are effective. To fully meet statutory requirements shortcomings in ICT and swimming must be addressed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has made sound progress in establishing how well it is performing. Its weaknesses are being systematically addressed through the implementation of a detailed school improvement plan. This contains relevant objectives but needs to extend over three years to be realistic.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of financial resources. Special grants are deployed particularly well to encourage the involvement of the community and support agencies in advancing pupils' learning.

The school is soundly staffed. All categories are very committed, as they show in their daily work. They are deployed well and benefit from a very good induction and professional development programme. Expertise in early years education, special educational needs, art and music enhances pupils' learning. Lack of expertise in science slows learning down.

The staffing structure is incomplete. This places extra strain on the small senior management team and leads to some weaknesses in the monitoring of teaching and academic standards. The inspection judgement is that when all posts are filled and the roll stabilises, the school's capacity to improve its performance will be very good. Accommodation and learning resources are broadly sound. They add to the quality of provision in art, music and gymnastics. Pupils are disadvantaged by the lack of a good sports field, outdoor space and equipment for the youngest pupils, a well-stocked library, and adequate space in some classrooms. Governors clearly understand, and soundly apply, the best value principles of competition, consultation, challenge and comparison to financial planning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel that the school has a strong sense of identity and is the hub of the local community. • They are very happy with the quality of support for children with special educational needs. • They feel that the school encourages and welcomes their help. • They believe that their children are taught well and make sound or better progress. • They are proud of the part pupils play in the 'ECO' group and school council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They wish that the size of some classes could be reduced. • A minority is dissatisfied with the amount of homework given to children. • A very small minority disapproves of provision in the nursery.

The team agreed with parents' positive views, though found some teaching and learning to be in need of improvement. They judged the organisation of the curriculum for three to five year olds to be good. There are appropriate aims to reduce class size and to review the success of the homework policy.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school's situation is almost unique and very different from most primary schools. In the year 2000 it received its first indicators of how well pupils achieve compared with all schools nationally. Results of statutory assessment tasks in core skills in English, mathematics and science revealed a very mixed picture of attainment ranging from very high standards in Year 6 to very low standards in Year 2 that were in the bottom five per cent nationally. This was as the school had anticipated from the outcomes both of their own assessments when pupils were first admitted to the school, and subsequently when conducting end of year teacher assessment. Causal factors were predominantly related to pupils' diverse and complex history of prior attainment in other schools. A significant minority were severely disaffected on admission. There was also a far higher percentage of children with statements of special educational need than most schools across the country would experience.
2. The school did not have available to it fully reliable assessment information about all its older junior pupils when required at the beginning of the academic year to set forecasts for Year 6 pupils' performance in Years 2001 and 2002. It based its targets on national averages in English and mathematics in the year 2000. These are 75 per cent and 73 per cent respectively reaching level 4. The school will do well to reach these targets this year as currently most pupils in Year 6, though they have made sound progress overall, are still producing work of a below average standard in English, mathematics and science. Year 5 pupils' work is of a higher standard and their progress suggests that they are much more likely to achieve the goals set.
3. At the infant stage, the results in the year 2000 were unusual as they went against the national trend for gender differences in achievement. Boys outnumbered and also out-performed the girls, particularly in mathematics. The school did not specifically identify this pattern though it recognised boys' difficulties and set in place an effective programme of support to address their disaffection. It intends to analyse gender outcomes this year in order to establish whether girls are still behind the boys.
4. The inspection team focused on the achievement of both groups in the classroom in order to establish whether girls are under-achieving compared with boys but did not identify a significant difference in provision for either gender. The issues arising relate to a lack of consistency in learning outcomes by both boys and girls. Discontinuity of teaching caused by a relatively recent change of school impacts in different degrees on all classes but particularly those at the junior stage. This factor is compounded in one of two large classes containing the Year 5 and 6 pupils by recent teacher absence on sickness grounds. Overall, lack of sufficient assessment information leads to some weaknesses in teachers' planning and also contributes to the different attainment and rate of pupils' progress. The school knows this and is taking appropriate action to address under-achievement. It is providing Year 5 and 6 pupils with additional support and intends to strengthen the way assessment procedures are carried out.
5. The school's analysis of levels achieved in the year 2000 tests was appropriately used to select Year 3 pupils for additional literacy support and this has been soundly planned and implemented. Classroom assistants have received appropriate training and are responsible for short support sessions every week that they plan and review with the special needs co-ordinator or the deputy headteacher. Parents are pleased with the sound progress made by Year 3 pupils and by boys within the current Year 2 group, all of whom were virtually reluctant to co-operate a year ago when asked to 'read and write' whatever the context. These pupils now want to improve and are at last

talking about books with enthusiasm. They are beginning to enjoy making books and talking about them.

They are still at the very early stages of phonic awareness and cannot use sounds to work out unfamiliar words for themselves. They continue to have difficulties with concentration but are persevering with appropriate targets to learn basic key words and letter sounds. From a very low baseline they are responding positively to the school's special provision for them and gaining confidence and skills in literacy.

6. Children in the nursery and reception classes are easily attaining the steps in the learning goals for their age groups. Standards achieved by the older reception children already broadly match the desirable learning outcomes and are high in social, emotional and personal development, aspects of language, literacy and communication and knowledge and understanding of the classroom use of ICT equipment such as a mouse and monitor. These achievements reflect good progress as a result of stimulating practical activities that encourage the sustained development of early communication, reasoning and problem-solving skills.
7. During the inspection attainment at Key Stages 1 and 2 was below average in literacy and numeracy, science and ICT. It was satisfactory in speaking and listening and in the development of handwriting. Standards were sound in history, geography, and design and technology. At both key stages they were above expectation in art and the gymnastics component of physical education. They are high in music by the end of the junior stage but junior pupils have not yet learnt to swim. Standards are therefore inconsistent across subjects. They reflect the challenge this new school faces in catering effectively for pupils' needs. It is most effective in enabling pupils with statements of special educational need for speech and language to make consistently good progress in all subjects. The progress of pupils on the register of special educational needs in mainstream classes is generally satisfactory but pupils do not always meet expectation in relation to their individual education plans because these are not precise enough to help staff plan appropriately. Higher attainers are not consistently achieving as well as they could in core and other subjects. Variations are partly due to shortages in resources but also to too few opportunities for independent work on research and investigative tasks that provide sufficient focus and challenge.
8. The school is working towards a situation where all pupils can successfully fill the gaps in their learning. It can look back on its five terms of existence and see encouraging indicators of progress over time. Standards that were at the lowest grade in all core subjects at the infant stage have improved to the equivalent of a grade below average. Satisfactory value has been added in relation to pupils' earlier results. The headteacher, staff and governors are aware that they need to accelerate this upward trend in pupils' performance as it is still not as good as it could be.
9. From an evaluation of all the work seen, inspection findings are that achievement is sound overall given the disparate levels of prior attainment a year ago. The school has worked hard. However, in a context of continuing high pupil mobility, one year has not been long enough to enable pupils to catch up with the standards achieved in most schools. There is evidence of some under-achievement. However, the school is looking forward to next year when it should achieve stability in its pupil numbers and workforce, and inconsistencies in rates of progress can be addressed. In summary, the school must ensure it adds rigour to the approach to raising standards in core subjects and skills in the future.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' enthusiasm for school and to learning, and relationships between one another and pupils and adults, are equally good. Behaviour in and around school is satisfactory. However, the extent to which pupils are consistent in sustaining the school's expectations for high standards in their conduct and willingness to co-operate is notably different at the three stages of learning. It

demonstrates the significant and positive difference the school's ethos is making to children with the least entrenched behaviour patterns and attitudes.

11. Children in the nursery and reception classes respond very well to school routines, aims and values. Their achievement in the social, emotional and personal area of development is demonstrably high and a significant strength of the school.
12. At the infant stage, attitudes and behaviour are good or better in two-thirds of the lessons. They did not fall below a satisfactory standard in any lessons. Pupils' relationships are harmonious yet a minority find it hard to concentrate and persevere with tasks. This shows that they need to be given more specific guidance of what is required of them.
13. At the junior stage, although pupils' response is good or better in approximately half of the lessons, behaviour falls below an acceptable standard in a small number of lessons. Significantly, these are in the core subjects that present them with a greater degree of intellectual challenge. Unless the activities are very well matched to their needs a few of the oldest boys display symptoms of disaffection. Learning in a science lesson, for example, was hampered by inappropriate behaviour. Teachers have to expend considerable energy and skill to successfully motivate all pupils in Year 6. In Years 5, 4 and 3, pupils' behaviour and attitudes improve. This was particularly noticeable in gymnastic lessons where pupils were physically challenged and eager to succeed. Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, made good progress in these lessons.
14. In activities outside the classroom, the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and response to opportunities for personal development are more consistent than in the classroom. Standards of behaviour in the playground and in the dining hall are generally good. Pupils are able to collaborate well and enjoy working together in many contexts. For example, some pupils were observed working as a team on willow weaving in the playground. The behaviour of pupils using the 'walking bus' to school is consistently very good. They walk sensibly and observe all the directions of the 'driver' and the 'conductor'.
15. The opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school are good overall. In discussion with visitors, representatives of the 'ECO' group and the school council talk with considerable maturity and are very polite and well mannered. They speak enthusiastically about specific responsibilities such as chairman, vice chairman and photographer. Pupils organise competitions around such subjects as saving electricity and judge the entries themselves. Members of the school council have organised a suggestion box and they meet regularly to discuss matters of school importance. Pupils also gain in confidence and self-esteem by taking part in the very wide range of extra-curricular activities such as the singing and computer clubs. Additionally, pupils have made generous donations to a number of charities including Marie Curie Daffodil Day, South West Children's Hospice, Red Nose Day and the India Earthquake Appeal. This provides a clear indication that pupils are well aware of those less fortunate than themselves. However, pupils' experiences of undertaking independent research and investigation to enhance their learning are far more limited. In many lessons they are very reliant on teacher input.
16. Pupils view the behaviour policy to be beneficial to the whole school community. They are proud that they have had an opportunity both to help to create it and monitor its effectiveness through the work of the school council. Parents have positive views about its impact upon behaviour in school. These were clearly reflected in comments made at their meeting with the Registered Inspector and through responses to the questionnaire.
17. Attendance rates are satisfactory and broadly in line with national average. The level of unauthorised absence is also broadly in line with national average. Pupils arrive at school on time. One pupil has been excluded.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Overall, the effectiveness of teaching is sound. However, when analysed for quality across the school, it is much better in some classes than in others. It reflects the relevance of the prime aim in the school development plan to raise the quality of teaching and learning to consistently good levels.
19. The best practice in terms of key stages is in the Foundation Stage of learning, where provision in the nursery and reception classes is good in all areas of learning. Significantly, the good adult:child ratio and sensitive child management make a positive difference to pupils' social, emotional and personal development. This is already good enough to indicate standards in this area will be well above expectation by the end of the academic year. Teachers encourage listening and language development in all the activities they provide. They anticipate the needs of children well. They ensure that those who need special help to succeed with lesson objectives receive appropriate support. They emphasise class routines and develop pupils' initiative and independence effectively in almost all lessons.
20. The quality of teaching is high for pupils in the centre for speech and language impairment and they make rapid progress. Teachers, including supporting adults, observe and monitor pupils' learning very well. They have high expectations for listening and concentration and are very effective in linking work to prior learning. The speech therapist and speech therapist language assistants withdraw pupils appropriately for one-to-one therapy and helpfully report back to the teacher. This information is then systematically recorded and used constructively in future lessons. Adults expect pupils to achieve their best and they usually do. The school aims for full social and partial curriculum integration for these pupils into mainstream classes and is successful in ensuring sensitive inclusion by their peers in many daily activities.
21. At the infant and junior stages the higher ratio of good or better teaching compared with the sound is less pronounced. Notably, a small minority of lessons fails to meet pupils' needs because they do not take sufficient account of pupils' different ages or special educational needs. Scrutiny of samples of pupils' work from the beginning of the academic year confirms the finding of good quality learning outcomes in the classes where teaching was seen to be strongest. It also highlights unsatisfactory discrepancies in teachers' expectations for standards achieved in pupils' recorded work, the challenge of activities set, and in the rigour or usefulness of marking strategies.
22. Further analysis of the lesson evidence indicates a complex picture with respect to individual subjects. At both key stages, science is most in need of improvement with regard to teachers' subject knowledge and expertise. Teachers at the infant stage are insecure in their understanding of forces and they also try to introduce the idea of fair testing too early for many pupils. In a junior class, lesson explanations of investigations and fair tests were muddled. The purpose of activities is not always sufficiently well thought through or communicated to pupils of very different levels of prior attainment. This is counter-productive in securing a good pace of learning based on clear understanding of what the tasks require of them. Pupils' knowledge of their own learning is inadequate in these circumstances.
23. Teaching in ICT was not directly observed except for one very small group of infants during a literacy lesson. Scrutiny of work was limited by its sparse quantity. It indicates sound progress recently at the infant stage and slow progress at the junior stage. Word-processing skills are progressing satisfactorily but use of control technology for communicating and analysing information is poor. This is almost entirely due to poor access to resources during the school's first year. It is also partly an issue of teachers' training needs. This is acknowledged and being

