

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **NEWTOWN FIRST SCHOOL**

Clifton Road, Exeter

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113083

Headteacher: Mrs J Foale

Reporting inspector: Mr P Bennett  
2234

Dates of inspection: 3-6 February 2003

Inspection number: 247296

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Clifton Road Exeter
Postcode:	EX1 2ES
Telephone number:	01392 255540
Fax number:	01392 424661
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Clewlow
Date of previous inspection:	3 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2234	Mr P Bennett	Registered inspector	Science Geography History Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9009	Mrs V Bradley	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31823	Mrs K Pratt	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18346	Mr R Bristow	Team inspector	Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	The work of the Special Educational Needs Units
32612	Mrs S Gartland	Team inspector	English Art and design Music	

The inspection contractor was:

Staffordshire and Midlands Consortium

The Kingston Centre  
Fairway  
Stafford  
ST16 3TW

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Newtown First School, a smaller than average first school, is located close to the centre of Exeter. Currently, 130 pupils (71 boys and 59 girls ) aged 4 – 8 years attend the school. The imbalance of boys over girls is due largely to the Language and Assessment Centres where there are 15 boys and only 4 girls. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (16%) is broadly average. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is low and there is only one pupil whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (31%) is above average and those with statements of special educational needs (10%) is well above average. Most of the latter attend the two Special Educational Needs Centres on site and travel in from beyond the immediate catchment area of the school. Most of the identified special educational needs relate to speech and communication or autism. Pupils enter school with a broadly typical range of abilities including those with learning difficulties and those who are gifted and talented. Including the pupils who are admitted to the two centres, overall attainment on entry to the school is below average. The local education authority has decided to close the Assessment Centre in July 2003, and as a result there has been a slight decline in numbers. The school is also subject to reorganisation proposals affecting Exeter schools in September 2005.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Overall, this is an effective school with an unusual balance of significant strengths and weaknesses. Pupils' personal and social development is very good, as is the teaching for pupils with special educational needs. Relationships are very good, staff manage pupils' behaviour well in lessons, and all pupils are included in the life of the school. Teaching in mainstream classes, and leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Currently, standards of attainment are too low in some important areas, and the school does not monitor its performance with sufficient rigour. The unit costs are high, but in view of the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, the school is judged to provide satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The very good relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves.
- The very good personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils and the inclusion of all pupils in all aspects of the life of the school.
- The particular emphasis given to creativity and the arts, and pupils' above average attainment in these areas.
- The very good use of the local community and of activities outside lessons to enrich the curriculum.
- The good progress made by pupils with special educational needs as a result of very good teaching in the Language and Assessment Centres, and in focused individual or group work in mainstream classes.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher in establishing the culture and ethos of the school.
- Parents support the aims and values of the school and are pleased with what the school provides.

### What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The planning for and teaching of writing and mathematics, and what is expected of the pupils in these lessons.
- The effective use of assessment and marking to improve pupils' attainment and progress.
- The monitoring of some aspects of the work of the school by the headteacher, staff and governors to identify what needs to improve and to ensure that planned improvements have had the desired impact.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the school.

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

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in November 1997. In the first three years there was a rapid improvement in standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and the school gained two School Achievement Awards. Since 2000, standards of attainment in these areas have declined. The school has recently made important improvements to teaching science and attainment has risen markedly in this subject. The school has reviewed the time spent on physical education, music and religious education and achieved a more balanced allocation of time (\*). Significant improvements have also been made to the quality of resources for the Foundation Stage and the outdoor environment. While some strategies were put in place to improve teachers' subject knowledge and confidence, ICT (\*) does not have a secure role as a subject or as a support for teaching and learning, and standards of attainment are now below average. (\* Key issues from the last inspection.)

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
Reading	C	D	E	D	well above average A above average B average CD below average well below average E very low E*
Writing	D	D	E	E	
Mathematics	B	C	E	D	

The well below average results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 included eight pupils with statements of special educational needs in the two centres. When their scores are discounted, pupils' attainment compared with similar schools was above average in science; below average in reading and mathematics; and well below average in writing. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 in science was well above average. The overall results indicate that boys' attainment was much lower than that of girls. This is largely explained by the fact that six of the eight pupils from the centres were boys.

Children in the reception class make satisfactory progress and most are well on target to achieve the expected early learning goals in communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development, by the time they start in Year 1. Their attainment in personal and social development is above expectations. Evidence from work seen during the inspection indicates that in Years 1, 2 and 3, pupils make generally satisfactory progress and their attainment is currently above average in art and design and music; broadly typical of that found nationally in design and technology, geography, history, physical education (no judgement is made for Year 3 where no lessons were observed), religious education and science; slightly below average in reading; below average in mathematics and information and communication technology; and well below average in writing. The attainment of pupils in the Language and Assessment Centres is generally well below average but they achieve well and make good progress against challenging individual targets.

#### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attitudes to learning are good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils know what is expected of them, and respond well to the praise and encouragement given to them.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils respond well to the opportunities given to show initiative and take responsibility.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance levels have declined over the last two years but are close to the national average. The school takes appropriate action in relation to unsatisfactory attendance.

Pupils' personal development is an area of particular strength in the school. The very good quality of relationships contributes significantly to the school's positive ethos.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Year 3
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs in the Language and Assessment Centres, and in withdrawal groups is very good. Teaching for these pupils is characterised by well-focused assessment which is used carefully to plan the next steps in learning; high levels of support from teachers and teaching assistants; and well-planned and well-resourced activities. Learning is fun and the relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils try hard and are willing to have a go even when they find tasks difficult. As a result they make good and often very good progress in lessons.

The quality of teaching in the rest of the school is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, the purpose was clearly explained to the pupils; group or individual tasks were well organised; questions were directed well to pupils of different abilities so that everyone had a chance to think and answer; the pace of learning was brisk; and pupils worked hard. In these lessons, pupils made good progress in their learning. In nearly every lesson, teachers managed behaviour well and were conscious of the safety and welfare issues. Pupils were attentive, responsive and engaged in their learning. In some lessons, not enough was expected of the pupils; and the purpose of learning was not identified clearly and did not relate sufficiently well to pupils' previous learning. As a result, work was not well matched to their needs and abilities, more-able pupils found the tasks too easy and progress was slow. The quality of marking was generally unsatisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and covers all areas of learning for the Foundation Stage, the National Curriculum and religious education. Particular emphasis is given to the arts and creativity. Strategies for teaching some aspects of literacy and numeracy are not developed sufficiently. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is provided. The inclusion and integration of all pupils into school life is a particular strength.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	A real strength of the school. Very good provision is made within the centres, through withdrawal groups and in all classes.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL CONT.

Aspect	Comment
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Appropriate provision has been made for one child who has recently joined the school with no English language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Personal, social and health education plays an important part in the work of the school. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school where pupils are safe and happy. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory, except for pupils with special educational needs.

The school works effectively in partnership with parents, who have a very positive view of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and upper management team provide effective leadership especially in relation to the aims and values of the school. Recently, their work has not focused sufficiently on raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils might achieve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are active and committed to the school. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well and are sensitive to the needs of staff, pupils and parents. Governors know about the many strengths of the school and some areas for improvement, but have not recognised fully the weaknesses in writing and mathematics.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Staff and governors do not yet evaluate systematically the quality of teaching and standards of attainment across all subjects and areas of learning.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Funds are used effectively and the budget is well managed. The school seeks to obtain best value when purchasing supplies and services. Too little use is made of new technology to support management processes and teaching and learning.

The school benefits from a committed and hard working teaching and non-teaching staff who represent a very good blend of age, experience and qualifications. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The school has the capacity to improve further. The planned closure

of the Assessment Centre and proposals for reorganisation are occupying much management time and having an impact on staff morale.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like school; behaviour is good in lessons; and children are becoming mature and responsible.</li><li>• The leadership of the headteacher and the approachability of staff.</li><li>• Teaching is good and children are making good progress.</li><li>• The school's aims, values and ethos, including the emphasis on the arts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of homework.</li><li>• Information about children's progress.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the parents about the culture and ethos of the school, and children's personal and social development. Inspectors believe that the school provides generally the right amount of homework in relation to the age of children. Sometimes written reports do not give a clear enough picture of children's attainment and progress.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The inspection took place in February when two thirds of the children in the reception class had only been in school for a matter of three or four weeks. Understandably, the programme of assessment on entry to the class had not been completed but initial judgements suggested that the children exhibited a broadly average range of attainment on starting school. Currently, children are making good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and their attainment is above that generally expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development, and are likely to attain the expected early learning goals by the time they start Year 1.
2. In recent years the school has used a commercial programme to assess children on entry to the reception class. The data from this process suggests that children enter school with a broad range of ability and that attainment on entry is broadly average when compared with schools nationally. The headteacher's own grouping of raw scores suggests that, in recent years, a smaller proportion of higher attaining children has been admitted to the school. When account is taken of the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs admitted to the Language and Assessment Centres, it is apparent that the profile of attainment on entry to the school is significantly below average. Given that the vast majority of these pupils are boys – currently 15 boys and four girls in the two centres – it is not surprising that boys' performance appears to be much lower than that of girls.
3. **The results of statutory assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2002 indicate that, in comparison with schools nationally, pupils' attainment was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This comparison includes eight pupils from the Language and Assessment Centres. When their results are discounted, the attainment of the remaining pupils, when compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (the national benchmark group of schools with between 8% and 20% of pupils entitled to free school meals), was below average in reading and mathematics, and well below average in writing. Notably, teacher assessments indicate that pupils' attainment in science was above the national average at the expected Level 2 and well above average at Level 3.** The results contain some interesting contrasts with 20 pupils achieving Levels 2A and 3 in mathematics, but only three pupils achieving those levels in writing. There were also some variations between teacher assessments and task results in reading at Levels 2 and 3, and mathematics at Level 3.
4. An analysis of trends in performance in recent years indicates that the pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics improved at a rate far better than the national average between 1997 and 2000. As a result, the school was awarded School Achievement



Awards for its performance in 2000 and 2001. Attainment in these subjects has declined markedly in the last two years against a national trend of improvement. When the results for the overload of boys in the centres are discounted, there is no significant difference in trends in performance between boys and girls.

5. The headteacher uses the raw scores from the programme of assessment on entry to the reception class to predict pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2. Actual results are compared with predictions and summarised in an introduction to the school improvement plan. The summary for 2002 indicates that approximately one third of pupils achieved above the school's predictions in reading and mathematics, and a similar proportion achieved below the prediction in writing. However, as the predictions are based upon the school's own banding of raw scores, and not a nationally or locally standardised method, the validity and reliability of the predictions are not wholly secure.
6. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2002 indicate that overall standards of speaking and listening were well below the national average. However, these results included all the pupils from the Language and Assessment Centres. When their results are discounted, the performance of the remaining pupils was typical of that found nationally. This reflects the judgements made by inspectors from their observations in school. **Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their speaking skills which are usually in line with, and sometimes above, those found nationally. In general, listening skills are not so well developed but are broadly typical of those found nationally.** Pupils are generally confident in responding to questions and in explaining ideas using a good range of vocabulary. They are eager to contribute to discussions but sometimes find it more difficult to be active listeners.
7. Evidence gathered during the week of the inspection indicates that pupils' attainment in reading, in the mainstream classes, by Year 2 and in Year 3 reflects broadly the range of attainment found nationally, with slightly fewer pupils achieving above national expectations and slightly more below expectations. **Overall, attainment in reading is slightly below average.** By the end of Year 2, many pupils read simple text accurately and older more-able pupils in Year 3 are able to read fluently and offer opinions about the plot, characters and genres of stories. Less-able pupils read hesitantly and have a limited range of strategies to support reading.
8. Across the school, in Years 1, 2 and 3, there is little evidence of pupils' writing at above average levels. Much of the recorded **written work is well below average standard.** The profile of writing is slightly better in the pupils' monthly, assessed work, but day-to-day written work is often of a low standard of content and presentation. Such work often contains basic errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils who understand the correct use of capital letters and full stops often do not apply this knowledge to their day-to-day writing tasks.
9. Pupils' written recorded work in mathematics demonstrates very little evidence of attainment above expectations for each year group. Indeed, recorded work is often poorly presented and of a lower standard than usually expected. **Conversations with pupils indicate that**

**their knowledge and understanding of mathematics is better than that demonstrated in recorded work, but is, nonetheless, below average.** By the end of Year 2, pupils have a relatively limited range of mental strategies and many are insecure in their understanding of subtraction.

