

INSPECTION REPORT

WEST CROFT JUNIOR SCHOOL

Bideford

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113132

Headteacher: Alan Junkison

Reporting inspector: Geoff Burgess
OIN: 23708

Dates of inspection: 22nd to 26th April 2002

Inspection number: 242733

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Coronation Road Bideford Devon
Postcode:	EX39 3DE
Telephone number:	01237 473548
Fax number:	01237 473440
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mervyn Lane
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

Information about the inspection team

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23708	Geoff Burgess	Registered inspector		Results & achievements Teaching & learning Leadership & management School improvement
9487	Frances Hurd	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values & personal development Attendance Personal welfare & care Partnership with parents
24342	Denise Franklin	Team inspector	Art: SEN Design Technology Religious Education	
26614	Annie Tempest	Team inspector	Geography History	Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development
28014	Peter Buckley	Team inspector	English Physical Education	Assessment & academic monitoring
23330	Tony Burgess	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	Strategic use of resources
27925	David Smith	Team inspector	Science: EO Information Technology	Learning opportunities

The inspection contractor was:

Geoff Burgess Inspections
4, Dodhams Farm Close
Bradpole
Bridport
Dorset
DT6 3EZ

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The Registrar
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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

West Croft Junior School sits above the town of Bideford next to its feeder infant school and serves a wide spectrum of families of almost entirely British heritage mainly from the town itself. About a fifth of pupils are entitled to free school meals but not all parents claim them. The number of pupils on roll has grown from 344 to more than 400 over the past five years with an average amount of movement of pupils into and out of the school during the year. Nearly a quarter of pupils are on the special needs register of whom ten, a relatively high number, have statements of special need. Although each year group has a good number of higher attainers, overall attainment on entry has been mainly below average and sometimes well below over the past five years but is improving.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, well led and managed, where good teaching is helping pupils of all abilities to achieve well and enjoy learning. With funding per pupil lower than most schools nationally and attainment on entry lower than in many, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching and good work by support staff ensures that pupils of all abilities achieve well
- Staff see pupils' personal growth as very important. Most boys and girls behave and relate well, work hard and are growing into mature, responsible and self-reliant citizens
- The school gives pupils very good opportunities to experience and appreciate the arts and their own cultural heritage, and to celebrate the cultural diversity of others
- It provides a very good range of extra activities to enrich the curriculum
- Staff take very good care of all the pupils and do all they can to help and involve the parents
- Very effective leadership by the headteacher, very well supported by the governing body, is maintaining the school's high reputation in the community.

What could be improved

- The school does not have a planned programme for developing pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education to ensure adequate coverage and consistency
- Assessment arrangements are well used for helping teachers to plan appropriate work but do not allow teachers to monitor pupils attainment against national standards
- Current afternoon timetabling arrangements inhibit the creative use of time in teaching non-core subjects such as music, design technology or religious education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since its last inspection in April 1997, standards in English, mathematics and science, as measured by national testing in year six, have improved by about the same rate as in most schools. Current standards show that this improvement is being maintained. The school suffered from a good deal of disruption from staff absences in 1997 but, with no teachers leaving in the past two years, the school has benefited from real stability and the quality of teaching has improved. Year group planning features strongly greatly helped by the new buildings, and provision for art and design technology is much improved. The process by which school developments are related to improvements in standards and prioritised is much clearer. In addition, provision for information technology has been substantially upgraded to good effect. Overall improvement is good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	D	D	C
mathematics	D	E	D	C
science	D	E	D	C

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

Over the past three years, results in English, mathematics and science have improved at about the same rate as most schools to stay below the national average but broadly average when compared with other schools in a similar situation. They also showed a good improvement over results obtained when the same group of pupils took national tests in year two. Current standards throughout the school are still below average but continue to improve steadily, year on year, and children in this year's oldest classes should achieve results to match schools in a similar situation in English and mathematics and even better in science. The attainment of the current year three group was well down when they started but the school quickly recognised this and steps to put this right are making a very good impact on the achievement of pupils who arrived with limited literacy and numeracy skills. Achievement in all year groups is good with relatively more higher attainers than might be expected and pupils who find learning difficult making good progress. Standards in non-core subjects are appropriate for the ages of the pupils concerned with strengths in art and information technology.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy their time in school and most are wholehearted in their approach to learning and respond positively to their work. They join in with everything that is offered, are always willing to contribute their own ideas and suggestions and are proud of their achievements and their school. Attitudes to learning and school are good
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' good behaviour around the site helps to make school a happy, positive experience. Behaviour in class is often very good and usually good but occasionally, when their powers of concentration are stretched, inappropriate behaviour by a few pupils wastes time for the rest. Behaviour overall is good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are good and this is a key factor in its happy, relaxed feel. Visitors are made very welcome and a great deal of mutual respect exists between adults and children. Most pupils act in mature and sensible ways and are very happy to take on any responsibilities when they are offered.
Attendance	Pupils regard school as a positive experience and attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All pupils have equal access to a suitably varied curriculum much enhanced by the contribution made by extra-curricular activities, especially in the older classes. Literacy, numeracy and information technology are strongly represented and other subjects provide stimulation and balance. Good planning arrangements ensure adequate coverage and that parallel classes receive a similar diet. Provision to enhance pupils' personal, social and health education has some strong features but is not consistent across the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Effective procedures for identifying, monitoring and supporting pupils with special needs have been established and all the necessary paperwork is in place and up to date. Well trained learning support assistants provide necessary help mainly as part of normal classroom work. Specialist teachers take responsibility for other pupils in smaller literacy and numeracy ability groups. Pupils with very special needs are well catered for and included in all the school has to offer. Provision for pupils who find learning or conforming difficult is good
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Staff make good provision for promoting pupils' personal development with very good arrangements for pupils to study and appreciate the arts, their own cultural heritage and to celebrate the cultural diversity of others. Provision for the development of pupils' social skills and attitudes and moral awareness are good with satisfactory attention given to helping pupils to reflect on the more spiritual aspects of their growth.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has developed a well-earned reputation for the very good care it provides for its boys and girls and its ability to meet the needs of all pupils. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils are safe, happy and not at any risk. Their behaviour and attendance are carefully monitored and suitable records kept of trends and significant events. Good assessment procedures are well used for modifying planning to meet current needs but are less effective in measuring progress against national levels. Where problems occur, parents are kept well informed and they are closely involved in any discussions held or actions taken.

Every effort is made to involve parents in their children's education and to develop lines of communication but parental response is mixed. Most support children with their homework and many help with special events and with transport for sports fixtures but few help in school. Good information is provided about the work of the school and pupils' achievements but limitations in assessment procedures mean that this does not indicate how well they are doing against pupils of the same age across the country.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership & management by the headteacher & other key staff	The head, well supported by the deputy, has been very effective in establishing the reputation of the school in the town and in bringing about necessary improvements to the accommodation and other provision. Year group and subject leaders are making an increasingly important contribution to the development of their areas of interest and the whole staff work well together in the best interest of the children. Overall leadership and management is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and keen for the school to succeed. They have well developed arrangements for fulfilling their responsibilities, know the school well through 'hands on' monitoring

	and reports from managers and are keenly aware of its strengths and limitations. The head has ensured that they are fully involved in identifying what needs to be done to improve and as a group, in committees and individually, they are providing the school with necessary practical and moral support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Procedures for monitoring and evaluating planning, teaching and standards have improved over the years and are now good. The whole school community is involved in the process and this leads to a good deal of informed debate. Information from national assessment is regularly used to identify trends and priorities for inclusion in school planning. Staff development has assumed a much higher profile with the school fully integrating performance management into its monitoring and planning processes.
The strategic use of resources	The school has little room for manoeuvre with its budget but has been very effective in securing extra funding. Substantial very effective and carefully managed improvements have been made to the buildings making good use of this. These have made much better use of the available space, and improved working conditions and staff morale. Where the school has choice, funds are spent on what staff and governors agree is important. Good use is made of all teaching and non-teaching staff and a generally good supply of teaching resources are effectively stored and well used.

The head and governors are to be congratulated on successfully bringing about and very efficiently managing a period of improvement and expansion in the school culminating in the new buildings.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children enjoy going to school • teaching is good and their children are making good progress • the school is helping pupils to grow up sensibly and behaviour is good • pupils work hard and do their best • the staff are very approachable and the school works closely with parents • the school is well led and managed • their children are able to enjoy a very good range of extra activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the work their children are expected to do at home • information about how well their children are getting on

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views and that more specific information could be given about how well their children are doing. However, the school's homework arrangements are better than in most schools and well supported by the majority of parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. With few exceptions, pupils from the junior school's partner infant school transfer to West Croft when they are seven. In 1997, when last year's top class took their Key Stage 1 national tests, their results were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Hence, although the same year group only achieved below average results in English and mathematics in their year seven tests in 2001, this actually represented a good improvement. Subsequent Key Stage 1 results in the partner school show some improvement in recent years but standards in the current year three were well below average in year two. It is also significant to note that recent assessments made in children's first year in the partner infant school, which for the great majority comes after attending the nursery, shows that their overall attainment is below average especially in their language and personal development.

2. In this context, the steady improvement shown in English and mathematics over the past three years, which is being consolidated in year six and built on in years four and especially five, is to be commended. Pupils are achieving well in these subjects throughout the school and, having identified the drop in standards when pupils entered year three, the school made a substantial investment in staffing to provide focused support for those pupils who had poor literacy and numeracy skills to very good effect. This group has made good gains and teachers in the other year three classes have been able to concentrate on pushing up standards among the more advanced pupils.

3. With this in mind, it is notable that although the number of pupils reaching average levels is less than in most schools in each year group, the number working at higher levels matches the percentage most other schools achieve. This has been greatly helped by organising pupils into similar ability teaching groups in years five and six. Most aspects of English and mathematics follow the trends noted above but the school recognises that writing is the area with most scope for development. Improvements in science have more than matched those in English and mathematics and the school should achieve average standards in year six tests this year with pupils in the other year groups achieving as well as pupils in other schools. The school's analysis of results over time indicated that girls had been doing relatively less well than boys but inspectors found no significant current evidence of this.

4. Much improved provision in information technology (ICT) is seeing a rapid improvement in standards throughout the school with younger pupils well up to speed and matching other schools and older pupils catching up fast, except in aspects of monitoring and control. Art is another strong subject with overall standards throughout the school better than in most schools and some outstanding examples of artwork on display. This is especially commendable as art was identified as an issue in the last inspection. Standards in all other subjects are generally appropriate for the ages of the pupils concerned with strengths where individual teachers have particular expertise such as in physical and religious education. It is significant to note that in those subjects which involve more reading and writing such as geography, history and religious education, sound standards are achieved despite many pupils having limited literacy skills.