addressed appropriately through the professional development programme and the good use of a special training grant.

24. The teaching of English and mathematics is usually sound but there are some weaknesses. Some components of the literacy and numeracy hours are consistently productive. Others do not work as well as intended. The better features are the focus on developing speaking and listening skills and knowledge of different texts and styles of writing. In Years 1 and 2, for example, shared reading of a Caribbean poem was followed up with some very good discussion about its meaning and appeal. Oral sessions devoted to extending speed and dexterity in mental number operations are often effective. However, weaker practice sometimes stems from inadequate planning of the distribution of time. After a very promising start to a Year 4 mathematics lesson pupils were expected to sit listening for too long and this adversely affected the concentration of a small group of slower learners. Some tasks at group reading or writing time are too difficult. For example, this happened in Years 1 and 2 when children were composing sentences using words in alphabetical order. Sometimes teachers allow pupils to chatter too much and waste time. At other times, they unintentionally give confusing messages about their expectations. In particular, junior pupils do not have a clear enough understanding of what the main requirements are of them. They need to be told when it is appropriate to draft ideas quickly in order to refine and modify them and not to worry about the legibility of their writing as long as they can read it. They also need to be quite sure when they must aim for accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar and combine this with a good standard of presentation.
25. Mainstream class teachers and learning support assistants support pupils with special educational needs satisfactorily and, on occasions, well by helping pupils with their work and through valuable interactions with pupils. A strong feature of planning is that all staff write individual education plans for the pupils in their classes. However, the learning targets in individual education plans are inadequately focused, for example, 'to spell the first 100 high frequency words', or 'to take care in presentation of work'. The scrutiny of work from a sample of pupils with statements of special educational need indicates that they have access to the full curriculum. However, their work is often the same as their peers except that they do less of it independently, or teachers provide simpler tasks, but not always matched to pupils' individual needs.
26. There is plenty of good teaching at both key stages to build upon. One Year 4 pupil with a statement of special need has recently been provided with appropriate computer resources to help with her physical needs when writing. There is excellent liaison with a special school when the school caters for pupils with dual registration. Some subjects or aspects of subjects are taught particularly well and result in good standards being achieved. There is some excellent practice in music and very good teaching in gymnastics, art and very occasionally in English lessons. Teacher expertise, high expectations, perceptive management of pupils by both teachers and support assistants, and very good use of accommodation, resources and lesson time, combine to make these lessons stand out.
27. Junior pupils acquire good knowledge and understanding of musical elements, well-developed skills in performing and appraising, and an appreciation of how music adds to the quality of life in different cultures. Year 5 pupils demonstrated in one lesson an enthusiasm and zest for learning Caribbean rounds that was quite exceptional. At both key stages pupils respond very positively in gymnastics lessons. They have challenging but enjoyable tasks that test their physical capability and creativity but also extend their ability to collaborate and get the best out of each other's ideas and aptitudes. Adherence to the principle of educational inclusion was seen to be very strong in one lesson where a pupil with significant physical impairment joined in stretching and rolling activities with her peer group. Infants are acquiring a good understanding of perspective and tone and use this knowledge well when selecting the right kind of pencil to achieve a desired effect in their observational drawings.
28. Teachers and support staff are very conscious of the wide variety of prior learning experiences pupils bring with them when they are admitted to Orchard Vale. A history of disaffection and poor learning is something most teachers have to address. They are committed to trying to provide

children with worthwhile experiences that foster their self-esteem, the will to concentrate throughout lessons, and their contribution to the common good of the school community.

They are also trying to create appropriate opportunities for purposeful use and clear understanding of the value of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. They often get this right in practical subjects and in the best literacy and numeracy sessions. An art lesson at Year 5 and 6 where pupils were persevering with making a patchwork quilt to illustrate a story to be shared with younger pupils was one good example of this strategy working for most of the class.

29. In order to meet the school's aims, the headteacher and staff now need to take a fresh look at subject action plans and assess their impact on the way pupils respond and learn over time. Teachers and their assistants should evaluate how well the objectives in the plans focus on small, realistic improvement targets that can be easily understood by pupils and monitored by staff. A greater degree of rigour in lesson planning, and in the consistency of teachers' expectations, is now necessary to achieve an overall good quality of teaching and learning.

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

30. In the context of a new school, the curricular aims are highly relevant. The way that they are implemented is sound overall and good at the Foundation Stage. Much of what is planned is broad based and stimulating but at the infant and junior stages lacks sufficient balance and continuity to be uniformly good. Provision for pupils in the speech and language centre is particularly good and is satisfactory for mainstream pupils with special educational needs. Planning for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory but inconsistently implemented in some classes. At the junior stage, statutory requirements for ICT and swimming are not fully met. In carrying out their leadership roles the headteacher, staff and governors have been concerned to achieve their aims and produce a curriculum that grows and develops with the school. They have sought to stimulate pupils' pride in the school and wider community. They have placed high value on the expressive arts in order to raise self-esteem. In a short time they have been remarkably successful in achieving many of these aims. Music, gymnastics and the arts are strong features of provision and the contribution made by extra-curricular activities and community involvement is excellent
31. The school makes very good use of the new guidance for children of nursery and reception age and appropriate use of guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to implement the National Curriculum. It is steadily developing its own schemes of work. There is an effective programme for personal, social and health education that includes sex education and the misuse of drugs. The school meets requirements for religious education and collective worship. However, there is under-use of assessment information to inform future planning. In particular, it is inadequate in some mainstream classes for pupils on the register of special education needs. These pupils are sometimes withdrawn from shared reading and this can be helpful to them. The procedure also requires monitoring to ensure that access to new texts and for reflection on their, and peers', learning is not diminished. Where necessary, pupils have additional opportunities for speech and language therapy, hydrotherapy and occupational therapy – this is a strong feature of the school.
32. Some areas of the curriculum lack balance. The allocation of time to the different subjects is in line with national recommendations, but some lessons in core subjects are over-long and lack pace. A whole hour for gymnastics is also longer than necessary, particularly for the younger pupils. Time allocated to ICT was unsatisfactory until very recently because of a lack of resources. Inadequate use continues to be made of computers in classrooms to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Swimming does not yet appear on the timetable. The school has plans to rectify this situation and these should be implemented quickly.
33. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies is broadly satisfactory. However, the way reading is promoted through the individual use of books for independent research in other subjects is not strong, and this contributes to weakness in pupils' achievements in reading and writing. Numeracy skills are soundly taught during mathematics lessons. Opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum are effective in design and

technology and art but lack sufficient focus in some teachers' planning. More use of charts and graphs in other subjects such as history and geography would help pupils' understanding of the mathematical application of handling data.

34. Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. Richness and diversity are added to the curriculum through an extensive range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. These span academic study support, sports, the arts and other leisure pursuits. High numbers of pupils attend one or more of these during the year. There is a particularly successful 'ECO' group whose members have initiated and taken part in many interesting projects such as the willow sculptures in and outside school. Many members of staff willingly give a great deal of time and energy to these activities, and they have a very positive influence on the whole ethos of the school.
35. Equality of access to the curriculum is sound. The school is successful in ensuring the educational inclusion of disaffected boys who were under-achieving. It provides special opportunities that enables 'performers and musicians' to develop their skills, and for supporting pupils and families with physical disabilities. There are occasions, however, when a lack of challenge in classroom activities leads to some high achieving pupils losing interest so that their learning suffers. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to promote the mixing of boys and girls in group or pair work, for example in physical education.
36. Provision for personal, social and health education is good, and the contribution of the community to pupils' learning, particularly their social and cultural development, is excellent. The school is deservedly regarded as being at the hub of the community. Parents, grandparents, governors and many others are actively involved in a wide range of activities inside and outside the school. Visits, community projects, school productions, clubs and many more activities are significantly enhanced by community involvement. There are very good relationships with partner institutions such as the local secondary and primary schools, and particularly good links with a special school concerning dual-registered pupils. Through such activities as link days, 'taster' days, and joint science projects, pupils' confidence is enhanced.
37. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good. Spirituality and respect for beliefs and customs are promoted very well through assemblies, art, craft and music. Opportunities to link all aspects are wide ranging; for example the current focus on African chants promotes cultural understanding. Participation in special events, such as the Barnstaple Carnival, supports pupils' social and cultural development. Visitors such as artists, drama groups and authors further enhance this aspect of school life. The willow-weaving project provides a good example of the influence of local culture. The school council is very effective and valued by all pupils. The promotion of moral development is strong. The culture of the school is to value and respect everyone for what they have to offer. Good behaviour is promoted through such things as positive reward schemes, happy books and circle-time. On Fridays, pupils are always dismissed with a smile and a positive message. Children frequently take part in helping different charities such as the 'Glasses for Africa' collection going on at present. The whole-school behaviour policy is proving increasingly effective but care must be taken to ensure it is consistently applied in every classroom.
38. An excellent example of the effective promotion of all aspects of the curriculum for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was an assembly taken by members of the 'ECO' group about looking after the Earth. Pupils taking the lead showed maturity and confidence. The response of the other pupils, and the sensitive way staff joined in without dominating proceedings, spoke volumes about the high ideals promoted throughout the school by the whole staff team.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school takes good care of its pupils. There are effective and comprehensive procedures for both child protection and health and safety that result in a safe and secure environment for children to learn. A very good example of care systems in practice is the organisation of the 'walking bus'. Parents involved are very well briefed on all aspects of their role. Effective arrangements also exist

for first aid and the recording of accidents. Care is enhanced by the good quality of relationships within the school community; a view endorsed by parents who shared very positive comments about this aspect of provision.