10. Pupils' written work in science is often limited in quantity and quality. It does not reflect the high standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 in 2002. Discussions with pupils indicate a better knowledge and understanding of areas of science than that demonstrated in books and on worksheets. **Overall, attainment in science is currently typical of that found nationally in all year groups.** By the end of Year 3, pupils know about the basic conditions that affect plant growth; they can sort and classify everyday materials; and they have developed an understanding of some of the essential principles of fair testing.
11. There is little recorded evidence of pupils' work in ICT, and pupils have relatively few opportunities to develop these skills through sustained experience. While some are confident users of ICT, others lack confidence and experience. **Overall, pupils' attainment in ICT is below average in all year groups.**
12. **In history, geography and religious education, pupils' knowledge and understanding expressed orally is in line with the expectations** of the National Curriculum and Devon's Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in all year groups. The quality and quantity of written work in these subjects is often below the standard found nationally. Only limited evidence of pupils' work in **design and technology** was available during the inspection. Photographic evidence of learning experiences and outcomes, and discussions with pupils indicate that **attainment is broadly typical of that found nationally.**
13. The school places much emphasis on creativity and the arts. Artwork is given a high profile in displays all round school, and appropriate time is now given to music appreciation and music making. **Pupils' attainment throughout the school is above average in art and music.** In the two lessons observed in physical education, **pupils demonstrated ability in gymnastics and movement that was broadly typical of that found nationally.**
14. Across the school, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their writing skills, and too little is demanded of them in terms of the quantity and quality of writing and presentation, in the humanities in particular. The development of numeracy skills is also inhibited by the limited recording in some areas, and not enough opportunities are planned into work in other subjects to develop these skills.
15. Pupils with special educational needs, in the two centres and in mainstream classes, are taught well and make good progress against individual targets, although their standards of attainment are often well below the average for their age. Their individual education plans are clearly focused and plan for progress day-by-day and week-by-week. Pupils are included in all activities, provided with a full range of opportunities and their talents are fully explored. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified and have individual education plans. They are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons but generally make satisfactory

progress. The one pupil whose first language is not English has been in school for too short a time to make valid judgements about attainment and progress.

16. Pupils make variable progress across the school. Those with special educational needs generally make good progress, and most pupils make good progress in the arts. Progress in speaking, listening and reading is satisfactory. In general, pupils do not achieve enough in writing or recorded work in mathematics. However, verbal and oral work demonstrate levels of achievement that are broadly typical of those found nationally in the humanities and science. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and apply themselves well to their work.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

17. **Relationships between pupils and adults are very good, ensuring good attitudes, values and personal development from most pupils. The attitude of most pupils to learning is good throughout the school. Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils know what is expected of them, and respond well to the praise and encouragement given to them. This promotes a positive, friendly ethos, which provides a very good basis for learning. All this reflects the high standards reported at the time of the last inspection.**
18. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They express confidently their opinions, knowing that their contributions will be listened to and valued. They take pleasure in their own and others' achievements. Generally, pupils respect the views of others, and often listen well when other pupils are describing their work. This was especially evident in an assembly presented by the youngest children during the inspection week. Children, some of whom had been in school for only a very few weeks, showed their paintings on the theme of the rainbow to an audience comprising other pupils, and a large number of parents and other family members. The group included pupils from the Assessment Centre, all of whom sang and signed 'I can sing a rainbow'.
19. The majority of pupils are interested in their work and concentrate very well. Some pupils who have difficulties with concentration are supported well, enabling them to learn and preventing disruption to others.
20. Most pupils behave consistently well, and respond positively to the school's clear guidelines on acceptable behaviour. They recognise the difference between right and wrong, and appreciate the effect of their actions on others and the environment. Pupils have respect for their surroundings, using equipment and resources with appropriate care. They work well together in pairs and in groups.
21. The behaviour of some pupils is occasionally inappropriate. Where such behaviour was observed, and pupils became restless, it was often because the work they were doing was not sufficiently challenging; the pace of the lesson was too slow; or they had not understood the instructions given to them. Some pupils, who as part of their learning difficulties have problems with social relationships, are successfully encouraged to work as part of the whole class. Teachers manage challenging behaviour from a minority of pupils very well, and

disruption to lessons is minimised. This helps to ensure that the inclusion of these pupils does not have a significant adverse impact on others. Pupils work well together, are well behaved and are proud of their achievements. A few pupils have known difficulties in behaviour but staff help them to produce a more acceptable response to their frustrations.

22. The very good quality of relationships contributes significantly to the school's positive ethos. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils form constructive friendships. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
23. Some parents have expressed concern at boisterous behaviour in the playground. The school has responded positively by appointing a member of staff with responsibility for improving behaviour in the playground, and by increasing the level of supervision during lunchtime breaks. No evidence of bullying was seen during the inspection, and behaviour in the playground, although boisterous, was not intimidating. Pupils work in an environment free from oppressive behaviour such as racism or sexism. In general, pupils play happily in the playgrounds at lunchtimes and playtimes, and enjoy using a range of newly acquired games.
24. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils respond well to the opportunities given to show initiative and take responsibility. They deliver registers, and help with classroom routines. Older pupils regularly help and support younger ones with shared reading.
25. Pupils have a good understanding of responsibility and citizenship by contributing to the work of the School Council. Representatives of all classes hold regular meetings where pupils' views are sought, listened to and valued. The School Council is currently being consulted about how the school should celebrate the coming National Book Week. When given the opportunity, pupils work well together as a team. For example, in a music lesson they responded very positively to the opportunity to evaluate their own and others' performance as the conductor of a group playing percussion instruments.
26. Attendance levels for the last academic year were broadly in line with the average nationally, but have declined slightly over the last two years. Authorised absence was above the national average, but there was little unauthorised absence.
27. The attendance record of most pupils is good. The school sets out clearly its expectations that holidays should not be taken in term time, and that absence will only be authorised for valid reasons. Individual pupils and families whose attendance record is unsatisfactory have been identified and the school is taking suitable steps to try to improve the situation.
28. The school defines clearly its expectations for pupils to arrive in school punctually. After gathering in the school playground, pupils move purposefully into school at 9.00 a.m. The main entrance gate is closed at 9.10 a.m. Parents of pupils arriving after that time are requested to report to the school office and explain the reasons for their children's late arrival. Most pupils arrive at school punctually, ensuring a prompt and effective start to the school day.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

29. **Overall, the teaching for pupils with special educational needs was judged to be very good and these pupils make at least good progress in their learning. The quality of teaching in lessons in the Reception Year and in Years 1 to 3 ranged from very good to unsatisfactory and was judged to be satisfactory overall. Pupils in these classes make variable but generally satisfactory progress in their learning. The profile of teaching is not quite as strong as reported at the time of the last inspection.**
30. The organisation of teaching groups across the school is quite complex as it involves five mainstream classes; a Language Centre and an Assessment Centre; regular focused groups for Early Literacy Support (Year 1), Additional Literacy Support (Year 3), additional writing support (Year 2); and withdrawal groups for special educational needs and speech and communications. The pattern is further complicated by the integration of pupils from the two centres into other classes for different subject areas. Essentially, the school is organised into single year group classes for the Reception Year and Years 2 and 3. Year 1 is divided into two small classes in order to encourage the integration of pupils from the Assessment Centre. In view of the proposed closure of the Assessment Centre and the consequent reduction in pupil numbers, the headteacher has sensibly arranged that the reception class and this centre work closely together in adjacent and shared areas.
31. Overall, during the inspection 46 lessons or part lessons were observed, including whole-class teaching and focused group work. The quality of teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory, and in the vast majority of lessons (96%) it was at least satisfactory. The teaching in six out of ten lessons was judged to be good or better; and in three out of ten lessons it was very good. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in two lessons. Nearly three quarters of the very good teaching was observed in the Language and Assessment Centres, in special educational needs withdrawal groups or in other 'booster' groups.
32. Teaching in the lessons observed in the reception class varied from very good to satisfactory and was judged to be satisfactory overall. Relationships between adults and children are very good, and children have settled securely into the routines of the school. Resources have been improved since the last inspection and the outdoor garden area provides an attractive and interesting environment in which to develop children's learning. Children's language and mathematical development progress satisfactorily, but the early introduction of the structures of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies give the younger and less-able pupils too few opportunities to learn through play and a variety of first-hand experiences. At times, learning is over-directed by the number of adults in the classroom, and children do not have enough opportunities to make choices, to use their initiative or to be independently creative.

33. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed in Years 1 to 3 varied from very good to unsatisfactory and was judged to be satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, the purpose of the lesson was identified clearly and explained to the pupils; teachers' own reading and writing were good examples for pupils to follow; group or individual tasks were well organised and matched to the prior learning of the pupils; questions were directed well to pupils of different abilities so that everyone had a chance to think and answer; the pace of learning was brisk; and pupils worked hard. In these lessons, pupils made good progress in their learning.
34. In nearly every lesson, the relationships between adults and pupils were very good; teachers managed behaviour well and were conscious of the safety and welfare issues; pupils with special educational needs were included and supported well in the learning activities; and pupils were attentive, responsive and engaged in their learning.
35. In general, too little use is made of regular, on-going assessment to identify the next steps in learning for pupils of different abilities. Pupils are not aware of how well they are doing or of their individual or group curricular targets. In some lessons, what pupils were expected to learn was not identified clearly and did not relate sufficiently well to pupils' previous learning. As a result, work was not well matched to their needs and abilities, more-able pupils found the tasks too easy and progress was slow. Very little use was made of ICT to support teaching and learning across the school. The quality of marking is generally unsatisfactory, containing too few comments or suggestions for improvement.
36. Throughout the school, teachers endeavour to implement the structures of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies but elements of these are not yet embedded securely in day-to-day practice. For example, in numeracy lessons, concluding sessions are often too short and insufficient use is made of them to recap what has been learned.
37. The quality of teaching observed in English lessons ranged from very good to satisfactory and was satisfactory overall. In literacy lessons, writing skills are taught effectively but pupils are given too few opportunities to apply these in sustained pieces of writing. Often too little is expected of the pupils in terms of the quantity, accuracy and quality of their written work. In general, the learning environment does not promote and value good quality writing as much as it could. Teachers read well and pupils are given many opportunities to develop their skills in reading groups, 'booster' groups and individual silent reading activities. Teachers enable pupils to develop their speaking skills well, and many pupils are confident in answering questions, and offering and explaining opinions. While pupils generally listen well to teachers and other adults, at times not enough is demanded of their listening skills, particularly when other pupils are making contributions or offering explanations.
38. The quality of teaching in mathematics ranged from very good to unsatisfactory and was judged to be satisfactory overall. Teachers are implementing the expected three-part structure of numeracy lessons but strategies for promoting brisk, mental and oral starts to lessons are not yet well established. In numeracy lessons, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to develop their use of mathematical language and different mental strategies and to develop their reasoning skills. The final sessions of lessons are often too short, and

insufficient use is made of them to evaluate what has been learnt. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, work was pitched at too low a level given the prior attainment of the pupils, and as a result they learned too little. In one lesson, pupils' behaviour was not well managed and too many were off task.

39. Very little teaching or use of ICT was observed during the inspection. In general, teachers lack confidence and subject knowledge in using ICT. In the one whole-class ICT lesson that was observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall. The lesson focused on labelling and classifying objects and pupils were really challenged to use correct language, including shapes and criteria. With only two computers available in the room, they had few opportunities to use ICT to record and communicate their findings.
40. Across the school, the quality of teaching in lessons observed in science, geography, history and religious education ranged from good to satisfactory and was judged to be satisfactory overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and pupils experienced some interesting activities including exploring the properties of materials and investigating the range of street furniture and road markings relating to safe parking in the immediate locality of the school. Pupils are given good opportunities to talk about what they are learning and to ask and answer questions verbally. Their verbal knowledge and understanding of key concepts is at least satisfactory and often good. However, all the pupils often undertake the same tasks and teachers' expectations for the quality of written recorded work are too low. Pupils often do not demonstrate anywhere near such high standards in their written work as is evident in their oral responses. No teaching was observed in design and technology.
41. The school places great emphasis on creativity and the arts. Teaching in music, art and design, and physical education lessons ranged from very good to satisfactory and was judged to be good overall. In a good art and design lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm and the high quality of her own examples of textile design inspired the pupils to investigate and design patterns. The quality of the work was above that expected for their age. In general, pupils made good progress in their learning in art and design and music and engaged in activities with energy and enthusiasm.
42. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs in the Language and Assessment Centres, in sessions with the special educational needs coordinator and in withdrawal groups, ranged from satisfactory to very good and was judged to be very good overall. Teaching for these pupils is characterised by well-focused assessment which is used carefully to plan the next steps in learning; precise learning objectives which are shared by teachers and teaching assistants; high levels of support; and well-planned and well-resourced activities. In these sessions learning is fun and the relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils try hard and are willing to have a go even when they find tasks difficult. They are involved fully in all learning activities and their self-esteem is often high, especially when they believe that their contributions are valued. As a result they make good and often very good progress in lessons.