5. Boys and girls who find learning or conforming difficult are making good progress in relation to the targets set on their individual education plans. These are specific and can be easily measured so that progress can be regularly assessed. The school has evidence that, as these pupils progress through the school, the number identified as having specific learning needs becomes less. Staff put a great emphasis on a positive approach, rewarding success and raising individual pupil's self-esteem. All pupils with extra needs are supported well either in the classroom or working in small groups and as a result they receive the same curriculum as the rest of the class at an appropriate level, and make good progress in their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils generally have good attitudes towards their school. They enter school in an orderly fashion and quickly settle down to whatever activities are usual for the start of the day without needing any direction to do so. Most are enthusiastic about learning, expect to find their lessons interesting and are willing to contribute their own ideas and suggestions. The prompt start to the day and pupils' sensible behaviour between lessons are an aid to good learning. They are very proud of their school, particularly of the new buildings. Boys and girls tidying up the lunch hall stopped work to ask, unprompted, 'Do you like our school? We think it's lovely.' They respond enthusiastically to good teaching, whether by school staff or by gifted outside visitors like the Hindu teacher who gave them roles to play in the recreation of a Hindu wedding. Inspired and excited by the colour, the music and the drama, they responded wholeheartedly and delightedly to this experience of another culture's richness. Pupils are keen to talk about their work and proud of their achievements.

7. Behaviour is good overall with no exclusions for ten years. Playtimes are generally harmonious occasions. Although the hard play area is small for the number of pupils, most children behave sensibly and cooperatively. No instances of oppressive behaviour were observed. Pupils are noticeably friendly and welcoming to visitors, very willing to chat about their school and their work, or to offer help if they think it is needed. They are confident and relaxed with adults. Behaviour during class is usually good and sometimes very good, although occasionally, when lessons do not interest them, inappropriate behaviour by a few pupils wastes time for the rest. Pupils behave well in whole school assemblies. They enter sensibly and remain quietly attentive, with very little fidgeting or whispering.

8. Pupils' personal development is good. They are aware of themselves as members of a community and accept its responsibilities. All have set tasks in the classroom and around the school, which are carried out conscientiously needing little supervision from adults. Monitors responsible for playground toys approached pupils, politely asking them to pack toys away. Boys and girls responded quickly and sensibly, treating the toys with care. Relationships between pupils and adults, and between pupils themselves, are nearly always good and sometimes very good, which is a key factor in the school's happy, relaxed feeling. The mutual respect between adults and children is a positive aid to learning. Although most pupils tend to play with members of their own year group and sex, examples of mixed-age and mixed-gender play were seen during the inspection. For instance, two year three pupils, a boy and a girl, had worked together to erect a 'tumbling tower' in the playground. They looked taken aback when two year six boys joined them, but quickly accepted them. When the tower finally collapsed, all four roared with laughter.

9. Attendance is satisfactory, being in line with national averages; unauthorised absence was below and authorised absence was also below. There are no significant problems with punctuality: most parents have to get to work by nine o'clock and therefore ensure that their children are dropped at school in good time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10. The last report stated that teaching was 'at least sound in over 90 per cent of lessons' with forty per cent good and a 'small minority' of very good. It went on to say that the school had been affected by a number of long-term staff absences. As a result, one key issue was to 'further raise the quality of teaching'. With no unsatisfactory lessons, more than three-quarters at least good and nearly a quarter very good and excellent, the quality of teaching has improved greatly in the intervening period.

11. A feature of this improved picture is the consistency of teaching throughout the school as shown by the fact that:

- Almost all teachers achieve more good and better lessons than satisfactory and a half teach very good or excellent lessons
- Very good or excellent teaching was observed in all subjects except music and design technology
- The balance of satisfactory and better lessons is very similar in each year group

- The balance of satisfactory and better lessons in English, mathematics and science taken together is very similar to that shown when all the other subjects are taken together. However, there are strengths in each group with all information technology and humanities teaching good and better in the non-core subjects and with thirty per cent of numeracy lessons very good and excellent as opposed to twelve per cent of literacy and science lessons.

12. Several whole school developments, some stemming from the last report, have contributed to this much more consistent and higher quality picture. These include:

- The effective implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the adoption of national schemes of work in other subjects which has provided a detailed agreed planning structure to ensure consistency and progression
- Weekly year group planning meetings help to ensure that learning objectives and work expectations for equivalent pupils in parallel classes are the same and that best use is made of subject strengths in planning
- An increase in the number of learning support assistants and the enhancement of their role especially in years three and four and in supporting pupils with extra needs plus:
- the expansion of the use of ability groupings (sets) in the core subjects in years five and six with extra staffing to reduce group sizes has helped teachers to focus more closely on the needs of groups of pupils and provide more support in the classroom
- Early recognition of a particular problem in year three and the appointment of a teacher to work with a quite large 'set' of pupils with limited basic skills made it possible for these pupils to catch up and for the rest to work to their potential in smaller class groupings.
- The appointment of an information technology specialist to work alongside class teachers in the upgraded computer suite has had a profound effect on the confidence and competence of both teachers and pupils.
- Performance management procedures have added structure and focus to existing monitoring and professional development procedures.

13. The impact of many of these factors can be seen in much of the excellent and very good teaching observed. Two high quality year five numeracy lessons illustrate the points made about the impact of the numeracy strategy and the extension of 'setting' into year five. In one, the significant number of higher achievers were thoroughly stretched by one of the mathematics coordinators who used her very good subject knowledge to good effect to address a current school priority, problem solving. Rapid-fire and very challenging questioning showed that the group were not clear about the concept of 'factors' when expressing a remainder in a division 'sum' as a fraction. One pacy, clear and well-illustrated explanation later and the whole group gained a clear understanding. Meanwhile, in the fourth group out of five, another aspect of problem solving, the use of data in graphical form, gave rise to a lot of energy and enthusiasm from a group whose attainments are below average. Another good example of on-going assessment led to an active and practical demonstration of the concept of a 'mode' in which the pupils themselves found the mode in the whole group, then among the girls and the boys. In the following virtual 'shared graphing' activity, almost every pupil volunteered to 'label the axis' and use coordinates to 'plot the points' successfully. The teacher's very positive relationship with her group together with lots of encouragement and a good use of humour encouraged confident, active responses and real engagement at the pupil's own level.

14. An excellent year four ICT lesson showed the value of the investment that the school has made in the subject. Making very good use of the digital projector, the ICT teacher fascinated pupils by showing them how, by repeating a simple square, the computer creates an elaborate pattern. With laminated sheets to remind them how to draw different shapes, pupils work together very well in pairs while the two teachers circulate to support and question, making explicit links to mathematics and art. Each pair, confidently and with real enjoyment produce 'lace-like' patterns with no two results the same and, with encouragement, vary the size, colour and position of shapes to produce ever more complex patterns.

15. In these lessons and in most others, pupils' enthusiasm for the work they are doing and very good behaviour are key factors in their learning well. However, in a minority of lessons, time is lost by the teacher dealing with minor misbehaviour which slows down learning while in others,

pupils comply but are passive in their response to less focused or over-long activities.

16. The quality of teaching for pupils' who find learning difficult is good overall. This is particularly evident in the lower school where pupils receive good focused teaching by support teachers and support staff. Lesson plans linked to the needs of the pupils focus well on the targets on their individual education plans. These targets, which are produced by the special needs coordinator in consultation with staff, are specific and measurable. They are reviewed termly and new targets set if these have been achieved. Well briefed support staff are used effectively in classes to support individual pupils' learning. Behaviour management is satisfactory and sometimes good but agreed strategies are used inconsistently across the school and are more successful in some classes than in others.

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

17. The taught curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory in that it broadly covers all that is required and meets statutory requirements. Religious Education is taught in accordance with and meets the requirements of the local agreed syllabus but the school needs to ensure that all aspects of topics have a religious focus. The programme for personal social and health education is mainly delivered through assemblies and other subjects. Sex and drugs education is linked to the science curriculum and supported by visits from the school nurse. Although many aspects of citizenship and safe and healthy lifestyles are covered in this way, a planned programme would provide more consistency and ensure progression across the years. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and provides equality of access.

18. Effective strategies are in place for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Learning support assistants provide additional support for years three and four and the special needs co-ordinator and part-time teachers work with years five and six. This enables pupils to benefit from smaller teaching groups for Literacy and Numeracy lessons.

19. The curriculum is carefully planned with policies and schemes as the basis of medium and short term planning. Curriculum initiatives and development involves staff and governors and the school development plan identifies priorities and resource needs. Year group planning meetings have been formalised since the last inspection and coordinator roles are clearly defined. There is a consistent approach to planning with teachers in year groups receiving good support from subject coordinators. Staff make good use of model plans made available by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and these are incorporated into the termly plans.

20. Current afternoon timetabling arrangements inhibit the flexible use of time in teaching non-core subjects such as music, design and technology and religious education. The mid-afternoon break means that there are two lengthy sessions each afternoon. These periods are too long for some subjects and lessons lose pace towards the end. As the length of the taught school week is shorter than recommended for this key stage an audit of the time spent on non-core subjects would benefit from a thorough review.

21. Good provision for pupils who find learning and conforming difficult has a positive impact on their learning. The school's commitment to inclusion is evident from the high priority placed on special needs to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. Most pupils are well supported either in the classroom by well-trained support staff, or in small groups for literacy and numeracy lessons. This enables teachers and support staff to focus on the specific needs of these pupils and to plan tasks to meet their needs. Older pupils enjoy using a structured reading scheme which is a great help in their learning.

22. The school provides a very good range of extracurricular activities, nearly all run by teaching staff, with some music lessons provided by the county music service, all of which are open to both sexes. Tuition is offered in violin, recorder, guitar, and woodwind instruments, with clubs for beginners and more advanced players, and the school choir is very popular. There are

computer clubs for each year group, as well as environmental studies clubs and football clubs. Older pupils are also offered netball skills and a netball club, gymnastics, athletics, table tennis, rugby, cricket, calligraphy, a radio controlled car club, and a French club for year six pupils. Older pupils are currently running a dance club for year three and in the autumn term they ran a chess club for them. In addition, pupils enjoy a wide range of offsite visits. Year three visited the Egyptian museum at Exeter; year four also went to Exeter and had town walks in Bideford and Barnstaple; years five and six went to Plymouth to see an educational musical; year six visited the local fire station as part of a 'life skills' day and made three river trips. Visits from a puppet theatre, a theatre group, a dance team and the 'Science Dome', an organisation set up to provide science presentations for schools enriched the curriculum.