40. The governing body has a good understanding of its responsibilities and regular discussions take place on matters of health and safety. Good records are held for pupils with medical conditions and for emergency contact, should it be required. The supervision of pupils at lunch and in the playground is effective. On one occasion an unsafe activity was observed but the school took immediate steps to ensure that it was not repeated.
41. The school has comprehensive policies for promoting good behaviour and attendance. There is clear guidance for all staff on how to ensure that pupils are treated fairly and with respect. There are well-defined reward systems to encourage and acknowledge effort and achievement. There is also a good description of the staged approach to the use of sanctions when pupils do not conform to the school's expectations of them. For the most part, rewards and sanctions are applied fairly and work in the interest of the school community. There were no incidents of an oppressive nature during the inspection and there are very few recorded. When they occur they are dealt with rigorously. There are isolated occasions in the older junior classes when teachers do not respond firmly enough in enforcing the 'time out' sanction for disobedience, whilst teachers can resort to the measure too quickly when admonishing infants for lapses in listening and concentration. Teachers consistently conduct registration in accordance with statutory requirements and, when necessary, alert the headteacher to patterns of irregular attendance or punctuality. In some cases the school actively involves parents in securing improvement and where there is a need, requests the assistance of external welfare agencies.
42. A sound assessment policy has been developed to help staff manage the process of measuring pupils' attainment and progress. The procedures identified are at an early stage of implementation so that some of the potentially effective methods for tracking progress identified in the school's action plan have yet to be fully introduced. At present they work best at the Foundation Stage where staff benefit from being in the position of being able to lay solid foundations for getting to know pupils and their needs. They obtain detailed information from parents about each child and build systematically on this as they plan early learning experiences. Teachers, and other supporting adults, regularly discuss and record significant information about each child's response to the week's experiences. They use their findings constructively to plan next steps. Their approach enables children in the nursery and at reception to make good progress.
43. The stages of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream school and the speech and language centre are implemented appropriately. Assessments of pupils attending the speech and language centre are particularly good and are made regularly by all adults involved with their learning. Reviews of statements are both up to date and well recorded. They generally link well with earlier and later individual education plans.
44. Teachers of children in the higher key stages inherited much of the information about prior learning from other schools. Some has been very helpful but in relatively equal proportion some has been sparse. Teachers are concentrating on adding to the detail in order to make links between assessment and lesson plans. They have done most work on finding successful ways to help a significant number of pupils to overcome negative attitudes to school, to concentrate and to co-operate with adults. There has been good use of additional funding to develop effective support structures for children who display acute symptoms of stress and disaffection. Useful procedures have been introduced for pupils to evaluate their own progress, including child/adult conferences and the setting of individual targets. Pupils speak positively about these opportunities. In discussion with inspectors some expressed a feeling that for the first time in their experience of school the teacher liked them. The school and parents are particularly encouraged by their success with pupils from Years 2 to 4. An analysis of inspectors' judgements of behaviour and attitudes in lessons for these age groups is supportive of the school's view.
45. The lessons that were judged unsatisfactory because of class management difficulties were in a class containing Year 5 and 6 pupils. These are the year groups where behaviour is seen to be

most fragile and where teachers, some on supply for absent colleagues, face the greatest challenge to their authority. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teachers need to add rigour to their written comments about academic achievement and progress.

Teachers in Years 5 and 6 achieve least consistency in the quality of marking and in setting targets for individual improvement. There is some very good practice, but too much is unsatisfactory, particularly in defining specific objectives for pupils with special educational needs. In a situation where pupils' needs are inadequately documented, needs cannot be quickly understood by supply teachers. Activities then prove to be inappropriate and fail to stimulate or advance the learning of any groups of pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. This aspect is a major strength of school life. It is very clear from the comments at the parent's meeting with the Registered Inspector and from their responses to the questionnaire that they hold the school in high esteem. For example, the parents of pupils with special educational needs are very explicit in their praise of the provision for their children. Their views reflect the success of the partnership that has been developed between the school and the home in a comparatively short time. Where parents have legitimate concern it is related to the effect of ever-increasing class sizes at the junior stage.
47. A large number of parents and other members of the community are closely involved on a regular basis. Many were seen helping their own children and others with their work. They make use of their specialist skills in such subjects as road safety, ICT, catering and sewing. More assist on educational outings and by hearing their children read in school and at home. This support has a very positive impact on children's learning. In particular, the assistance provided by parents who act as 'drivers' and 'conductors' of the 'walking bus' is excellent. In all weathers they walk their 'passengers' through the lanes of the estate in a very caring and responsible way. The major impacts of this initiative have been the reduction of the number of cars used to get pupils to school and the improved fitness and health of the children. The new Parent Teachers and Friends Association is making a very positive impact on school life with the events that it runs. In its short history it has raised over £2000 for school resources.
48. Information for parents is excellent. The school prospectus and the regular newsletters, both with many photographs, are very informative. The annual reports for parents on the progress of their children are also of high quality. They include targets for development and, in the junior stage, contributions from pupils on their progress in school. Great care is taken to inform parents about the topics that their children will be studying in class. A 'how to help' section is particularly useful to focus attention on what parents can do to help children with topic work.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The school opened in September 1999 as a result of North Devon's successful bid for funding through a Capital Challenge Bid. It is soundly led and managed in challenging circumstances and is a steadily improving school. It benefits from the energetic leadership of the headteacher who is wholeheartedly supported by a hard-working staff team and governing body. Teachers and the various categories of administrative, support and site management staff, all share a commitment to the very apt aims and values devised by governors to underpin the rationale for the school. These are based on principles of educational inclusion and academic excellence, partnership between the school and the community it serves, and sustainability in the 21st century.
50. The context in which key staff with leadership roles work is very unusual. The pupil/teacher ratio is above average and this reduces the amount of time teachers are able to devote to pupils. Procedures for appointing, inducting and developing new colleagues have, for the most part, been very effective but the school will not have a complete senior management team, or be fully staffed, until September 2001. Teachers are gradually being appointed as the school roll grows but in the interim, responsibilities are appropriately shared by groups rather than individually delegated. Everyone works together towards fulfilling the priorities comprehensively described in the governors' first school development plan published in the spring term 2000. The temporary staffing structure

has made sensible and practical use of collective expertise to meet early objectives to devise the wide range of school policies and develop a whole curriculum.

The headteacher and governors also ensure that staff who need help to adjust to the rigorous demands pupils make on them receive appropriate support and training. Staff, pupils and parents all respect the way in which the headteacher makes time to talk to them to resolve difficulties and motivate them when they need encouragement.

51. In fewer than two years much has been successfully accomplished. Governors have worked hard to support the headteacher and to be effective in the role of critical friends. They are well led and organised and have been closely involved in the systematic pursuit of the strategic development plan and with the good management of financial resources. Governors' management of delegated funds for setting up the new school has reflected a good understanding of the four best value principles of consultation, competition, challenge and comparison. They have achieved particular success in applying the first two principles. Examples are the prudent use of additional grants awarded by national government to raise standards in literacy, and of those won through local initiatives to enhance community involvement in the children's education. Already, governors have established a good reputation in the area for forging close and productive working relationships with parents and community groups. Parents of pupils who were disaffected in previous schools are very pleased with their children's progress since transferring to Orchard Vale. Similarly, families whose children attend the speech and language centre have a high regard for the way in which their children's needs are met. The new school prospectus, and the very informative first governors' annual report, show how well governors have met their responsibility to consult parents and keep them informed about the work of the school.
52. The school knows that there remains much to be done to ensure that aims for good quality teaching, high academic and behavioural standards, and the best value principles of challenge and comparison, are successfully met. The headteacher, members of the senior management team and governors have begun to evaluate progress with their key priorities and are realistic about the school's weaknesses as well as keen to celebrate its emerging strengths. They are aware that some pupils still display challenging behaviour and not all teachers are consistent in the way they respond in these circumstances. They realise that, though standards have steadily risen from poor levels in most year groups a year ago, they are still below average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. To increase the value it adds to pupils' attainment on entry, the school must ensure that standards continue to rise so that they equal, then exceed, national averages in statutory tests at both key stages.
53. The school is not yet fully effective in enabling key staff to monitor what is happening in the classroom to check on how well pupils are achieving. Though broad improvement targets have been set, these are not all specific enough to provide focus and rigour when teachers are planning lessons for mixed year and ability groups. Inconsistencies in teachers' approach to communicating high expectations for what pupils can understand and do have not been fully identified or addressed. This hinders learning. There is an urgent need to build on the sound progress made with setting up appropriate procedures for assessing and recording pupils' academic and personal development. It will be vital to devise very specific targets for improving academic performance overall and for different groups at both key stages. Co-ordinators must persevere with subject action plans, particularly those that relate to completing schemes of work and developing the cross-curricular use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Plans for teaching swimming must be quickly finalised in order to meet statutory requirements. Other initiatives designed to eliminate gaps in pupils' learning and under-achievement in some aspects of their work should be systematically addressed over a longer period of time.
54. The school is fortunate to have a well-qualified and capable group of support staff who help to make up for the above average pupil/teacher ratio and add to the quality of teaching. It also has teachers who between them have a good range of subject expertise and knowledge of how to support pupils with special educational needs. Weaknesses in subject expertise are confined to science, whilst the weakness in monitoring some individual education plans result from lack of management time for the special educational needs co-ordinator, not from issues of poor delegation.