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

43. **The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant, and covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and the areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. There is an act of daily worship and the religious education curriculum complies with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented since the last inspection but some aspects of these strategies are not yet embedded securely in lessons. The place of information and communication technology in the whole curriculum has not developed sufficiently since the last inspection. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Very good provision is made overall for pupils' personal, social, health, spiritual, moral and cultural education. A strong emphasis is placed on creativity and the arts. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. The balance of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection.**
44. Policies and schemes of work exist for all subjects. Nationally produced materials are used as the basis for planning in most subjects. Long-term and termly or half-termly plans are of good quality and identify the key purposes for learning, as well as relevant teaching activities for all subjects. The information gained from assessment about what pupils know, understand and can do, is not used satisfactorily by teachers when drawing up their weekly plans for lessons.
45. The school has adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies but they are not sufficiently well embedded in all classes. Lessons and units of work often do not build on each other well enough to ensure that pupils are offered sufficiently difficult tasks to develop and extend their skills, knowledge and understanding.
46. For pupils in Years 1 and 2 the amount of teaching time is above the nationally recommended minimum, whereas for pupils in Year 3 it is slightly below. Some slippages of time occur throughout the school day, particularly at the beginning and end of sessions. A time is set aside for quiet or guided reading at the beginning of each afternoon. This time is often used well for small, focused group teaching but, in most classes, there is little planning relating to the needs of the majority of pupils for this session.
47. The school is highly committed to including all pupils in all aspects of the life of the school. All pupils have full access to the curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers work very closely with the special educational needs coordinator and classroom support assistants to ensure that these pupils' needs are met. Consequently, these pupils make good progress against the targets detailed in their individual education plans. Some pupils are withdrawn from class and taught in small groups for English. The school is very aware of the need to give due emphasis to equality of opportunity and ensures that pupils are not withdrawn from the same lesson throughout the year. Pupils with statements of special educational need are well provided for and teaching and non-teaching staff take care that their needs, as identified in their statements, are met. The organisation of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime, gives these pupils access to additional learning experiences which would not be possible after school hours, because of the distance that



they have to travel to home. Provision for the higher attaining pupils is broadly satisfactory but less well developed across the school than is the case for the pupils with special educational needs.

48. The whole curriculum is enriched further through good links with the local community which result in a range of visits and visitors. Effective working links with the four middle schools to which most of the pupils transfer, at the end of Year 3, provide satisfactory induction arrangements for the pupils.
49. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The headteacher has made this a priority for the school and these areas have been developed successfully. This is most apparent in work relating to healthy eating and the school's policy towards healthy snacks at breaktimes. The school makes effective provision for sex education within personal development, and the Year 2 science work considers birth and growing up. Similarly, pupils have opportunities to developing an understanding of the differences between medicines and harmful drugs.
50. The school lists a very good range of extra-curricular activities in its documentation. There is a football club for the older pupils, drama club, recorders and a choir. Pupils also use the school garden to support their learning, and the school is deeply engaged in and committed to the arts.
51. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. This has a significant impact on the good attitudes to learning that pupils develop.
52. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. This is achieved through the programme of assemblies, the personal, social and health education activities and 'circle time'. From these, pupils gain insight into values and beliefs that enable them to reflect on their own and other's experiences. School assemblies provide time for reflection and to share and celebrate success. Religious education affords opportunities for pupils to consider the centrality of God in various religions and to consider the beliefs and values of others. Regular visits and contacts are maintained between the local churches and the school. The 'friendship' seats in both playgrounds allow pupils to both seek and offer companionship.
53. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. A strong and clear whole-school ethos and moral code for good behaviour are promoted consistently, throughout the school, by all members of staff, who provide good role models. Principles distinguishing right and wrong are taught well and consistently across the school. Pupils are well aware of the school's code of behaviour and the expectations of teachers and other staff. Pupils throughout the school treat each other and adults with respect and courtesy.
54. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils develop positive attitudes to each other, and the creation of the school council gives pupils the opportunity to take on responsibilities and suggest changes within the school. This has included working on a

behaviour policy, as well as deciding how to spend money granted to them by the Friends of Newtown School.

55. Provision for pupils' cultural education is very good. Pupils have opportunities within the curriculum to appreciate the art and music of a number of other cultures and, in religious education, they study key celebrations from various faiths and cultures. Through work in history and geography, pupils find out about their own and other localities, both past and present. Visits, visitors to the school and links with the local community make an important contribution to cultural development.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

56. **The school continues to be a very caring place where all staff provide sensitive and thoughtful support to pupils. They are accessible and responsive to pupils' personal and emotional needs. The very good relationships within the school have a positive impact on pupils' learning, and continue to be a significant strength of the school. The school is successful in including all pupils in all aspects of school life. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress and using this information to guide the next steps in pupils' learning have not developed sufficiently since the last inspection, and are generally unsatisfactory.**
57. The school creates successfully a climate for good behaviour by having high expectations, and by managing inappropriate behaviour well. This provides a very positive atmosphere for learning. Parents are happy with the care, support and guidance offered to their children. Most pupils respond very well to the praise and encouragement given. Some pupils have challenging attitudes and behaviour, usually as part of their identified learning difficulties. The school supports them well, ensuring that there is as little detrimental effect on the learning of others as is possible. Behaviour at lunchtime is good. The increased level of supervision in the playgrounds at morning break and lunchtime has had a beneficial effect on behaviour.
58. Information gained from assessments when children first join the school is used to group pupils and to predict attainment targets by the age of seven. However, this information is not yet used systematically to plan teaching and learning experiences for individuals or groups of pupils over time. The new Foundation Stage profile is being implemented and is intended to provide significant information upon which to plan for the future learning needs of pupils, set targets for improvement and measure the progress that pupils have made against national comparative data.
59. The school meets the national requirements for both teacher assessment and statutory testing at the age of seven. In 2002, there were some inconsistencies between the results of teacher assessments and tests in writing and mathematics. Different subject leaders use the results of statutory and other tests in different ways. In English, the subject leader analyses strengths and weaknesses and uses this information to organise pupil groupings for additional literacy support. As yet the information is not used effectively to challenge and extend high attaining pupils, particularly in writing. In science, as a result of previous analyses, the subject leaders recognised that more attention needed to be given to scientific enquiry

across the school. This has led to a significant improvement in pupils' attainment. Little or no analysis of the mathematics' test results has been undertaken by the subject leader, and the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' performance are not identified clearly.

60. Some procedures for monitoring academic progress have improved since the last inspection. In the foundation subjects, teachers review gains made in skills, knowledge and understanding according to whether pupils have exceeded, achieved, or are still to achieve the objectives for each unit of work. This information is then used when reporting to parents.
61. The academic progress of pupils is not monitored systematically due to a lack of accurate assessment information. Although items of work are completed regularly in the 'Once a Month' books, these are not assessed against national criteria. While the progress of groups of targeted pupils towards projected levels of achievement is noted, there is insufficient monitoring of individual pupils. Targets are set for individual pupils, which are agreed and shared with parents at consultation evenings, but these targets are often too broad. Ongoing assessment is not used effectively to set learning targets for individuals or groups of pupils, or to track their progress towards these.
62. The quality of teachers' marking is generally unsatisfactory and does not relate sufficiently to targets for improvement. Where evident, much of the marking in pupils' books concentrates solely on celebrating achievement or commenting on presentation. Nevertheless, some isolated examples do provide a good model of comments which tell pupils clearly how well they have done, and how work can be improved in the future.
63. There are no formal procedures for recording gains in personal and social skills, which are strengths of the school. Procedures for monitoring pupils' social development are informal, but generally effective. Teachers know their pupils well, and any concerns are discussed during weekly staff meetings.
64. The procedures for assessing pupils with special educational needs and monitoring their academic progress are very good. All statutory requirements are met. Individual needs, whether learning or emotional and behavioural, are identified early and teaching and non-teaching support is managed and organised effectively and fairly. Targets for improvement are shared with parents and carers, and gains in skills, knowledge and understanding are recorded. Achievements are celebrated and shared with others. Speech therapists and other outside agencies are used very well. There are good procedures for identifying pupils' needs and for measuring gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. Individual education plans are manageable and have clear targets for improvement, which are usually matched to developing pupils' language and communication skills.
65. School procedures for marking registers and recording and reporting pupils' attendance meet statutory requirements. Parents know the expected procedures for informing the school of the reason for pupils' absence. If no information is received, good procedures are in place for school staff to contact home to establish why a pupil is absent. The school makes good efforts to remind parents of the need for punctuality and regular attendance,

actively discouraging holidays taken in term time. Liaison with the education welfare service is limited by frequent changes in personnel, but the school nurse provides contact and support if required.

66. Child protection procedures are good, they are well established, and meet statutory requirements. The headteacher is the designated teacher with responsibility for child protection. Liaison with relevant social services is satisfactory.
67. The health, well-being and safety of pupils are given an appropriately high priority. Fire drills and checks of safety equipment are carried out regularly, together with risk assessments. First aid provision is good. The potential risk of only one exit from the first floor Year 3 classroom has been considered, especially in view of the forthcoming provision of the computer suite on the ground floor of that building. Following appropriate advice, the plans have been modified to ensure that there is a corridor between the new computer suite and the external exit. In addition, the risk to pupils from one uncovered pond in the school garden has been assessed, and the school considers the risk to be acceptable, as pupils do not use that area unsupervised.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

68. **Parents have a very positive view of the school. They confirm that their children like coming to school; they are welcome in school; and support and guidance is freely offered and available. They feel that the school is helping their children to be mature and responsible. These positive features have been maintained since the last inspection.**
69. The school actively encourages parents to be involved in their children's education. At the start and end of each day, the headteacher and teachers greet pupils and their parents in the playground. This provides a very good opportunity for informal discussions, and enables parents to request a more formal meeting with staff if needed. Some parents expressed a wish to have more opportunity to accompany their children into school at the start of the school day. Others spoke of their appreciation of the clear start to the day, when pupils enter the school building, and of their confidence that they could speak easily with teachers and support staff, if they so wished.
70. Some of the information parents receive is very good. Regular newsletters give parents a good range of useful information regarding school activities. The school relies on the high quality of personal relationships that it has with parents, and does not currently require parents to sign a home-school agreement.
71. The school prospectus provides parents with a wide range of useful information. It gives good advice about ways in which parents can help their child to learn, and how they can find out what happens when their child is in school. Consultation evenings provide good opportunities for parents to meet teachers to review their children's progress.

72. The governors' annual report to parents is informative. It tells parents about school activities and projects, and gives personal details about the governors, in addition to the information required to conform to statutory requirements.
73. The quality of the annual report to parents of their child's work is satisfactory, although there is some inconsistency between classes. Information to parents on what their child knows and can do is good, and there is some indication of progress made. There is often insufficient detailed information about the progress that the child has made, the next steps in learning, and how the child could improve further. Children are given a good annual opportunity to evaluate their own areas of achievement during the year, and to identify areas where they might achieve more.
74. Parental involvement in pupils' learning continues to be good. Parents are encouraged to hear their child read, and reading records show that a good number of parents do support learning in this way. The school has arranged evening meetings to inform parents about approaches to reading in the literacy hour. Home-school books provide a good method of communication between the school and parents of pupils in the Language Centre. Pupils are regularly set spellings to be learned. In Year 3, pupils are set a homework task on Fridays to be completed over the weekend; often this task is targeted to support a lesson scheduled for the following Monday.
75. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very well informed at termly and annual reviews. Details of gains in skills, knowledge and understanding are often communicated on a more regular basis. Good information is shared with parents and of particular note is the way parents are invited initially to observe what their children are doing in school. The Special Needs Awareness Group (SNAG) meets regularly and provides a good opportunity for all parents to become better acquainted with a range of issues relating to special educational needs.
76. A small number of parents help in the classrooms on a regular basis. The school has successfully encouraged more parents to contribute recently, and hopes to increase the number of parents involved in this way. Parents' consultation evenings and school performances are very well attended. A large number of parents and other family members attended the class assembly during the inspection week. The Parents' Garden Workshop Group has continued its valuable work in the school garden, and the Friends of Newtown School (FONS) organises successful social and fundraising events to support the school. The help and support provided to the school are valued and appreciated.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

77. **The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are satisfactory overall. They provide strong support for the personal and social development of all pupils, and the school is well organised to welcome, include and provide for pupils with special educational needs. Recently, the school management team has not focused sufficiently on raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils might achieve.**

