

INSPECTION REPORT

South Molton Community Infant School

North Devon

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113168

Headteacher: Mrs P Fewings

Reporting inspector: Miss J. Moxon
23584

Dates of inspection: 23 - 27 September 2002

Inspection number: 247319

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	North Road South Molton Devon
Postcode:	EX36 3BA
Telephone number:	01769 572198
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Hinchliffe
Date of previous inspection:	18 September 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23584	J Moxon	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Religious education Foundation Stage curriculum	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further School data and indicators
11072	S Elomari	Lay inspector	Educational Inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?

2779	J Billington	Team inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught? 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

South Molton Community Infant School is a smaller than average school with 118 pupils on roll. Children aged four to seven attend the school, starting in September or January in the year in which they are five. Children enter school with broadly average levels of ability. They are taught in single age classes of mixed ability until age seven when the majority transfer to the local junior school. Most children come to the school from private or rented housing in the Devon market town of South Molton. The social and economic circumstances of the locality are close to the national average. The number of pupils taking free school meals is 15.25%, close to the national average, but fluctuates according to seasonal employment.

The school has 20% more boys than girls, which has been the trend in South Molton for many years. The balance is being redressed in the current Reception Year group. There are well below average numbers of pupils with special educational needs, but above the average number of statemented pupils. Levels of attendance at the school are the highest in the local area and above the national average. The school has very few unauthorised absences and there has been one temporary exclusion. There are well below average numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups and one pupil for whom English is an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. Children come to school with broadly average ability and achieve standards well above those expected in many subjects by age seven. The school has a very strong philosophy to educate the ‘whole child’ by providing a wealth of experiences, which enable pupils to ‘grow in confidence’. The school’s aims are reflected admirably in all its work. The new building is of exceptional quality and provides an excellent environment for learning. The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide very strong and effective leadership and management, resulting in very good teaching and learning in all year groups. Relationships are very good and help pupils in their learning. The support given to pupils with special educational needs is excellent. Pupils are offered many exciting and imaginative learning experiences, which they thoroughly enjoy. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The very effective leadership of the headteacher, senior managers and governors ensure high standards and enable all members of the school community to “grow in confidence.” The school’s aims are imaginatively reflected in all its work.
- There is very good teaching in all classes.
- The school offers an exciting, attractive learning environment of exceptional quality.
- Very high standards are achieved in mathematics, reading, art and design, music, information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education.
- The school has a dynamic, positive commitment to include all pupils in every aspect of school life. Support for pupils with special educational needs is excellent.
- Teachers design imaginative and creative learning activities to provide high quality opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are very well cared for.
- The headteacher and staff are very committed and work together very successfully to improve

the school.

What could be improved

- The information shared with pupils and parents about how well they are doing and what they need to do next.
- The behaviour of a small number of boys during some whole class teaching sessions in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding in religious education

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was last inspected the school was judged to be underachieving. In the last two years, the headteacher, staff and governors have worked extremely hard to address the issues from the last inspection in order to improve the school.

The school is now a very good school because:

- The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide strong leadership. Pupils are now reaching much higher standards in a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers and other staff have received good quality training and teaching is now very good.
- Classes have been reorganised and pupils are receiving teaching that is better matched to their needs.
- The management of the school has been improved by the appointment of a deputy headteacher, and subject managers know how to lead and monitor their subjects.
- The school has moved to a new building, which is unique in design and quality. It provides a much better environment for pupils and staff to learn and work in.
- Targets are set for pupils to work towards by the time they are seven. Teachers know that pupils are set to achieve these, and the headteacher checks regularly that they are on course.
- The headteacher and senior staff monitor the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make.
- Time in the school day is now better organised and used.
- The governors understand what they need to do and are now carrying out their roles very well.

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection and the school has the capacity and determination to improve still further.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Children enter the school with broadly average levels of ability. Although the current intake of 15 children is above average in some areas of learning, first assessments for the other full year groups show that most children's ability when they start school is average. By the time pupils enter Year 1 they are achieving beyond the levels of the Early Learning Goals, having made very good progress in the Foundation Stage. According to the 2001 test results, standards in reading and mathematics were average when compared with similar schools, and schools nationally. Standards in science were average. Writing was above average. The school had increased the number of pupils achieving Level 3. From 1999 to 2001 the school's results in reading showed a decline, but remained in line and above national averages. In mathematics they remained constantly in line with national averages and in writing they remained consistently above.