Accommodation and learning resources are well organised and cared for, and space is used well to celebrate pupils' work. Though both are more than adequate for most aspects of teaching and learning there are some significant shortcomings. The range of reference books and technological equipment are insufficient, whilst outdoor learning space and play equipment for the youngest pupils and the playing field for athletics and games are particularly inadequate.

55. The inspection report is sought by the school to provide clear benchmarks from which to improve and measure added value in the future. To progress from sound to very effective leadership and management the issues raised will need to be rigorously pursued. Overall, the headteacher, staff and governors work very hard and demonstrate a strong commitment to strategic development. They show a very good capacity to succeed with the agenda set for them.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to meet its aims and increase effectiveness the school should now:-

1. Raise standards further in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT by:
 - A. building on the good practice observed and exemplified during the inspection;
 - B. increasing efforts to make marking effective and to establish individual and group learning targets based on accurate assessment and analysis of all available performance data;
 - C. improving the consistency with which teachers plan appropriate activities in basic skills for pupils of different ages and aptitudes;
 - D. consolidating and sustaining behaviour management strategies so that pupils make the best possible use of lesson time and provide constructive help to each other in class.

(paragraphs 7, 9, 29 & 45)
2. Maintain the programme of curricular review and development as outlined in its comprehensive school development plan but prioritise more precisely so that:
 - A. gaps in statutory requirements are addressed speedily;
 - B. planning for every year group is more clearly defined;
 - C. time is apportioned appropriately;
 - D. additional reading resources are acquired and used more effectively to support the implementation of the literacy strategy.

(paragraphs 30, 32 & 53)
3. Enable subject co-ordinators or teams to develop their leadership and management skills as quickly as possible by:
 - A. continuing with the good programme of professional development;
 - B. giving them regular opportunities to monitor the quality of lessons and standards of work in each class;
 - C. devising ways of retaining examples of work that would provide key evidence of pupils' developing knowledge, understanding and skills;
 - D. helping them to devise indicators of success that can be easily measured and celebrated.

(paragraphs 53, 55, 95, 104, 114 & 144)

Other issues that should be considered by the school when preparing its action plan are:-

the access to better outdoor learning facilities for children under six;
(paragraphs 53 & 76)

the poor condition of the school playing field;
(paragraphs 53 & 158)

the lack of a library containing a good range of reference and research resources; *(paragraphs 53 & 93)*

the strategy to achieve smaller and more equitable class sizes at the junior stage.
(*paragraph 46*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	14	32	43	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	285
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	40

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	17
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	63

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	83
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	21	15	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	11	15
	Girls	8	8	6
	Total	23	19	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64	53	58
	National	84	85	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	16	13
	Girls	5	6	8
	Total	16	22	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	44	61	58
	National	84	88	88

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Attainment data, in the form of a numerical table, is omitted from the report because the number of pupils in Year 6, in the year 2000, was fewer than ten.

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	232
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.20
Average class size	31.30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	305

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	63

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.70
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	291313
Total expenditure	282051
Expenditure per pupil	1152
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	9262

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	280
Number of questionnaires returned	113

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	29	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	60	35	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	42	4	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	38	12	1	3
The teaching is good.	71	27	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	32	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	21	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	65	31	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	27	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	36	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	27	2	0	4

Other issues raised by parents

Concerns were expressed about the impact on junior pupils' learning of the increase in the size of classes.

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

57. Children are admitted to the nursery at four years of age twice in the year, the older in September and the younger in January. At five, they are admitted to the reception classes in September and January.
58. Arrangements for their start in both age groups are successfully geared towards as smooth a beginning as possible. Relationships with most parents encourage an effective learning partnership and have a beneficial impact on children's learning, with help in reading for example. Home visits, undertaken by nursery staff, are well organised with clear goals and they provide an important awareness of what children, know, understand and can do upon entry.
59. There are new national requirements with regard to the curriculum for children of this age. Teachers and their support staff have successfully introduced these new initiatives through careful and thorough planning. A particular strength is their attention to ensuring that each area of learning is strongly embedded within practical activities relevant to children's interests. Much of the successful learning taking place both in the nursery and the reception classes is directly related to the shared aims and high expectations of all staff. Their assessment and observational procedures are good and linked effectively to planning so that learning experiences are well focused and match pupils' individual needs and abilities.
60. Children with special educational needs are very well supported. Their individual requirements are assessed and activities for them are well planned. They are encouraged to take a full part in all activities and, because teaching and planned activities relate to the level of their understanding, they make good progress in all areas of learning.
61. In reception classes, the school has established the children's prior attainment upon entry, through the use of assessment tests. Pupils' attainment in language, mathematics and social skills is recorded as being in line with a national sample and this has been confirmed during the inspection. In some aspects of learning, children are on course to achieve higher than average standards by the end of the reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. A particular strength at this key stage is that children's personal, social and emotional development is of a very high standard in comparison with that expected nationally.
63. In the nursery, very young children settle quickly, learn how to work together and behave appropriately in a number of different situations. They sustain very good levels of concentration and independence and use available resources purposefully. The oldest children after nearly two terms are confident learners, eager to tackle new experiences and have a clear awareness of how to behave in given situations. They demonstrate their good understanding of responsible behaviour, for example, when discussing acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the hall. Even in the absence of their usual teacher, they sustain very high standards of behaviour with few reminders from support staff. Relationships between staff and children are very good which leads to trusting attitudes and a sense of self as a member of a community. Staff members are skilled at anticipating pupils' needs and encouraging persistence. Their expertise in shaping children's learning attitudes, so that they can take full advantage of the rich learning experiences on offer, is well developed and leads to good progress in most situations.
64. In reception classes, pupils successfully build on their skills in personal and social development and are already reaching all the early learning goals in this area. This is a reflection of the effective teaching they receive, in which they are encouraged to do as well as they can, to tackle each task with steady confidence and purpose and to take pleasure in the end result. Within a happy

atmosphere where children are treated with respect, all pupils learn effectively and with an eagerness to contribute and share their ideas with others.

Communication, language and literacy

65. Teaching and learning are good in this area of learning in both nursery and reception classes. Children therefore make good progress, particularly in the development of listening skills. Effective use is made of different strategies to involve all pupils and encourage a willingness to succeed. For example, well-targeted questions involve all ability groups so that children are developing well the ability to respond to instructions and questions in whole-class and group activities. Children also enjoy listening to stories and show a good understanding of what they have either noticed in illustrations or from the text.
66. Teaching of basic skills is thorough and opportunities for writing and reading are highly relevant. The oldest nursery pupils are keen to write their own names and some average and higher attainers 'write' long lines of print generally using letters from their own name. By the time children are ready to leave the nursery, they have met most of the early learning goals for their age group and have made a sound start in speaking skills, and a good start in listening skills, reading and writing.
67. By the end of the reception year the majority will have already started, or be ready to undertake, the early goals indicated within the National Curriculum. Literacy lessons have a clear focus on learning the sounds of letters of the alphabet, the significance of capital letters and the position of letters in a word. As a result, children demonstrate a good understanding of letters and how they sound within words. The oldest reception pupils are beginning to read simple books and can comment on the use of punctuation as well as what is happening. Higher attainers read with fluency and expression and good use is made of their skills to serve as a role model for the others. Lower attainers are able to follow a story through the use of pictures and can talk about what is happening. Speaking skills are average overall for the year group and reflect the different levels of confidence and breadth of vocabulary on entry to school. Children can express their needs, speak clearly, and the oldest pupils in particular are eager to talk and share ideas appropriately.
68. The number and range of books to support learning are inadequate.

Mathematical development

69. Children's attainment is average for both the age groups. They make good progress and are on course to achieve the early learning goals for mathematics by the time they leave the reception classes.
70. In the nursery, teaching and learning are good. The care to provide appropriate resources, good explanations, probing and problem-solving questions, extends children's capacity to learn mathematical concepts. Children respond well as they count to 10 and beyond. Average attainers achieve accuracy as they point to objects as they count and higher attainers are beginning to make simple calculations based on adding together two sets of differently coloured teddies, for example. They have begun to record their discoveries pictorially, showing early understanding that more objects make a number greater or less than another.
71. Teaching and learning at reception are consistently good and focused according to children's individual needs and aptitudes. Teachers are careful to introduce activities within an understandable context. They adjust explanations and levels of challenge to ensure activities are well matched to the children's prior attainment and designed to stimulate children's curiosity. The shop-play in one class was effective in developing the ideas of exchange within a well-structured and purposeful activity because the teacher had spent time in helping children to set up the shop and develop constructive shop-play at an earlier stage. The older children show confidence in handling money to 10 pence. Some more able mathematicians give change to 20 pence. These pupils recognise numbers to 20 and above on a number line, knowing for example that 15 comes after 10.

72. The use of number rhymes and stories help younger reception children to build well on their counting skills, and most can count and order numbers to 20. They are able to count backwards and forwards to 5 and beyond. They distinguish between taller and shorter by comparing their beanstalks with other objects in the room and can use the language of size correctly. Some higher attainers, after a walk around the school, are able to draw the objects they have seen according to size and are able to compare these against themselves successfully. The majority of lower attainers know some of the basic shapes and colours.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. The good progress in both the nursery and the reception classes is developed through the successful introduction to all topics by a real-life route. Good quality books, photographs, and the use of artefacts and frequent visits to the locality, are used well to link areas of experience and to illustrate a given concept. For example, mathematical activities related to size were linked to the bean planting activity that in turn was part of a topic on seeds, a theme planned as part of the follow up of a visit to a nursery centre. The shop in one class had trowels and packets of seeds for sale, made by the children, that they then 'planted' in the make-believe 'Magic Garden'. The visits to the locality are very well used for developing geographical skills. A number of realistic maps of the local area, made by children where they had learned about positioning roads, houses and other aspects of interest, were displayed.
74. Very good progress is made in developing computer skills in the reception classes. Some children are adept at using the mouse, and can guide the cursor and click on selected items within the menu. They can control the line on the screen by moving the mouse and can make effective pictures from their choices of colour options. They can explain these processes clearly. Displayed work indicated good control of the mouse to move clothes to dress a 'teddy'.

Physical development

75. Teaching and learning are good across the Foundation Stage. Careful planning to develop basic skills is very well implemented. Weekly gymnastic sessions are used to full effect and standards of attainment are well above average across the Foundation Stage. Support staff play an effective role in ensuring a smooth session in the absence of the usual teacher. Strategies such as demonstrations to enhance good performance and encouragement to practise and refine skills are successful. The contribution to the children's personal, social and emotional development is high. The youngest children can dress and undress unaided. All stop immediately upon command and listen carefully. All share and take turns on the apparatus with admirable self-control. All make excellent use of the available space and they demonstrate very good body control. Their balancing and jumping skills are very mature and they can try out new things confidently and creatively. More could be done to qualify praise by stating the reasons for giving it as pupils are working. This strategy would enable children to evaluate their performances, an under-used element in the lessons.
76. The staff try hard to compensate for constraints within the programme for developing children's physical development. The outdoor space for the nursery is safely fenced in, but too small to allow for a range of continuous outdoor activities that can help children to initiate their own play, through the use of a wide range of resources. The lack of large toys, such as a climbing frame, inhibits children's development of climbing skills. Opportunities to ride bikes are provided in weekly sessions, walking round the locality to get physical exercise is a fortnightly venture and children can play playground games each day.