78. Under the committed leadership of the headteacher, supported by the upper management team, the school is very successful in realising its aims and intentions relating to the personal and social development of pupils; the quality of relationships; the provision of a curriculum that embraces and values the arts; and the establishment of a centre of excellence and expertise for teaching pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher demonstrates these aims in her interactions with children and is a very good model of lively and effective teaching. Under her guidance and influence as a leader and teacher, the pupils' attainment improved markedly between 1997 and 2000. The school received two school achievement awards.
79. The school's aims currently make little or no explicit reference to promoting high standards of attainment, and the work of the school management team is not focused sufficiently on raising teachers' expectations of what pupils might achieve. As a result, children are sometimes presented with unchallenging tasks and the quality of written work across the school is generally lower than should be accepted. In the last two years standards of attainment have declined in reading, writing and mathematics, and improvements to the teaching of ICT have not had sufficient impact on pupils' attainment.
80. The headteacher has managed successfully the organisation of the special educational needs centres and teaching groups elsewhere in the school, in order to secure effective provision for pupils with special educational needs and other lower attaining pupils. The special educational needs coordinator provides very skilful support for the provision for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes across the school. The current arrangement of two parallel Year 1 classes enables pupils from the Assessment Centre to be integrated well into mainstream classes. The potential for partnership working and challenging more-able pupils in these two classes has not yet been realised fully.
81. The organisation of teachers into subject leadership teams for English, mathematics, science, arts and humanities, has been successful in improving curriculum planning, sharing ideas and developing resources. Subject leaders value working with colleagues and the teams have provided good professional development experiences for recently appointed teachers. The science team has been particularly effective in reviewing provision, identifying a development need and implementing changes that have led to improved results in science. In general, these subject teams do not have a secure understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses of their areas of responsibility, or of how the school's performance compares with national expectations.
82. Currently, staff and governors are dealing with the implications of the local education authority's decision to close the Assessment Centre from July 2003. The school is also included in proposals to reorganise the shape of primary education in Exeter from September 2005. As well as creating some anxiety and uncertainty within teaching and non-teaching staff, these various proposals are occupying a significant amount of the headteacher's and governors' time. One of the three key areas for action in the school improvement plan rightly relates to supporting staff members in managing change.

83. **Governors are active and committed to supporting the school in the role of ‘critical friend’ and endorse its aims and values. The governing body fulfils its statutory requirement effectively. Governors know about the many strengths of the school and some areas for improvement, but have not recognised fully the weaknesses in writing and mathematics.**
84. Governors are familiar with the day-to-day running of the school and have link roles relating to subjects, aspects and classes. For example, some have been able to observe lessons; another attends meetings of the Special Needs Awareness Group; and others attend school assemblies and performances. Nevertheless, they do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of how the school compares with other schools and how this information could be used to raise expectations for improvements in pupils’ attainment. They do fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are sensitive to the needs of staff, pupils and parents. For example, they have decided thoughtfully to move the date of the annual meeting for parents to July when light nights would encourage greater attendance and when the report will be relevant to both Reception and Year 3 parents. The school improvement plan also contains interesting evidence of the results and analysis of a staff and governors’ questionnaire, but little reference is made in the plan to standards of attainment.
85. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive document that includes analysis of performance data; an evaluation of the previous year’s action plans, including a cost-effectiveness judgement; and current action plans with clearly defined objectives, strategies and success criteria. Of the three key areas for action, only one refers to an area of academic performance – reading – and success criteria relating to pupils’ attainment are only referenced to pupils with below average attainment. Despite the much lower level of performance in writing across the school, and lower than average attainment in mathematics, these areas are not included as current priorities for action, though it is recognised that writing has been a priority in previous years.
86. **Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school’s performance do not provide all subject leaders with a sufficiently clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and standards of attainment in their subject areas.**
87. Subject leadership teams have had some opportunities to monitor whole-school performance and this has been successful in science, in particular. These opportunities are sometimes too narrow in their focus and timing, and do not provide subject leaders with a secure understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. The headteacher has planned a comprehensive programme of monitoring teaching and learning, but this has not always focused rigorously enough on the effectiveness of the implementation of the national strategies for teaching literacy and, especially, numeracy. Monitoring pupils’ work relies too much on samples in monthly writing books rather than on pupils’ daily work, and has not led to a clear enough identification of weaknesses in writing and mathematics.
88. Newly qualified teachers have been inducted effectively into the routines of the school. Arrangements for the performance management of staff, including that of the headteacher, are in place and governors play an effective role in this. Training under a national

programme to develop teachers' skills and confidence in using ICT to support teaching and learning, has not yet been undertaken. Consequently, some teachers lack appropriate subject knowledge and confidence in using ICT in the classroom. Similarly, there is limited evidence of recent staff training focused on the effective implementation of the national numeracy strategy. Given that some elements of this strategy are not being implemented effectively, this represents a significant gap in the professional development programme. Nevertheless, teaching staff do have access to professional development opportunities, in school and through other providers such as the local education authority. For example, the science subject leader has found the local education authority's annual science subject leaders' meeting of great benefit to her own professional development, and her ability to fulfil her leadership role.

89. **The school makes satisfactory use of its staff, accommodation and learning resources.**
90. The school budget is planned carefully and appropriate allocations are made in line with priorities in the school improvement plan and subject action plans. Specific grants have generally been used effectively and the deployment of funds in support of special educational needs has ensured high quality provision in the Centres and through the work of the special educational needs coordinator in mainstream classes. Financial controls and administration are good. The school seeks to secure best value when purchasing services and materials. The administrator and clerical assistant ensure that the day-to-day administrative tasks are carried out efficiently, and also provide a friendly reception for visitors. The governors and headteacher are aware that difficult budgetary decisions will have to be made in light of the closure of the Assessment Centre and the subsequent reduction in income. They understand that this may lead to a reduction in staffing and are planning for this eventuality. These issues are already being discussed and personnel advice has been sought from the local education authority.
91. The school benefits from a committed and hard working teaching and non-teaching staff who represent a very good blend of age, experience and qualifications. There are proportionately more staff than would normally be expected for a school of this size. This reflects the support required for pupils with special educational needs in the two centres and the main school. The quality of provision for these pupils is a particular strength of the school.
92. The Victorian school buildings are well maintained and provide an attractive environment for teaching and learning. The site is secure behind a wall or fence, though disabled access remains difficult given the natural slope of the ground and the steps up to the Year 3 room. The school benefits from having two halls, two playgrounds, a field and a very attractive garden area/outdoor classroom, imaginatively developed by staff and parents. Resources for teaching are generally adequate except for information and communication technology. However, deficiencies in this area should be addressed by the planned creation of an ICT suite in Summer 2003. At present, the school does not make enough use of information technology to support management processes such as analysing data, planning the curriculum and accessing teaching resources.



93. Given the staff and governors' evident personal and professional qualities, and levels of commitment to the school, as well as the high level of parental support, it is clear that the school has the capacity to improve further.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

94. In order to improve the quality of education and raise standards of attainment, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) Improve attainment in writing and mathematics by:

- raising teachers' expectations for what pupils should achieve;
- setting clear targets for individual pupils and tracking progress towards these;
- providing further professional development relating to the implementation of national strategies in literacy and numeracy;
- identifying areas across the curriculum where writing and mathematics skills can be applied and developed more effectively;
- raising the profile of writing in displays in classrooms and around the school;
- analysing pupils' performance to identify areas of strength on which to build and areas for improvement;
- improving weekly planning and identifying more precisely the intended outcomes of lessons for different groups of pupils.

(Paras: 3, 5, 8-10, 12, 14-16, 35-38, 40, 43-46, 59, 79, 142-147, 156-163, 169-177, 209, 212)

(2) Improve attainment in information and communication technology by:

- implementing the national professional development programme for all staff;
- ensuring that the use of ICT is planned for across the curriculum;
- implementing the proposed improvements to the facilities and resources for ICT. (\*)

(Paras: 11, 35, 39, 43, 88, 92, 179, 182, 186, 206, 217-223)

(3) Implement a more rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluating the quality of education and standards of attainment that:

- makes better use of national and local comparative data;
- enables subject leadership teams to review regularly samples of work from every class;
- identifies clearly the strengths and weaknesses in teaching skills across the school.

(Paras: 61, 81, 83-87, 167, 179, 191, 201, 216)

(4) Implement more effective and consistent approaches to marking work and to assessing pupils' attainment and progress by:

- building on the good practice that already exists in some areas of the school;
- providing pupils with clearer feedback on the ways in which their work can be improved;
- recording and analysing performance information;
- setting clear curriculum targets for individuals or groups;
- using this information to plan the next steps in learning;
- tracking pupils' progress more regularly towards their curriculum targets.

(Paras: 35, 42, 44, 56, 58, 59, 62, 64, 99, 107, 111, 167, 176, 178, 182, 189, 190, 215, 231)

\* The school has already identified this as a key area for improvement.

## THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS CENTRES

95. **Very good provision, funded by the local education authority, is made for pupils in the Language Centre and the Assessment Centre. The quality of the education and its successful impact on pupils are due to careful planning over a long time by the centre teachers and support staff, and by the headteacher and staff in the main school.**
96. Currently, the Language Centre has 13 pupils, all with statements of special educational needs relating to difficulties in speech, language, communication and associated problems. The complexity of individual needs for the six pupils in the Assessment Centre, which includes degrees of autism, is being assessed skilfully and, where appropriate, contributes to the process of identifying a statement of educational need. All 19 pupils benefit significantly from being in a mainstream school, and the pupils in the main school also benefit from having pupils from the centres integrated with them for specific subjects.
97. While their attainment is often well below the national average, pupils in the Language Centre make at least good progress. This is determined against the targets set for them within their individual education plans. They are attaining their targets, which are adjusted each term and are recorded in termly and annual reviews. Targets are challenging and sufficiently focused for the teacher to match effectively planned activities to the needs of individual pupils. Pupils are taught in groups for numeracy each morning, and either remain within the centre or join their mainstream class for literacy on three mornings a week. In the afternoons, pupils may join their appropriate mainstream class for other subjects of the curriculum. This very effectively enables these pupils to access a wide range of learning and supports the good progress that they make.
98. Three of the pupils in the Assessment Centre have been integrated into mainstream classes, and three others are either integrated into the reception class, or withdrawn to receive quality, focused teaching time where progress was observed to be at least good. Since the last inspection, the arrangements for admission and the provision are essentially the same for the Language Centre. Impending changes, including an increase of provision in the Language Centre from 13 to 20 and the proposed closure of the Assessment Centre, have been subject to consultation. The integration of these pupils is of the highest quality and is phased in order to prepare them for entry into their chosen mainstream schools. The Assessment Centre has six pupils, all of whom are expected to return to their chosen mainstream school for September 2003.
99. Pupils enter the Language Centre after careful assessment by education professionals and speech and language therapists. Many have complex difficulties that impede their learning. These may be a combination of language difficulties and emotional, behavioural or physical problems. Their needs and requirements are documented carefully by the multi-professional staff, and records show that pupils make good, and sometimes very good progress towards the targets set for them. Attainment is below national averages and expectations, but sometimes it is not that different from other pupils in the main school who also have special educational needs. The progress of pupils in the centre is inhibited by lack of language skills,

which often include listening and understanding, as well as speaking. However, as a result of the good teaching and assiduous work by many parents, most pupils have a satisfactory vocabulary for general use, as well as some specific technical words for subjects, even if some cannot say them very well. Their learning is good overall, and in some respects, it is very good.

100. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are beginning to be able to identify and read common words and recognise that words convey information. By the end of Year 3, pupils are reading simple stories and can identify and talk about both the story and the characters. In mathematics, pupils below the age of six are beginning to match numbers to five. Those in Year 1 count to ten and identify two-dimensional shapes such as a circle and triangle. Those in Year 3 count in tens, and some know doubles to 100, and can add and subtract two digit numbers. Three pupils from the Assessment Centre were integrated fully into the group activities, which were planned for pupils and parents in the reception class. They received very good support when counting to six and being introduced practically to the concept of 'one more'. Parents appreciated this opportunity, and had made special arrangements to be able to attend the activity which was intended to inform, and to enable them to become more involved in their children's learning.
101. A high proportion of time in both centres is focused correctly on communication skills. This is paying dividends, and many pupils are showing a great improvement in their listening skills. Pupils' reading is generally below the level expected, but a few pupils are approaching national standards. Although some pupils appear to read fluently, they do not always understand what they are reading, and have little idea of the text, or its implications. Other pupils, however, are making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of sounds, and can spell out words accurately and enjoy talking about the story. Pupils' writing is below the standard typical for their age, and for some it is well below expectations.
102. The quality of relationships evident in the centres between staff and pupils, and increasingly between the pupils themselves, is very good. This is the result of very good teaching and an unconditional regard by all the adults in the school, which makes pupils feel secure and valued. This is a key factor in the centres' success. Self-confidence has been enhanced enormously since pupils started there. Personal and social skills, which are promoted in the centres, are extended when they are integrated into other classes, and have improved greatly. Pupils try hard and are willing to have a go, even if they find work, and particularly speaking, difficult. All are eager to come to school. This is due to the careful handling by all staff. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Behaviour is very good overall and most pupils are willing to sit still, and to try new activities. For some, this is a huge improvement and is leading to better learning all round.
103. Overall, the teaching in both centres is very good, particularly when grasping opportunities to move pupils on, as seen when a child in the Assessment Centre responded unusually enthusiastically to a set of farm animals and their associated colours. Both centres have benefited from a stable staff, consisting of a teacher supported by a teaching and learning assistant. Support staff are experienced and have a sound knowledge and understanding of what is required. The teachers and classroom support work very well together and have,

over time, honed clear practices, so that the centres run smoothly for pupils and parents. Pupils respond very well to these established routines and even new pupils settle in happily. Speech and language therapists, who provide an essential input to the assessment of the pupils, give good quality support in both centres.

