

INSPECTION REPORT

YEOFORD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Yeoford, Crediton

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113115

Headteacher: Mrs Lynda Dermody

Reporting inspector: Mr Peter Kerr

23583

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th June 2003

Inspection number: 247303

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Yeoford Crediton Devon
Postcode:	EX17 5HZ
Telephone number:	01363 84234
Fax number:	01263 85170
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gillian Shepherd
Date of previous inspection:	13 th October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23583	P Kerr	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Music Physical education Religious education Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
8937	H Allen	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21121	D Houghton	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Geography History Information and communication technology Educational inclusion Provision for pupils with special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a small village school accommodating 30 pupils aged four to 11 taught in two classes. Numbers on roll have declined slowly over recent years. Children start school at the beginning of the term in which they are five, with broadly average attainment. At the time of the inspection, there were two children in reception. There is currently a preponderance of boys in the school. The pupils are predominantly of white British ethnic backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. Most live in or near the village, where socio-economic indicators are above average. Seven per cent of pupils claim free school meals, which is a below average proportion. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is 29 per cent, which is above average. Two pupils (seven per cent) have a statutory statement of special educational needs, which is a well above average proportion. The main areas of need are behavioural and learning. The school participates in the Devon Parents Learning/Children Learning scheme. Two new teachers have been appointed since the last inspection and an unusually high proportion of pupils joined and left the school during the past year. The school's Mission Statement is 'Improving Quality' and it aims include a commitment to enabling pupils to achieve their potential.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education in a secure and caring environment. Teaching is very good in the reception and Years 1 and 2, where pupils achieve well, and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils reach standards broadly typical for their age by the end of Year 6 and achieve satisfactorily overall, though learning slows in Years 5 and 6. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with good support from the governors. Costs per pupil are unavoidably high in such a small school, but all the income is spent wisely on the pupils' education. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in reading are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning in reception and Years 1 and 2 is very good indeed.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the pupils' progress.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good.
- Pupils develop very good relationships with each other and the staff and behave well.
- The school works closely with parents and carers, who support the pupils' learning well.

What could be improved

- Use of assessments and marking to set challenging targets for pupils in all subjects.
- Standards in history and geography and the rate of learning for the older and higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- The quality of presentation of pupils' work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1997. Since then satisfactory improvements have been made. Measures taken to address the key issues have been reasonably successful overall: standards have improved in design and technology and physical education, though achievement in Years 3 to 6 in some aspects of physical education is still too low; standards in ICT have improved considerably with expert support from the secondary school; behaviour management is more effective and success criteria are now a feature of the School

Improvement Plan; the school aims have been improved, but still fall short of a clear commitment to high standards. In addition, many improvements have been made to the site and grounds, the teaching of music is much improved and the quality of provision for the infants has been very significantly enhanced.

STANDARDS

The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 are not published here because too few pupils from the school take the tests for them to have any statistical significance. The results vary significantly from year to year as one or two pupils who are exceptionally able or who have special educational needs skew them significantly. The school meets its targets in the tests, though for similar reasons, these are not very useful indicators of success. Over time, the test results show that standards at the school are improving at about the same rate as they are nationally in English, mathematics and science. Standards in English, including literacy, are broadly average overall at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in mathematics, including numeracy, are above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Standards in science are above average at the end of Year 2. They are average at the end of Year 6 with areas for improvement in experimental skills.

The main strengths in standards and achievements found by the inspection were:

- Standards in reading are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve well in ICT.
- Children achieve well in reception and pupils continue to make rapid progress in Years 1 and 2.

The areas for improvement refer to Years 3 to 6 and they are:

- Although test results are often good at the end of Year 6, not all pupils achieve as well as they should, especially the higher attaining pupils.
- Standards in geography and history are below average.
- The quality of pupils' handwriting is below expectations and the presentation of their work is often untidy.
- Older pupils do not have enough regular and consistent opportunities to develop the full range of skills in physical education.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well relative to their prior attainment because of the good quality support they receive. Pupils with exceptional ability in particular subjects are given opportunities to extend their learning, for example through participating in extra lessons at the secondary school. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily during their time at the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good in reception and infants. Good overall in juniors, but interest and effort wane in Year 5 and Year 6.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Very good in the infant class. Incidents of behaviour restricted to a few older pupils, but this is mischief rather than bullying. There are no exclusions on record.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good throughout the school and older pupils take good care of younger ones. Personal development is very good in the infants, where the pupils become confident independent learners, but junior pupils become too dependent on support and direction from staff.
Attendance	Satisfactory – similar to the national picture.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very Good	Very good	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.

Despite much very good and some excellent teaching in reception and Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall because learning slows in Years 5 and 6 and some pupils therefore do not achieve as well as they could over their time at the school. The quality of teaching of English and mathematics and the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is very good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors.

The main strengths in teaching and learning are:

- Pupils become enthusiastic, independent and resourceful learners in reception and Years 1 and 2 because the teaching is of such consistently high quality.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school enabling pupils to use this key skill well for enjoyment and learning.
- Good marking of pupils' work in English is used to set targets pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants give very good support to special educational needs pupils, who make good progress towards their individual targets.
- Some good quality displays show that pupils' work is valued and motivate them to improve.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have very good relationships with the pupils, enabling lessons to be conducted in a positive atmosphere, and teaching assistants often make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning.

The following areas for improvement relate only to Years 3 to 6:

- Some lessons proceed at a slow pace and work is not always set at the correct level. This contributes to slower learning for older and higher attaining pupils.
- Insufficient attention is paid to the use of discussion, research and investigation as ways of enabling pupils to learn according to their aptitudes and abilities.
- Marking and assessments do not inform pupils where they are or exactly what they need to do to improve. They become too dependent on staff to tell them what to do next.
- Although the experienced teaching assistants are very effective when teaching groups of pupils, their skills are not always fully utilised in lessons.
- Teachers do not set high enough standards for the presentation of pupils' work. As a result, the pupils do not get as much out of some activities as they could.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall with good enrichment through visits. Good in reception, very good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good throughout the school. The pupils' needs are clearly identified and they receive consistently good support, especially from some very skilled and effective teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Good moral code. Some excellent examples of spirituality in the infants, but missed opportunities in other areas of the school's work such as assemblies. Older pupils have limited opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A very caring school. Satisfactory procedures in place, but some need tightening up. Procedures to encourage good behaviour and eliminate bullying are good. Assessment is good in English and ICT, but not in other subjects.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has a Good partnership with parents, who support their children's learning well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher gives a good lead in setting the tone for the school, but the school's aims are still not sharply enough focused on raising standards. All the teachers are key staff and all are fully stretched at present, though not all their work is directed towards the most appropriate objectives.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors fulfil statutory obligations well and have a good grasp of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school analyses test results to compare with other schools, but is not yet fully successful in gaining an accurate picture of individual pupils' achievements or the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The governors do what they can with their limited resources to support the School Improvement Plan and apply sound principles of best value to their spending.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Staffing levels are good, though best use is not always made of the available expertise. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory for physical education, and staff facilities are in a poor state of repair. Adequate resources are available for all subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school is very approachable and keeps them well informed about their children's progress.• The children like school.• Teaching is good and the children are making good progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities provided after school and at lunchtimes.• The behaviour of some pupils at lunchtimes.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views and found that behaviour was good overall and that for the size of the school, a satisfactory range of activities is provided outside of lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The trends in the school's results in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are positive. Standards are generally higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. However, because of the very small numbers of pupils from the school sitting the tests each year, the performance of just one pupil makes a significant difference to the overall results. For similar reasons, the test results cannot be used to compare the performance of boys and girls. The following judgements on standards rely mainly on observations made during the inspection and the school's tracking of individual pupils.

2. Children make good progress during their reception year to reach standards typical for their age by the time they begin Year 1. They achieve particularly well in their personal and social development to become confident, independent learners. Progress is good in all subjects in Years 1 and 2 and pupils achieve well because of the very rich, integrated learning environment. Standards are broadly as expected at this stage except in reading, mathematics and science, where they are above average. Good progress is maintained in most subjects during Years 3 and 4, but learning slows during Year 5 and Year 6 so that pupils achieve satisfactorily to reach standards broadly typical for their age by the end of Year 6 except in reading, where they achieve well to reach above average standards, and in ICT, where all pupils achieve well to reach expected standards because of the good expert support they receive.

3. At the end of Year 2, the pupils' test results and achievements were better in reading than in writing in 2002, but the school's assessments show less difference in performance in 2003. The inspection found that standards in writing have improved and are now nearly as good as in reading in Year 2. Standards in speaking and listening are also good in Years 1 and 2 because of the stimulating environment in which pupils have many opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings and to listen to others. This enables all pupils, including those who begin school with limited language skills to gain confidence and make rapid progress.