23. Particularly good provision is made for older pupils. Year five had visits from a Tudor time traveller and a construction day, as well as the wonderfully rich cultural and spiritual experience which took place during the inspection when classrooms were transformed into a temple and a Hindu wedding was celebrated with ritual and dancing. In the annual Arts Week for years five and six the school has a wide range of artists, storytellers and other visitors. Year six have a residential visit (this year to a youth hostel on Dartmoor), which always involves outdoor activities, watersports, and visits to places of interest. Those not taking part in the residential visit go on local day trips while the others are away. Year five visit an adventure centre for a day. The school has canvassed parents about the possibility of other year groups having something similar but the idea was not particularly welcomed.

24. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning which is matched by the school's contribution to the community. Good use is made of the local area to enhance the curriculum in subjects such as religious education, history and geography. Representatives of the emergency services visit the school as do local clergy. The choir regularly sings locally and pupils entertain elderly people and fundraise for local charities such as a hospice. They take part in local sporting tournaments – three teams went to the area gymnastics championships last year - and four violinists play with the North Devon String Training Orchestra. The local community regards the school with affection. Neighbours keep a close eye on the premises out of school hours. Local people save vouchers for books or equipment for the school even though they have no children there and many past parents come back to help at annual fairs. School events like these are very well supported by the local community as well as by parents. A number of local organisations rent school premises for their meetings, including karate, cross-stitch and diet and fitness clubs. The site is also used by the scouts, the horticultural society, for schools soccer tournaments and by Torrington District Council cricket club.

25. West Croft School has good relationships with its partner institutions working closely with the feeder infant school and with Bideford College to ensure that transition in each case is as easy as possible. Staff meet to share information about pupils and coordinators regularly consult each other about the curriculum. Years five and six pupils are invited to Bideford College theatrical and musical productions. The Bideford College bursar has offered helpful advice over the installation of the computer suite in particular and on maintenance topics generally, and as the infant school shares the school site, there is extensive cooperation over security and maintenance issues.

26. Overall arrangements for enhancing pupils' personal development are good with strengths in moral, social and cultural aspects. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils are given the opportunity to explore values and beliefs and the way in which they impact on people's lives. They acquire knowledge and insight into these beliefs through class and whole school assemblies, which explore feelings and enhance children's self worth. During the inspection week, one whole school assembly was entitled "Self esteem". Children were praised for their thoughtfulness, helpfulness and hard work in school. Most assemblies included a prayer, but in some cases there was no real opportunity for pupils to reflect on what they were being told. This content does not aid their spiritual development.

27. Provision for moral and social development is good. The school provides a wide range of extra curricular activities such as computer, dance and chess clubs. Models of moral virtue are

provided through literature, RE, Sciences, arts and assemblies. In one literacy lesson, year four children explored the moral issues of stealing and right and wrong. In another, year three religious education lesson, the children were asked to express opinions on “what makes a good friend”. Clear guidance is given in the school prospectus and various policies as to the behaviour expected of staff and pupils, including guidance on bullying and “Managing Equality”. Throughout the school a moral and social code is being positively and sensitively encouraged and children behave well.

28. A system of house points is awarded throughout the school and certificates are given in assembly for pupils gaining 50, 100 or 150 house points. This system is valued by the pupils and it gives a mechanism for working together. All staff promote a very caring ethos based on a respect and concern for one another. The school council has recently been extended across the whole school and the councillors “feel proud” of their role and give good support to their fellow pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection although meetings could be more frequent and the role of the school council could be further enhanced.

29. Cultural development is very well promoted. Pupils’ awareness of their own culture is acquired through visits to places of educational interest, for example to the steam museum, Paignton Zoo, The Tarka Trail, the local wildlife centre and adventure centres. Pupils’ study of other cultural traditions is very good. For example during the week a Hindu visitor talked to year five children about a Hindu wedding. All older pupils participate in an annual Arts Week and visitors from South West art organisations are invited into the school. In art the children look at the work of many artists and cultures, such as the impressionists and make their own images from these techniques. Music and singing play an important role in assemblies and class lessons, eg year six are learning 1960’s pop songs in history.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The arrangements the school makes for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality are very good. Parents are given clear guidance in the prospectus and reminders in newsletters. Registers are taken quickly and efficiently, and procedures fulfil statutory requirements. Teachers are provided with a list of common symbols to record all possible variations on reasons for absence. The school records attendance using a computerised system and the school administrator does a printout of any unexplained absences weekly, and a more detailed analysis monthly. Absences are followed up by telephone if no notification is received after two days. The school has recently focused on improving its already good standards of punctuality through monitoring and reminders to parents and pupils.

31. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good and the school has a reputation for dealing well with pupils excluded elsewhere. The senior management team meets each week to consider the week ahead. If a pupil’s behaviour is causing concern, all staff are alerted. Any incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour are noted by the staff member concerned in a notebook. This is regularly checked by the headteacher to monitor individual behaviour patterns and to see if particular situations or areas of the school are generating problems. Pupils who misbehave repeatedly may have a report book issued where behaviour is graded after each lesson and breaktime by members of staff and by their parents or carers at home. The headteacher or deputy inspects the book daily. Staff make every effort to praise any examples of good behaviour as well as reporting unsatisfactory ones. The school’s housepoint scheme is intended to reward any positive aspect of a pupil’s behaviour and its code of conduct is widely displayed with copies given to pupils. A good range of playground toys is available to each class in turn on a rota basis. Some of these toys require pupils to work together as a group to encourage cooperative behaviour.

32. Very good procedures are in place for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of pupils. The child protection policy follows local authority guidelines and staff are given clear guidance and told to report any concerns to the headteacher who is the child protection liaison officer. The school nurse and doctor are always involved in any child protection discussions, and the school has had very good support from the local child protection team. All staff are asked to report any perceived health and safety hazards and an immediate assessment is made. The site

manager is mainly responsible for managing health and safety in the school and has undertaken training courses in many different aspects of the subject. He has put in place well-planned and clear procedures for the checking of electrical and other equipment and the management of hazardous substances and carries out regular audits of the premises. The governors do an annual risk assessment walk. Regular fire drills are carried out and all fire equipment is regularly tested. The school recently had a surprise visit from the fire brigade to assess its fire awareness provision and was congratulated on its arrangements.

33. Currently, three first aiders on the staff have up-to-date qualifications. All classrooms have a note of their names and brief guidance on first aid. Pupils are taught how to treat themselves and others when minor accidents occur. The school will shortly be holding a first aid training day for all staff, and specialist training is to be given on the use of an epipen. A member of staff is always on duty in the school office which forms the main entrance. Playtimes are well supervised with a good ratio of staff to pupils. There have been some problems with trespassers and upper surfaces of the building have been treated with anti-vandal paint. Intruders tend to be young people looking for somewhere to play football or skateboard but windows have been broken by balls and pupils' artworks or science experiments left out in the grounds have been interfered with.

34. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are good. The very full section in pupils' annual reports reflects teachers' good knowledge of them. Staff use praise effectively to reinforce self-esteem with a 'Self Esteem Assembly' every fortnight. Class teachers commend their pupils for achievement, whether academic, sporting or personal. Pupils are encouraged to feel responsible for their own learning with an 'agenda for the day' listing all lessons and activities posted in each classroom. The school council with representatives from each class, some elected by secret ballot and some chosen by their teacher, has two meetings a term with a governor and a teacher. Pupils have a wide range of duties around the school and in their classrooms. In their last term, year six are asked to complete a detailed questionnaire (designed in consultation with pupils) on all aspects of school life. Their comments are taken seriously and used to modify provision for the next year.

35. The coordinator for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) gives colleagues ideas on how to introduce topics in curriculum subjects (for instance, considering the different lifestyles and foods eaten by rich and poor in Tudor England). The school is currently preparing a submission for the 'Healthy Schools Award' and efforts have been made to ensure that pupils understand the importance of a good diet and of keeping themselves safe. Members of the emergency services talk about topics like 'stranger danger' and road safety. PSHCE is also provided through 'family group' sessions. A 'family' is made up of pupils from all year groups led by a member of staff, either a class teacher or a classroom assistant. Older pupils learn about drugs and sex education through science lessons and talks by the school nurse. However, with no scheme of work, adequate coverage and progression cannot be assured.

36. Good procedures for identifying pupils who find learning difficult are used effectively to provide them with additional support and to group them according to their ability for literacy and numeracy. The teachers use the school's assessment procedures to identify pupils who need extra support and to set good quality individual targets which are reviewed each term. The school has good links with other agencies to ensure that they can provide the pupils with support as early as possible. Annual reviews of statements are appropriately completed and again all agencies are fully involved in the process. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is good.

37. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection and are now good, although some elements remain in the developmental stage. Those used include the statutory assessments for pupils in year six, the optional tests in years three to five, and additional nationally accepted standardised tests in reading and mathematics. In addition, progress in English is tracked through progress and assessment books recording one or two pieces of writing per term. In mathematics there are half termly assessment tasks to match work covered and in science, pupils are assessed at the end of each topic. Pupil progress

is well recorded in information and communication technology. Other assessments are made in other subjects including self-assessment in history, geography and religious education.

38. Assessment is used effectively to guide planning. The headteacher and the deputy head manage the assessment process and have systems in place, such as work sampling against agreed policies, to ensure continuity and progression in what pupils are taught. However, the monitoring of individual pupils' progress is only satisfactory because the fullest use is not made of the existing procedures to provide a mechanism by which the school can easily record pupils' attainments compared to national standards, monitor progress in these over time and set individual and group targets for improvement. Not enough attention has been paid to assessing pupils' work against National Curriculum criteria with teachers in year groups levelling and moderating samples, and pupils, in particular the older ones, knowing what they need to do to achieve a higher level.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The school has very effective links with parents. It is extremely welcoming and encourages parents to contact them immediately with any problems. Class teachers are available for informal contact at the end of the day and the head or deputy can be seen at short notice. When new pupils join the school, they and their parents each have a private fifteen-minute meeting with the headteacher as well as a tour of the school and an opportunity to meet their new teacher. Last year's induction meeting included a presentation by year six pupils entitled 'My life at West Croft'. Two parent consultation evenings are held each year and parents are invited to attend class assemblies when pupils display the work they have been doing. Parents can write comments in their child's reading record book or home/school link book. They are invited to attend separate Christmas concerts for each year group. The school sends out a version of the Ofsted parents' questionnaire every year, slightly adapted for its own use. Parents are given full feedback on the results which are used when drawing up the school development plan. The school offers parents support in many unobtrusive and imaginative ways. For instance, it provides second-hand football boots for any pupil requiring them, and provides parents with a map of local parking. It offers guidance to parents wanting further education and puts them in touch with suitable providers. The school can arrange for the school nurse to do outreach work with parents at home if this is felt to be appropriate.