104. A major strength of the teaching is the quality of the planning, which ensures that lessons are appropriate for all pupils. Lessons are fun, and this promotes learning. Day-to-day assessment is built successfully into the planning. Lessons are evaluated carefully to see if they have been successful, and relevant modifications are made to subsequent lessons. Targets, which are linked to individual educational plans, are displayed so that they are always prompting and driving teaching and learning. An awareness of individual needs and skills relating to the challenge of integration continue to have a high priority in the recent school improvement plans.
105. Generally, pupils are well behaved and teaching and support staff are adept at recognising and responding to naughtiness or sheer frustration. Staff know when to ignore sulking and silly behaviour, and when to insist on change. The management of difficult behaviour is very good. This was most evident in a Year 2 gymnastics' lesson when one pupil was handled very well in order to minimise interruptions and to maintain the flow of learning opportunities for other pupils.
106. The curriculum provided is good overall. Pupils are given full access to all the subjects of the National Curriculum and to religious education. In other subjects, the pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and for most the progress is good as they start from a low base. Special emphasis is given to practical work whether in music, art and design, and physical education. Often pupils are integrated into the appropriate class for these activities. They have access to extra-curricular activities such as the football club. The choir is influential in helping pupils overcome speech difficulties.
107. The support and guidance given to the pupils in the centres is of very high quality. Pupils feel secure and cared for within a warm and friendly atmosphere. Parents are highly appreciative of this. The assessment of pupils' progress in learning is good, with some very good features, especially when ongoing assessments are used to amend planning in order to set more challenging targets. Very good records are used to set targets for academic and social improvement. Speech therapists are influential when setting additional targets which are displayed for all to see, and then amended each term. These very good strategies influence the quality of pupils' learning. Accurate records are kept of the progress towards the targets in pupils' individual education plans, which are sufficiently specific to ensure that the progress can be measured. Good summaries are made, and reports to parents are useful.
108. Partnership with the parents in both centres is very good and this enhances the quality of the pupils' education. A good welcome pack is provided for all pupils, and parents are given as many opportunities as they choose to be involved in the work with their child. Parents appreciate the opportunities for termly and annual review, as well as the informal opportunities to 'pop in'. They appreciate the contacts with teachers who seek every

opportunity to update them with successes as well as concerns. The Special Needs Awareness Group (SNAG), which meets regularly during school time, is influential in responding to concerns and provides an opportunity to make parents better informed. During the week of the inspection, the successful meeting designed to explain the role of the speech therapist was attended by parents from both centres, as well as the link governor for special educational needs, a support assistant, the headteacher and parents from the main school. The teacher from the Assessment Centre has recently consulted with all parents in order to respond more positively to their needs.

109. The leadership of both centres is very good. By attending regular courses, both teachers-in-charge are very well informed, and have a wealth of experience and expertise, which is very well matched to the needs of pupils. Support staff are very well managed and are deployed effectively. They support individuals and groups and report back to teachers. This is best done when both concerns and progress are recorded in writing, thus contributing more effectively to pupils' ongoing assessment records. Together with the co-ordinator for special educational needs, both teachers-in-charge have been influential in raising the awareness and understanding of all involved in special educational needs. This has added significantly to the quality of pupils' learning experiences. Both centres are well organised and managed on a daily basis. The teacher-in-charge of the Assessment Centre is to be commended for managing the impending changes very well. Governors are linked to each centre and regular visits enable them to keep the full governing body well informed of successes and concerns. The accommodation is generally good and resources are varied and well used. The speech therapists have the advantage of a quiet area to use when necessary.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	16	12	16	2	0	0
Percentage	0	35	26	35	4	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	130
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	36

#### **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	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year. Eight of these pupils were from the SEN Centres.	2002	21	15	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	15
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	23	23	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (77)	64 (77)	72 (87)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	14
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	25	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (87)	75 (83)	75 (83)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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



*Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year*

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>No. of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>No. of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	123	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	1	0	0
Information not obtained	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y3**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Average class size	22

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y3**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	205

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	459533
Total expenditure	465609
Expenditure per pupil	3424
Balance brought forward from previous year	19609
Balance carried forward to next year	13533

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

*Results of the survey of parents and carers*

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	111
Number of questionnaires returned	67

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	20	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	61	36	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	32	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	26	12	0	6
The teaching is good.	76	22	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	29	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	15	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	43	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	63	33	3	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	81	16	0	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	21	1	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	28	6	2	5

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

110. **Some significant improvements have been made to the provision for children in the reception class since the last inspection. The school has regarded the development of the curriculum for these children as a priority and resources and the environment have been improved significantly to support learning in the key areas. An area of the school grounds has been developed to provide a garden with a tarmac surface for wheeled vehicles and funds have been allocated for appropriate resources. Overall, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum and quality of teaching for these children.**
111. Teachers have had the opportunity to attend appropriate training and have developed planning to reflect the national guidance for children aged up to five. Planning is now secure but does not always include sufficient detail of the desired learning outcomes linked to individual activities. As a result, not all activities have a clear purpose or focus and rates of progress are reduced. Assessments when children start school have been used as a guide to group children for learning, but have not been analysed with sufficient rigour. Ongoing teacher assessments and tracking of progress are underdeveloped. This has been recognised by the staff who have begun to use the new national Foundation Stage Profile as a means of identifying children's attainment and progress by the end of the Reception Year.
112. Children are admitted to the reception class in September and January. At the time of the inspection, there were 29 children in the class, a majority of whom had only been in school for three or four weeks. On entry to the reception class children demonstrate variable levels of attainment but overall they are broadly in line with those found nationally. The proportion of children entering the school with higher than average levels of attainment has reduced slightly since the previous inspection. While they are in the reception class, children make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Children with special educational needs make good progress.
113. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Staff have high levels of enthusiasm and commitment, and work effectively as a team co-ordinated by the Foundation Stage leader, who is also a member of the school's upper management team. This ensures that the views of the Foundation Stage are represented at a whole-school level and is indicative of the value the school places on the early stages of education.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

114. The teaching and provision for personal, social and emotional development are good. Nearly all of the children enter the reception class with average skills in this area of learning, and by the time they transfer to Year 1 many are achieving above the early learning goals in personal and social development. This represents good progress and reflects the high expectations of the staff and the emphasis the school gives to this area of learning.

115. The adults working in the reception class provide very good role models for the children. At the start of each day, children are welcomed individually and are made to feel secure and valued. Staff have a calm and sensitive manner with the children and encourage them to listen to each other and to consider the views and needs of others. This is reflected in the positive way the majority of children play together during free choice activities. For example, two children riding together on a wheeled vehicle were working as a team and helping each other to mount and dismount safely. When one child was hurt, others were quick to show concern and compassion.
116. Children from the Assessment Centre interact well with the other children in the reception class and join in a range of activities. The staff have created a positive learning environment where all contributions are equally respected and valued.
117. Children are generally enthusiastic about their learning. The majority of children settle quickly to a task and show appropriate levels of concentration. Staff encourage children to become independent and to take responsibility. For example, the children are expected to dress themselves after a physical education lesson and they respond positively, sometimes helping each other, and only asking for help when really necessary. Care is taken to teach and reinforce good practice in relation to personal hygiene.
118. The school places great importance on developing an effective partnership with parents and this has a positive impact on the personal, social and emotional development of the children. Foundation Stage staff have worked hard to further develop their excellent induction programme which supports children by forging a close link between home and school. During the inspection parents were invited into the reception class to work and play alongside their children.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

119. The provision and quality of teaching in communication, language and literacy are sound overall with some good features.
120. Many opportunities are provided for the children to speak and listen in a range of situations. The good adult-to-child ratio means that children are given frequent opportunities to discuss and explain what they are doing. For example, a group of children were observed setting the table for a picnic and discussing which of their favourite foods should be included on the menu. Teachers and learning assistants use a range of well structured and sequenced questions to encourage children to talk about their work. Children making models out of junk material were challenged to use correct mathematical vocabulary in order to describe the boxes, and were asked to explain their choice of material.
121. An over-emphasis on whole-class teaching sometimes inhibits learning and has a negative impact on children's attainment and progress. When children were observed working for extended periods in a class group they found it difficult to sustain their concentration and had less opportunity to interact with each other.

122. Overall, children make good progress with their communication skills particularly in speaking. The majority of children are on line to achieve the early learning goals and some will exceed them by the end of the academic year.
123. Progress in reading is satisfactory. The children enjoy sharing big books, reading as part of a small group or attempting to read independently. They demonstrate an increasing knowledge of sounds and words. The majority of children are able to discuss the content of a story and to express personal preferences or opinions. Some children can re-tell familiar stories in the correct sequence; others are able to use initial sounds to help identify unknown words; and a few are recognising patterns in words. A group of more-able children enjoyed the challenge of finding words to rhyme with 'cat' and provided a variety of correct suggestions. The majority of children will achieve the early learning goals for reading by the end of the Reception Year.
124. An evaluation of children's work indicates that teachers are maintaining an appropriate balance between teaching the skills needed for writing and allowing children the opportunity to write independently. Some more-able children are using their knowledge of letter sounds to write simple regular words and have the confidence to make plausible attempts at more complex words. One child, engaged in writing a shopping list, was undeterred when it was suggested that chocolate cake should be added to the list and made a commendable attempt at writing the words. The majority of children are able to hold a pencil correctly and demonstrate correct formation of the letters that have been taught. A few children are reluctant to write at this stage and staff model writing by scribing for them.
125. The children are making satisfactory progress overall with their writing and the majority are on-target to attain the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class.

### **Mathematical development**

126. The quality of the provision and the quality of teaching are variable, but overall the children make satisfactory progress. The majority of children are enthusiastic and approach mathematics with confidence. They are able to recognise numbers up to 20. Some children handle simple addition up to 10 mentally and record the work correctly.
127. Where teaching and learning are effective, children experience a range of carefully planned activities that build on previous experience and are matched to their ability. Learning is less secure when children have not had sufficient opportunities to consolidate their understanding of previous learning. For example, children who were being introduced to the concept of subtraction found it difficult because they did not understand what was meant by 'more than' or 'less than'. Similarly higher ability children were unable to tackle  $20 - 6$  because they were not familiar with place value.
128. Work in mathematics is well integrated into other areas of the curriculum. For example, a programmable toy was used to practise counting. Early years staff are skilful at reinforcing the language of mathematics and a dance lesson was used to demonstrate 'wide' and

'narrow' shapes and 'high' and 'low' movements. Classroom routines are also used to model the correct vocabulary, and 'first, second and third' were used consistently as children were lining up.

129. Following an assembly, twenty parents joined the reception class children to play mathematical games. Everyone had lots of fun using board games, dice and number lines and a group of children gained first-hand experience of weighing during a cooking activity. Overall, this provided an excellent learning opportunity for the children, all of whom made good progress during the session.
130. The majority of children will attain the early learning goals for mathematical development by the time they leave the reception class.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

131. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the provision is sound with some good features. The children are offered a range of stimulating activities that develop successfully their understanding of the world they live in and their sense of time. Good use is made of the school locality to develop an awareness of place and belonging. For example, reception children went out into the community to look for evidence of recycling. Recyclable rubbish was collected to form a rubbish mountain before being sorted into different categories. Development in this area is also supported by educational visits to a local donkey centre, where children gain first-hand experience with the animals. The provision of an attractive garden has given children the opportunity to find out about their environment, and to talk about those features they like and dislike. They have been involved in planting and caring for an area of the garden.
132. The children enjoy designing and making, and have access to a range of construction apparatus. Children involved in junk modelling were observed working alongside an adult to explore different methods of assembling and joining materials. Some opportunities are provided for children to use computer programmes and programmable toys. The school has appropriate plans to extend resources and staff expertise in this area. During the year, the children have an appropriate range of opportunities to find out about their own and other cultures and beliefs.
133. The majority of children will achieve the early learning goals for knowledge and understanding of the world before they enter Year 1.