4. Although pupils reach standards typical for their age in spoken English by the end of Year 6, their achievements are satisfactory rather than good because they do not have enough opportunities to extend their discussion skills in lessons. Standards in writing have risen since this became a priority area in the School Improvement Plan. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 write confidently and independently, some in joined handwriting. By the end of Year 6, the content of the pupils' writing is typical for their age, with good punctuation and grammar. However, the standard of handwriting and presentation is below expectations. Overall, standards in literacy are average and achievements satisfactory.

5. Pupils achieve well in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 to reach above average standards at the end of Year 2 because of the very rich learning environment and skilful teaching. The pupils have a great deal of confidence with numbers and shapes and a very good vocabulary to describe the mathematical world. Standards in mathematics, including numeracy, are average at the end of Year 6 and achievement satisfactory.

6. Standards in science are above average at the end of Year 2 because of the lively way the subject is taught, with many rich opportunities for the pupils to observe and describe the natural and man-made world around them and to undertake appropriate systematic

investigations. Pupils have above average levels of knowledge overall at the end of Year 6, but have not developed the more advanced experimental skills, resulting in satisfactory achievement.

7. Recent improvements in provision and good quality specialist teaching have raised standards in ICT. Rapid progress has occurred throughout the school and standards are now broadly as expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There are more gaps in the pupils' knowledge in Year 6 because of previous shortcomings in provision, such as in control technology, but there are also strengths, for example in data-handling and the use of the Internet to aid learning. Pupils are now generally using ICT well to support their learning across the curriculum.

8. The pupils in the school with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. This is because the targets are specific and achievable, for example about the words to be learned each term. Pupils and parents are fully aware of these targets and they work hard to achieve them. The pupils receive additional support from dedicated staff and this has a positive impact on their learning and understanding. Those pupils whom the school identifies as able and talented have some opportunities to engage in more challenging work. They are set individual targets, and in some instances in Year 5 and Year 6, given the opportunity to work alongside others from different schools who are equally talented. However, in many lessons in Years 3 to 6, the higher attaining pupils do not achieve well enough because they are not sufficiently stretched. The inspection found that boys and girls achieve equally well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Most pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils get on well with each other, their teachers, learning support assistants and all other adults in the school. Younger pupils in particular, confirm they like school and are happy to talk about what they particularly enjoy doing. All pupils begin lessons wanting to learn and determined to try to do well. The infant pupils respond very well to enthusiastic teaching and are eager to answer questions when asked. They also show consideration for others during lessons. They work well in groups, supporting each other when they find work difficult. All the pupils usually show consideration for others, for example by moving quietly around the school when lessons are in progress and going out quietly for physical education. All pupils are fully included in the life and work of the school. Those with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work and this has a positive effect on their progress.

10. The behaviour of infant pupils is usually very good, not only in the classroom but also outside lessons during lunch and break times. Incidents of poorer behaviour are usually restricted to a few junior pupils and are more likely to occur outside the classroom. However, any poor behaviour takes the form of mischief and does not escalate into bullying. There are a few pupils with particularly challenging behaviour, particularly in Years 3 to 6. However, in discussions with pupils it is obvious most have a clear understanding of right from wrong and pupils are sympathetic towards others who sometimes find it difficult "not to be naughty".

11. Relationships between pupils are generally very good with a particular strength being the way pupils of all ages get on with each other during whole school events such as assemblies, break and lunch times. A particularly noticeable feature is the way older pupils look after younger ones. Parents are very appreciative of this. Relationships between the infant pupils and the adults and older pupils who look after them are excellent.

12. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average for similar types of schools. Pupils generally arrive at school on time and this enables lessons to start promptly.

13. Pupils in the infant class demonstrate maturity beyond their years. They respond well to the opportunities they are given to work independently. During the inspection, for example, they worked happily in pairs without supervision, giving and writing down instructions on how to get to various locations in the classroom. They then confidently talked about what they had done when the class came together at the end of the lesson.

14. Many junior pupils currently have difficulty when asked to work independently and to work things out for themselves. They are too dependent on support from the staff to make progress in their learning and many lack the confidence to take on responsibility for their own learning. They are also often unable to sustain concentration because of a lack of interest in the work they are given, which it is either too difficult or too easy for them. Maintaining the interest and enthusiasm of these pupils is a major challenge for the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is much very good and some excellent teaching in the infant class. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when no very good or excellent lessons were seen and just one third of teaching was good or better. At this inspection, teaching was good or better in over sixty per cent of the lessons seen and very good or excellent in 40 per cent of lessons. However, this overall figure masks a big difference in the quality of teaching between the infant and junior classes. Teaching was good or better in all of the nine lessons seen in the infants and very good or excellent in seven of them, whereas only three of the ten lessons seen in the juniors were of good or better quality and none were very good or excellent. There was also a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 to 6. The main impact of the relatively pedestrian teaching in Years 3 to 6 is to lower the motivation and limit the achievement of the older and potentially higher attaining pupils in the school.

16. The high quality of teaching for the youngest pupils is characterised by very good teamwork that includes joint planning between the teacher and classroom assistant. This enables the reception children to learn through purposeful play for much of their time in the classroom while at the same time benefiting from the lively and stimulating whole class activities and discussions that frequently occur. As a result, they make very good progress, especially in their personal and social development, language and communication skills and knowledge and understanding of the world. They become confident independent and enthusiastic learners.

17. This very good rate of learning is sustained throughout Years 1 and 2 by lively, well-informed and sometimes inspirational teaching. The teacher has provided a colourful, rich and varied environment within the classroom and its immediate surroundings through attractive, thought-provoking displays and well-organised resources and materials. The pupils learn well because they are happy, motivated and challenged. Whole class discussions make them think and continually introduce new ideas and vocabulary. They respond with a lively interest, a willingness to express their ideas and sustained effort to complete any tasks they are given. The teacher is especially skilled at listening carefully to what the pupils say in response to her questions and to the experiences she provides and using these responses to build on the pupils' learning. Very good use is also made of the school site at this stage, particularly for the study of the natural world.

18. Good learning is maintained through much of Year 3 and Year 4, but the pupils' rate of progress slows in Year 5 and Year 6 because lessons do not cater well enough for their needs. There are good examples of lessons that involve the whole junior class in purposeful learning, but for much of the time this difficult objective is not quite achieved. There is a tendency for teachers to lead the whole class in discussion for too long when the subject material is appropriate for only a proportion of the pupils. For example, in preparatory discussions for a science experiment, this strategy limited the scope that the older pupils had to develop more advanced experimental skills. In some lessons, teaching assistants are used well to teach a group of pupils at one level while the teacher teaches another group at a different level. For example, good learning occurred in a mathematics lesson when a teaching assistant used a marked metre stick to visually re-enforce the three times table with a group of lower attaining pupils while the teacher talked through problem-solving strategies with another group. This is not a consistent feature of provision, however, and on some occasions, best use is not made of the available adult support.

19. The school's strategy for teaching literacy skills is good overall. English is taught very well in the infant class and satisfactorily in the juniors. Reading is taught well throughout the school. The pupils learn well and become confident readers, using their skills to read for pleasure and to gain access to information to support their learning in other subjects. Speaking, listening and writing skills are taught very well in the infants and satisfactorily in the juniors. In the infant class, pupils have many opportunities to engage in thoughtful, stimulating discussions that are skilfully guided by the teacher. Such opportunities are rare in the juniors, where the pupils are too often led towards expected outcomes by the teachers and do not have enough opportunities to explore and extend their own utterances. The teaching of writing is very effective in the infants, where it emerges from the many activities, including role-play, that are provided. The teacher keeps meticulous records and ensures that the pupils learn the basic skills systematically. In the juniors, good planning and marking ensures good learning in grammar, spelling and punctuation, and good content in the writing, but expectations for handwriting are too low and some work is spoiled by poor presentation. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not make best use of other subjects to improve pupils' writing – for example by expecting fuller written explanations of experiments in science or studies in history and geography.

20. The school's strategy for teaching numeracy skills is satisfactory. Mathematics is taught well in the infant class, where it is integrated into the pupils' everyday learning experiences. They develop enquiring minds and are encouraged to express and explore their own ideas as well as to learn the basic number skills systematically. In Years 3 to 6, although the basic facts and skills in number, shape and measure are taught in a systematic way, the pupils do not apply their developing knowledge and understanding enough to solving more complex problems and exploring shape and number patterns. They become too reliant on the teacher's explanations and too reluctant to try things out for themselves. This reflects the general trend in lessons for teachers to teach the whole class or group towards an expected outcome rather than tailor their planning and input to the varying needs of the individuals in their groups and encourage individual and small group investigations and research. Sometimes the pupils raise interesting and relevant questions which are not followed up because they are not on the lesson plan. Marking in mathematics does not identify what it is the pupils have learned and what they need to do next, and does not offer interesting suggestions for further exploration.