40. Parental involvement has a good impact on the life of the school, particularly through the parents' and friends association. It raised money to build the room for a new library, convert an outside classroom into a computer suite and provided £1,000 towards the restocking of the new library. Its major fund-raising events are fairs in the summer and at Christmas. It also organises social events for parents and pupils. Most parents work and are unable to help in school on a regular basis but there are always plenty of volunteers to help with one-off events such as escorting pupils to swimming, off-site visits, or sports matches. They also help with special events such as the annual 'Bake In' when large numbers of pupils bake cakes and biscuits in the school hall. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning overall. A small number are extremely supportive of their children's learning at home and most parents listen to their children read (though not always on a daily basis). Some do not find it possible to offer help with their children's work at home. The school provides pupils with the opportunity to catch up on homework at lunchtimes.

41. The quality of information for parents is good. Regular newsletters give sports results and brief accounts of other activities, as well as information on forthcoming events. Parents are given very clear general guidance on homework and the prospectus is user-friendly and attractive. More specific instructions are given when necessary, for instance parents of pupils undertaking a fifteen-minute period of independent research were asked to time them. Records of achievement include samples of work chosen in conjunction with pupils. Staff are quick to tell parents of any achievement by pupils. The school organises events to inform parents about the curriculum: for instance, year six pupils presented a science workshop for parents during National Science Week. The governors' report fulfils statutory requirements, but is not presented in an inviting format. Written reports for individual pupils are adequate but could be improved. Effort and

attainment grades are given for all subjects, with brief comments and targets for English, mathematics and science. Some comments are too vague or use language which parents may not understand, such as 'she should aim to increase her ability to use Carroll diagrams more confidently'. The information on statutory assessment tests is not clearly presented. Reports note any clubs the pupil has joined, have comments on personal development and a comment from the headteacher. There is no space for parents or pupils to comment. Parents wanting information about the curriculum their children will be studying are invited to come and see their class teacher's planning. This may not be an option, however, for parents who work.

42. Parental involvement in special needs provision is satisfactory. Wherever possible they are fully involved at all stages of the process and the targets on their child's individual education plan are shared with them during parent consultation evenings. Parents or carers usually sign these plans, so that they can support their child in achieving the targets and are invited to attend or to contribute in writing to the annual review meetings for pupils with statements of special educational needs.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. With a steady increase in the numbers on roll, a settled staff achieving many more good and very good lessons (and some excellent) and much improved working conditions for staff and pupils, the school has come a long way since its last inspection. Much of the credit for this must go to the headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy head and very well supported by the governing body. Together they have successfully managed a very full workload and made very good use of the opportunities presented by the increase in staff numbers and considerable improvement to the accommodation. The head's role in patiently, but with some determination, sustaining all that was good about the school while building in national and school based initiatives is especially commendable. Also very noteworthy and much appreciated by parents, is the fact that he ensures that he teaches each class in turn and so is very aware of what is going on at the chalkface. Year group and subject coordinators have played a full part by managing and developing their areas of interest and provision across the school has improved as a result. A good example of this is in information and communications technology where the substantial investment the school has made in resources and teaching support is paying very good dividends.

44. Governors are very supportive and committed to the school, many visiting on a regular basis. They have a well-defined and understood structure of committees and individual responsibilities with a clear programme related to the priorities identified in the school development plan. Many bring considerable expertise to the governing body, training has a much higher profile and all are very keen for the school to succeed. Their efforts on behalf of the school in bringing about the new accommodation deserve special mention. They take their monitoring role seriously, visiting regularly and receiving feedback on the effectiveness of various developments from the head, deputy head and other responsible staff. This is an improvement since the last inspection. As individuals and as a body they know their school and their responsibilities well. Governors linked to subject areas are well informed and very involved in the development of their subjects with many having attended relevant in-service training. For instance, the very specific expertise of the governor responsible for ICT was very useful when decisions were being made about developing the subject.

45. Monitoring and evaluation of provision and standards is an area, which has seen much development since the last inspection. Planning, classroom practice and children's work are regularly checked and evaluated by the head, deputy head and subject coordinators and the school has greatly increased its capacity to collect and analyse data from national testing and the its own assessments. Staff and governors are much more aware of trends and anomalies and are making more use of the information to set priorities, such as writing and problem solving in mathematics, in planning. However as yet, the information is not being used to predict individual pupil's performance in English, mathematics and science or to set individual targets and check on the progress of particular groups of pupils.

46. is good and the register is kept up to date by the special needs coordinator (SENCO). All paperwork is well organised and the requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. The SENCO provides sound support by setting individual targets for pupils, based on detailed information provided by teachers and support staff. Plans are in place to introduce the new Code of Practice to all staff. Resources are good but the SENCO does not have a permanent teaching base where resources can be easily accessible to all staff and where pupils' work can be displayed to celebrate their successes. The special educational needs governor is a member of the teaching staff and is fully supportive. Governors have appropriately put a high emphasis on ensuring that the needs of pupils who find learning or conforming difficult are provided with the relevant support to ensure they are fully integrated into the life of the school.

47. Action and financial planning has improved since the last Ofsted report, which stated "Overall there are too many issues and the school needs to prioritise and to ensure key aspects have precise targets." Ample analysis of assessment results and other information is provided for the governors to ensure the best use is made of available funds to bring about improvements in provision. The School Development Plan (SDP) identifies proposed developments for the coming year and includes details of key personnel, cost, proposed developments, evaluation criteria and a timescale.

48. Strategic use of resources, including funding, is good. The school budgets thoroughly and has benefited greatly from astutely targeted spending, which reflect the priorities the school has identified. Governors use the overall management plan and three-year data to set out plans over time. These are reviewed to ensure funds are directed to areas of need or development. All staff and governors are actively involved in identifying priorities for development. Sufficient levels of responsibilities for spending are delegated to staff with management responsibilities; for example subject co-ordinators manage their subject budget. Teachers bids for their areas of responsibility are considered by the senior management team and the governing body before budget allocations are made. Governors are provided with on-going budget detail to regularly monitor the progress of the SDP and the emerging financial position. Clear limits are put on spending and transfers of funds to ensure appropriate financial control.

49. The governors and headteacher actively explored alternative means of funding. For example, the school obtained grants to help fund the computer suite and also fought to ensure the 'selling off' of some of its land ultimately benefited the school by providing the finance to build the year three extension. Both these initiatives have greatly enhanced the provision of the school. Financial resources provided by the Bridge Trust help fund swimming, Arts Week and computer resources. The school uses the financial resources available effectively. Competitive quotations are sought where appropriate and where the lowest quotation is not accepted it is reported to the governors finance committee and the reasons for the decision are recorded in the minutes.

50. Financial resources have been used to create additional posts both inside and outside the classroom to support the smooth running of the school and raise standards by improving provision. The very efficient site manager provides valuable support by, among many other things, ensuring resources/ equipment are available for lessons and thus allowing more time for teachers to teach. He works closely with fellow governors to seek additional funding, such as 'seed challenge' to provide additional cupboard space in the hall, and a grant from the Jubilee Fund to further improve accommodation. The appointment of a 'specialist' ICT teacher has greatly enhanced provision in that subject and as a direct result has raised standards.

51. The most recent external audit carried out in March 2000, highlighted a wide range of issues where policies and practices would benefit from being updated. Overall the audit acknowledges that the headteacher and administrator "appear to have a satisfactory understanding of the financial administration of the school." The internal audit action plan indicates that all these issues have been, or are in the process of being, addressed. Systems of financial control are well-established and respective roles and responsibilities are appropriately defined. The school administrator provides high quality support and administration systems are efficient, unobtrusive and support the day to day running of the school. A finance computer package is efficiently used to raise orders and monitor spending and good accounting records are

maintained and monitored by staff and governors.

52. There is a good match between the qualifications and experience of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and the demands of the curriculum. In addition to class teachers, the special needs coordinator teaches older pupils in small groups, two support teachers allow setting for numeracy and literacy in years five and six, a further support teacher works with lower attaining pupils in year three. A specialist information and communication technology teacher supports teachers in the computer suite and a support teacher covers non-contact time for class teachers. Staff qualifications provide a good match to the needs of the curriculum, with particular strengths in music, information communication technology and physical education. Subject coordinators are well qualified for their roles. Five newly-qualified teachers have joined the staff in the last four years: all have been well integrated into the school and felt well supported during their induction period. Staff are given plenty of opportunities for in-service training. The eleven classroom assistants include the site manager and are well-trained for their role and give good support to class teachers.

53. Accommodation is good overall. Five temporary buildings have recently been replaced by new accommodation; there is also a new library and an 'outside classroom' has been converted into a computer suite. The grounds have recently had extensive remodelling and reseeded following the building work involved with an amply-sized field, and a new semi-circular playground has been created with a terraced amphitheatre adjacent to the main hard play area. A small, unfenced pond and an attractive woodland wildlife area, with well-marked paths complete the site. The school is well kept, with no graffiti and virtually no litter. The original building is in good condition, except for some windows, which are being replaced on a rolling programme. All the accommodation is kept very clean and is well maintained inside and out. The two staff toilets for each sex are barely adequate provision for the number of staff. There is no dedicated medical room and storage for first aid and medical items is very limited. Sick pupils have to sit on a sofa in the hall. With no dedicated room for teaching special needs pupils, areas where small group work can be done are in short supply. Very few entrances to the building have ramps allowing disabled access, and the school has several flights of stairs within it which would make it difficult for wheelchair navigation.

54. Resources for learning are good overall with the provision for information communication technology very good. Staff make very good use of the available storage space: items are stored accessibly and clearly labelled. Subject coordinators regularly audit the resources for their subjects and ensure that colleagues know what is available to them. Book stock in the main library is low following an audit but is currently being built up again with financial aid from the parents' association and other sources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. To make the most of the very many improvements in provision and resources celebrated in this report, the governors, headteacher and staff of West Croft Junior School should:

- (1) Develop a planned programme for supporting pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education to ensure that they all cover the recommended areas in a coherent and progressive way by:
 - auditing what the school already does in this area and making a record of existing good practice
 - using National Curriculum non-statutory guidelines to create a framework of knowledge, skills and understanding for each year group
 - fitting current good practice onto this framework and evolving activities and

- strategies to fill in the gaps this leaves
- developing an uncomplicated way of monitoring pupils' progress in this area using the agreed framework

(Paragraph 35)

(2) Make the fullest use of good existing assessment procedures to provide a mechanism by which the school can quickly and easily record pupils' attainments compared to national standards, monitor progress in these over time and set individual and group targets for improvement by:

- revisiting the outcomes of recent assessment activities such as optional national testing (SATs) and school writing progress tasks and matching them to agreed National Curriculum levels
- working with year team colleagues to validate these judgements
- developing a means of keeping an easily accessible running record of these and subsequent similar assessments
- using this to evaluate progress and setting individual targets based on the information this provides
- collating this information to provide data about improvement across classes and year groups.