Creative development

77. Creative development is promoted well by staff. Through discussion and personal intervention, they help children to make good progress across the Foundation Stage. Children are provided with a wide range of activities to develop artistic and musical skills. Teaching is good because the staff are aware of the effects they want children to develop and they find interesting means for them to do so. Children explore and experiment with paints and paint-mixing to make recognisable portraits. They use fruit halves to make sensitive prints. They make effective selections from a wide range of collage and sewing materials to create eye-catching pictures. In the nursery, their control of felt tipped pens in drawings indicate a developing understanding of how to use line effectively to create a recognisable picture. In one reception class, children made observational drawings that clearly indicated a good understanding of how to represent objects as they are seen. Children can well describe how they made the different kinds of pictures.

ENGLISH

78. Standards achieved by seven year olds are currently below average but are better than the results achieved in the year 2000 tests, when the percentage of pupils reaching level 2 or above in reading and writing was well below the national average. The test results reflected the teachers' assessment of boys' and girls' very low levels of achievement when they were admitted to the school, either one or two terms previously. There was a larger than average percentage of children in the group with special educational needs in speech and language development and also a significant number who were reluctant to practise and extend their literacy skills.
79. At the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils reaching level 4 or above in the year 2000 tests was very high in comparison with the national average and similar schools but these results were based on a very small number taking the tests. The current levels of attainment, by a much larger group of Year 6 pupils, are far below the standard achieved in the year 2000. Standards are below average in English overall, primarily because of the pupils' weak skills in reading and writing.
80. Throughout the school teachers have encountered a need to concentrate on developing pupils' ability to listen, concentrate, and understand the variety and range of purposes for speaking and listening, reading and writing. Teachers and support staff have worked hard at raising achievement to appropriate levels, with most success at the infant stage. Now, pupils' listening and speaking skills reach the national average at both key stages. In relation to the school's early targets for them, a high majority of pupils have responded very well to teachers' expectations and their efforts are good in relation to prior attainment.
81. Seven year old pupils have made sound progress in their ability to listen to staff and peers in literacy lessons. For example, they listen carefully to the teacher reading poetry or to guidance that enables them to understand what they have to do in follow-up activities. Most junior pupils listen well when lessons are well structured and provide good opportunities for listening to each other's suggestions, as, for example, when reviewing their individual efforts to produce arguments for and against smoking. A minority of the oldest pupils, despite the teachers' efforts, is unable to sustain listening for long and this prevents them from making consistent progress.
82. Infants are confident to suggest and discuss ideas, and enjoy opportunities to answer questions about stories and poems in whole-class sessions. Most junior pupils participate appropriately in 'brainstorms' to stimulate ideas and build upon teachers' and peers' suggestions. A group of pupils who led a whole-school assembly presented their ideas fluently and held the attention of their very large audience throughout. The standard of their performance was high.
83. Most infants now have a clear understanding of the difference between non-fiction and fiction, and in lessons are systematically learning to hear and read sounds in words, for example 'or' and 'ar'. However, average and lower attaining pupils, though they are interested in books, have under-

developed word-building and word recognition skills. Their performance indicates that they need a further period of rigorous consolidation of early reading skills.

Higher attaining pupils are, in contrast, independent, fluent and very confident readers attaining above average standards. They are ready to learn more advanced reference skills and apply them in a wider range of contexts.

84. Some Year 6 pupils have a good degree of interest in books and reading. A few are articulate and knowledgeable about fiction. However, some of the books they read are at an inappropriate level of difficulty. Teachers do not monitor pupils' choice of reading matter well enough or find ways of ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to use library, reference and research skills. Pupils therefore lack the skills to locate non-fiction books or apply skimming and scanning skills, and this is a weakness in English and other subjects.
85. The scrutiny of work shows that a small minority of older infants and older juniors write well for their age. Infants write confidently and fairly accurately using simple punctuation and interesting vocabulary whilst older juniors have a more thorough command of the complexity of language and can adapt their writing style more readily. Pupils competently discuss features of writing, such as punctuation, during literacy hour shared reading and writing sessions. In other subjects such as science, history and geography, the writing activities for pupils are less challenging than the shared writing sessions in the literacy hour.
86. Overall, very few Year 6 pupils write very well and this is indicative of the gaps some have in their prior and current learning experiences. Discontinuity of teaching is hindering the rate of progress of one Year 6 group compared with the other – a fact the school acknowledges and is trying to overcome through extra support from a supply teacher. In both upper junior classes, pupils' work reflects too many word and sentence level exercises rather than a focus on a broader application of literacy skills across the curriculum. However, there are some good examples of writing for a meaningful purpose, especially in one class, for example, an analysis of a poem by W. H. Auden and a comparison of book and video versions of the same Roald Dahl story. The oldest pupils do not independently draft and refine their work enough. Overall, in an attempt to keep secure class control and ensure pupils fill rather than waste time, teachers do too much writing for pupils rather than supporting them while they write.
87. Standards of spelling are below the national average at both key stages but show encouraging signs of development at the lower key stage. Infants are learning to recognise spelling patterns through focusing on words in the literacy hour. They are beginning to spell high frequency words accurately. Some spelling in junior pupils' books and lessons is unsatisfactory because pupils copy spellings and do not learn from their errors or by remembering spelling patterns. This points to a need for teachers to be more vigilant in their marking and setting improvement targets.
88. Pupils' handwriting matches the national average at both key stages. Many Year 2 pupils join letters and their writing is legible though letters are not consistently well formed. Older juniors write in a joined style and mostly legibly. They are sometimes careless with letter formation and some work is untidy. This is partly due to pupils' confusion about when they should concentrate on getting their ideas down and not worry about presentation, and when they should be producing their neatest efforts. Pupils also lack a clear understanding of when to use pens and when pencil would be more appropriate.
89. There are very few examples of word processing in pupils' work and this is because ICT resources have been available to pupils only relatively recently. Teachers are now including such opportunities regularly in their planning, and intend to increase pupils' access to appropriate cross-curricular activities.
90. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall in relation to the targets on their individual education plans. Progress is good in the special centre for speech and language development. Pupils in the centre benefit from regular practise in very specific learning

goals, whereas the targets for pupils in mainstream classes can be too open-ended and make it difficult for teachers to monitor their progress.

91. Special initiatives, mainly led by classroom assistants, are making a positive difference to pupils' achievements. The time invested in motivating disaffected boys is, for example, enabling a group of Year 2 boys to write meaningfully for the first time in their experience of school. The 'Story Show Project' is popular with lower attainers. They are very proud of their self-made books and tried hard to read them when invited to do so by an inspector and other adults. Parents turned out in numbers to the special party held especially to celebrate their achievement. They unanimously expressed their pleasure that at last their children wanted to read and write. Similarly, lower achievers in Years 3 and 4 are gradually responding more and more enthusiastically to additional literacy support in small groups. Six pupils from Year 3 who read to inspectors had made sound or better progress since taking assessment tests in reading in Year 2.
92. Teaching in English and literacy is sound overall. It is good or better in a minority of lessons, and occasionally unsatisfactory, at both key stages. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers plan appropriately for the class, linking lesson objectives to prior learning. They ensure pupils understand what is expected of them and make sound use of time and resources. In a very good lesson at Key Stage 1, the teacher's quality of planning and motivating strategies met the needs of pupils very well. Infants' appreciation of Caribbean poetry was very ably developed, first by the teacher's expressive delivery, then through good questioning skills, followed by a thorough analysis of the way in which the poem was structured. In an effective lesson at Key Stage 2, the teacher explained, and modelled, the Japanese haiku form of poetry clearly. This enabled pupils to collaborate as a class, and in small groups, to create their own verses using the same syllabic pattern. There was unsatisfactory teaching in two lessons, one at each key stage. Teachers were taxed by the challenge of meeting the needs of pupils with a wide range of previous experience and, especially at the junior stage, very ambivalent attitudes and behaviour in lessons. Activities were not planned to match all pupils' needs. The pace became leisurely and pupils displayed no sense of urgency as they worked. Few took sufficient care with their writing and what was produced by many in the class was of inferior quality.
93. The school makes increasingly effective use of display to celebrate achievement. Seeing their work on walls successfully motivates pupils of all ages. The range of reading resources is only just satisfactory, mainly because the school makes good use of the library borrowing service. The lack of a library and insufficient materials from different cultures and traditions for older pupils disadvantages them compared with many established schools where book stocks have been gradually developed over time.
94. The management of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator has relevant expertise in the subject. Much has been done to identify how to further develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of standard English and make effective use of literacy skills in other subjects. A detailed action plan is in a very early stage of implementation. Assessment procedures are appropriately identified but they do not consistently inform teachers' planning or knowledge of pupils' learning yet. Direct observation of lessons and sampling work has barely begun.
95. Teachers and support staff are clearly committed to finding ways to accelerate pupils' learning. The school should now persevere with efforts to enable effective monitoring to take place. It must build on strengths and systematically target the recurring weaknesses in teaching and learning in order to continue to raise standards.

MATHEMATICS

96. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining standards below expectations for their ages in numeracy and in all areas of mathematics, that is, number, algebra, space, shape and measure and the handling of data. Results for Year 2 pupils in the year 2000 national tests were well below the national average, reflecting pupils' poor levels of attainment on entry to the school and the high proportion of the age group requiring additional special educational needs support. The very small

group of pupils in last year's Year 6 achieved standards that were well above national averages and in the top five per cent nationally.