The national 2002 test results are not yet confirmed, but according to the school's test results and the evidence seen in the inspection, standards have risen and many more pupils are achieving the higher levels. According to the inspection findings, current standards in writing are above average and in reading, mathematics and science they are well above average.

This year, in reading, 89% of pupils achieved Level 2 and above, which is in line with the national average, 74% of those were Level 2B and above, almost half were Level 3. In writing 91% of pupils achieved level 2 and above, which is well above the national average. Over half of those were Level 2B and above; a small number were Level 3. In mathematics, all the Year 2 pupils achieved at least Level 2, 78% were at Level 2B and above, 36% achieved Level 3 and one pupil reached Level 4. Teacher assessment in science indicates that all Year 2 pupils achieved Level 2 and above, and a quarter of those achieved Level 3. Standards in information and communication technology are very high, well above the expected level for children aged seven. Standards in religious education are in line with those outlined in the local agreed syllabus, but are below the good and very good standards in other subjects. Standards in art and design, design and technology, physical education and music are well above those expected by age seven. They are above those expected by age seven in history and geography.

The school chooses to set targets for all pupils based on their attainment on entry to the school and the end of the Reception Year assessments. Targets are appropriate and are generally met. The majority of pupils make very good progress in their learning across a range of subjects. Pupils with special educational needs, with English as an additional language and those who are gifted and talented make very good progress in their learning because they are so well supported by all staff. The school has achieved Levels 4 and 5 in test results for the last two years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: most pupils behave well in the classroom and the playground. They show interest in their work and concentrate well. A small number of boys in Years 1 and 2 do not always behave appropriately in whole class teaching sessions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils enjoy very supportive relationships with their peers and with adults.
Attendance	Very good: attendance is well above the national average and unauthorised absence is rare.

Pupils throughout the school have very good attitudes to learning. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall. Pupils know what is expected of them and, with the exception of a small number of boys, respond very positively to praise and encouragement. The school promotes the importance of prompt, regular attendance very well so that almost all pupils attend regularly and on time. The headteacher tries hard to discourage parents from taking their child out of school for holidays, especially when national tests are being taken, but holidays account for a high proportion of the absence. Attendance is consistently very high and there is very little unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	very good	very good

Pupils are organised into five classes, one reception, and two classes each in Years 1 and 2. There are six full-time teachers including the headteacher. One member of staff works with groups of pupils throughout the school until the second reception intake in January. During the inspection a member of staff was absent, their place being taken by a temporary teacher.

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. There is very good teaching in all classes. In the 37 lessons observed during the inspection, none of the teaching was unsatisfactory. Social inclusion is a strength both of teaching and of the life of the school as a whole. In the Foundation Stage the

quality of teaching is very good and provides a range of high quality learning experiences across the curriculum. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is very good overall. English and mathematics are both successfully taught. Teaching in literacy is good. Teaching in numeracy is very good, with lessons being conducted at a good pace. Excellent teaching was seen in music. Very good teaching was seen in information and communication technology, art and design, and physical education. In all other subjects there was good teaching. Teaching is sometimes not as effective as it could be when behaviour is restless in class teaching sessions. The majority of pupils make very good progress in their learning in a wide range of subjects because of the very good teaching, positive relationships and good quality resources in the school. Teaching meets the needs of all pupils. Homework makes a good contribution to teaching and learning in school. Since the last inspection teaching has shown a very significant improvement because of very good leadership.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Pupils are taught a very wide range of subjects, made extremely interesting and exciting by their teachers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Due to the high quality expertise of the learning support assistants, the work of the special educational needs co-ordinator and the teachers, provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The pupil for whom English is an additional language receives very good support for learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a very high standard of care. Pupils in the school are cherished and their individual needs are very well met by all staff. The school successfully promotes racial equality.

Thoughtful consideration for pupils' welfare and learning lies at the heart of school life. Throughout the school there is excellent support for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, because all staff work with imagination and commitment to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. The school has very good facilities for physically disabled pupils. Procedures for assessment are very good and have improved since the previous inspection. However, the school does not always make sufficient use of the information when planning the next stage of learning. The school works well in partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is very good leadership and management by the headteacher and the senior staff. The commitment to raising standards, driven by the headteacher, is also shared by the governors, senior managers and subject co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its duties very well. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. They have established very effective methods of monitoring the performance of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, senior managers and governors evaluate the school's performance very well. Subject managers are developing their monitoring role.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses the building, the staff, the equipment and the funding very well to provide a high standard of education. Grants designated to the school are very well used, particularly in the areas of staff development and special educational needs.