### **Physical development**

134. The provision for physical development is sound and the children make satisfactory progress in this aspect of their development. They handle pencils, paintbrushes, scissors, tools and construction materials with increasing control and confidence. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of the children and teach the skills effectively.

135. Children receive a satisfactory range of outside play activities and are developing satisfactorily their skills of co-ordination. They can control wheeled vehicles and are able to stop and change direction in order to avoid obstacles. They show a good awareness of space and the majority use it well.
136. During physical education and dance lessons children move with confidence. The teachers and learning assistants join in with high levels of enthusiasm and energy and this is reflected in the quality and range of movements undertaken by the children. Many children were observed running, hopping and skipping to music in a controlled manner. Children were also encouraged to recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active and were able to talk about them.
137. The majority of children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year and some will exceed them.

### **Creative development**

138. Children have daily opportunities to become engaged in creative work, but some activities are less effective because the adults are over directive. This reduces rates of progress as children are unable to use their initiative or to be independently creative.
139. Appropriate opportunities are provided for children to undertake role-play and, during the inspection, children were invited to spend time in the class 'Toy Shop'. The resources provided to support imaginative play in this area were limited and, as a result, many children were unable to sustain their interest.
140. Children are making good progress with their music and are able to perform a song confidently for the rest of the school. The majority of children are able to move rhythmically and creatively in response to music.
141. The quality of teaching and provision for creative development is satisfactory overall. The children make satisfactory progress and the majority should achieve the early learning goals for creative development by the time they leave the reception class.

### **ENGLISH**

142. **Overall, pupils' attainment in English is below the national average in Years 1, 2 and 3. Results achieved in the national tests for seven-year-olds since the last inspection, indicate a period of rapid and sustained improvement in pupils' attainment from 1998 to 2000, followed by a downward trend in attainment. Overall, the school is making satisfactory provision to improve pupils' attainment in reading, speaking and listening, but strategies to improve the quality of writing are not having sufficient impact on raising standards. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory.**
143. In English, the areas where the school does well are:



- Pupils' speaking skills have been developed well.
  - Basic skills of reading and writing are taught effectively.
  - Teachers are confident in their approach to teaching.
144. Where the school needs to improve:
- Pupils' attainment in writing is too low.
  - Teachers do not have high enough expectations for the quality and presentation of pupils' writing.
  - Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their writing skills through sustained writing in English lessons and other subjects.
145. Compared to all schools nationally, the results achieved in the tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 in reading and writing were well below average. These results include pupils with statements of special educational needs in the Language and Assessment Centres, which significantly alters the profile of the year group. When these results are discounted, pupils' attainment in comparison with other similar schools was below average in reading and well below average in writing. The proportion of mainstream pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in reading is broadly typical of that found nationally, but attainment at the higher level in writing is below average. Significantly, in writing, only three pupils achieved Level 2A or Level 3, which is far fewer than might have been expected.
146. In three of the last five years girls have out performed boys in reading and have consistently achieved better results in writing. However, these results are skewed by the six to two overload of boys to girls in the two centres. Nevertheless, the school has given some consideration to the resources provided to support boys in their learning, but has not carried out a comprehensive audit of teaching strategies or learning styles. This has been identified as a priority for development.
147. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2002 indicate that overall standards of speaking and listening were well below the national average. However, these results included all the pupils from the Language and Assessment Centres. When their results are ignored, the performance of the remaining pupils was typical of that found nationally. This reflects the judgements made by inspectors from their observations in school. Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to develop the skills of speaking and listening. By the time pupils reach the age of seven and by the end of Year 3, the majority have made satisfactory progress and have achieved standards in line with the national average. The attainment of a significant number of pupils is above average in speaking.
148. The practice observed in some classes of giving pupils a few minutes to think and discuss in pairs before contributing to a class discussion, improves the quality of speaking and listening. It is successful in building confidence and in accelerating progress for pupils of all abilities. For example, in Year 2 pupils were encouraged to explore a range of adjectives, adverbs and examples of alliteration to be included in a class poem. One pair, working together, was able to suggest "*a shining shell held secretly in my hand*". Pupils in Year 1 worked together to consider different ways to begin a story and, as a result of class discussion, agreed an unusual and sophisticated opening paragraph which concluded with the sentence

*“She turned the man into a scarecrow and that is how the story began”*. In the best lessons, teachers use a range of questions that encourage pupils to go into greater detail in their responses. They are required to explain their ideas and to use a wider variety of vocabulary.

149. Overall, skills of listening are less well developed than those of speaking and rates of progress are variable. At times, pupils are provided with purposeful activities which promote active listening. Musical activities are used effectively to develop listening skills and to support learning in this area. In other lessons, pupils are passive for long periods and find it difficult to sustain their concentration. Teacher expectations, particularly of the older pupils, are too low in this respect and, on some occasions, poor skills in listening hold back learning in English and other subjects.
150. Raising standards in reading has been identified as a priority in the current school improvement plan. Currently, pupils’ attainment across the school is slightly below national expectations. A significant number of pupils in Year 2 are reading at a level below national expectations, but by Year 3 standards in reading are closer to the expected level.
151. Pupils are provided with a range of reading opportunities including shared text work, guided reading, ‘Everyone Reads In Class’ (ERIC) sessions and an individual reading programme. Older pupils have the opportunity to support younger pupils during book sharing sessions.
152. Throughout the school the majority of pupils enjoy reading and are able to talk confidently about what they have read and about the kind of books they prefer. The more fluent readers, who have the opportunity to choose their own books, are particularly enthusiastic. Some pupils reading from the reading scheme have a limited recall of other books and find the reading materials less motivating and interesting. Some books are borrowed from the library service to supplement the resources available for guided reading. Since the time of the last inspection, a small library area has been created, although the majority of books are retained in the classrooms. The library, library loans and book collections in classrooms are used effectively to develop reading and reference skills.
153. Rates of progress in reading are variable but satisfactory overall. The majority of pupils in Year 1 are able to talk confidently about authors, illustrators and the ‘blurb’ that helps them to find out about a book. The majority of Year 2 pupils are familiar with the features of non-fiction books such as contents, index and glossary and can explain their purpose. More-able pupils make satisfactory progress so that by Year 2 they are able to read with expression, taking note of the punctuation. They use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them to read any unfamiliar words and if necessary split the words up into chunks. One pupil was able to work out ‘delighted’ in this way. More-able pupils were also observed re-reading sentences, but few of them omitted the unknown word and read on in order to ascertain meaning. The most-able pupils in Year 3 are able to read fluently and offer opinions about the plot, characters, favourite authors and different genres of stories.
154. Pupils of lower average ability find reading more challenging and rates of progress are unsatisfactory. They read hesitantly and have a limited range of strategies to support their reading. They are able to use initial sounds but only make use of picture or contextual cues

when prompted to do so. Special educational needs pupils receive high levels of support with their reading and, as a result, make good progress overall.

155. Most pupils read regularly at home. Reading diaries are used to promote good communication between home and school. They are used effectively to praise and encourage pupils and often inform parents about the focus for learning. They are less often used to identify targets to secure future improvement. This limits the impact they have on raising standards and on rates of progress.
156. Across the school, pupils' attainment in writing is well below average and much lower than in reading. Progress is unsatisfactory for most pupils except those with special educational needs. Writing is an area of significant underachievement in the school. This inhibits learning in other areas of the curriculum, where pupils are limited in how they are able to record their ideas or what they have learned.
157. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to write both in English lessons and through other areas of the curriculum. A detailed examination of pupils' work indicates a limited range of opportunities and low expectations in terms of productivity during writing activities.
158. Lesson observations and discussions with pupils show that the majority of pupils are being taught the basic skills necessary to write, but are not consistently required to apply them. Written work is often careless and poorly presented, with basic errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. For example, the majority of Year 2 and Year 3 pupils understand the correct use of capital letters and full stops but do not make use of that knowledge when they are writing. Many pupils who have mastered the basic joins in handwriting lessons do not use them when writing independently.
159. Often, pupils are not expected to reflect the good ideas they have generated during class discussions in their written work. For example, more-able pupils in Year 1 recorded their ideas for the structure of a story by drawing rather than writing. Year 2 pupils, having thought of exciting vocabulary and sentences to improve a poem, were restricted by a writing frame that only allowed the addition of single words.
160. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall with some good features and some areas of weakness. In the ten lessons observed, the quality of teaching ranged from very good to satisfactory. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented in all classrooms and has been adapted to meet the needs of the school. Teachers are confident about teaching English and generally have sound subject knowledge. The curriculum is planned to ensure coverage of the strategy but the purpose of some lessons are not clearly defined. This results in activities which are not sufficiently focused on what it is intended that pupils will learn, and which do not always meet the needs of all ability groups.
161. Where teaching was good the pace of the lesson was brisk and pupils were actively involved in the learning. Teachers made effective use of oral and written modelling and provided high quality explanations to extend pupils' understanding. In the best lessons, teachers had clear learning objectives which were shared with pupils and the concluding

session was used to assess, consolidate or extend learning. Teachers had high expectations in terms of learning and pupils' behaviour.

162. Teaching was less effective where teachers' expectations were low and there was a lack of challenge for the pupils. The purpose of these lessons was unclear and pupils did not know what was expected of them, or how the teacher would judge the success of their work. In a few lessons, the role of the teacher during group activities was not clearly defined or focused well enough on key learning activities.
163. The intervention programmes designed to support underachieving pupils are well planned and delivered, and are effectively accelerating progress for the pupils concerned. The school has implemented an additional programme to support writing and this is proving effective in increasing the proportion of pupils who will achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 2.
164. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour in English lessons are generally good and sometimes very good. Pupils of all abilities work with interest and enthusiasm.
165. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and their contributions are valued. Whenever possible pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively. For example, in a Year 1 lesson a child was nominated to support her peers should they have difficulty in reading the text. The pupils' ability to evaluate their own work is under developed and this has a negative impact on the standards of work produced. Classroom displays are not used effectively to promote literacy and raise awareness of the school's expectations for high quality writing. Similarly, the displays lack the range of key words, phrases and other support materials that are common in classrooms nationally and help pupils to work independently or to self-check.
166. Subject leadership has been developed to include a team of teachers working under the direction of the headteacher. This provides effective opportunities for the professional development of team members and ensures continuity in the event of staff changes. The team is involved in regularly reviewing the priorities for action. Raising standards in reading has been identified as a target for whole school improvement. Some professional development has been provided for the staff. The strategies for improvement have been implemented but have not been effective in raising standards, particularly in writing. The impact of training and interventions has not been evaluated with sufficient rigour.
167. Much of the analysis of performance data and monitoring of planning and teaching is carried out by the headteacher. The progress of a representative group of pupils is tracked. The headteacher hears the pupils read and scrutinises the recently introduced writing assessment books. Teacher assessment is insecure and is not underpinned by a clear understanding of levels of attainment. The headteacher has recognised this and has arranged appropriate training for the staff. The use of individual, group, class and whole-school targets is underdeveloped. Targets are not used effectively to raise expectations and standards. For example, the targets for improvement that are identified through teacher assessment are not used systematically to inform the planning for future lessons. They do not provide a focus

for developmental marking and pupils quickly forget them. This reduces their impact on pupil progress. Marking of work in English is unsatisfactory throughout the school as it does not provide pupils with a clear view of what they must do to improve.

168. Resources for the teaching of English are adequate. ICT is underused as a resource to support learning.

## MATHEMATICS

169. **Overall, pupils' attainment in mathematics is below the national average in Years 1, 2 and 3. Results achieved in the national tests for seven-year-olds since the last inspection indicate a period of rapid and sustained improvement from 1998 to 2000, followed by a downward trend in attainment. Nevertheless, overall attainment was higher in 2002 than in 1998. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory but the National Numeracy Strategy is not yet implemented securely in all classes.**

170. In mathematics, the areas where the school does well are:

- There are examples of good and effective teaching in mathematics.
- The school is well resourced for teaching mathematics.

171. Where the school needs to improve:

- Standards of attainment are too low.
- Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are not embedded securely in approaches to teaching.
- There has been insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching and standards of attainment.
- Teachers' subject knowledge has not been developed sufficiently through well-focused training opportunities.