21. Marking is generally not used effectively in subjects other than English to acknowledge what has been achieved and point the way forward in Years 3 to 6. Expectations for presentation are also too low for the older pupils, who are not asked to fully label and explain their graphs and charts in science or geography, for example, and to write

down clearly what it is they have learned from a particular exercise. This limits the usefulness of their work as a basis for revision or for raising new questions.

22. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional support both in class and in small groups, enabling them to make good progress. Teaching assistants are fully aware of the contents of the pupils' individual educational programmes and have received training in how to use them in class. Pupils on the able and talented register in Years 3 to 6 receive some extra tuition, for example by joining mathematics sessions at the secondary school on occasions, but are often not given tasks that are challenging enough at other times.

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

23. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced and relevant to pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs. The literacy and numeracy strategies are well embedded and are having a positive impact on teaching and learning, especially the literacy strategy. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy through other subjects.

24. The quality and range of opportunities provided by the school is good for reception children, very good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In Years 5 and 6 particularly, work is not always matched well enough to pupils' levels of attainment especially and this often results in a lack of challenge for these pupils, who then lose interest in their work. This hinders their progress in achieving the more advanced learning skills, for example being more aware of the impact of different historical periods on today's world. The school provides a satisfactory programme for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, including sex education and it values the contributions from other professionals such as the school nurse. Although education about the misuse of drugs is covered, the dangers are under-emphasised. There is a good programme of annual events to raise pupils' awareness of the world around them for example raising funds for people who are less fortunate than themselves. Year 6 life skills training also helps prepare the pupils in a practical way for their secondary education and adult life.

25. Effective long term planning ensures satisfactory coverage of all curriculum subjects and topics are planned in such a way that they are not repeated. Subjects such as geography and history are sensibly taught in blocks over a period of several weeks to lend coherence to the topics being covered. The school makes good use of teachers' individual talents such as in music where one teacher takes lessons in both classes, and physical education, where the teacher with most experience teaches the full age range for gymnastics. The provision for ICT has improved tremendously since the last inspection and there are now planned opportunities to use computer programs to support learning in other subjects such as science, art and design and history.

26. The school places appropriate importance on equality of opportunity. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Teachers and support staff are fully aware of pupils' individual needs and plan carefully to ensure that there are opportunities for all to achieve success not only in literacy and numeracy but also in their personal and social development. Pupils who are identified by the school as being able and talented, for example in literacy and mathematics, are provided with some work which challenges them at the appropriate level, though many lessons do not consistently meet their needs. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum including those who are withdrawn for additional support.

27. There are good links with other schools. Teachers from the secondary school provide some specialist help, for example in teaching ICT, and this has the additional bonus of helping pupils prepare for their secondary education. Links with the local playgroup are good. The school also makes good use of other community facilities such as the sports hall and swimming pool in nearby Crediton to make up for its own lack of facilities. Visits, such as those to Exeter Cathedral and to other places of local interest, provide good support to the curriculum, giving pupils appropriate first hand experiences. Residential visits further enhance the pupils' social development. Visitors, including the local vicar, a sculptress and a musician, bring a welcome added dimension to pupils' learning.

28. The school does not provide any extra-curricular activities because they would compete with the independently run 'after school club' on the site. Parents accept that, with such a small staff, the current arrangements represent a reasonable compromise, although pupils have to pay to use the club.

29. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Provision for moral development is good throughout the school. With clear expectations for behaviour and how people should treat one another. Pupils therefore clearly know right from wrong. They respect the school's rules because the reasons for them are fully explained. Provision for spiritual development in the infant class is exceptional. The pupils experience many uplifting moments in which they are guided towards a real appreciation of the wonders of the natural and man-made world. Exclamations of wonder were observed in response to very thoughtful teaching during the inspection, for example when the roots of plants were revealed, showing how they grew differently in different situations or when the computer robot executed a series of turns that the pupils had programmed in. No such moments were observed in the juniors and opportunities were missed to bring such a sense of reverence for life to whole school assemblies. The pupils' social development is catered for very well in the infants, where they become very confident and independent. This momentum is not maintained throughout the juniors, although the recently introduced school council has added a useful dimension to the pupils' awareness of citizenship. The school makes pupils aware of broader cultural influences on their life through introducing a variety of art and design and music to them, but does no more than the minimum expected to enhance their appreciation of life in a multicultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. There are effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and the school's provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety are all satisfactory. This represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

31. The school provides a caring ethos in which all teachers and learning support assistants make it their business to ensure that pupils feel secure. The mid-day and Yeo Yo (after school club) supervisors are well liked by pupils, who feel valued, resulting in a pleasant family atmosphere. All pupils are confident they can approach any adult in the school if they are worried about anything. Child Protection procedures are secure. All staff have a clear understanding of the need to report any concerns about pupils' welfare to the head teacher. Inter-agency relationships are good. The school is able to call on fellow professionals to help support pupils with special educational needs, or in the case of the school nurse, to work alongside teaching staff to help deliver parts of the personal, social, health and citizenship education and science curriculum. The school has sound procedures in place to ensure that pupils do not gain access to unsuitable Internet sites.

32. The age and layout of the school buildings and its grounds give rise to some hazards that could cause injury to pupils and staff. One of the governors has taken the initiative to undertake a risk assessment and as a result measures have eventually been taken by the local education authority to eliminate or reduce some of these risks. However, health and safety audits and risk assessments by an appropriately trained person are not a regular feature of provision. The school has rightly recognised the need to increase the number of staff trained in First Aid.

33. Positive behaviour is encouraged and acknowledged in assemblies where pupils can receive achievement certificates and strive to earn a merit cup. Expectations about behaviour are reinforced by class rules that are discussed and agreed by pupils. These measures have enabled the school to solve the problems with behaviour identified at the last inspection.

34. Activities such as *circle time* supplemented by other lessons, including personal, social, health and citizenship education, and whole school events such as assemblies, help promote pupils' personal development. The recent introduction of a school council, with representatives from each year group, enables pupils to become more involved in the running of their school. Snack Time is used very effectively in Years 1 and 2 to encourage pupils to become more independent as well as building confidence by giving pupils the opportunity to share their interests with their classmates. The infant teacher and learning support assistant are good role models and consistently demonstrate to pupils that they have high expectations of them and expect them to do well. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem is constantly boosted in this class by the opportunities for independent work that are planned into lessons for even the youngest pupils. For example, two reception pupils who were deliberately left alone to complete a painting task did so very responsibly and were able to articulate to an inspector how well they enjoyed doing it.

35. Junior pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their own initiative to resolve problems. Given the good relationships that already exist across the school, older pupils could be encouraged to do much more to support and look out for others. The school does not set individual targets for pupils to ensure regular progress is made in promoting their personal development. In a few cases such targets would need to reflect the small steps some pupils can be expected to make.

36. The school is fortunate that most pupils are eager to come to school. However, the school could do more to promote good attendance by celebrating the good attendance of many of the pupils.

37. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance are satisfactory overall. Assessment procedures in English are good, and provide a clear exemplar for use in other subjects. The school makes effective use of various tests both to monitor pupils' progress in English and to set targets, which are shared with pupils and parents. However, these are not yet linked to the National Curriculum levels of attainment and it is unclear both to teachers and pupils what they have to do to reach the next level. Pupils are fully involved in assessing their own work in English on a day to day basis, for example through the use of checklists for different styles of writing, and then agreeing personal targets with their teacher. Individual progress books contain illustrative samples of pupils' work which clearly show the development of pupils' skills. As in English, the school uses end of year tests in mathematics and science. However, these are not yet analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning or to plan further work. Consequently pupils again are not clear on what the next step is. This results in progress being erratic especially in Years 5 and 6. Assessment in other subjects, except in ICT, is in its infancy and is not used effectively to plan work. In ICT, there are good record sheets which clearly indicate what has to be done to achieve each level. This is just beginning in art and design and music where the school is using the level

descriptors from the National Curriculum to monitor pupils' progress but has not yet been extended to include other subjects. Consequently, pupils are not aware of where they are in these subjects and are not sufficiently motivated to reach the higher levels of attainment. Marking in English is good and informative but in other subjects it is merely ticks and crosses to confirm whether or not pupils have completed a set task correctly and is therefore of little value in supporting their learning.

38. At all stages, pupils with special educational needs are monitored closely and their individual education plans are regularly updated. All staff know these pupils well and provide appropriate support both in and outside the classroom, for example to those with behavioural or emotional difficulties. Teaching assistants monitor the work and personal development of these pupils alongside the teachers and this makes a valuable contribution to their learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The school has an effective partnership with parents, who view the school positively. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

40. Parents confirm that they are happy that the school works closely with them and they are comfortable in approaching the school with any problems. Because most parents live nearby they have the opportunity to speak to teachers on a regular basis. In addition the school organises parents meetings each term that are well attended and where academic targets can be discussed. Parents understand that they can arrange to meet a member of staff if they have any particular concern.