(Paragraphs 38, 45, 61 & 62)

(3) Ensure that current afternoon timetabling arrangements do not inhibit teachers in planning to cover the full range of the curriculum with the flexibility they would wish by:

- completing a rigorous time audit of the actual amount of time spent on the various non-core subjects over the year
- investigating the impact that the present arrangement of two discrete hour long sessions with a mandatory break has on this
- deciding what the optimum length of lessons in subjects such as physical education and music should be
- using this information to agree on a best-fit structure for the afternoon session

(Paragraph 20)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- minor misbehaviour in some lessons wastes time (Paragraphs 15, 16 & 66)
- children's annual reports are not sufficiently explicit (Paragraphs 14)
- religious education lessons do not always have religious content (Paragraphs 17 & 120)
- the school does not have an area set aside for dealing with medical problems or a room for the special needs coordinator to operate from (Paragraph 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	15	39	23			
Percentage	4	19	49	29			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		403
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		76

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		98

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	41
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5.4	School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.2
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	72	51	123

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	43	47	60
	Girls	37	26	42
	Total	80	73	102
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (71)	59 (64)	83 (76)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	45	47	51
	Girls	39	29	29
	Total	84	76	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (69)	68 (64)	79 (71)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	401
Any other minority ethnic group	

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		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.2
Average class size	31

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	698724

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	222

Total expenditure	695764
Expenditure per pupil	1789
Balance brought forward from previous year	48443
Balance carried forward to next year	51403

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.83

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.03
Number vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	403
Number of questionnaires returned	181

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	40	3	1	
My child is making good progress in school.	56	39	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	52	1	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	46	10	3	1
The teaching is good.	59	37	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	44	10	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	28	1	2	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	27	2	3	1
The school works closely with parents.	42	49	7	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	73	25	2		1

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

56	40	3	1	1
57	36	4		2

Other issues raised by parents

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

56. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English, while still below the national average at the end of year six, are improving and that the more able pupils do well. The setting for literacy in years five and six, with the creation of five teaching groups out of three classes has a clear influence on raising standards. The attainment of the current year three group was well down when they started but the school quickly recognised this and through carefully targeted support is making a very good impact on the achievement of pupils who arrived with limited literacy skills. Pupils in all years and including those with special educational needs, are achieving well over time against their prior attainments.

Speaking and Listening

57. Year six pupils attain average standards in speaking and listening skills. They talk and listen confidently in a range of situations as in a religious education lesson where pupils shared ideas as to how a person might show they are a Christian and listened well when discussing moral issues. Year five pupils worked well collaboratively in offering facts and opinions about proposed new development on the school site, and were confident in their role-play when representing the views of those with vested interests. They were thoughtful and mature and showed a keen interest in the opinions of others. Teachers work hard to encourage pupils to think of alternative vocabulary or ways of expressing feelings. In a year three lesson some more able pupils were able to liken events to other experiences such as a rough ride on a raft to 'a car on a bumpy road'. In a year four lesson pupils found it challenging when looking for dialogue in a narrative, writing the spoken words on their white boards and then sharing it with another pair. However, more planned opportunities could be provided, for example through a wide range of drama related activities, for pupils to develop their speaking skills.

Reading

58. Overall standards in reading by the end of year six are below the national average, although there are a significant number of pupils who read very well. By the end of year six most pupils read confidently and accurately for a range of purposes. They talk about their books and are beginning to offer opinions about them but, although most can identify at least one author, few are able to make comparisons between a number of different authors. Pupils in years three and four are developing their reading skills systematically, and although they are below the national expected levels, pupils enjoy reading and are heard to read regularly. Teachers encourage reading during literacy lessons through group reading activities and in whole class sessions. For example, in a year four lesson the teacher reading 'Tyke Tyler' to the class photocopied extracts of the text drawing out the meaning of words such as 'pandemonium' likening it to 'a wet play time', highlighting the use of punctuation marks and the alternative words to replace 'said'. All pupils have a home school reading log, and although, for example, one year four pupil visits the local library and reads daily and writes book reviews, many pupils are heard to read at home too infrequently. Pupils in years five and six use information from research well and understand how the new school library is organised. Reading records are well maintained by teachers and pupils often write book reviews.

Writing

59. Standards of writing achieved by pupils by the end of year six are below those expected for their age. Inspection evidence indicates that, although standards are below the national average, pupils in all age groups are making good progress in lessons and achieving well over time. The literacy strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, and pupils are writing for a wide range of purposes. In a year three lesson the teacher modelled with the class 'The River Raft Runs Wild', asking for descriptive words and introducing the idea of paragraphs. In a year four lesson pupils looked at a text and, working in pairs, they added extra feelings and description, writing their initial thoughts on a small white board. They used their dictionaries well to find suitable vocabulary. This strategy is used effectively in many lessons to improve pupil confidence in writing. Year five pupils brainstormed their thoughts on amenities needed in a village before starting to write reasoned arguments but many pupils tended to write in simple sentences rather than use connectives such as 'however' and 'moreover' when developing a point. Evidence of the planned use of writing across the curriculum was seen in a year six lesson following a geography lesson looking at rivers. Pupils read round the class from a photocopied text of the journey of the River Teign, before using their skimming and scanning skills to underline the main points and then summarise the passage. Their work is well presented, their handwriting is joined and legible although this was not the case when they joined the school, and accurate spelling is taught systematically.

60. The quality of teaching and learning is good, an improvement since the last inspection. Introductory whole class sessions in the literacy hour are well taught. Well-matched tasks and targeted questioning seen in many lessons shows that teachers have a good knowledge of the needs of individual children. All lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives but there is some inconsistency in the effectiveness with which teachers share these objectives with pupils, so that they know exactly what they should be learning. In the best lessons seen, teachers encourage pupils to review their learning against these objectives at the end of the lesson. Good examples of teachers using skilful questioning to extend pupils' learning and to target pupils of differing abilities were seen in all lessons. Teachers deploy and brief their teaching assistants well which contributes to the effective, skilled support they give to pupils with special educational needs and others groups with which they work.

61. Teachers generally manage their pupils in a positive and effective way, which helps to build their confidence, sustain their concentration and contribute to their positive attitudes to the subject. They make good use of computer programs, for example, to help pupils develop their word processing skills and their reading and language development. Good use is made of assessment to match work to pupil's needs and to adjust their planning. However, teachers do not sample and moderate writing across the school to increase their own awareness of how pupils' skills are developing in relation to National Curriculum levels. Boys and girls are not sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve in relation to these levels.

62. The co-ordinators have worked well with teachers to implement the national literacy strategy very consistently so that the pupils build effectively on previous learning. Classrooms have pupils' literacy work well displayed, including good examples of imaginatively word processed work, and most have key vocabulary and literacy prompts appropriate to the age of the pupils. Resources have been improved and the new library is well stocked with good quality non-fiction and poetry books that pupils use regularly. Assessment procedures are good. Individual pupil's progress and assessment books record, sampling of work and the use of optional national test are all well used to modify planning. However, these are not matched to agreed National Curriculum levels or moderated and levelled across year groups. Nor is the information used to set individual targets or to provide data about improvements across classes and year groups and as such its use to support pupils' academic progress is only satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

63. When compared to schools in a similar situation, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly similar to that noted in the last report which said "By the time pupils leave at the age of 11 they achieve sound standards and a significant minority of pupils, good standards". However,

when compared to all schools standards throughout the school are below average but improving.

64. Through the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the accompanying improvement in provision, particularly teaching, pupils are typically making good progress and are achieving well. The National Numeracy Strategy has brought necessary attention to detail in the planning and a proper progression to the development of the subject through the school. Teachers have concentrated on improving the quality of teaching and learning to raise standards and improve results.

65. Attainment of pupils on entry is below average with a very wide range of ability. Pupils' knowledge, skills and methods of working in mathematics increase and refine as they progress through the school and they begin to develop good work habits. Boy and girls in year three improve their ability to calculate by developing appropriate strategies. For example, they work out addition sums by identifying numbers which are 'nearly' multiples of ten, such as 29 or 31, making the calculation by substituting 30 and then add or subtract 1 as appropriate. In year four most pupils answer simple multiplication facts, such as $6 \times 3 = 18$, and use number facts to work out more difficult calculations e.g. $5 + 7 = 12$, $50 + 70 = 120$, $500 + 700 = 1200$. They learn about 3D shapes and are able to make nets for cubes. By year five, pupils identify factors and multiples of a number and recognise scalene, isosceles, equilateral and right angle triangles. In year six, pupils use a variety of methods to write down multiplication calculations. They construct and interpret charts and graphs and calculate the area of simple and compound shapes. Many measure and draw angles accurately, although some find this difficult. Although pupils clearly make good progress throughout the school, the very wide range of ability persists. As a result some pupils achieve very high standards, while others struggle with even the most basic calculation, such as 'half of 6'.

66. Pupils' attitude to mathematics is good. The behaviour observed in all maths lessons is nearly always good and often very good or excellent. Pupils willingly volunteer answers and most pupils participate well. As a result they work productively and at a good pace. In lessons most respond enthusiastically, particularly in 'mental maths' and are eager to explain the strategy they are using. When required, they work quietly and independently, seeking help only when required. They work well with their classmates, share resources fairly and cooperate well. Boys and girls respect the feelings of their classmates and spontaneously show their appreciation when others share their work or give a correct answer. Very occasionally, particularly in the lower sets, pupils are distracted, call out and make irrelevant remarks. However, this is not the norm and indeed in one lower ability set observed their response was most impressive, with pupils focused and on task throughout.

67. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good. In all the lessons observed the teaching was at least satisfactory and most was good and better. In four lessons teaching was very good and in one, excellent. This is an improvement on the last Ofsted which said 'Teaching is at least sound in the vast majority of lessons and good in over half. A significant minority of teaching is very good and a similar amount unsatisfactory.' The school has embraced the introduction of the NNS and confidence has grown in the delivery of the subject. Where teaching is better the pace of lessons is brisk, with a good mix of direct teaching, explanation and questioning, and opportunities for pupils to use practical activities to reinforce their learning. Teachers use well thought out questions to challenge children to explain and demonstrate their thinking to the rest of the class. Good displays of mathematical vocabulary in each classroom help reinforce learning. Planning is nearly always closely linked to previous lessons with clear learning objectives. Lessons are nearly always driven by learning objectives which are made clear to the children at the beginning.

68. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory pupils have not developed sufficiently good work habits to maintain the pace of learning once the lesson moves from direct teaching to individual or group activities. In a few lessons, in their anxiety to ensure all children fully understood the concept or strategy involved, teachers explanations were overlong, allowing minimal time for children to 'have a go' during group or whole class activities.

69. Planning based on the National Numeracy Strategy is now thorough and systematic. Teachers give pupils the opportunity to explain their strategies and methods such as where year six pupils were encouraged to use the information in a job advert to work out how much would be earned in a year and to explain their method to their classmates. Appropriate resources and equipment are used effectively to ensure understanding. In mental maths, number boards and number cards give every child the opportunity to answer and so be fully involved. Displays are very well used to promote and consolidate learning. For example, a year five class used an investigational approach to produce a quite stunning display on rotational symmetry and pattern. Mental maths sessions are generally well used to give a clear start to the lesson and most observed were conducted at a brisk pace.

70. Generally the plenary is effectively used to draw together what has been learned and to highlight key facts or ideas that need to be remembered. In a very small number of lessons insufficient time and emphasis was given to ensure pupils fully understood the strategy or concept involved. As a result a few children finished the lesson unsure of what they were expected to be able to do or know. Work is well matched to the ability of the pupils, not only through the ability setting, but also within a set where, quite often, the teacher provides three levels of work. Teachers ensure activities are well chosen to include pupils of all abilities. Teaching is aided by learning support assistants who provide valuable additional support particularly for children who need the most help.

71. Pupils are in most cases achieving well. As a result of the quality teaching and the establishment of well-developed work habits, learning is good. Pupils' ability to use correct mathematical terminology is developed from the time they enter the school. They improve their understanding of mathematical operations and their ability to use different methods of working out a problem in their head. During lessons, pupils are becoming more self-reliant when faced with a problem. They are able and willing to ask for help when needed and are motivated to improve. Evidence from lessons observed shows pupils work purposefully and try hard. It was quite noticeable that in several lessons learning improved once the pupils moved to the practical activities. Appropriate work set to be completed at home often extends or complements learning in class.

72. The curriculum is now based on the framework for the National Numeracy Strategy and outlines the key objectives to be addressed each term. The subject coordinator updated the school guidelines in Feb 2002. Work is selected from a variety of sources to ensure it is suitably matched to the ability of all the children. The school's system of grouping pupils by ability in years five and six and the provision of an additional teacher in year three has helped raise standards by making teaching more effective.

73. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory, with good features. Staff analyse the results of optional national tests conducted at the beginning of the year, together with the most recent Key Stage 2 test papers. Teacher assessments related to key objectives are used to identify areas of weakness which are used to pinpoint appropriate curricular targets for the coming year. The information generated by the further analysis of standardised tests, carried out across the school, is used to assess standards, identify trends and set year group targets. At present opportunities are missed to make the fullest use of all the existing assessment procedures, such as the optional national tests (SATS) to record pupils' attainments compared to national curriculum levels, to monitor progress and set individual and group targets. The headteacher and the deputy head formally scrutinise work twice a year and provide feedback to help target developments. The marking policy was updated in February 2002 and pupils' work is regularly and consistently marked, but only sometimes includes useful comments to help the pupils recognise how they can improve.

74. Two well-qualified teachers jointly coordinate the subject. Well targeted training to raise subject knowledge, including five staff attending a five day numeracy course, the involvement of the local authority maths adviser and the monitoring of teaching and learning are already helping to raise standards. The school's subject action planning is well developed and this ensures resources are targeted at agreed priorities. Resources for mathematics are good, with enough

equipment etc. to properly resource the full implementation of the Numeracy Strategy. Suitable cross-curricular links have been established with other subjects, although links with information technology could be further developed.

SCIENCE

75. Standard of attainment in science are similar to the national average but the attainment of higher attaining pupils is below both national and similar schools' averages. Since the last report standards have improved in line with the national trend. Pupils are provided with a comprehensive programme of science activity that enables them to acquire a knowledge and understanding of the world around them, materials, and physical processes. They develop good investigative skills and are able to record and measure their observations. Most are able to make comparisons, identify patterns and relationships and offer explanations based on this. Pupils are confident in making predictions and have a good understanding of fair testing.

76. From the earliest year in the school pupils are given the opportunity to develop science skills through practical investigation. Year three pupils learn to classify materials from around the school and are able to explain, for example, that glass is a suitable material for its purpose because it is waterproof and transparent. In investigating the properties of materials they discover that some changes, like the melting of chocolate, are reversible, and that others, such as concrete made from sand, gravel and cement, are not. The absorbency of paper, the durability of different surfaces and the hardness of materials are tested and compared. Pupils understand how seeds germinate and grow and they investigate and compare different growing conditions by planting cress seeds in different mediums – carpet, kitchen roll, sand, flour, currants and compost – and making careful observations of the results. From studying teeth pupils know that teeth and bones contain calcium which is found in milk and cheese. In making a "mouth map" they observe and record the number and type of teeth and learn that incisors are for cutting, canines for tearing and molars are for crushing food.

77. In year four pupils learn to use Newton meters to measure the force required to pull an object across a surface. They know that forces push and pull, and where a bicycle was used to demonstrate, that there is friction between the tyres and the road. They are able to describe air resistance and know that whilst it would be helpful to a parachutist, reducing air resistance through streamlining would be more useful for a racing car. Through investigations on sound year five pupils learn how the pitch of a sound can be changed. Although some find it difficult to differentiate between high and low pitch they find that the pitch of sound created by blowing over the top of a bottle is influenced by ratio of air and water and that the pitch is lower if there is more air to vibrate.

78. Year six pupils describe how to conduct a fair test and know that altering one of the variables can affect the outcome. They make predictions, undertake investigations, compare and challenge results and draw conclusions. Whilst investigating elasticity, they learn that some materials will return to their original shape when stretched and that there is a stretching and a reactionary force. They plot the amount of stretch of elastic bands of different widths, tabulate their findings and draw graphs of their findings. Not all investigations turn out as expected, and whilst separating ink from water some pupils predicted that the evaporated water would be blue. They then discovered that the evaporated water was clear and that the separated residue was blue. When challenged to separate a sand/salt solution they show an understanding of soluble and insoluble materials by first filtering out the sand and then by evaporating the liquid to leave a salt residue. Although pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the range of investigative and experimental work, some do not justify their opinions with clear explanations to show their understanding.

79. Pupils have a positive attitude towards science and their enthusiasm for practical investigative activities is evident. Most pupils sit quietly, listen carefully and are keen to answer

questions and contribute to discussions. There is good co-operation and teamwork between them, particularly when they comment on and evaluate the work of others. They express an interest in their work and are responsive and enthusiastic about the investigations they have undertaken.

80. The teaching of science is good across the school. In all lessons observed, it was at least satisfactory and in most it was good and better. Planning is well structured with a balance of explanation, discussion and investigational work. Teachers' knowledge of science is good and this facilitates probing discussions on what pupils understand. Where the teaching is good, lessons are brisk and scientific knowledge is clearly expressed to pupils, with clear examples to enable pupils to learn. Subjects are introduced with a clear progression of ideas and pupils' knowledge is probed. A clear focus on the practical and investigative nature of science enables pupils to predict and explore ideas. However, in a few lessons pupils were given less opportunity to explain and elaborate on their understanding and to predict the outcome of investigations. Although boys and girls learn well, the task in some lessons be more challenging, particularly for able pupils. Teachers involve pupils with a good range of questions and this effectively reinforces pupils' understanding. The plenary sessions are effective in reviewing and reinforcing learning. Pupils are well managed and given praise and encouragement. Expectation for behaviour is high and the tone of classrooms one of a purposeful working environment. The progress of pupils is regularly reviewed with assessments at the end of each unit of work. Year six pupils have weekly homework to reinforce learning in the classroom and booster lessons are designed to prepare them for the end of year tests. Learning support assistants provide good support for pupils who have learning difficulties and for whom concentration and the ability to listen is difficult.

81. Two well-qualified subject coordinators effectively lead Science. Since the last inspection the scheme of work has been revised and a new set of course materials has been introduced to ensure continuity and progression through the years. The coordinators undertake regular observations in the classrooms and scrutinise pupils' work. Assessment results are evaluated and this analysis informs school and subject development plan. The school has identified the need to raise standards of science among higher attaining pupils. Good resources for the subject are well organised and grouped and stored by topic for ease of access. A variety of displays around the school illustrate the value placed on science activity. The regularly updated policy emphasises the importance of practical activity for pupils and the need to develop links to other subjects. Curriculum visits take place to support science, for example, a visit to the local fire station for discussions on safety with links to good health and the perils of smoking. Older pupils benefit from visitors to the school for drugs and sex education lessons linked to the science curriculum

ART AND DESIGN

82. The attainment of pupils in art and design is better than expected for their ages. All pupils, including those who find learning difficult, make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Standards have improved since the last inspection and the school has successfully addressed the issues identified in the previous report.

83. By the end of year six pupils are confident with their use of a wide range of media and techniques to create interesting and mature works of art. Year three pupils make interesting pictures based on 'The Snail' by Matisse and pictures of the waves on the sea in the style of Hokusai, using pastels. They use a marbling technique effectively to produce fish mobiles and experiment satisfactorily with tie-dye techniques to produce attractive designs on material. Pupils in year four have a good understanding of the significance of the use of tone, light and shade in their drawings, practising these techniques and using them well in their work. They make symmetrical designs using white paper and use their skills effectively for pencil sketches of shoes and hands. Pupils also paint in the style of Van Gogh and produce work of a high standard. Year five pupils draw detailed cross-sections of fruit, showing the structure and position of the seeds. They use watercolours to colour the sketch and most pupils are confident in mixing the colours. In year six, pupils study the works of three famous artists; Picasso, Monet and Andy

Warhol and produce high standard work in their styles.