172. In 2002, the results of the national tests for seven-year-olds indicated that standards of attainment were well below average when compared with all schools and very low in comparison with similar schools. When the results of pupils in the Language and Assessment Centres are discounted, pupils' attainment overall was below the average for similar schools. Significantly, the proportion attaining the expected Level 2 was well below average whereas the proportion achieving Level 3 was broadly typical of that found nationally. Teacher assessments identified three pupils at Level 3 whereas eight pupils achieved this in the national tests. Results also show that boys have performed significantly lower than girls in three of the last five years, and girls have performed below the national averages for girls in the last two years. From available data there are few signs of a significant improvement in attainment in 2003.

173. Findings from this inspection reflect the results of statutory assessments. As they move through the school, pupils are unable to use and apply mathematics systematically across the various strands because there are significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding. They do not build successfully upon what they know because they do not understand enough at each stage to do so. The focus of lessons is sometimes not well matched to what

pupils know and can do and, consequently, the level of achievement is too low for a large majority of pupils by the end of Year 3.

174. In classes where the teaching is better, pupils make some good progress during the year but do not progress as well as might be expected overall because they have not had the grounding to make the necessary gains in attainment. Year 1 pupils count on and back to 10 and higher attaining pupils are familiar with numbers up to 100. Pupils are given only limited experience of using number lines and grids in order to focus their understanding of place value. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have an unsatisfactory grasp of mental strategies. Those capable of higher attainment are reasonably confident in their recall of addition facts to 10, but others are less confident and most are insecure in their understanding of subtraction. Some pupils can sequence numbers to 100, and count on or back in ones and 10s, and the higher attaining pupils can round numbers up to the nearest 10. Pupils' limited understanding of number operations causes them to achieve little success in solving number problems and many have only a limited understanding of how to work out what to do. Past work indicates that they have had too few opportunities to investigate practical problems that are related to real-life situations that have a relevance to their own experiences. Pupils can name simple two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes but few can describe the properties of these shapes using appropriate mathematical language.
175. Year 3 pupils improve their skills in counting back as a mental strategy for subtraction but many do not see the connection between addition and subtraction, and higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough. Few pupils have the necessary experience to solve problems by extracting and interpreting information presented in a graph and chart. They are not challenged sufficiently, for example, when asked to describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes, they were not required to use appropriate mathematical language. Pupils with special educational needs tend to receive better in-class support and make satisfactory and sometimes good progress.
176. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. It is satisfactory overall although there are weaknesses across the school. Good teaching was seen in Year 1 where explanations were clear; there were interesting, imaginative activities at the level of pupils' understanding; and effective guidance was provided in small group sessions. Working procedures were well established and time was used well. Weaknesses in the use of assessment to guide planning results in a lack of match between the work that is planned and the need of the individual pupils in most classes. Higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough. There are some weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge and there is insufficient use of skilled questioning to help pupils develop their ideas and put right misconceptions. As a result, pupils are not enabled to extend their mathematical knowledge as fast as they could.
177. The National Numeracy Strategy is not fully embedded in all classes. For example, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop different mental strategies and explain their thinking. Concluding sessions are often too short and insufficient use is made of them to evaluate what has been learned. There are particular weaknesses in marking, which is not used to improve their work.

178. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are under-developed and, as a consequence, are not used to inform planning. No effective analysis has been undertaken of the results of the national tests for seven-year-olds to inform the school on those areas that are strengths, or to highlight the areas of mathematics in which the pupils still have difficulty. Targets for individuals or groups have not been set, and there is no tracking or target setting procedure in place. Some teachers have difficulty predicting the likely levels of attainment for pupils.
179. The subject leaders are knowledgeable and the school is well resourced for mathematics. Despite this, the impact has not been enough to successfully raise standards because teaching and learning has not been systematically checked to ascertain where further action is needed. For example, it is not clear how much pupils really know and can do at the beginning of each year, and how effectively this can be matched to the requirements of the mathematics curriculum. ICT is not used sufficiently and consistently to support teaching and learning in the subject, though it has been used effectively in an exercise in Year 3 to communicate survey results in graph form. In general, opportunities to develop numeracy skills across the curriculum have not been planned at whole-school level.

## SCIENCE

180. **For most pupils in Years 1 to 3 standards of attainment in science are typical of those found nationally. The school makes effective provision for teaching and learning in science, and the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. The results of statutory assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were above the national average and this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.**
181. In science, the areas where the school does well are:
- Pupils' attainment in statutory assessment at the end of Year 2 has improved significantly in the last two years.
  - Pupils are enthusiastic and interested in the subject, and they behave well in lessons.
  - Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good.
  - Good links are made between science and personal and social development.
  - The subject is well led and well-focused actions for improvement have been successful.
182. Where the school needs to improve:
- Assessment processes are not used well enough to inform the next steps in learning and to match tasks to pupils of different abilities.
  - The quality of marking is unsatisfactory.
  - The quality of written and recorded work is not as good as it should be.
  - Not enough use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning in science.
183. The results of statutory teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2002 indicate that overall the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 (75%) was well below the national average, whereas the proportion attaining Level 3 was above average. These results are distorted by the inclusion of eight pupils with statements of special educational need from the Language and Assessment Centres. When these pupils are excluded from the analysis, the results indicate that, in comparison with schools with a similar proportion of

pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' attainment was above the national average at Level 2 and well above average at Level 3. This represents a significant and sustained improvement in attainment in the last two years.

184. Evidence from pupils' work over the course of the current school year indicates that the school is covering the relevant aspects of the National Curriculum and that levels of attainment are broadly typical of that expected of pupils of their age. For example, pupils in Year 1 have learned about the growth of a bulb and used observational drawings and labels to record significant details. They have begun to explore the properties of different materials and describe these using criteria such as smooth, silky and rough. In Year 2, pupils have sorted and classified food using groupings such as cereal, fruit and vegetable, sugar, milk, meat and fish. They know about electricity and are aware of the concept of a circuit. Year 3 pupils have learned about light and shadows. When investigating the movement of a shadow they made predictions such as, '*The position of the shadow will move*'. '*The shadow could disappear*' and '*It might go round in a circle.*' A group of Year 3 pupils was also able to talk about how they might carry out an investigation about waterproof materials. Through discussion they were able to demonstrate an understanding of fair testing and an awareness of constants, variables and the need for accurate measures.
185. The work undertaken in studying food and diet, plant growth and life processes provides good support for pupils' personal and social development.
186. In general, the quantity and quality of pupils' written work is of a lower standard than is demonstrated orally. Teachers demand too little of them in terms of the quality of presentation and the importance of communicating clearly observations and results. At present, the planned curriculum does not identify clearly enough the expectations for a developing range of written recording strategies. There is also little evidence of the use of ICT to record and communicate the results of scientific investigations.
187. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted the national non-statutory guidance for planning units of work in science. This provides coherent coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for science but is sometimes not adapted sufficiently to meet the learning needs of all pupils. Teachers' weekly plans tend to record activities or a general class objective relating to knowledge and understanding. As a result, work is pitched towards the level of the average pupils, with some different expectations for the ways in which work would be recorded. For example, in a Year 1 lesson about materials, less-able pupils recorded by sticking a sample to a piece of paper and incorporating it in a drawing; average ability pupils stuck a sample to the paper and wrote a label describing it; and more-able pupils were asked to write a sentence. All pupils had good opportunities to discuss the texture and appearance of the material and its possible use in model making. However, there were limited opportunities to extend the scientific thinking of the more-able into sorting, classifying, recording and predicting.
188. In the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall. Pupils were given good opportunities to explore materials and talk about them with adults. The pupils were enthusiastic and interested by the range of materials and the task required of them.



Relationships between adults and pupils were generally good and pupils applied themselves well to the tasks. In both lessons, pupils with special educational needs were supported well in observing and talking about the materials and they made good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding and use of vocabulary. Too little was expected of the other pupils in terms of the quality of the recording of the outcomes of their observations, although orally they demonstrated satisfactory progress in relation to the key objective of the lessons.

189. The quality of marking in science is generally unsatisfactory with little evidence of teachers intervening to move scientific thinking forward. Many samples of work have no marks on them or only a tick. In one Year 1 class, a good model of marking encourages pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding through written questions such as, '*What do you expect to see next time?*'
190. Arrangements for assessment in science have been improved since the last inspection. Interesting use has been made of a '*what I know about...*' brainstorming technique at the beginning and end of science modules. Teachers also keep a record of the progress of different groups against National Curriculum level descriptors. Although these are passed on at the end of the year, assessments are used more to make overall judgements about pupils' attainment than to plan the next steps in learning for individuals.
191. The science leadership team works well together, represents a good level of subject expertise and is led ably by an enthusiastic subject leader. The team has an annual opportunity to observe lessons and monitor the quality of teaching and learning. As a result of this sort of activity, they have identified areas for curriculum improvement relating to the development of scientific enquiry and organised relevant whole-school training. Through their support and leadership, the quality of provision has been improved and the results of statutory assessments at the end of Year 2 have risen markedly. Currently, they do not monitor and evaluate the written, recorded outcomes of work in science across the school on a regular enough basis. Resources for science are adequate and organised effectively.

## ART AND DESIGN

192. **Pupils' attainment in art and design is above average in Years 1, 2 and 3. The school makes good provision for the arts and the quality of teaching is generally good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.**
193. It was only possible to observe one lesson of art and design during the inspection and the quality of the teaching seen in that lesson was good. Judgements have been based on discussions with pupils and teachers, work in sketchbooks and on display, portfolios of previous work and a scrutiny of planning.
194. The attainment of pupils at the age of seven and in Year 3 is above average. All pupils make good progress in art and design skills, and are provided with a wide range of opportunities to explore their creativity. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are included fully in art activities and achieve success in lessons with the support of skilled learning assistants

195. Art and design lessons are carefully planned by teachers who have good subject knowledge. In Year 1, for example, pupils have produced some very good paintings, using powder paints, based on observational drawings made in the school garden. Pupils were encouraged to focus on the composition of their work and had completed the big areas before adding details and considering light and shade. In Year 3, pupils were inspired by the teacher's personal expertise as a textile designer. They studied examples of her work before developing their own repeating patterns based on two different shapes. Pupils were able to use the correct technical vocabulary and to discuss, for example, what was meant by colourways. ICT was used to support learning in this lesson but is generally underused as a resource.
196. Work in art and design is used to enhance learning in other areas of the curriculum. For example, display boards in the hall illustrate the cultures associated with a number of other countries. Pupils have frequent opportunities to work together and to evaluate their own and other people's work.
197. The school regards the arts as a priority and supports the provision with a generous budget allocation. The subject is well resourced. Work undertaken during art and design lessons is supplemented and extended during an annual 'Arts week'. This is one of the highlights of the school calendar and provides pupils with the opportunity to work in mixed age and ability groups, alongside visiting artists and members of staff. Pupils are able to learn specific skills. For example, a press was hired so that pupils could learn about the technique of collagraph printing. Pupils exhibit their work and present their achievements to parents and other visitors.
198. The school makes good use of the local community to support learning in art and design. Pupils visit the art gallery in Exeter. The school contributes to local art exhibitions, for example when the neighbouring church was celebrating an anniversary.
199. Pupils also enter a range of competitions. One good example is a sculpture called "My world" which was produced collaboratively, by Year 2 pupils, and won a prize in the South West Arts Council competition.
200. Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy their work. They apply themselves to the tasks and demonstrate perseverance and enthusiasm for the subject.
201. The art and design subject leader works effectively as part of the arts team. She brings expertise, enthusiasm and commitment to the role, and is influential in raising standards in art and design. She monitors the content of what is being taught and levels of achievement. The arts team is responsible for identifying resource needs and deciding on priorities for development. However, there is little formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

202. **The school makes satisfactory provision for design and technology. Pupils' attainment in Years 1, 2 and 3 is typical of that found nationally for pupils of their age. This reflects the judgements made at the time of the last inspection.**
203. A judgement on standards in design and technology has been made after reviewing photographic evidence; analysing examples of past work on display; reviewing planning; talking to the co-ordinator and more valuably talking to pupils. All this evidence indicates that standards are typical of what is expected for pupils by the age of seven and in Year 3.
204. An analysis of long-term planning indicates that design and technology is undertaken each term, and that skills are developed term-on-term and year-on-year. Since the last inspection food technology has been introduced and is included for all pupils, whether in deciding which fillings to use in sandwiches in Year 3, or producing gingerbreads to support number development in the Foundation Stage. Teachers appreciate not only the expertise of support staff in adding to the quality of teaching and learning, but also parents who volunteer their services.
205. In discussions with pupils, they are knowledgeable about the skills needed for design and technology. They emphasise the need for planning and talk from their experiences about the properties of materials. They shared their strategies and techniques confidently, for example when attaching hinges; joining a variety of materials such as wood and card; and when using adhesives- 'don't use too much'. They enjoyed their activities and shared their 'disasters', which had the desired effect of helping them to understand what had gone wrong and how to improve next time - essential requirements of designing and making. Pupils commented on how much they enjoyed the annual 'Arts Week' and the activities planned to enhance their skills. Examples of work on display such as musical instruments and designs in boxes indicated a good level of finishing and a consideration for quality.
206. The subject leader has not yet contributed to improving the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology by observing lessons. However, she has good photographic evidence and she monitors planning. She is aware of the need to improve the use of ICT to support teaching and learning in design and technology.