41. The information the school provides for parents is generally of good quality. Parents are very happy overall with the information they receive. They feel very much included. The school prospectus and the governors' report to parents comply with statutory requirements and provide useful information about the routines of the school. Newsletters are sent home on a weekly basis, including information for parents on topics their children will be covering at the beginning of each term. The annual reports on pupils' progress are of very good quality and are valued by parents. They describe what children can do and in most cases give some indication about the progress their children have made, particularly in English, mathematics and science where attainment and effort is scored. They do not include targets, however, either for personal development or for educational achievement.

42. The school tries hard to provide opportunities for parents to be involved in the running of the school and to attend school functions. Parents are consulted on some aspects of school life. For example, they were recently asked for their views on the Yeo Yo's provision and were invited to participate in a recent review of the school's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. Parents value the opportunity to send their children to a village school and are very concerned about its future viability. They would like to see more done to encourage other local parents to send their children to the school. Despite the small size of the school there is an active parent teachers' association that organises social events.

43. A few parents help in the classroom with such activities as listening to children read. Parents have the opportunity of attending a number of topical Parents Learning/Children Learning courses with a "Using the Internet" course being the latest. These opportunities enable parents to contribute to their children's learning both at school and at home.

44. Parents whose children have special educational needs are kept fully informed. They are involved in setting targets in individual education plans and in the regular reviews. In all individual education plans there is a section which informs parents how they can help their child. The homework that these pupils are set is effectively linked to the targets in the

individual education plans. Parents of children who have been identified as gifted and talented are kept fully informed of the additional provision that the school is providing and are encouraged to help their children at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher gives a good lead in ensuring that the school provides a caring ethos, and has worked closely with the governors since the last inspection to improve the building, site and curricular provision. These improvements have had many positive effects on learning. For example, the equipment and support provided for ICT have brought much improved teaching and learning in this subject and raised standards significantly, and arrangements for the use of the Leisure Centre have improved facilities for physical education. The school has also worked very hard to meet the targets set for it by the local education authority in the Year 6 national tests.

46. The school was criticised in the last inspection report for not having a commitment to high standards in its aims. Such a commitment is implicit in the school's current Mission Statement: 'Improving Quality', but is not given explicitly as the main objective for the improvements in provision. This contributes to a lack of clarity on how the school is to raise standards and levels of achievement, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where important factors contributing to a slowing down of learning at this stage have not been identified.

47. The headteacher delegates a sufficient range of responsibilities to the other teachers, both of whom have a very full workload. The full-time teacher fulfils all her current responsibilities very well and has contributed significantly to improving provision and raising standards in reception and Years 1 and 2. The part-time teacher shares the management burden as much as she can with so little time at the school, for example by managing the core subject of mathematics as well as taking responsibility for music throughout the school. Parents appreciate the positive impact that these two members of staff have had on the transformation in the infants and the improved teaching of music. Leadership and management is good in English and ICT, where it has contributed significantly to raising standards, and satisfactory in other subjects.

48. The governors fulfil their statutory duties well, including ensuring that the school offers equal opportunities to all its pupils, and give very good support to the school. They take initiatives on occasions, for example in pressing the local education authority to take the measures that they deem necessary to address health and safety issues that they have identified. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and play a satisfactory role in shaping its direction. The School Improvement Plan is sound, and gives a clear picture of the areas the school is trying to improve. The governors ensure that budget spending is closely linked to the Plan. Their role in evaluating the effectiveness of the Plan is hindered to some extent, however, by a lack of focus for their visits to the school, which are rather general and not explicitly linked to specific improvement objectives.

49. The school is assiduous in comparing its performance with that of other schools in order to ensure that it is achieving best value. However, these comparisons are based mainly on an analysis of the school's results in the national test results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Given that the numbers of pupils taking the tests each year render the results statistically unreliable, the time and energy spent analysing them is of limited value. In comparison, other important considerations, such as how to assess and track pupils' progress in key skills in each subject and ensure that the work they are given is challenging enough throughout Years 3 to 6, receive insufficient attention.

50. The school office is run very efficiently by the school secretary, enabling the headteacher to concentrate on educational matters. She has received appropriate training to keep up to date with the local education authority's latest financial management systems and makes sound use of ICT to streamline procedures. The governors are provided with full financial information for their meetings by the local education authority. All the money that the school receives for specific purposes, such as special educational needs, is used appropriately.

51. The school policy for pupils with special educational needs has been updated appropriately to take account of the recommendations in the revised Code of Practice. The co-ordinator has a good system for the identification and review of the needs of these pupils, maintaining the good provision and procedures reported by the previous inspection. A policy is also in place to identify and support exceptionally able or talented pupils and the governors have fulfilled their statutory obligation to adopt a racial equality policy.

52. Staffing levels are good and teachers and teaching assistants work together well as a team. Support is not full time in the infant class, however, leaving the teacher to cater on her own for two key stages for some of the time. There are sufficient resources to support learning in all subjects. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, though the lack of a school hall limits the provision for physical education, especially in Years 3 to 6. Some areas of the staff facilities are in a poor state of repair, which does not send a very positive signal about how they are valued.

53. The school consults parents about spending priorities and the recently instituted school council has brought the pupils into the process of planning school improvement. The governors do their best to ensure that good quality goods and services are obtained at a competitive price. Taking into account the need to spend more money per child in a small school, the overall quality of educational provision and the standards achieved, school gives sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to raise levels of achievement overall, and raise standards in history and geography, the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) Improve assessment procedures and marking so that in all subjects, teachers, pupils and parents know how well the pupils are doing and what needs to be done next.
(Paragraphs: 14, 20, 21, 24, 26, 37, 41, 49, 67, 71, 73, 76, 77, 79, 80, 84, 91)
- (2) Extend the range of teaching methods used in Years 3 to 6 to encourage a greater variety of learning styles including individual and small group investigation, research and problem solving so that pupils maintain the momentum towards independent learning established in Years 1 and 2.
(Paragraphs: 4, 6, 8, 14, 15, 18, 22, 24, 27, 35, 46, 63, 66, 71, 78, 82, 83, 91)
- (3) Improve the quality of presentation of pupils' work so that it contributes more to clarifying their thinking and improving their writing and is of more use in revising and raising questions to stimulate further learning.
(Paragraphs: 4, 19, 21, 65, 70, 71, 81)

In addition to the above key issues, the governors should consider the following for inclusion in their action plan:

- Placing more emphasis on the dangers of drugs in the teaching of personal, social, health and citizenship education.
(Paragraph: 24)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	6	5	5	1	0	0
Percentage	11	32	26	26	5	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 five percentage points

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Where the number of pupils in the year group are ten or fewer the results are not published

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

Where the number of pupils in the year group are ten or fewer the results are not published

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	26	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	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
No ethnic group recorded	3	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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.8
Average class size	15

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	43

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
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	£
Total income	152 361
Total expenditure	152 186
Expenditure per pupil	4 761
Balance brought forward from previous year	(741)
Balance carried forward to next year	175

Figures in parentheses indicate negative values

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.3

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

30

Number of questionnaires returned

13

Percentage of responses in each category

One respondent equals

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	46	0	0	8
My child is making good progress in school.	39	62	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	69	0	8	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	69	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	46	54	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	39	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	31	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	62	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	62	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	23	62	8	8	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	62	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	39	46	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

At the meeting, some parents expressed their disappointment that some families in the village sent their children to other schools in the area when this is a perfectly good one and would like to see more done to remedy this situation in order to keep the school viable.