The headteacher has a clear, child-centred vision. She has inspired and encouraged the development of the staff and strengthened their commitment to achieving high standards. Her strong philosophy is manifested in the aim of the school, 'growing in confidence' which applies equally to staff, pupils and other members of the school community. The school demonstrates excellent commitment to its aims and values. There is a dynamic commitment to inclusion for all members of the community. Excellent relationships enrich the quality of teaching and learning and lie at the heart of the school's success. The accommodation for learning is excellent. The new building is unique in its provision of an exceptionally well-planned environment for learning and play, particularly for children in reception. The outstanding quality of the building, internal furnishings, displays and resources reflects the aims of the school and enables all those who work and learn within it to feel valued. Teachers and support staff provide an excellent range of expertise to ensure that all subjects are well taught. The contribution to success made by the team of learning support assistants is outstanding. Staff responsible for individual pupils with particular special educational needs are devoted to ensuring that those pupils are cherished, valued and fully included in all aspects of school life. The headteacher and governors ensure that comparisons are made with the performance of other similar schools locally and nationally and seek best value for contracts and purchases. Resources for learning in the areas of the curriculum are very good overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents believe that teaching is good.• Most parents feel happy about approaching the school with concerns• They believe that behaviour is good.• There is confidence in the leadership and management.• Parents believe that the school provides the right amount of homework• All parents believe that their children like school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents would like to receive more frequent updates on their children's progress, including their learning targets.• A significant number of parents feel that the school does not provide a sufficiently interesting range of activities outside school.

Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views of the school. Inspection evidence bears out concerns that parents could be better informed about how their child is getting on in that, although parents are informed about the targets set for their child, they are not kept up-to-date on the progress made towards meeting them. However, the school is working hard to involve all parents as active partners in their child's education and responds quickly to any concerns. The range of activities outside lessons is greater than commonly seen in infant schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. At the time of the inspection the children in the reception class had been together as a group in school for two weeks and the pupils in Years 1 and 2 were in their fourth full week of the autumn term. Judgements on standards by the age of seven were made from the work of the previous Year 2 pupils, their assessments and test results. Judgements were supported by the work seen at the beginning of the year for the current Year 2 pupils. As the Reception class will not be complete until January, when the school receives its second intake, the assessments and work of the present Year 1 pupils were also considered when making judgements about attainment on entry and by the end of the Foundation Stage.
2. Pupils are taught in classes of below 30. Each year group has two classes. The admission limit is 60 per year. Numbers have fallen slightly and the Reception classes will be the smallest in the school from January. Since moving into the new building, the school has taken increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs. There are 20% more boys than girls in all year groups except the Reception Year, which is set to reverse the trend.
3. Children enter the school with broadly average levels of ability. Although the current intake of 15 children is above average in some areas of learning, baseline assessments for the other full year groups show that most children's ability when they start school is average. By the time children enter Year 1 they are achieving beyond the levels of the Early Learning Goals, having made very good progress in the Foundation Stage.
4. According to the 2001 test results standards in reading and mathematics were average and writing was above average. When compared to similar schools the number of pupils achieving Level 3 was well below average in mathematics, below average in reading, but above average in writing. One pupil achieved Level 5 in reading and Level 4 in mathematics.
5. Although there is no official national analysis at this time of the year for the 2002 test results, the school's results indicate a dramatic rise in standards, particularly for pupils of higher ability in reading and mathematics.
6. According to the inspection findings, standards in writing are good and in reading, mathematics and science they are very good.
7. In reading, 82 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 and above, which is in line with the National average; 74 per cent of those were Level 2B and above and almost half were Level 3. In writing 91 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 and above, which is well above the national average. Over half of those achieved Level 2B and above and 6% were Level 3. In mathematics, all pupils achieved Level 2 and above, 88 per cent were at Level 2B and above, 36 per cent achieved Level 3 and three per cent Level 4. Teacher assessment in science indicates that all pupils achieved Level 2 and above, a quarter of which achieved Level 3.