## **HUMANITIES**

207. **For most pupils in Years 1 to 3 standards of attainment in history and geography are typical of those found nationally. The school makes effective provision for teaching and learning in both subjects, and the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. This broadly reflects the position reported at the time of the last inspection.**
208. Evidence from pupils' work over the course of the current school year indicates that the school is covering the relevant aspects of the National Curriculum and that pupils are working at levels of attainment that are broadly typical of that expected of pupils of their age, except for pupils in the Language and Assessment Centres whose attainment is generally below average.

209. In Year 1, pupils have developed their understanding of the past and present through exploring the differences between toys old and new. They have recorded the outcomes through observational drawings. They have undertaken fieldwork in the immediate neighbourhood of the school to identify signs, symbols and street furniture associated with safe parking. Back in the classroom, they have tried to apply what was learned from this experience to concept, sketch maps of an imaginary environment that they had drawn earlier. Pupils in the Language Centre also undertook similar fieldwork, including good use of a digital camera to record images from the environment. While their knowledge and understanding was broadly in line with expectations for their age, their ability to express this in writing was well below expectations.
210. In Year 2, pupils are learning to recognise the countries of Great Britain and record these on a map. They have also learned about some aspects of life in Scotland and have begun to explore the advantages and disadvantages of living on an island. In history, they have developed their understanding of past and present through learning about the life and work of Florence Nightingale. This work also linked well with activities in religious education relating to a theme of remembrance.
211. In Year 3, the programme of work means that little work in geography has been undertaken as it is taught in blocks across the year. However, pupils have produced interesting work relating to the Saxons and their invasion of Britain. This includes discussing why the Saxons would or would not want to come to Britain, and exploring the difference in meaning between invade and settle. They have also been encouraged to empathise with the invaders in writing about how someone might feel on the boat approaching Britain.
212. Overall, in discussions in lessons and in their verbal responses, pupils demonstrate a range of knowledge and understanding in history and geography that is broadly typical for their age. However, written work is generally of a lower standard and too little is demanded of the pupils in terms of quantity and quality. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing knowledge, understanding and enquiry skills. Those with special educational needs are supported well and often make good progress.
213. The quality of teaching in the three lessons observed ranged from good to satisfactory, and was satisfactory overall. Teachers provided interesting fieldwork activities for pupils and extended their knowledge and understanding through well-directed, open-ended questions. Pupils were excited by discovering the wealth of information about parking in a section of road that they passed along daily. As a result, they learned well and enjoyed the experience. In both history and geography lessons, teaching assistants provided good support to pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to engage in the learning activities.
214. A weakness of two of the lessons was that teachers were not entirely clear about what they wanted as a recorded outcome of the work. As a result, pupils were unsure of what to do and the written or recorded outcomes did not fully demonstrate the knowledge and understanding that the pupils had gained.

215. The quality of marking in history and geography varies between classes and is generally unsatisfactory. At times, there is little evidence of marking on pupils' work. In some pieces that contain teachers' comments, marking is positive in tone but does not move learning forward. In only one class was there evidence of marking that related clearly to the purpose of the activity. Processes for assessing and recording pupils' work in history and geography are unsatisfactory and there is little evidence of assessment being used to inform the next steps in learning. National non-statutory guidance is used as a basis for planning the programme of work in each subject but this is sometimes not adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Weekly planning gives little evidence of matching the planned outcome of lessons to the learning needs of pupils of different abilities.
216. The subjects are led through a humanities leadership team. Staff involved in this team have good subject expertise and find the team structure to be mutually supportive. They have begun to address issues to do with resourcing different units of study and recognise the need to plan more effectively for the range of writing that could be developed through different topics. Currently, they have too few opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and standards of attainment across the school. As a result, they do not have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in performance in the subjects. Resources for history and geography are adequate and include interesting photographs and artefacts relating to local studies.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

217. **Information and communication technology was a key issue from the previous inspection and the school rightly considers that ICT is still an area of the curriculum that requires development. Overall, there has been insufficient improvement in the provision for ICT and pupils' standards of attainment in the subject. The school has bid successfully for funding for an ICT suite and this will be built later this year. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and in Year 3 is below national expectations.**
218. In general, very little evidence was seen of pupils' achievements in ICT. It was used only infrequently to support teaching and learning in lessons. Pupils in Year 1 were observed controlling the mouse, and using it to drag pictures across the screen. Pupils with special educational needs receive more time on the computers and this enhances the teaching and learning.
219. In Year 2, pupils know how to save their work but are not sure how to retrieve previously saved work. They can draw pictures using 'freehand' and are competent in using drawing packages. They are becoming increasingly confident in simple word-processing skills but knowledge of how the computer allows them to correct and improve their work is under-developed. This is due, in part, to the small numbers of computers available in any class, and that pupils do not use them frequently and regularly. Limited use is made of databases or the geometric drawing tools, although such software programs are available on the computers.

220. Pupils in Year 3 were able to control a programmable toy in order to enhance their mathematical knowledge of shape, but they were only able to give it one instruction at a time rather than a complete set of instructions.
221. In the one whole-class ICT lesson that was observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall. The lesson focused on labelling and classifying objects and pupils were really challenged to use correct language, including shapes and criteria. However, with only two computers available in the room, they had few opportunities to use ICT to record and communicate their findings. Teachers' knowledge and skills in ICT have not been developed sufficiently and, in general, they are not confident users of technology to support teaching and learning.
222. The subject leaders are aware of the improvements needed in ICT and have a good range of skills between them, but currently staff development in this area is very limited. The subject leaders are knowledgeable, well organised and enthusiastic. The school has adopted the nationally produced scheme of work ICT but this has not yet been embedded securely into the curriculum. Schemes of work in other subject areas do not make full use of the technology to support teaching and learning. Plans are in hand for all teachers to receive training in the use of ICT in lessons as well as to develop their own skills.
223. The school has an adequate number of computers, however they are not used regularly enough to support the curriculum or to develop continuously pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of ICT. Some teachers lack confidence in the reliability of computer hardware and, therefore, do not make as much use of the equipment as they could.

## MUSIC

224. **The school makes good provision for music and the quality of teaching is generally good. As a result, pupils' attainment is above that found nationally. Overall, the quality of provision has improved since the last inspection. Many pupils are developing a love of music and great enthusiasm for the subject.**
225. During the inspection four lessons of music were observed and inspectors joined the pupils during times of collective worship. Overall, standards in music are above those expected nationally for seven year olds and for pupils at the end of Year 3.
226. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. In a whole-school assembly, pupils shared in the enjoyment and were eager to participate. The majority of pupils were able to sing a range of songs from memory. They demonstrated an understanding of tempo and dynamics. The choir performed with confidence and sang sweetly with clear diction, expression and pitch control. Pupils were also able to listen attentively to a piece of music and to identify particular features. This contributed well to the development of speaking and listening skills.
227. The quality of teaching is good overall and reflects the level of expertise of the staff. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher was able to model the standard of performance that was required and to play the guitar as accompaniment. This supported pupils in achieving

good results. Hand signals were used to indicate high and low notes which consolidated pupils' understanding. The teacher had high expectations and reminded pupils of what was required.

228. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher used consistently the correct technical vocabulary and this was reflected in the pupils' ability to use and explain the terms. One pupil was able to recall the word '*ostinato*' and to explain what it meant. Pupils were then invited to pick out appropriate phrases from a story to be used for *ostinato*, which would subsequently be developed into a composition. "*Keen ears, sharp eyes*" and "*What about a tail?*" were popular and appropriate choices.
229. The school offers a well-balanced curriculum which provides good coverage of all elements of music. The provision is further enhanced by extra-curricular opportunities. For example, many pupils choose to become a member of the choir. During the inspection, pupils were observed learning to play the recorder. Others were exploring a range of tuned and untuned instruments. Pupils in Year 1 were selecting instruments to illustrate different weather conditions. They were able to name the instruments and talk about their characteristics. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were learning about the role of people in an orchestra and took it in turns to be the conductor.
230. During the year, pupils work together to prepare for concerts and class assemblies. Pupils gain a sense of pride and achievement, and the performances are valued by the parents. Music makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, participate fully and enjoy success. Music, songs and instruments from other cultures are the focus at different times during the year.
231. The music subject leader works as part of a committed and enthusiastic arts team. The team works effectively to promote creativity within the school. They identify priorities for development and evaluate the success of initiatives. There are no formal systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress or for monitoring the quality of teaching. Staff work closely together and this provides the subject leader with an overview of standards in this subject. This aspect of her role is underdeveloped. The time allocated to the teaching of music has been increased since the last inspection and is now similar to that found in most schools. The subject is well resourced, although ICT is underused as a resource to support teaching and learning. However, in the previous year, the school developed an interesting link with the local university involving a project which gave access to playing instruments on-line.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

232. **Overall, pupils' attainment in physical education is typical of that found nationally by the age of seven. No lessons were observed in Year 3. The school makes satisfactory provision for teaching and learning in the subject. In discussions, pupils in Year 2 expressed their enjoyment and enthusiasm for these activities. This reflects broadly the judgements made at the time of the last inspection.**

233. In the two lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, teaching was at least satisfactory with teachers having good subject knowledge. In both lessons pupils were used to demonstrate quality movement and others were eager to learn. Pupils were managed very well and support staff were used effectively in adding to the quality of teaching and learning. In the good lesson observed, in Year 2, pupils were reminded of the need for control and advice was shared to enhance limb extension by stretching and pointing fingers and toes. Pupils were challenged and responded admirably when commenting on what made movement very good and how they might improve. Pupils linked movements well and were capable of repetition and sustained activity.
234. Teachers' plans indicate a range of activities such as gymnastics, dance, and team games with good planning compensating for the relatively limited size of the indoor accommodation for older pupils in larger classes. At present, a decision has been made that pupils will not be involved in swimming. As a result, the time allocated to the subject has been reduced and is typical of that found nationally. A good range of activities outside the normal school day, including football, adds to the quality of the curriculum. Teachers and pupils make good use of the playgrounds and the school field, and resources are satisfactory for the current age of the pupils.
235. The school is committed to community involvement and takes part in local festivals of dance and sport. Physical education contributes significantly to pupils' personal and social development especially during the seamless integration of pupils from the Language Centre.
236. The subject leader provides effective support for physical education but does not monitor teaching and learning in other classes, although she does monitor planning. Teachers record progress as pupils having exceeded or still to achieve particular skills, but this information is not used consistently to plan the next steps in learning.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

237. **The school makes satisfactory provision for teaching and learning in religious education. Since the last inspection the amount of time allocated to the subject has been increased. Pupils' attainment is in line with that expected by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.**
238. Only one lesson was observed during inspection. Evidence from teachers' planning, pupils' work, and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus, by the end of Year 2 and in Year 3.
239. Pupils have a good grasp of religious traditions and can compare some of their distinctive features, such as the part special foods and fasting play in religion. They can talk thoughtfully about different beliefs, including their own, and they know about festivals such as Divali, the Chinese New Year, Passover, and Christingle. They have a good knowledge of stories from some of the major religions but have only a limited knowledge of some of the vocabulary associated with religions other than Christianity. Year 3 pupils can describe



aspects of the Jewish faith thoughtfully and they understand 'symbolism'. They are developing an understanding of how religion can influence peoples' lives.

240. Pupils generally have a positive attitude to learning about religion. They are happy to discuss ideas and hear about different customs and beliefs. They listen with interest and show consideration for each other's opinions. The school ethos of care and responsibility towards others provides a good foundation for developing discussion. However, opportunities to reflect in depth are sometimes missed.
241. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching complies with statutory requirements and follows the agreed syllabus. In general, the expectations for the quality of pupils' written work are too low. Links with other subject areas are developing through topic work.
242. In Year 2, good links are made through the theme of 'remembrance' between 'memories of Granny', Remembrance Day and work in history about the life of Florence Nightingale. Teachers' marking of work in religious education rarely records comments relating to pupils' knowledge and understanding, or to ways in which work can be improved. A policy document for the subject has been written and the locally agreed syllabus is used as the basis for the teachers' own planning. The subject leader is part of the humanities team and this encourages better links between subjects. At present, there are no whole-school strategies for assessing, monitoring and evaluating pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching and learning in religious education. The school has an appropriate range of resources for teaching the subject.