97. Though standards are improving in the infants and juniors many pupils are not yet achieving as well as they should. More able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and under-achieve because they frequently undertake the same work as other pupils in the class before moving on to more difficult work. However, pupils with special educational needs receive much more additional help in lessons and make good progress in relation to their prior levels of learning. The pupils in the speech and language centre achieve particularly well. During the inspection no discernible difference between the attainment of boys and girls was observed. Numeracy has a high focus in lessons and pupils' skills across the school are developing satisfactorily. However, the use of number work in other subjects is inconsistent. Pupils' progress is directly related to the school's developing use of the National Numeracy Strategy, which offers a clear structure for the development of numerical skills. Implementation of the strategy and its impact on learning is sound overall but needs further consolidation.
98. By the age of seven most pupils understand and use mathematical language with satisfactory understanding. Most count in multiples of two, five and ten up to 100 but they have not yet acquired the mental agility to confidently use more than one method to arrive at a given answer. The opportunity to solve problems in real-life situations is mainly restricted to the use of decimal coinage. The school is aware of the need to use mathematical challenges and games to help pupils individually and collectively to develop a deeper understanding of mathematical principles. In Year 2, pupils confidently use the full range of coins to solve simple purchasing problems. More able pupils in the same year work with currency of higher value. Less able pupils require more help but show improvement in their numeracy skills. Most pupils recognise and name simple shapes, whilst more able pupils confidently and correctly use more advanced terminology such as 'hexagon'. Most pupils understand the relationship between sets and multiplication. Measuring in centimetres and telling the time is carried out satisfactorily. Pupils' progress in the handling of data is less well developed. Scrutiny of pupils' work and classroom displays indicates unsatisfactory levels of attainment. There is insufficient planned use of ICT to gather and interpret data in the form of graphs and diagrams and to draw conclusions.
99. In Years 3 and 4 pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. By the age of eleven most pupils are attaining slightly below the expected levels and are making sound progress in relation to their attainment in Year 5. However, there continues to be a wide variation in the levels of attainment achieved by individual pupils. The absence of detailed assessment data from the high proportion of pupils joining the school midway through the junior stage has meant that pupils are not always given stimulating, challenging tasks. This has a negative effect on their general progress.
100. Pupils in Year 6 estimate with appropriate levels of accuracy, recognising angles in shapes such as right angles. About two-thirds of pupils multiply by ten with confidence and about a third multiply by 100. Junior pupils lack confidence in applying their numeracy knowledge to real-life problems. The setting of such work is not a regular feature of many lessons. In their anxiety to maintain class control most tasks at the junior stage are directed too closely by the class teacher. They do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to devise their own methods and thus improve their ability to solve problems. Pupils are frequently required to record their answers formally rather than developing a more practical, problem-solving approach. Most teachers miss opportunities to develop mathematical understanding when teaching other subjects. The best cross-curricular practice is in art and design and technology. Displays around the school indicate pupils learn to develop a range of skills relating to shape and the development of measuring skills, and such opportunities need to be extended more to other subjects, particularly science.
101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, varying from unsatisfactory to good. Most teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and in some classes use their expertise effectively in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy hour. The best teaching is characterised by enthusiastic delivery of facts, suitably challenging work for all pupils in the class and high

expectations of what they might attain during the lesson. Pupils are taught relevant mathematical vocabulary and there is a suitable balance of whole-class teaching, individual and group work involving all pupils. The quick paced mental oral starter, the sharing of lesson targets (often displayed) with pupils and the getting together at the end of lessons to review learning are having a positive effect on pupils' learning. These features were all demonstrated well, for example, in the speech and language centre.

102. In a few lessons the balance of teaching and pupil activity is inappropriate because teachers take too much time when introducing the lesson and pupils are then given insufficient time to complete their own tasks. Lengthy introductions are often the most difficult part of the lesson for lower attaining pupils and their recorded work is in insufficient quantities to verify their understanding of processes. More able pupils lose concentration during group work, especially when teachers' short-term planning does not meet their needs or when time-targets for completing work are not set. In some lessons the discussions at the end of lessons are rushed and fail to celebrate success and review progress made. Classroom displays reflect an appropriate range of appropriate mathematical language. However, some displays contain too little of the pupils' own work. Good use is made of classroom support staff as well as the occasional voluntary helper. Non-teaching staff are aware of the teachers' intentions and provide a lot of help during practical 'hands on' sessions. The good relationships that exist between pupils and adults help to ensure calm, well-organised routines in most classrooms.
103. Pupils have good attitudes to mathematics and most respond well in lessons, particularly at the infant stage where behaviour is more consistently good than at the junior stage. Most pupils work co-operatively in groups, collaborating and sharing ideas in a responsible manner. When they are working with an unfamiliar teacher, a small minority of older junior pupils displays poor attitudes and behaviour, despite the best efforts of the teacher to support them appropriately.
104. Taken as a whole, arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress and attainment are satisfactory. However, the subject co-ordinator is aware of a need to review national test results in greater detail in future to identify trends and areas for development, with a specific focus on the standard achieved by boys and girls over time. Assessments are carried out regularly in lessons and results recorded but not consistently used to plan work for pupils of differing ability within classes. Marking gives praise to individual pupils. The very best examples inform them how to improve their work, though this level of help is not always given. At present there is an insufficient range of strategies to determine pupils' standards across the school. In a period when staff members have faced many pressures and priorities, monitoring has not been tackled systematically.
105. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Time has been allocated for the subject co-ordinator to monitor teaching and target additional support where necessary. Improvement targets have been identified and are being addressed through an appropriate subject action plan. There is a good range of recently purchased materials to support class teachers' subject expertise. There is a very positive commitment to raise standards now that the school population has stabilised.

SCIENCE

106. Standards attained in statutory tests in Year 6 in the year 2000 were high but the number of pupils in the group was so small the results cannot serve as a benchmark for standards in the school overall. Year 2 pupils' formed a much larger group and their performance in teacher assessment was very low in comparison with the national average. The results demonstrated the adverse effect on standards where levels of mobility from one school to another are high, and the group includes an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

107. There has been a small improvement in the subsequent year but standards are still below average at both key stages and progress has been slow. Pupils do not have sufficient knowledge or skills to enable them to achieve good standards in any of the four attainment targets. In particular, they have a poor understanding of scientific enquiry, so that although their knowledge of such things as habitats, materials, or the human body is sometimes sound, they cannot carry out investigations or experiments in a systematic manner.
108. At the infant stage, there is some sound teaching practice. However, significant weaknesses in subject expertise is a factor that hinders progressive learning of scientific ideas and working methods, irrespective of pupils' prior levels of achievement. Teachers succeed in gaining pupils' interest and co-operation, for example, in lessons about forces and movement. They provide potentially worthwhile practical experiences. These include devising tests using model vehicles and ramps, and exploring the effect of forces such as wind or a jet of water on the movement of an object. Pupils' curiosity was aroused in two lessons observed and they tried hard to make appropriate suggestions for the things they wanted to find out. Pupils enjoyed the activities and behaved well, but some questions were too vague to be appropriate for scientific enquiry. Others were useful, such as 'Does the heavier car go down the ramp faster?' However, pupils' skills were not well enough developed for them to devise a reasonable experiment to test the hypothesis. In another lesson, where pupils were using water jets, the teacher presented too many variables in the range of large, small, heavy and light objects used. The idea of fair testing was lost and learning was unsatisfactory. In both lessons pupils made few gains in their scientific understanding despite their positive attitude to learning.
109. At the junior stage, evidence from lessons indicates that the quality of teaching is mainly sound but that, as at the lower key stage, teachers' understanding of the subject is variable, ranging from good to weak. Younger pupils in this key stage are learning about the different habitats of living creatures. In the best lesson the learning objectives were made clear and the teacher's knowledge was secure, so that pupils' learning was sound or better. Pupils were encouraged to think about highly relevant questions. These included, 'Why do animals need shelter?' and, 'What do animals need to protect them from other animals?' They were given a clear explanation about the paired task to prepare an investigation. They came to valid decisions and conclusions. In an unsatisfactory lesson, the scheme from which the teacher worked was the same and pupils were preparing an investigation into the habitats of woodlice or snails. In this instance tasks were either too directed or the learning objectives were vague. That meant pupils had little idea of what they were trying to find out. For example, higher achieving pupils were asked to fill in missing words in a prepared script, and this failed to challenge them. Pupils who had explored the school grounds were confused about which aspects of habitats such as dark or light, damp or dry, concealed or open, they were trying to investigate.
110. In a lesson where Year 6 pupils from two classes joined together, the teacher had devised a sound experiment to test the insulating qualities of various materials. The lesson plan took account of pupils' ability and included some challenging questions for the high achievers. Unfortunately, the scientific skills of many of the pupils were so under-developed that they were unable to carry out the experiment in a systematic and effective way. Despite the teacher's clear learning objectives and best efforts to motivate pupils, learning was unsatisfactory. The poor response of a very small number of boys who had neither the skills nor the self-discipline to apply themselves to the tasks in a meaningful way prevented their peers from making effective use of time.
111. As so many of the pupils have come from other schools, slow progress over the key stage is partly an issue of discontinuity of teaching and learning and gaps in curricular coverage. It is also because a significant minority of the oldest pupils continues to have poor attitudes to learning or because teachers' expectations are not made crystal clear. In subjects where expectations are consistently better communicated, standards are higher.
112. The application of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in science is poor. The lack of sufficient resources until recently has meant that there has been very little use of computers to enhance learning through the use of spreadsheets and data-handling programs. Similarly with numeracy, there is a distinct absence of tables, graphs and measurements in, for example, the monitoring of

weather conditions or the accurate measurement of growth. There are some good examples of well-managed and neat work on display, for example, in the special educational needs unit. However, much of the written work is careless and untidy, especially in one class of older juniors. At both key stages the standard achieved does not sufficiently reflect improvement in attainment in English.

Pupils do not seem to have a clear idea of when presentation is not important and when it is, for instance when note taking or drafting in preparation for a new piece of work or when producing a final copy. Listening skills are inadequate for effective learning in some lessons at both key stages. In discussions most pupils are willing to give an opinion, and these are used constructively in the good lessons. In the unsatisfactory lessons a minority are not prepared to listen to other pupils' contributions.

113. The curriculum, which is still being developed, ensures coverage of the required areas of study through a two-year rolling programme of topics, but does not ensure a systematic progression in skills and knowledge. The draft policy for science is good. It contains good practical advice and information including such aspects as the role of parents, equal opportunities, and the contribution of science to other areas of the curriculum. It gives a sound overview of aims, expected levels of achievement and entitlement. The weakness lies in the application of these aims in the classroom. For example, the statement, 'All lessons have clear learning objectives which are shared and reviewed with pupils effectively', is often not apparent in practice. Similarly, the statement that 'Weekly lesson plans should contain elements from overall learning objectives broken down into the steps appropriate for the age and stage of pupils', is not consistently reflected in teachers' planning.

114. The monitoring of pupils' subject performance is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning has not received due attention in the face of other whole-school issues, yet there is good potential for effective management of the subject. The action plan for the year ahead is rigorous and outlines appropriate plans to sample pupils' work, monitor planning, observe the quality of teaching and learning and put in place necessary training. The school must ensure that this programme is given high priority. The quality of teaching and learning needs to improve to have a beneficial impact on standards and the extent to which pupils achieve their best.