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

55. Children join the reception class during the term in which they become five and then move into Year 1 at the end of the reception year. At the time of the inspection, only two children were of reception age and were being taught in the infant classroom alongside Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. They had been in reception one and two terms respectively. The provision for these children is of good quality. The class teacher is very skilled at including them in discussions and presentations alongside the other children to stimulate their interest and include them socially, while at the same time ensuring that they spend a good part of the day engaged in learning through carefully planned purposeful play activities. Inevitably, because there are so few of them, opportunities for such play are not as rich and varied as they could be in a larger group. The experienced teaching assistant, though not available full time to do so, gives very good support. The children have a spread of attainment on entry to reception. Some are quite articulate and confident, while others are relatively immature and reluctant to speak. Overall, their attainment is average. The children make very good progress in all the six areas of learning outlined below, to achieve all the expected standards for their age before they begin Year 1 of the National Curriculum, for which they are extremely well prepared. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, with many excellent and some outstanding features. The classroom is a very attractive and stimulating environment, in which the children feel secure and happy and which reflects the great variety and richness of the learning that has taken place. The teacher keeps meticulous records of the children's progress and continually adjusts her teaching to suit the children's developing needs. The judgements on attainment and achievement at this stage depend partly on the evidence of how well the Year 1 pupils are doing, as two children is too small a sample to generalise from. A very effective feature of the provision is the way children effortlessly progress from the reception to Year 1 when they are ready because of the systematic and challenging but clear and enjoyable route that the teacher provides for them to follow.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. Many aspects of provision in this area of learning are excellent. The teacher very skilfully tailors the support given and expectations placed upon each individual child to suit their level of maturity and emerging social and emotional needs, which are very varied. The children are generally included in all the class routines and discussions, enabling them to establish friendships and learn to accommodate other people's likes, dislikes and needs. The classroom is extremely well organised so that the children know exactly what is expected of them throughout the day. They quickly become independent, learning to take out and put away equipment that they want to use, and working at tasks unsupervised when required. During the inspection, the two children were observed on a number of occasions playing and working independently of the teacher, co-operating with each other from time to time. Their level of maturity and confidence is impressive considering their age. Snack times make a very valuable contribution to many aspects of the children's personal development as they share food and conversation with their friends and the staff. Formal lessons in personal and social education, such as discussions and role play about the dangers of talking with and accepting gifts from strangers are also used very well to engage the children at the right level in learning about how to live safely in the wider world. The outdoor area is used well to give the children the experience of sharing a range of toys and equipment with their friends. Overall, the children develop a very good sense of belonging to a thriving and happy community and become independent and enthusiastic learners.

Communication, language and literacy

57. The children make very good progress in this area of learning because of the language rich environment in which they learn. Their initial attainment in this area is very varied. Some are confident speakers from an early stage, while others take a long time to begin engaging in conversation. The teacher and teaching assistant are skilled at getting the children to talk as they play, engaging in role-play with them, asking them about what they are doing and judging when the time is ripe to give some extra challenge. In whole class discussions, the teacher skilfully directs simple questions at the reception children to draw them into the conversation in a non-threatening and supportive manner. The children therefore gradually extend their communication skills in a relaxed way, making optimum progress towards the expected standards. By joining in with the whole class they learn familiar stories and poems and begin to recognise and enjoy features of language such as rhyming words. The children made very good progress in learning a simple rhyme about 'Fuzzy Bear' during the inspection because of high expectations and friendly coaxing from the teaching assistant. The Year 1 pupils' progress shows that those children who are capable of it exceed the goals before the end of reception. They become familiar with and enjoy books, 'reading' through pictures initially then gradually recognising and reading more words and sentences. They make rapid progress in writing because of the unhurried yet closely structured way in which they are introduced to it, through lots of role-play situations in which 'pretend' writing is a natural means of communication. The teacher's excellent records trace the development of their skills, from making very primitive marks on paper to writing words and simple sentences in a rapidly improving style. By the time they begin Year 1, they listen, speak, read and write purposefully to communicate effectively and as a means of extending and enriching their learning in all subjects.

Mathematical development

58. The children make rapid progress in this area of learning to reach or exceed the expected standards by the end of reception. They learn to recognise and follow patterns, for example repeating shapes on an embroidered cushion, and gradually learn the names of the geometric shapes that are represented in the world around them. The classroom is rich in illustrations of these, and they have many games which lead them into sorting shapes and recognising similarities and differences between them. The children benefit from their participation in whole class sessions, as when they watched the shapes that emerged as they took turns to unfold and refold corners of a tablecloth, revealing rectangles, pentagons and hexagons in different perspectives. The teacher and teaching assistant keep a close record of the children's responses so that they can bring their learning on when the opportunity arises. For example, when looking at the patterns on a cushion and trying to make similar ones using plastic shapes, one of the children decided to introduce colour as well as shape, and was encouraged to do so and explain what the pattern was. The teacher introduces numbers in a wide variety of enjoyable settings, which makes learning fun for the children and enables them to gain a lot of confidence in applying their mathematical knowledge. For example, as part of a lesson on programming a floor robot to go forwards a set number of times, the teacher set out a series of 'towers' to be knocked down. The children estimated how many moves it would take, programmed the robot, enjoyed the success if it hit and re-adjusted their estimate if it didn't. The children were able, for example, to say 'it needs six' when five was just not far enough. By the time they begin Year 1, the children have a very good vocabulary to describe the world around them in mathematical terms, such as more, less bigger, not enough. They know their numbers at least to 10 and have an understanding of the basic concepts of adding and subtracting.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. The children's progress in this area of learning is exceptional. The wonderfully rich environment created by the teacher in the classroom enables them to use their emerging language and thinking skills to learn about all aspects of their immediate surroundings and the wider world at a very rapid rate. All of their learning is inter-related, so that they use knowledge and skills from one area to help them in another. For example, in their work on leaves, they made a 'map' of the school grounds to show where they had found the various leaves; they sorted them according to criteria they had discussed, including their length, and represented their 'classification' using a mathematical 'Carroll' diagram. They drew and painted illustrations and used the leaves to print, and found pictures of the relevant trees in books. Such wonderfully interwoven learning is the hallmark of the excellent provision in this class. During the inspection, the children were examining leaves using a magnifying glass. Their drawings were very mature for their age, showing considerable detail, such as the gradual change of colour in the stem. They were highly motivated in the task because the leaves belonged to a shoot from a sprouted acorn that they had found outside the classroom. The children talk about things that have happened to them in the past, and differentiate between old and new things. They have a very good awareness of their locality because of the excitement that the teacher generates in new discoveries and the rich and varied ways in which their observations are presented in the classroom. Because the teacher creates so many opportunities to refer back to enjoyable and memorable learning, the children's developing knowledge and understanding of the world is very secure. They are in an excellent position to take advantage of the National Curriculum programmes of study in science, design and technology, geography, history and ICT by the end of reception.

Physical development

60. The children make good progress in this area of learning because of the many opportunities they have on a daily basis. They use a wide variety of tools and equipment competently, from paintbrushes and scissors to magnifying lenses, and computer controlled robots. The good range of models that they have made reflect well-developed construction skills with a variety of materials. They showed an above average awareness of the space and people around them and ability to move in time to music during the country-dancing lesson that was observed. The grace and control of movement demonstrated by some of the Year 1 pupils shows that this aspect of their development is very well catered for. The outdoor learning area adjacent to the classroom is used very effectively to give the children the opportunity to develop physical skills with a range of large toys and equipment, including wheeled toys that they can ride on and develop control of. The records of their progress shows that they develop good hand-eye co-ordination and the ability to keep control of a ball and other small objects that they can throw, catch and kick. By the end of reception, they are very well prepared for the National Curriculum in physical education

Creative development

61. Progress is very good in this area, though little work was seen in progress during the inspection. The children achieve well relative to their abilities. This was demonstrated by a prize-winning picture painted by one of the children of the different shades of light she could see from her bedroom window. The artwork on display is very varied and reflects the use of a wide range of stimuli and materials. Role-play and puppets are used very effectively to extend the children's imagination. The children enjoy a wide variety of musical experiences, from singing simple songs and rhymes to exploring how high and low sounds can be made with different instruments. They achieve well to reach standards at least typical for their age in all aspects of this area of learning by the end of reception.

ENGLISH

62. Standards in English are average by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement and their progress are good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. These results are similar to those reported at the last inspection. However, comparisons with previous years and national statistics are totally unreliable because of the small numbers of pupils taking the tests and the impact of the relatively high proportion of either exceptionally able pupils or pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. The 2002 national test results show that in Years 1 and 2 all pupils attained the expected level 2 or above both in reading and writing. However, whilst some pupils exceeded this level in reading none attained the higher levels in writing. In the 2003 tests it is anticipated that a greater percentage of pupils is likely to achieve these higher levels. By the end of Year 6 a significant proportion of pupils attain the higher level 5 but there is a small number who do not reach the expected level 4, giving average of attainment overall. The inspection found that boys and girls achieve equally well in lessons.

63. A number of pupils start school with noticeable language difficulties. However, by the end of Year 2, most are confident when speaking. Very good quality teaching encourages pupils to participate in class discussions, for example in *circle times*. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and answer their teacher's questions sensibly. They readily explain what they are doing, give clear opinions concerning their storybooks and join in with familiar poems. Progress is slower in Years 3 to 6. Whilst most pupils readily discuss their work and openly offer their opinions as to what they like, some find it difficult to explain what they are doing clearly and concisely. However, they listen well enough in lessons. For example, they followed instructions on how to interrogate a computer database accurately and so were generally successful in answering the questions they were asked. The school effectively encourages the development of speaking and listening through an annual whole-school drama week that is thoroughly enjoyed by all. However, there are not enough lessons where pupils, especially those in Years 5 and 6, are encouraged to engage in debate discussions. When these do occur, they are often dominated by a few vociferous pupils.

64. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is above average although there are a few who find reading difficult. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 find reading enjoyable and exciting. The average and higher attaining pupils read fluently. They take notice of punctuation, and as a result are beginning to read with good expression. They are quick to recount what they have read and most are able explain why things happened. One pupil for example, explained that a character in his book mixed his words up because he had banged his head. These skills continue to improve throughout Years 3 to 6, and whilst some pupils lose this initial interest most read aloud clearly and interestingly. They compare the styles of different authors and clearly express their opinions about what they have read. The school very sensibly places strong emphasis on developing word-building skills, especially in the early years. This is reflected in high standards in this aspect of reading. Lower attaining pupils confidently attempt to build up words, using letter sounds, and are not put off when they make mistakes. All pupils have a good knowledge of the layout of a non-fiction book and all except the very youngest can successfully find a book in the library using the school's numbered classification system.

65. As at the last inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 write confidently and independently. The school has selected writing as an area for development and the impact of this is now being reflected in the pupils' work. They make good progress from their initial writing of very simple sentences in Year 1 to writing coherent stories by the end of Year 2. They write good, well sequenced recounts of traditional tales such as 'Snow White and the Lion!!' using a wide range of punctuation, such as full stops and question marks, accurately. The older Year 2 pupils use cursive script, which is reasonably legible, and their spelling is good, with the more

complex words being either correctly spelt or at least phonically plausible. The lower attaining pupils write carefully. Although they often spell simple words incorrectly, their attempts are still recognisable. All pupils use words effectively to write interesting stories that are a pleasure to read. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to write for a range of purposes for example, taking notes in order to recount stories more concisely. By the end of Year 6, the average and higher attaining pupils use a range of punctuation correctly including speech marks, apostrophes and exclamation marks. Pupils use adjectives and adverbs for impact in their stories. For example in one story a pupil wrote '...the rusty pickup...' when trying to create an atmosphere. The oldest higher attaining pupils readily discuss the impact of long and short sentences and the use of connecting words to create moods in their writing. Lower attaining pupils are still at the early stages in writing. Their progress has been slow, but their achievements are satisfactory considering their starting points. Standards of handwriting in Years 3 to 6 are not satisfactory. Work is often untidy and interesting stories spoiled by poor presentation.

66. The quality of teaching in English is very good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. The literacy strategy is having a positive impact on lessons, which have a good balance between a clear focus on grammar and the use of listening, speaking, reading and writing to gain and convey information and ideas. The very good lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 were lively and challenging. As a consequence, the pupils are enthusiastic and excited by language. Slower learning occurs in Years 3 to 6. On occasions, the pace of lessons drops because pupils are not challenged at the correct level and the lesson objectives are not fully realised. The experienced teaching assistant makes a good contribution to managing and teaching the class on occasions, but is not always deployed effectively enough. Pupils of all ages are now using word processing programs effectively to edit some of their work. Pupils' responses to English are good, and this has a positive effect on their learning, especially in reading. The enthusiastic and well informed co-ordinator is well aware of the need to improve standards in writing and is providing good guidance in using different strategies in order to achieve this aim. However, she has not yet had the opportunity to work alongside colleagues in order to share her expertise. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and well trained assistants use specific programmes of work to teach these pupils effectively in small groups. Specific targets noted in their individual education plans ensure that their work is matched to their individual needs.

67. Assessment procedures, including regular testing, are good, and this is contributing to the rising trend in standards. Teachers track pupils' progress carefully and set individual personal targets, for example to improve handwriting. However, these are not specific enough. Consequently pupils and their parents are not clear of the current level of their work or what they have to do to achieve the next level. The quality of marking is good and is a contributory factor to the rising standards. It very clearly explains to pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do next.

MATHEMATICS

68. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. The school's results in the national tests vary wildly from year to year because of the very small numbers of pupils involved, and cannot be used reliably to compare the school's performance with that of other schools. The Year 2 results in 2002 were much better than in 2001, and much better than in reading and writing, reflecting some advice and support given by a numeracy consultant. The provisional results for 2003 show an equally good performance. In the Year 6 tests, the results were very good in 2002 but the results in 2003 are expected to be broadly average. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection with the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy.

69. The inspection found that pupils achieve very well in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 to reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. The work in their books shows that they learn in a wide variety ways, including investigations, and present their results in a very mature form. For example, they construct pictograms and graphs and ask sensible questions about them, such as 'which colour is the most popular?' Much of the work in their folders is at the higher Level 3, reflecting the provisional test results. For example, they round numbers up or down to the nearest ten and use a range of metric units of measurement, including litres. They apply their mathematical knowledge confidently in practical situations, for example shopping. During the inspection, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils demonstrated an above average knowledge and understanding of shapes. They were able to name pentagons and hexagons and decide that it did not matter if the sides were not the same length – they would still be pentagons and hexagons.

70. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have covered all the required ground to achieve the expected standard in numeracy, shape and measure and handling data. They construct various graphs to show data and ask questions about it. Their questions lack sophistication however. In their books, the graphs are often not labelled and little is said about them. The presentation of their work is often poor, making it difficult to work out what the problem was they were working on and how they arrived at their answers. However, they are very confident with numbers in discussion, reflecting the school's successful emphasis on the basic skills of numeracy. They have a good understanding of place value and the connections between fractions, decimals and percentages. They are not so good at applying their knowledge to new situations, however. For example, they have difficulty using their knowledge of equivalent fractions to problems involving adding fractions. The pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, but the higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

71. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The overall impact of the teaching is satisfactory rather than good because of the importance of sustaining good progress to the end of Year 6. Pupils make very rapid progress in Year 1 and Year 2 because sustained, lively, well organised teaching provides a wide range of interesting practical experiences for the pupils to learn from. The pupils sustain reasonably good progress in Year 3 and Year 4, but the pace of their learning slows in Year 5 and Year 6. Lessons are planned very thoroughly and attempts made to provide different levels of challenge for the different age and ability groups within the class. Some lessons are not as effective as they could be, however, because the teacher directs too much of the available time and energy towards delivering the planned content rather than taking into account what the pupils already know and understand. As a result, the pupils lose interest and make insufficient effort. The marking of pupils' work is not used effectively to gauge the extent of their understanding and to challenge them to further effort. It is usually just ticks or crosses, with no expectations made clear about presentation. As a result, the pupils take too little care over setting out their work and do not learn to apply their skills to new and more demanding problems. The teaching methods chosen are not always suitable. For example, the teacher sometimes talks through problems with a group of very mixed ability pupils rather than enabling them to work through problems at their own level and supporting them on an individual or small group basis. In whole class sessions, insufficient opportunities are provided for the pupils to fully talk through their own methods of solving problems, with too much input from the teacher on occasions. There are too few opportunities for pupils to engage in individual or small group activities that challenge them to draw on a wide range of mathematical knowledge and understanding to solve problems or investigate patterns in shapes and numbers.

72. Good support is provided for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The teaching assistant is very effective at direct teaching of mathematics. For example, good use was made in one lesson of a graduated stick to focus pupils attention on

the three times table, getting them to count forwards and backwards using the stick as a visual aid. The children concentrated well in this lesson and made great efforts to remember the correct numbers. The teachers and teaching assistant are very sensitive to the pupils' various needs and strive to ensure that no-one is made to feel inadequate or embarrassed when they find work difficult. Pupils with exceptional ability in mathematics receive extra mathematics tuition at the secondary school.

73. The subject co-ordinator has ensures that all the teacher have received substantial training in teaching the National Numeracy Strategy to small, mixed age classes. This is having some beneficial effects, for example the use of a wider range of visual and practical aids. The pupils' results in the various tests are tracked, but this information is not used very effectively in setting challenging targets for individuals and involving them in monitoring their own learning.

SCIENCE

74. The school's test results were very good at the end of Year 6 in 2002. However, as only four pupils took the tests, the results cannot be used to make a fair comparison with other schools. The results look like being good in 2003, though not quite as high. All of the children assessed by the school at the end of Year 2 in 2002 achieved at least the expected Level 2 and some reached the above average Level 3. Overall, sound improvements have been made since the last inspection.

75. The inspection found that present pupils have above average attainment at the end of Year 2 and average attainment at the end of Year 6. These standards reflect very good progress in Years 1 and 2, where pupils achieve well, and satisfactory achievement by the end of Year 6. The pupils' achievements in Year 1 and Year 2 were illustrated very graphically during the inspection when they described in great detail the different parts of a plant and the functions they fulfil. They know that the roots anchor the plant in the ground and provide it with water and that the leaves use sunlight to make food. They observe closely and make very detailed drawings of what they see, such as the way roots tangle when their growth is restricted. Their understanding is very secure because it is based on high quality guided first-hand experience. Pupils continue making good progress in Years 3 and 4, but their rate of learning slows in Years 5 and 6 because lessons become less interesting and challenging for them. The standards they reach are broadly typical for their age, and better than that in some areas of knowledge. For example, they describe a food chain in detail from green plant producers to omnivore consumers, draw diagrams to show how an eye sees a reflection in a mirror and describe the differences between liquids, solids and gases. The higher attaining pupils do not extend their skills and vocabulary sufficiently, however. For example, they predict what will happen to a plant when deprived of light, but do not use scientific language to explain why. They describe in detail the sun's apparent movement through the sky during the course of a day and how this can be tracked by measuring the shadows cast by a fixed object. However, the explanations they give are not always convincing and sometimes confused, reflecting insufficient discussion and research. For example, one pupil wrote that: 'it changes because we change our clocks and the sun would set at different times'. This confusion was not picked up in the teacher's marking and an opportunity therefore missed to improve the pupils' thinking and language skills as well as their scientific understanding.