84. Good cross-curricular links with history support the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in art and design well. Pupils in year three design attractive borders in the style of the Ancient Egyptians. In year four, one group of pupils successfully design mosaics showing hunting scenes, harvest, garden scenes and Roman Gods/ Goddesses, using small squares of coloured paper. Another class produce attractive mosaic tiles, using brightly painted eggshells. Also in Year 4, pupils use the medium of their choice to sketch pictures of objects linked to their work on being an archaeologist. Year five design and make attractive Greek masks and use a scratch technique for the decoration on Greek pots.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is good and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned using the schools guidelines. Classroom management is usually good and resources are well organised. Good demonstrations of techniques support learning effectively. All adults provide good support and are confident in developing pupils' ideas and skills. Where teaching is very good, the teacher uses resources very well to inspire and interest the pupils. He ensures that they can recall and use skills learnt in previous lessons. As a result pupils are eager to learn, concentrate on their tasks extremely well and make very good progress in their learning.

86. Subject management is good and the interest and expertise of the co-ordinator has had a positive impact on the raising of standards in art and design. This was an issue in the last report, which has been particularly well addressed. Good self-assessment procedures for pupils have been introduced and are used well to support learning. Subject guidelines are effective and good links with partner schools ensure continuity and progression of skills. Time is given to learning about artists and their influences and sketchbooks are used well to practice skills, develop ideas and for observational drawings. The arts week for older pupils also has a positive impact on standards. During this week visitors including local artists and puppet makers share their expertise with pupils. The very enthusiastic governor responsible for art supports the school very well in obtaining funding for such events. Resources are good and the school is fully involved in exhibiting pupils' work at the local gallery.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

87. Standards are as expected of pupils by the end of year six with pupils' ability to make what they have planned maintained and standards in the process of designing having improved significantly since the last inspection. There are now sufficient opportunities for pupils to work with textiles and for food technology.

88. By the end of year six pupils work with a variety of materials and components with some accuracy, paying attention to the quality of finish and to the function of the model. Pupils in year four look closely at collections and photographs of free standing and self-supporting objects. They decide how these objects are supported and use the information satisfactorily to make stable structures using paper. Others use information technology effectively to design their own ideal bedroom. Pupils in year five use either natural materials or clay to design and make interesting and attractive photograph frames. In one class, pupils experiment with materials that could be used to make printing stamps for Indian designs on bags. They discuss their suitability confidently and investigate the best way to fix the wool or string to a piece of corrugated plastic. In year six, pupils satisfactorily design, make and evaluate a moving toy using pivots and levers. They make a number of designs and construct the one that is the most suitable.

89. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Satisfactory planning covers all areas of the subject, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is keen to introduce cross-curricular links with other subjects which have proved to be successful in art and design, to ensure that there is sufficient time devoted to design technology in all year groups. Some teachers still lack confidence in teaching design technology, although generally teachers' subject knowledge is sound. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to experiment and to discuss their findings with partners before sharing them with the rest of the class. This strategy

gives pupils confidence to 'have a go', particularly those who are less willing to contribute in larger groups. Teachers give sound demonstrations of techniques such as rolling and folding paper to stiffen it and this enhances pupils' learning.

90. Management is good and the co-ordinator provides good support to colleagues. The school has appropriately continued to identify design technology as a focus for improvement and as a result standards are beginning to improve. Teachers' knowledge and understanding have been increased through specialist training. The co-ordinator has successfully introduced self-assessment procedures so that the pupils can evaluate their own work. Teachers are beginning to use this information to assess pupils' progress against the statements in the National Curriculum programmes of study. Resources are good and well organised. The annual 'Arts Week', when specialist visitors, such as puppet makers, share their expertise with pupils, has a positive impact on their learning.

GEOGRAPHY

91. By the end of year six, pupils achieve standards which are in line with National Curriculum expectations. The school organises topic themes in each year group ensuring continuity and progression across the school. The skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils in this subject are as expected and pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

92. Pupils' geographical skills develop steadily as they progress through the school. In Year three, good use is made of maps. For example, in one lesson "Where is Bideford in the world?" pupils were asked to plan their route from home to school on a map. By the end of the lesson they were able to draw a simple map with street names. In year five, boys and girls displayed a good awareness of continents and seas. They were asked to discuss and find India on a map and then were given holiday brochures to find out as much information as they could. They made judgements about the reliability of the 'source' and used information to make judgements about weather conditions and suitable clothing. Year six pupils learn how rivers are formed and in one lesson they made a model river from its source to its mouth. They then used the model to demonstrate the process in practice. This lesson provided the children with a greater knowledge of geographical vocabulary – "banks", "debris" and "source" and they were then able to apply what they had seen practically to photographs of a river and put them in order. Pupils are able to generate geographical questions.

93. Teaching in geography is good and in some cases very good. Teachers have clear and focused objectives, lessons are planned well and generally they have a good pace. Good question and answer sessions are a feature of most lessons and are used effectively to find out what pupils know and understand. For example, at the start of one lesson the pupils were asked to position geographical vocabulary words onto a picture of a river system. From this exercise and by quality questions, the teacher could establish the prior geographical knowledge of the children before she went into the main activity of the lesson. A good variety of other resources including computer programmes are used as a stimulus to geographical enquiry. All classrooms have attractively displayed information, artefacts, photographs and books on their current topic. Many of the displays encourage active involvement, such as a display in a year four classroom with questions like, "What river runs through Bideford?"

94. The management of geography in the school is good. Since the last inspection the policy guidelines and schemes of work have been rewritten to reflect new schemes and by all year groups have completed a questionnaire as to coverage and resources. A good emphasis is made on practical experience and fieldwork, and the environment within the local area is used well to enrich class-based learning. Older boys and girls experience field trips to Bideford and Exeter with future trips being planned to Llandudno and a year four residential trip to Bath is being planned.

HISTORY

95. Standards in History are appropriate for the ages of the pupils concerned throughout the school and have been well maintained since the last inspection. Pupils make sound and sometimes good progress in their learning through good teaching, detailed planning, interesting resources and frequent visits to places of historical interest. All year groups benefit from 'hands on' experiences in history, for example in year five, pupils had a 'Tudor Visitor' into their classroom. This visit resulted in good quality historical discussions led by the pupils about social habits and hygiene during Tudor times. The pupils also make trips to places such as the Exeter Museum to see the Egyptian display, the railway station and the War Museum.

96. By the end of year six, pupils show a good understanding of the various sources available for them to use for historical enquiry and use them effectively to find out about the past. Year six pupils were able to describe events and personalities connected to their topic "Britain Since the 1930's" and a group of year six pupils had a discussion on what life was like in the 1960's. They described some of the changes and differences between then and now. Year five pupils gave a talk about London in Tudor times, relating to crime, dress and housing. In year four, boys and girls learning about Roman life had researched Roman mosaics and were able to produce some excellent eggshell mosaics in their art lesson. In year three, the pupils were learning about the Egyptians and were eager to take part in a role-play exercise on Tutenkhamun, Howard Carter and Lord Caernarvon. In all years, photographs, artefacts, posters and literature provided good support for the historical topics.

97. Throughout the school, pupils show that they understand the features and events of past societies and the consequences of change. This is well demonstrated in the year six topic "Britain Since the 1930's" where pupils were able to show understanding of the topic and draw out changes in lifestyle in the 1930's, '40's, '50's and '60's.

98. Teaching is never less than good and occasionally, very good. All lessons are well-planned and teachers use and prepare resources well. Teachers plan interesting and stimulating activities that challenges and engage pupils, such as the year six work on sources of evidence. A year four teacher produced some artefacts for the children to try to determine who the mystery person was. The local area is well used and visits to local places provide good support to the history curriculum.

99. Management of the subject is good. The coordinator works hard to support colleagues to ensure good standards are maintained. He has identified targets for future development and is keeping a portfolio of work samples across the year groups to ensure that colleagues are aware of standards expected throughout the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

100. There has been a significant investment in the provision for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) since the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school are achieving very well and the standard of attainment is always at least in line with national expectations and frequently better. Boys and girls are making good progress particularly in the earlier years where attainment is above average.

101. Boys and girls learn and develop a good range of computer skills through the comprehensive programme of planned activity as they progress through the school. Basic keyboard and mouse skills are consolidated in the early years in the school and pupils learn to log on and off the system and to access and save their work. They complete their own skill profiles in the form of "I can" assessment sheets which require them to reflect on their own capability and indicate what they think they do well and the areas they think could be improved.

102. Pupils in year three use a crime simulation programme. In order to solve the crime they are required to use a range of skills including the careful reading of screen directions, matching

plans to photographs to identify missing objects and using co-ordinates to locate positions on a map. Information is entered into a database, and in one example on animals, pupils search the information to identify common characteristics, such as animals with wings and animals that eat plants. Using a database for a class party, pupils determine the most and least popular games, clothes and food. In another example, pupils enter weather information onto a database, then analyse the information on temperature and rainfall patterns and present results in graph form. Pupils learn to add formulae to spreadsheets and to explore number patterns. Text boxes are added to provide a commentary on the number patterns observed and to demonstrate understanding. When word processing work, such as in writing instructions for making a jam sandwich, pupils use fonts of differing size and colour and to illustrate their work with graphics.

103. In year six, pupils learn to make multimedia presentations to convey information on the school to a particular audience. At the planning stage they decide on the audience, for example, parents of year two children who will be joining the school, and then write appropriately for that group. They use a digital camera to add photographs to their work and also include animated graphics and text using different fonts and colours. The Internet and CD Roms are used to search for information on, for example, aspects of Tudor history. In one activity where the Internet was used to search for holiday destinations and brochures some of their own evaluations of the activity concluded that it might have been easier to go to a travel agent. In using spreadsheets to model the sales and income of break time snacks, pupils enter formulae, use the auto sum facility, calculate averages and graph their results. In a maths investigation a spreadsheet is used to find the possible areas of a shape with a defined perimeter.

104. Pupils' attitude when working with computers is good and they enjoy working in the computer suite. Some pupils lack confidence in using the keyboard and mouse but careful pairing by the class teacher results in good working partnerships. Where they work in pairs there is good co-operation, problems are discussed sensibly and tasks are shared. Pupils are confident in exploring menus and using toolbars, and in asking questions when they are uncertain. There is real enjoyment and sustained concentration when presented with the challenge, such as solving a crime with a simulation program. More articulate pupils are able to explain what they have done, what they find difficult, what was exciting and where they were frustrated. In the lessons observed pupils were busy, enthusiastic and highly motivated.

105. The co-ordinator and class teacher jointly taught the lessons observed during the inspection. In most instances the co-ordinator introduced the ICT element and the class teacher led on the content. The use of these specialist skills ensures that the quality of teaching is consistently good and frequently better. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the planning, showing how the lesson is organised, is detailed. It also makes good links to other subjects, particularly literacy and numeracy. The introduction to lessons is brisk and purposeful, with tasks being presented in a clear and structured manner that holds pupils' attention. Good use is made of the projector in demonstrating tasks and recapping previous knowledge. Class management is very good and the expectations of good behaviour are high. This enables pupils to learn effectively and to ask appropriate questions. Learning is also assisted by deliberate pairing of pupils to provide lower attaining pupils with support when reading screen information or directions. Praise is used generously to support and encourage pupils.