ART AND DESIGN

115. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in art. Standards achieved are above age-related national expectations with some very good standards achieved in the infants. Eye-catching displays throughout the school make an exceptional contribution to creating a bright and welcoming environment. They show that pupils' work is valued, which contributes successfully to their self-esteem. This is immediately apparent in the entrance area and adjacent corridor where every pupil in the school has a creative item of collage entitled 'Sew an Orchard' displayed. Many practical tasks are successfully linked into other subjects; for example the manufacture of a patchwork quilt design links to repeating patterns in mathematics.

116. In the infants, pupils work imaginatively in a variety of media to produce a very good range of work. Portraits of friends illustrate the confident mixing of paints to achieve correct skin tones. Observational drawings when looking through a 'window' indicate pupils' well-developed skills in using tone and line. Older pupils are aware of the way in which the use of collage and printing add texture to illustrations that accompany well-known stories.

117. These very good standards are successfully built upon in the juniors, where pupils explore and combine media and visual elements for a growing range of different purposes. Links with other

subjects successfully inform and influence pupils' work, for example using Roman artefacts as starting points for sketching and painting. Pupils experiment successfully with visual and tactile materials such as string and paint to produce printed patterns. They have a good knowledge of the work of a wide range of artists, including local artists whose work is exhibited in school. Pupils try hard to emulate the techniques displayed in their own work, including imaginative three-dimensional work in textiles and clay.

118. The quality of teaching is good overall with some examples of very good teaching in the infants. In a lesson for Year 1 and 2 pupils, when developing pupils' knowledge of photography and moving images, the teacher showed very good subject knowledge. The lesson plan was clear and the lesson objectives well communicated. She enabled pupils to understand the parts of a photograph that are fixed and those that were moving as the photograph is taken. She ensured pupils used a range of pencil grades to create appropriate effects of light and shade as they worked to produce their own idea of what might be captured in the next photograph frame. Most teachers plan well and are very effective in demonstrating what is expected of pupils. Good emphasis is given to pupils developing the skill to carefully review the quality of their work and to think how to improve it. Teachers are successful in encouraging pupils to work carefully to produce their best work. They create opportunities for pupils to view their approach to tasks to the way well known artists work over long periods to achieve the results that are valued so highly.
119. In the art lesson observed, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good. They were keen to learn and enjoyed what they were doing. Most were able to listen and watch intently, providing suitable and thoughtful answers and generally appreciating the well-directed help from the teacher and support assistant. This enabled them to make very good gains in their proportional drawing skills. Pupils across the school are proud of their work and achievement and many take advantage of opportunities outside lessons to pursue their interest in art. There is a successful art club and very good links with local art galleries. Artists in residence further enrich pupils' experience and understanding of how art contributes to the world of work. Overall, the subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
120. Resources are good in quality, range and accessibility, supported by a very good range of recycled material. The development of ICT skills to enhance pupils' understanding is at present unsystematic and therefore unsatisfactory.
121. Leadership of the subject is good. Teachers are well supported by a recently introduced programme of work that contains the latest subject requirements. The subject plan contains clearly identified ways in which the subject should be developed in the future. It shows how the monitoring of teaching and standards is intended to improve to achieve consistency in the systematic development of skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. Standards attained match national expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils have appropriate experience in designing, making and evaluating work using a range of materials and methods. However, the regular use of wood and pneumatics is limited. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress.
123. The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory or better in the two lessons seen. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum and pupils' needs. High levels of work are expected and pupils respond accordingly. Infants were observed enthusiastically developing a range of winding gear to accompany a piece of work on a well-known nursery rhyme. The teachers' behaviour management and their enthusiasm for the subject encourage positive attitudes from pupils who are very keen to try new methods. All pupils take care with their work, steadily improving their ideas and skills. Pupils sustain their concentration well and their sense of enquiry and curiosity has a positive impact on their learning. In the upper juniors pupils have successfully manufactured a puppet from a variety of recycled material. However, although there are some well constructed models that increase in complexity,

the processes are not sufficiently recorded and there is limited evidence of evaluation or testing in order to improve models and designs. Literacy and numeracy skills are appropriately used in design and technology, for example when measuring materials and labelling designs. Pupils' learning is further enriched through a number of planned events where craftsmen, such as weavers, visit school to demonstrate their skills in the manufacture of willow fencing and archways.

124. The school has recently produced documentation using the new national guidelines as a basis for its planning. It is aware of the need to monitor the consistent development of pupils' skills as they move through the school. The teaching scheme provides a variety of worthwhile experiences, including food technology, mechanisms and textiles. In the absence, until recently, of adequate access to resources for ICT, little purposeful use has been made of it to support skills in monitoring and control. Nonetheless, the management of the subject is sound in the context of the school's early stage of development. The co-ordinator has been in post for less than one term, has a developing knowledge of the subject, and is beginning to identify the school's needs and plan effectively for future improvement. This includes an audit of teachers' in-service training needs, and the introduction of systems for monitoring teaching and assessing pupils' work.
125. The subject is well resourced which has a positive impact on pupils' learning. There is a wide range of centrally stored materials, including a range of recycled materials used in modelling, and a well-equipped food technology room. A variety of resources are stored on a trolley from which pupils independently select their own equipment and materials. Pupils are made aware of the need to use consumable items economically and they respond responsibly to this expectation.

GEOGRAPHY

126. In those aspects of geography seen during the inspection, standards at both key stages are broadly typical of those seen in most schools.
127. Apart from one session in the speech and language centre, no lessons were seen at the infant stage during the inspection week. Evidence from past work indicates that, overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their map-reading skills and have a growing awareness of localities beyond their own. In their 'Global Eye' project, they are able to link photographs, postcards and artefacts to the given countries. Year 2 pupils in the special needs centre ably use maps of different scale and can identify the location of the African continent and key countries being studied, such as Mozambique. They are familiar with atlases and in the lesson could, for example, find Devon on a map of the British Isles. Some physical features, such as the equator, were identified correctly. Easy access to very good resources, combined with good questioning and guidance from the teacher, helped pupils considerably to make good progress in the lesson.
128. By the end of the junior stage, pupils read maps for information with reasonable skill, and understand the importance of location in working out similarities and differences. They recognise and describe physical characteristics such as terrain and climatic conditions. They offer appropriate reasons as to what effect climate has on the people living there but their ability to carry out geographical inquiry is not well developed. They are not proficient at interpreting, unaided, their results through the use of sources. Apart from higher attainers, few are able to recognise how places can change over time. Few are able to come to conclusions independently or examine evidence closely enough to make considered, realistic judgements in, for example, their comparative studies about the similarities and differences between Britain and Kenya or Tanzania.
129. Pupils are interested in geography but are heavily dependent on teachers to help them every step of the way. They are attentive when working directly with the teacher, but very quickly move off the task when not directly supervised. What they already know is not sufficient for them to grasp new learning with confidence.
130. In the two lessons observed in Year 5 and 6 classrooms, teaching was good. Through well-planned lessons, carefully selected resources to match individual needs and a good understanding of the subject, the quality of learning was good. In one class particularly, the teacher, new to the class, showed considerable ingenuity and flexibility in changing lesson objectives and teaching methods

to match pupils' lack of research skills. In the other, some skilful questions such as 'What can we say about...?' enabled pupils to look more closely at the available evidence and come to some realistic conclusions. From the evidence of past work, pupils' literacy skills and ability to use computer programs to research information are insecure and few apply them well in support of geography.

131. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. Since September a well-constructed and useful policy and a subject action plan have been produced. These show that the school knows what needs to be done to improve provision and raise standards. Priorities appropriately include the development of a scheme of work, assessment opportunities and arrangements for checking the quality of classroom teaching and pupils' work. These should be pursued as planned.

HISTORY

132. Standards, in the limited number of lesson observed, matched national expectations. Pupils' progress, including those with special educational needs, is at least satisfactory throughout the school. There is evidence of sound teaching with appropriate coverage of the different aspects of the curriculum. Planning is detailed, with a good link between learning goals and suggested activities. Pupils' work is individual which indicates they are encouraged to find out for themselves. These factors actively promote enquiry skills and independent learning.
133. At the infant stage, pupils are able to distinguish between old and new toys. They are beginning to develop understanding of the passing of time through exploration of how they were made then, and what materials are used now. They are learning to develop historical questions to help them examine sources of evidence more accurately. Pupils have increased their knowledge and understanding of famous people such as Florence Nightingale.
134. At the junior stage, younger and middle juniors successfully extend their knowledge and understanding of what it was like to live in Britain before and during Roman times. They make good use of sources to find out about Roman culture. Older juniors learn about life in ancient Greece and can describe principal events, pose historical questions and use books and other sources to find out information.
135. In the lesson observed, the teacher provided good supportive guidance. The use of probing questions and clear explanations helped pupils to develop a sense of awareness of what can be learned through careful consideration of historical evidence. Resources stimulated interest and the lesson was smoothly managed with good opportunities for pupils to work together effectively.
136. The teaching programme is well planned but from the limited evidence available, is not consistently taught to an acceptable depth in both mixed Year 5 and 6 classes. The volume of work and in-depth exploration in one class is much greater than in the other. Across the school, there are too few opportunities provided for pupils to develop their literacy skills, and examples of poor standards in writing indicate low expectations on the part of some teachers. The use of computer programs to research information has been under-used in support of the subject but this has been a resource issue largely beyond the school's direct control.
137. The leadership and management of the subject are sound in the school context. The humanities team has worked hard during a short time at the school to develop a comprehensive policy and scheme of work. There has not yet been an opportunity to discuss these with all staff. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' attainment across and within the year groups has not yet occurred beyond that of evaluating teachers' termly planning. The subject action plan

contains appropriate development objectives and the school should aim to implement the plan as scheduled.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

138. Standards are below expectation at both key stages. Statutory requirements are not met and pupils of all abilities are under-achieving in this subject. Much of the explanation for unsatisfactory teaching and learning is due to difficulties in securing the organisation of appropriate software to support pupils' development in ICT. Lack of access to resources has meant that by the ages of seven and eleven, most pupils have not made sufficient progress from their earlier skill levels in all areas of this subject's curriculum. There is little opportunity for pupils to improve their ability in control technology because there is insufficient software. Nonetheless, there is a wide range of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skill when using computers and a significant minority attain satisfactory standards in some areas such as word processing.
139. Throughout the school, most pupils display interest as well as a wide range of initial skill and understanding of computers and other technological equipment, often stemming from using such equipment at home. In the lower infants, pupils are seen to have appropriate opportunities to practise literacy skills as they arrange words displayed on a monitor screen into a sentence. They use the mouse and keyboard with satisfactory skill and understanding and gain satisfaction from reading their work back to a classroom assistant. By the age of eleven, due to limited access to computers, most pupils' keyboard and mouse skills have not advanced far beyond those expected of younger juniors under normal circumstances. However, they have a better awareness of recent developments in ICT and of its potential in cross-curricular applications. A group of Year 6 pupils describe using the Internet at school to locate appropriate websites to search for information relating to history and geography topics. Pupils print pictures and text from websites and copy information into a word-processing program. Some pupils confidently search for sites and type in website addresses. Pupils discuss the use of the computer to generate art. Pupils make occasional but better use of their knowledge and skills in literacy than in scientific and mathematical activities. During literacy lessons some effective use is made of computers to check spellings, construct letters, and word process other types of writing. No examples of data-handling work were evident in lessons though a few pupils in the after-school computer club accessed data they had saved. Overall, cross-curricular work in ICT is in urgent need of further development.
140. Pupils with special educational needs now have appropriate access to technology. The recent acquisition of a special keyboard for physically disabled pupils is already making a positive difference to progress made in lessons.
141. Pupils are being successfully taught how to use equipment with care and consideration for others. When they are working pupils show respect for resources and divide the short time that they use the equipment fairly and without argument. Some are proactive in seeking opportunities to develop their skills, as observed during lunchtimes when a few pupils chose to undertake their own word-processing activities. On these occasions they display responsible behaviour; enjoy working independently at the workstation and support each other's learning well. Teachers promote ICT through the use of good quality captions to accompany work on display but the amount of pupils' work in public places is negligible.
142. The school benefits from a technology suite with sufficient computer workstations to accommodate 16 pupils. Governors are allocating funds appropriately to purchase significant amounts of software to support skills in data-handling and control technology. When fully operative this suite will significantly increase the planned opportunities for work in ICT. There is also sufficient audio and visual equipment such as television, video and listening centres to increase pupils' use and application.