76. The quality of teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2. The teacher plans many varied and interesting opportunities for the pupils to explore the world through scientific observation and enquiry. The activities that are provided link the pupils' developing science knowledge to many other areas of their learning. Their drawings of seeds and plants, for example enhance their art and design skills, and making a plan of where they found their leaves and classifying them contribute to their geographical and mathematics development. In an excellent lesson,

the teacher held the pupils spellbound waiting to see how the roots of the seeds they had planted earlier in the term had developed. Excellent questioning includes all the pupils, taking full account of their responses and leading them towards a fuller understanding and more accurate vocabulary. As a consequence, the pupils' learning is very enjoyable and stimulating. In Years 3 to 6, where the task of providing interest and challenge across the full age and ability range become more difficult, lessons are less well matched to the pupils' needs. For example, discussions on how to set up an experiment are conducted with the whole class, when the older and higher attaining pupils could benefit from opportunities to discuss and investigate their own ideas in order to develop more advanced experimental skills. The marking of pupils' work is poor. There are few comments in the pupils' books and poorly presented and inaccurate work is accepted. Opportunities are missed to develop the pupils writing skills, for example by explaining clearly and accurately what they have learned from an experiment, and their mathematics skills by clearly labelling and explaining graphs. Despite these shortcomings, lessons do manage to convey the main body of knowledge and the basic skills required for pupils to do well enough overall in the national tests at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons to make good progress.

77. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory given the wide range of other management tasks the co-ordinator has to undertake. Science lessons contribute very positively to the pupils' personal development in the infants, but less effectively so in the juniors because of the lack of opportunities for older pupils to become more independent in their learning. The school acknowledges that a review of the way in which pupils learn science in Years 3 to 6 is due so that manageable systems can be introduced to plan for and track the pupils' progress in the key skills of scientific enquiry to enable them all to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. Pupils use ICT satisfactorily to support their learning, for example by incorporating images and text imported from the Internet to illustrate their work and using an electronic microscope to observe specimens at high magnification.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

78. Standards in art and design and design and technology are typical of those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents an improvement in design and technology in Years 1 and 2 since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained in art and design. Progress overall is satisfactory although the higher attaining pupils especially in Years 5 and 6 are not always challenged enough, and therefore do not achieve the standards of which they are capable. Because of timetabling during the inspection period only one lesson in art and design was seen in Years 1 and 2 and one lesson in design and technology in Years 3 to 6. Judgements are based on wider evidence taken from the work seen and discussions with pupils and teachers.

79. Throughout the school the quality of the work on display in both subjects is good and ensures that pupils feel their work is valued. Pupils use a range of different paints and materials such as powder paint and fabrics. They use information they have gained from other subjects to depict scenes, for example the impressive paintings about the Fire of London for which they won several awards in local competitions. They use sketchbooks effectively to practise and develop observational drawing skills, as seen in representations of natural objects. They have a good grasp of the concept of designing articles before making them, for example 'The hat for a queen'. In design and technology they learn about simple joints such as those used in the teddy bears and the opening doors that they have made. They create three-dimensional objects such as simple sculptures using plaster of Paris and simple wool weaving. Pupils continue to develop a range of skills in Years 3 to 6, where they use pencils of different hardness in their observational drawings. They develop artistic knowledge through looking at the paintings and drawings of European artists such as Klee,

Kandinsky and aboriginal artists. They then paint pictures of their own in a similar style, for example their paintings about journeys. In design and technology, pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn about different joints and use rigid materials when they make huts linked to their other work on shelters. Their designs become more complex and include lists of materials and measurements. The older pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not, however, learn or use the more advanced skills to make moving models such as roundabouts using gears or different cams and they are not encouraged to make detailed scaled drawings.

80. Since the last inspection the range of work in each subject has been extended to ensure that pupils have a satisfactory variety of experiences. The school has sensibly adapted a recognised commercial scheme of work to make lessons relevant to pupils, and planning and teaching these subjects in blocks of lessons ensures pupils to make observable progress over a short period of time. Although no food technology was seen, planning documents indicate that all required aspects are covered and that careful attention is given to health and hygiene. The school provides well for pupils who have special educational needs and for those who are identified as being able and talented in the subjects. Assessment procedures are in their infancy in art and design, where work is now being linked to the national curriculum levels of attainment. The assessment results are not at present shared with the pupils and do not clearly indicate what they must do to achieve the next level. In design and technology, assessment is unsatisfactory overall and is too dependent on teachers' informal knowledge of individual pupils. Consequently progress is erratic, especially in Years 3 to 6 and in particular for the older pupils in Years 5 and 6. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop assessment procedures that clearly indicate the step-by-step development of skills.

81. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the subjects and this is reflected in the work seen and in the limited number of lessons observed. They are delighted with their work and are pleased to explain how they designed and made their models and paintings. There was a wonderful shout of delight from pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, when they saw the patterns that emerged as their teacher took their sculpture out of its mould. Older pupils' workbooks indicate that there is a need to improve presentation and detail. In the lessons, seen the quality of teaching was good. The teacher is aware of the lack of challenge for the older pupils and is taking steps to set more demanding work, for example the drawing of 'exploded' diagrams of the joints and elevations of their models.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

82. Standards in geography and history are typical of those expected at the end of Years 1 and 2 but below those expected at the end of Year 6. This represents a slight decline in history in Years 3 to 6 since the last inspection; no judgement was made on standards in geography. Progress is good in Years 1 and 2, satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6, resulting in unsatisfactory achievement overall.. There were no lessons timetabled to take place in geography and history during the inspection. Judgements are made on the basis of wider evidence of an analysis of pupils' work and through discussions with pupils and teachers.

83. The planning of lessons is sound and ensures that a satisfactory range of topics is taught in both subjects. In both Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6, these subjects are taught through a rolling programme that cover all relevant aspects of the National Curriculum and ensure that topics are not repeated in the mixed age classes. In Years 1 and 2 the geography curriculum includes a study of the local area. Pupils make illustrative local maps and draw conclusions from local traffic surveys. The school has broadened this work to include aspects of other curriculum areas such as citizenship in the 'Passport to the World' topic. There are very good cross-curricular links in history, for example with art and design. In this

work the teacher was able to assess pupils' understanding of the historical facts about the 'Fire of London' through the depictions in their paintings and drawings. In Years 3 to 6 pupils are encouraged to use a range of resources such as books and the Internet to gain factual evidence for example concerning famous people in Tudor times. Older pupils work more independently using a greater range of resources. Although pupils study a satisfactory range of topics the older pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not always challenged sufficiently to draw inferences and implications from historical events and their impact on today's society. In geography pupils in Years 3 and 4 locate places on maps using four figure references. They study topics such as mountains and different climates, but the older pupils do not readily make links, for example between physical geographical facts and the growth of settlements.

84. No direct teaching was observed but evidence from pupils' work indicates that the quality of teaching is at least good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' attitudes to geography and history vary. In Years 1 and 2 they enjoy their work and make good progress. In Years 3 to 6, whilst they have satisfactory attitudes, they do not always appear to find their work interesting or enjoyable. This is mainly because of the lack of challenge for the older pupils. Discussions with pupils indicate that there is insufficient development of the key skills and concepts in both subjects. The work seen indicates that pupils have found the key facts but there is little indication of how they have applied this knowledge. Work is marked but is mainly just ticks and does not indicate how well pupils have done or what they need to do to improve. Assessment is limited especially in Years 3 to 6 and is too dependent on teachers' individual knowledge of pupils. It does not clearly indicate to pupils or teachers what they have to do to achieve the next level in their work, which results in the slower progress in Years 3 to 6, especially in Years 5 and 6 and for the most able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional support and overall make satisfactory progress in these subjects. The school has made a good effort to ensure that pupils are given a broad and balanced education in these subjects and is aware that pupils do not always achieve as well as could be expected in Year 5 and Year 6.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

85. Standards in ICT have improved considerably since the last inspection throughout the school and are now in line with national expectations and continuing to rise. This is because of the improved ratio of computers to pupils and the help provided by an additional specialist teacher from the local secondary school. It is too early to assess the true impact of this improved provision but in the lessons seen pupils are making good progress and achieving well throughout the school.

86. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, the pupils have a sound knowledge of simple computer operations. They use icons on the screen to construct simple pictures, create informative simple graphs from information they have collected and use word processing programs to edit their writing at a basic level. They knowledgeably program a robot to move according to instructions, including commands to repeat the same movement a number of times. This not only develops their computer skills but also enhances their mathematical understanding of angles and turns. Reception children as well as those in Years 1 and 2 use digital cameras as well as tape recorders confidently to record their work and to develop their listening skills.

87. Pupils continue to improve their skills at a good rate in Years 3 to 6 although some skills have to be taught from scratch because the wide use of computers in the school is relatively new. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, they use the Internet naturally as an information resource and begin to learn more complex operations such as *cut and paste* tools when word-processing. As in Years 1 and 2, pupils use computer programs to enhance their work in other subjects. For example, they retrieve information from the Internet for their

work on the Tudors and successfully interrogate databases to find the information they want. They use art programs creatively to support their work when studying such techniques as the pointillism style of Seurat. Throughout the school, pupils use a range of equipment such as tape recorders and electronic microscopes to support their learning. For example infant pupils used an electronic microscope to look at parts of plants.

88. The quality of teaching is good. It was good in the two lessons seen and the quality of the pupils' work suggests that it is consistently good. The specialist teacher's enthusiasm spilt over to the children and they enjoyed learning. Pupils have positive attitudes and see modern technologies as a part of everyday life. The scheme of work is at present being updated to ensure that the curriculum is well balanced and that skills are developed systematically. Suitable programmes are carefully selected to support learning in other subjects. The school uses good assessment procedures that clearly indicate what pupils have to know and understand for each level of learning. This helps to ensure that they are given work that provides the correct level of challenge and that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and achieve as well as they can.

MUSIC

89. Good improvements have been made in provision for music since the last inspection, leading to higher standards throughout the school. The part-time teacher puts her musical expertise to good use by taking lessons throughout the school and playing the piano for singing in assemblies. This supports the pupils' singing, which is tuneful. Parents appreciate this improvement in provision.

90. Pupils reach standards broadly typical for their age at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Year 2 pupils understand the basic elements of pitch and tempo of a piece of music. Most of them identify and play high and low notes on a xylophone or chime bars, though some are unsure of this. They compose simple pieces of their own, representing the sounds they have made with drawings and symbols and creating recognisable patterns. They listen to and discuss examples of different styles of music and have their own tastes, which the school encourages. For example, a pupil brought in a CD of African music for use in a lesson that was observed during the inspection. Pupils are achieving well at this stage. By the end of Year 6, pupils listen attentively to music and pick out features that make it distinctive. For example, they describe how the speed or loudness of different parts of 'the Planets Suite' by Holst conjures up images of fire and war to represent Mars. Their skills at composing and performing music are improving, but are not yet as good as they should be for their age because of a lack of previous experience. They co-operate satisfactorily in groups to compose a piece containing contrasts, for example, but need a lot of support and guidance from the teacher to give it shape and style, and are not skilled at evaluating what they have done and suggesting improvements. This reflects a lack of previous experience and satisfactory rather than good achievement at this stage despite recent good progress.

91. Teaching is good throughout the school. The teacher knows the subject well and plans lessons that effectively cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. Plenty of opportunities are provided for the pupils to listen to and discuss a range of music and to use a variety of musical instruments. Lessons have a clear purpose and build on previous learning. Pupil management is good overall, but in Years 3 to 6, lessons are too closely directed, limiting opportunities for pupils of different ages and abilities to develop different levels of skill. The teacher comments on the pupils' efforts, using praise well to encourage them to greater effort and accomplishment but there are too few opportunities for the pupils to evaluate and improve their own work. Assessment procedures are in place to track pupils' progress though National Curriculum levels of attainment, but these are not yet used

effectively to ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities are challenged sufficiently. Sound use is made of ICT in the form of tape recorders to aid learning, but full use is not yet made of the full range of computer programmes available to widen the pupils' composing and performing skills. Music is not used consistently to enhance assemblies by encouraging reflection or to widen the pupils' musical tastes as fully as possible or broaden their cultural perspectives. Peripatetic violin lessons allow those pupils with flair to flourish, and all the pupils involved have gained merits in their tests. The school actively promotes this aspect of the pupils' personal development by including the young instrumentalists in special events. Music work from the classroom has also been given extra relevance by being incorporated into the drama week this year for the first time.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

92. Good improvements have been made to provision for physical education since the last inspection, when statutory requirements to teach gymnastics were not met and there was no systematic planning for lessons. The co-ordinator provides clear guidance for teaching in dance, games and gymnastics and the school makes good use of a Sports Hall and pool at the local leisure centre.

93. Judgements on standards could not be made in gymnastics because it was not taking place during the inspection. However, photographic evidence shows that pupils of all ages undertake a range of gymnastic activities. Standards in country dancing exceed those expected at the end of Year 2. The pupils dance enthusiastically to music, following the rhythm and changing movements in response to changes in the music. They know a range of dances and have a good awareness of the steps and movements. The standards observed in creative dance were below expectations in Year 6. Although the pupils showed the capacity to move with agility and grace, most did not interpret the music creatively or extend the range of movements they used. Observations of pupils at play in the playground and on the school field indicate that they have ball skills typical for their age at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The fact that three of the four leavers from Yeoford in 2002 gained places in the secondary school rugby and netball teams is evidence that their games skills are at least comparable to local standards.

94. It is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching overall or its impact on learning. The quality of teaching observed in Years 1 and 2 was very good. In Years 1 and 2, the most is made of the available time in the village hall. For the lesson observed, the generously offered services of a musician living near the school were made full use of as he played the melodeon for country dancing. Because she could simply signal to the musician when she wanted the music to start and stop, she could devote all her time and attention to observing the pupils and giving them tips for improvement. The musician's wife made a valuable contribution as an extra adult in the circle to keep the dance going, increasing the pupils' enjoyment and level of participation. A lively warm up demonstrated the pupils' enthusiasm and skill as they skipped round the hall, making good use of the space and thoroughly enjoying themselves. Minimum time was spent on instructions and maximum time encouraging and coaching individual pupils as they danced. As a result, the rate of learning was very good indeed and the pupils applied every ounce of physical and creative effort to the process. Insufficient time was spent in the dance lesson in Years 3 to 6 to make a secure judgement about teaching. The use of a taped BBC programme caused too many pauses waiting for the correct place on the tape to be found and reduced the momentum of learning so that the pupils lost interest and made very little progress. Older pupils express an understandable lack of interest in dance lessons.

95. Although good improvements have been made, arrangements for teaching and learning in physical education are still far from ideal. The village hall is not really a suitable setting for lessons, especially in Years 3 to 6. The temptation is to cancel lessons when they cannot be held outdoors, and this happens too often. The school provides extra tuition from professional coaches for the pupils in swimming, cricket and soccer, but there are no after school sports clubs. Some parents would like to see more consistent provision for physical education. The school would like to improve facilities, but cannot see a way of doing so.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

96. Standards meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, maintaining the standards reported at the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of some of the basic tenets of Christianity through Bible stories and the morals they portray. Good quality discussions in class help them to develop their awareness of things beyond their everyday experiences. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have a good grasp of how the Bible originated and its historical context by the use of a time line. They compare the Christian and Jewish rules for life with similar rules that guide the lives of Buddhists and Hindus, and the different creation stories from different religions. They compare the Muslims' pilgrimage to Mecca with Christian pilgrimages, for example to Lourdes, showing an insight into the similarities as well as differences between them. The pupils have a very good understanding of how religion affects people's lives because this strand of the syllabus is very well taught. For example, after a class study of Christian's challenge in Pilgrim's Progress, one pupil wrote of her own challenge when facing the momentous upheaval of moving house. The pupils are encouraged to articulate and explain their own beliefs, and do this very well. For example, one pupil wrote that his beliefs are strengthened each week at church with his family and that: 'I don't believe the scientific theory is correct because I don't believe that millions of life forms can be created in a big bang'.

97. Although very little teaching was seen during the inspection, it is evident from the work in the pupils' books that the quality of teaching is good overall from Year 1 to Year 6, enabling pupils to make good progress and achieve well. The pupils are given relevant information and challenged to explore ideas and express their feelings, thoughts and beliefs. Some of the writing that emerges in Years 3 to 6 is very thoughtful indeed. It is also neat and well presented, reflecting high expectations from the teacher, who teaches the subject throughout the school and also leads and manages the subject well. The pupils' work shows that they respond well to the opportunities they are given to express themselves in this way. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development by encouraging them to explore and articulate their ideas and beliefs and think about complicated and sometimes difficult issues. ICT is used to support learning, for example through the use of a digital camera to take photographs of local churches in preparation for a visit.