106. The coordinator provides very good subject leadership. As the school has made a significant investment in computer hardware it has also planned to make the best use of staff by not allocating the co-ordinator a class responsibility for this year and by using that time to support teachers in jointly teaching ICT to all classes. This has proved to be very effective not only in raising the standards of work achieved by pupils but also in providing support for teachers. The coordinator has also received training that has enabled the assessment of staff capability and the provision of specific and appropriate support. She has received good support from governors who also use visits to observe lessons. Good use has been made of the time available this year in reviewing policies and schemes of work, writing guidelines and monitoring pupil progress.

107. ICT is well organised with procedures for marking and assessment and with identified links with other subjects. The school development plan identifies the further development of the subject and includes consolidating the gains made this year with teaching and learning. All

classes are timetabled to use the suite of networked computers with Internet access. Classroom computers can access files that have been worked on in the suite and this enables work to be followed up and completed. Other resources include a scanner, digital camera and control technology equipment. ICT is evident in many of the displays around the school. Pupils have benefited from the "keyboard club" run as an extra curricular activity. The issues identified in the previous inspection, to develop the use of spreadsheets and the need for further training and support for teachers, have been fully addressed.

MUSIC

108. Inspection evidence from observation of a small sample of lessons, music associated with assemblies, extra-curricular activities and individual instrumental tuition indicated that standards in music are average. However many children are involved in musical activities outside the classroom, both playing instruments and singing. For example, the school choir has grown to a total of 90 children. As a result of this additional provision standards among these children are often higher, enabling the more-able pupils to achieve well. The tuition provided by visiting specialist teachers in string and woodwind, together with the extra curricular activities of choir, recorders, guitar and keyboard, greatly enhance and complement what the school has to offer its pupils. Overall this is an improvement on the last inspection which said. 'By the end of the key stage pupils are achieving standards in line with national expectations.'

109. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to maintain the quality of provision in music despite the inevitable time restraints on the subject brought about by the implementation of the Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. They have targeted the areas identified in the last inspection by introducing a new commercial scheme to support planning by identifying the learning activities and outcomes. This has proved valuable in ensuring both progression and adequate coverage of the curriculum and providing a framework to monitor the progress of the children. Each year group is asked to provide three samples of work each year; one written, one taped and one observation. Work samples are carefully chosen from each strand of the music curriculum, performing, composing and listening and appraising. Links have also been developed with information technology by integrating software into the scheme.

110. Pupils make sound progress in lessons and achieve well in music throughout the school. Year three pupils are able to suggest instruments that could be used to represent the sounds of autumn and have a basic understanding of pitch and timbre. In year four, pupils listen well to compare Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony with a sea symphony by Vaughn Williams and create symbols to represent the wind or the rain. The oldest juniors listen to a variety of fanfares, such as 'Fanfare to the Common Man' by Aaron Copeland and then sing in three parts to create a 'fanfare composition'.

111. Teaching of music is satisfactory and good. Lessons are well structured with clear learning goals and objectives. Teachers have sound and improving subject knowledge and organise the lessons with an appropriate mix of information, demonstration and practical activities. Every class has a chart displayed showing and naming the instruments available in the school. Resources available are used well, and all pupils are encouraged to participate. Typically pupils are enthusiastic in music lessons and relish the opportunity to both compose and perform, and this is equally true of both boys and girls. They really enjoy singing and are proud of their accomplishments, and as a result behave well. Singing in assembly is good. On entry music is played to allow pupils to listen and compare music from a variety of sources. Sometimes in assemblies pupils perform to the rest of the school. Appropriate links are made with other subjects in the curriculum. In year three pupils were encouraged to identify adjectives about autumn, such as fluttering, crisp, whirling before using the adjectives to decide what instruments to choose.

112. An extremely active school choir, run by the co-ordinator, works continually towards a variety of performances throughout each year. At Christmas, the choir sings at West Croft and Pynes Schools and Bideford Christian Aid carol concerts and entertains the residents at Grenville

Nursing Home. This December, it took part in a 'Schools Christmas Carol Competition' at Atlantic Village in Bideford performing three contrasting pieces, two of which had challenging two-part harmony and the school gained second place. In the spring term, they took part in the Devon Schools Proms Concert at the Queens Theatre in Barnstaple experiencing singing to a larger audience. Finally, in the summer term the choir presents an 'end of year' production, performing songs from musicals such as Oliver, Grease and Riversong. This summer the school is planning to perform a musical version of 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' entitled 'Rats.' At various times through the year the choir also takes part in other concerts such as the Tarka Radio Music Live at the district hospital, and at a local residential home.

113. The music co-ordinator is very well qualified; indeed music was her degree specialism. She leads the subject well and has overseen the successful implementation of the new scheme. Through observation and work sampling she is able to effectively monitor standards and teaching. The range of musical instruments and other resources available are plentiful, in a good condition and are stored appropriately. Resources for music are well used. The school's range of musical instruments includes some from different cultures (e.g. Ocean Drums).

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. Lessons in games and dance were observed during the week of the inspection, and evidence from teachers' planning and the school's scheme of work shows that pupils take part in all aspects of the physical education curriculum. In the lessons seen, achievements of boys and girls are appropriate for their age and standards in years three to six are at least in line with national expectations. In one year four games lesson they exceeded them. Pupils in years three and four swim regularly and for those who have not achieved the national recognised standards of swimming 25 metres there is a further opportunity in year five. A residential week for pupils in years six provides an opportunity for outdoor adventurous activities.

115. Although some teaching was only satisfactory the overall standard of teaching is good. Features of good teaching are the planning, organisation and management of pupils that ensures a good pace to the lesson, enabling pupils to achieve maximum activity. A good example of this was in two year three dance lessons, where teachers maintained a good pace by breaking down the 'window cleaner' and the 'shopping' dances into parts, using pupils to demonstrate and evaluate before putting the components together. An example of good teachers' subject knowledge and high expectation of what boys and girls can achieve was seen in a year six netball lesson. Pupils worked hard in their skills session before starting the game, but during it pupils were taking extra steps after receiving the ball and they had another quick skills session before restarting the game. At the end, effective questioning helped pupils evaluate what they had achieved and what needed to be improved. Another example of teachers' high expectation was seen in a year four bench ball game where pupils respond very well by quickly moving into spaces and passing accurately. In other games sessions, such as years three and six football the quality of skills practise and the expectations were not as high. Pupils enjoy physical education and respond more positively to challenge, activity and high expectations. They listen and respond well to instructions, co-operate when working together and are able to evaluate their own skill and those of others. Through its emphasis on working together, the subject strengthens the school's provision for pupils' social development.

116. Since the last inspection the strength of the subject and its very good provision for extra curricular activities has been sustained. The coordinator has effectively introduced pupil assessment and is using information and communication technology to record events and contribute towards performance evaluation. She is very well supported by the staff in providing a range of extra curricular activities and sustaining the school's involvement in local sporting events. This together with the good size hall, spacious grounds and good quality equipment contributes to the subject's strength in the curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

117. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of year six. All pupils, including those who find learning difficult, make

satisfactory progress in their learning, particularly as learning accelerates in the upper key stage where teaching is often good or very good.

118. By the end of year six most pupils know in detail some of the practices and beliefs of Christians and those of other faiths. Pupils in year three are beginning to understand some of the festivals celebrated by Christians. They discuss times when they have a celebration such as birthdays, bonfire night and Christmas and then identify important celebrations or festivals for Christians, such as Easter, Christmas and baptisms and their significance. They reflect on what has happened in their lives so far and what their hopes are for their future. Year four pupils begin a topic about 'special books' by looking at their own favourite books and relating this to the importance of the Qu'ran to Muslims. They understand how the book has to be treated and that Muslims can only touch the book after they have washed their hands. Most also know that the Bible is important to Christians and the Torah to Jewish people. Many know that the Torah contains five books which are the first five books in the Old Testament of the Bible and can confidently name these books.

119. Pupils understand some of the reasons why people make pilgrimages. For example they know that Moses made a journey from Egypt after being instructed to leave by God and that Muslims feel that it is extremely important for them to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. They compare the version of the creation story from the Bible with that of other stories. Pupils in year five talk about signs and symbols in their everyday lives and begin to relate these to symbols represented in Christianity and Hinduism. They develop their knowledge and understanding of Hinduism, such as the procedures of a Hindu wedding ceremony, extremely well during a lesson presented by a visiting practising Hindu. Pupils in year six show good levels of understanding of what it means to be a Christian. For example they know that Christians follow the rules of 'The Ten Commandments' and can explain the meaning of most of them. They develop their thoughts and ideas well and debate some moral issues arising from discussions about the commandments very maturely. By this age they are making satisfactory comparisons between religions and are able to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others. They satisfactorily recall information about Judaism in particular the special family meal and prayers.

120. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to very good. Planning is satisfactory and teachers are making appropriate use of the scheme of work and school guidelines, which meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. However, lessons which are introducing a new religious education topic do not always have a religious theme and by the end of the lesson pupils do not realise that they are studying religious education. For example, in one lesson pupils thought about what had happened in their lives so far such as learning to walk and talk. In another lesson pupils looked at their own special books and there was only a very brief reference to any religious books. The pace of these lessons is satisfactory and teachers give individual pupils sound support to complete the tasks successfully.

121. In lessons where teaching is very good, the learning objective is clearly related to religious education and a brisk pace is kept up throughout the lessons. Behaviour management is very good. Relationships are very good and all contributions to discussions are valued. Pupils ask questions confidently and are given clear explanations by the teacher. The teachers' very good subject knowledge and very focused questioning has a positive impact on learning. As a result during these lessons pupils made very good progress in their learning and achieved better than is expected for their age.

122. Management is good and the co-ordinator is effectively introducing assessment procedures linked to the attainment targets in the agreed syllabus. This enables teachers to assess what pupils know and understand about religion and how they are learning from religion. Some non-contact time has been available and this has been used well to observe teaching and to look at samples of pupils' work. The co-ordinator has a sound understanding of what needs to be done to further improve standards. She is well supported by the governor responsible for religious education who visits regularly to observe lessons and to take assemblies. Resources are good and pupils' learning is effectively enhanced by visits to local churches and by visitors to school. This was particularly evident during the inspection when a practising Hindu talked to

pupils about his beliefs and demonstrated the Hindu wedding ceremony. This excellent provision enabled pupils to make excellent progress in this aspect of their religious education.