143. During the inspection week, there were many occasions when computers were not in use. This does not effectively promote pupils' learning. The staff has realised that they do not all have sufficiently high levels of personal skill, knowledge and understanding to make effective use of existing hardware and software. They are looking forward to the professional development sessions already arranged for the summer term with the headteacher and a member of the local authority support services.
144. The designated co-ordinator is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and actively attempting to move all pupils' learning forward. Overall, the subject is at an early stage of development but is being given high priority in the school development plan and this should be sustained. The main objectives are to improve the approach to tracking pupils' progress and to manage the effective monitoring of teaching and learning. The ultimate aim is to ensure rigorous implementation of the statutory orders, equality of opportunity for all pupils and higher standards. There is a firm commitment to improvement by the governors, headteacher and staff.

MUSIC

145. Infant pupils reach national expectations and the oldest juniors exceed them. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, enjoy this subject and participate in activities well. As they get older, they develop increasingly mature attitudes to music making and appraising, are able to sustain critical listening, and use their well-developed skills and knowledge of musical vocabulary with confidence and poise. The subject makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
146. Infants' sound achievement is best demonstrated when pupils make patterns of sounds. Pupils manage a reasonable degree of accuracy when asked to repeat patterns made up of long and short beats. Children with different levels of prior attainment work effectively in small mixed-ability groups to create their own simple compositions. They are developing appropriate skills in sharing and building on individual ideas. They are beginning to participate in the oral evaluation of group performance. However, pupils' attitudes and ability to concentrate are inconsistent and better in one class than the other. The quality of discussion would be improved by more sustained and careful listening when appraising music. Seven year olds do not use subject vocabulary with confidence to describe the effects they are creating. For example, the word 'crescendo' is unfamiliar to them yet they can achieve this effect well as they perform in groups.
147. Junior pupils are far more accomplished in the use of precise terminology when describing their work and the response to it. They use words such as 'pitch', 'texture' and 'ostinato' naturally and are clearly used to discussing musical elements in the context of a range of different styles. When singing, the oldest pupils keep in tune and their diction and expression are very good. If the tempo required is lively as in Caribbean chants and rounds, they capture the mood eloquently. The standard of singing is very high and the pupils' sense of musical expression and appreciation of the diversity of music is striking.
148. Teaching and learning are consistently sound or better and junior pupils' progress is good. All teachers plan conscientiously, with appropriate reference to balanced coverage of the statutory programmes of study. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils, and teachers help pupils understand how they have progressed during the lesson. Pupils also have opportunities to extend their skills by attending additional peripatetic lessons or lunchtime music clubs.
149. There are several differences that staff should consider between the excellent and the sound lessons. One is the rigour with which the teacher uses appropriate terminology and also expects pupils to use, and perform to the best of their ability. Another is the clarity of feedback provided about the quality of pupils' performance. Pupil management is also significant. Rather than slow the pace of a lesson to draw pupils' attention to restless behaviour, in the best lessons teachers focus on strategies that motivate pupils. Children with special educational needs receive sensitive support and pupils with a special interest in music are encouraged to share their skills. They are seen, for example, to lead as soloists for other pupils to echo. In these very good lessons it is

difficult to see how the vast majority in the class could work or try harder. When success and effort are acknowledged and difficulties supported in a positive way, pupils make rapid progress.

150. Access to a purpose-built music room, a very plentiful range of percussion instruments, and audio-visual equipment, makes a significant difference to the quality of pupils' experiences. The acoustics in the room are very good. There is plenty of space for pupils to spread out so that even when, during a lunchbreak, over 50 children from five to eleven years of age joined together in a singing club, they could all join in without any problems.
151. The subject is accorded high status. It is used to celebrate the school's community ethos and spirit. For example, in an assembly led by the 'ECO' group all the pupils sang very well, communicating the joy of collective song and the reverence of the occasion. The school prospectus and annual governors' report to parents also describe the significant achievements of pupils at the North Devon proms and the Barnstaple Carnival last year.
152. The co-ordination of the subject is effective in the context of a new school. The headteacher and the creative arts staff team support colleagues and share good practice. The subject development plan contains appropriate objectives for improvement, including access to training for less confident staff. The next step will be to plan future action in greater detail. It will be important to concentrate on monitoring standards so that they continue to rise at both key stages.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

153. Only gymnastics was observed during the inspection so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on standards in physical education. In gymnastics, the attainment of pupils at both key stages is above national expectation. Teachers' plans show that dance, games and athletics are taught in accordance with statutory requirements but pupils are not being taught swimming activities and water safety in the junior stage. Plans are in hand to rectify the situation, and governors should take steps to ensure that these are carried through before the end of the school year.
154. Teaching is at least sound and often good at both key stages. Teachers demonstrate good class management and have clear lesson objectives and high expectations for pupils' behaviour and attainment throughout lessons. They have well-established procedures to ensure the health, safety and attention of pupils. Pupils know about the importance of warming up before strenuous exercise and are watchful and caring of each other. Pupils are developing good listening and performing skills and are able to benefit from suggestions made by the teacher or other pupils. For example, infants build up sequences of movements by travelling and balancing in different ways, identifying which parts of their body are affected by stretching and bending. They copy, repeat and explore simple actions with control and co-ordination. The higher achievers show a good appreciation of quality in their movements, for example completing a forward roll with style and precision. Despite rather long sessions, pupils maintain concentration, enjoy the activities and know when they have achieved well. In the better lessons they are given the opportunity to exercise independence to develop their own ideas, for instance when devising synchronised movements while working in pairs. In some lessons the teaching is too directed. This stifles initiative and inhibits the high achievers.
155. Pupils in the early junior years undertake similar activities, but with greater variety and skill. They show good progress from the infant stage in the range and quality of their movements. They give reasons why warming up before an activity is important, and why physical activity is good for their health. When practising movements and balances they can see how their work is similar to and different from others, and use this understanding to improve their performance. The higher achievers comment on skills, techniques and ideas used in their own and others' work.

156. Sound use is made of classroom assistants in lessons. Their effectiveness could be further increased if they were more actively involved in evaluating and reporting back to the teacher, particularly during whole-class activities. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved. In one lesson a disabled pupil was able to participate with the aid of a helper, and afterwards spoke fluently about the parts of the lessons she could join and those that she could not. Resources for gymnastics are good, and the hall is very well suited for its purpose.
157. The school makes good use of the expertise of volunteers and members of sporting associations in support of pupils' learning. During the inspection older children benefited from a session with a local golf professional. Planning was very thorough, and this kind of activity shows a willingness to enrich the games element of physical education programme whenever possible. Dance is given plenty of emphasis and plays an important part in some of the school and community celebrations and performances.
158. Some aspects of provision are not good enough and hinder pupils' access to a full games and outdoor activities programme. The playing field is almost unusable because of bad drainage and a steeply sloping site. Plans are in hand to improve it, and governors should continue to do their best to make sure that something is done so that full delivery of the curriculum is possible.
159. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. Good opportunities are identified for cross-curricular links, for example, rules and instructions for literacy, and scoring and counting for numeracy. Schemes of work published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are used to ensure curriculum coverage and progression at both key stages. With the exception of swimming, provision in physical education is a strong feature of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

160. By the end of both key stages, the range of evidence shows that attainment is broadly in line with that expected in the Devon Agreed Syllabus and pupils make sound progress in the subject.
161. Infants have appropriate understanding of Christian beliefs through learning about Old and New Testament stories. Work in books shows that pupils understand the value of belonging to families and communities and about significant incidents in Christ's life. They have discussed moral issues arising from parables, for example 'The Good Samaritan'. They have been introduced to aspects of Judaism through stories from the Old Testament and have made simple comparisons with Christianity. By the end of the junior stage pupils have developed a better understanding of the significance of prayer in religious belief. They have considered the meaning to Christians of 'The Lord's Prayer' and made comparisons between Christianity and other major religions.
162. Teaching in the two lessons observed was at least satisfactory and good in the lesson at the lower junior stage where the teacher set a reflective atmosphere, gave good information about a visit to a mosque and used whole-class discussion well. Year 3 and 4 pupils knew the names of places of worship of the major religions and could discuss places of reflection, and a few knew the religious meaning of light and candles.
163. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Effective use is made of educational visits and of voluntary help from visitors to stimulate pupils' interest. In the lesson observed the chair of governors, a local pastor, and his daughter led the lesson about the Old Testament story of Daniel well. The lesson included appropriate opportunities to consider moral issues about justice and bravery, for pupils to pray and to write their own prayers. In an infant stage assembly, the teacher furthered pupils' understanding of the importance of faith through telling a story from the New Testament about healing.
164. A scrutiny of samples of work shows that there is a qualitative difference in curricular coverage between classes containing pupils from Years 5 and 6. One class has looked in more depth than the other at similarities and differences, not only between Christianity and Judaism but also

between Islam and Hinduism. Such differences indicate some inequality of opportunity and show a need for more rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress.

165. The Devon Agreed Syllabus is new and the school is using it to review the way in which the current approach to curriculum planning ensures continuity and progression in religious education. The co-ordinator has developed a scheme of work and a policy is in draft form. There is an appropriate action plan for the subject that is designed to improve the curriculum and raise standards and this should be maintained.