8. In spite of the large numbers of boys in the school, there are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls, both in South Molton and nationally.
9. From 1999 to 2001 the school's results showed a decline in reading, but remained in line and above national averages. In mathematics they remained in line with national averages and in writing they remained above. The 2002 results are even more positive and, although unconfirmed, show a commendable improvement, particularly for more able pupils.
10. Standards seen during the inspection support the 2002 results, except in reading where standards in the current Year 2 are very good, and much higher than the test results indicate.
11. The school chooses to set targets for all pupils based on their attainment on entry to the school and the end of Reception Year assessments. Targets are appropriate and the school generally meets them. They reflect the ability range within each year group including the increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs.
12. The improvement in results reflects the changes implemented through strong leadership. School development planning has focused on raising attainment. Training has been given to all staff, year groups have been separated and taught in ability groups for part of the week for writing and mathematics. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved. The learning environment has been transformed, targets are set from Reception and monitored through ongoing assessment by the headteacher. Test results are analysed for groups and individuals to find out where the weaknesses are and what needs to be improved. Support is given to groups of pupils as well as individuals with special educational needs. All staff are made aware of the predicted outcomes for pupils by the time they are seven and expected to work towards them, monitoring progress regularly.
13. Standards in ICT are very high, well above the expected level for pupils aged seven.
14. Standards in religious education are in line with those outlined in the local agreed syllabus, but are below the good and very good standards in other subjects.
15. Standards in art and design, design and technology, physical education, and music are well above those expected by age seven. They are above those expected by age seven in history and geography.
16. Pupils are able to use the skills they learn in English and mathematics well in other subjects.
17. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make very good progress in their learning because they are so well supported by all staff, particularly the learning support assistants. Gifted and talented pupils and those with above average ability make very good progress. The school has achieved Levels 4 and 5 in test results for the last two years.

18. All pupils achieve very well in a range of areas of learning. The high standards in a wide range of subjects reflect the commitment of the school to developing the 'whole child'. It is noticeable how well pupils apply themselves when working on stimulating, independent tasks alone and in groups. A small number of pupils in Year 1 and 2 who work very well on investigations and other independent tasks find it harder to apply concentration in formal, whole class teaching sessions. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and are encouraged to use their own ideas and imagination, knowing that their contributions are valued and used by staff. Pupils spontaneously express to adults the enjoyment they feel: for example the excitement of one six year old who had to tell someone; ' I love art, I really, really love it!'

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

19. Pupils throughout the school have very good attitudes to learning because they enjoy the stimulating and exciting work they are given. They develop a high level of concentration, independence and confidence to use their imagination. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall. However, there are many examples of very good behaviour and in the reception class behaviour is never less than very good. The pupils know what is expected of them and, with the occasional exception of a small number of boys, respond very positively to the praise and encouragement given to them. Attendance is consistently very high and there is very little unauthorised absence.
20. Pupils are very keen to come to school because they enjoy their lessons and other activities. Every parent who responded to the questionnaire stated that their child liked school. Pupils arrive in the morning with a sense of anticipation and are enthusiastic about their work. Children in the reception class already look forward to school and are keen to learn. Pupils listen very attentively to their teacher and to one another. They try hard to complete the work set and almost always concentrate very well. This is particularly the case in lessons such as art and design, music, physical education and science when pupils are being creative and exploring their world. They take delight in using imagination. Pupils also enjoy the many challenges they are given in lessons. For example, in a Year 2 information and communication technology lesson pupils quickly learned the sort of questions required to complete the task and took over the activity from the teacher. Pupils take a pride in their work and in their achievements. The sensitive support given to pupils with special educational needs leads to them being fully included in every aspect of school life. The pupil for whom English is an additional language is similarly very well supported. Positive attitudes to learning pervade the school and have a significant effect on the very good progress made.
21. Behaviour in lessons is good overall. In the reception class it is very good. Pupils throughout the school respond very positively to the very good teaching. During the inspection, very good or exemplary behaviour was observed in eighteen lessons. In ten lessons it was good and in a further eight, satisfactory. In no lessons was behaviour judged to be unsatisfactory. However, in those lessons judged satisfactory, the behaviour of a small number of boys did not meet the otherwise high standards. For example, in a Year 2 information and communication technology lesson a group of boys was noisy and had to be called to order several times. This behaviour occurs most often during the times when the teacher is talking to the whole class, as happens especially in literacy and numeracy lessons. Almost all pupils

come to school well prepared to learn. The school has a purposeful working atmosphere where all pupils are enabled to give their best. Because teachers do not often have to spend time managing unacceptable behaviour, the pace of lessons is good, which helps pupils to learn well. However, when pupils do misbehave the lack of clearly established consequences means that incidents can take longer to manage. Pupils often show a high level of respect for the feelings of others and learn to value opinions that may differ from their own.

22. Often, pupils demonstrate very high levels of maturity, for example, in the respectful way they look after the school building, resources and environment. They are encouraged in this by the exceptionally high quality of the building and the site, and by the imaginative way it is used. The way pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and to work independently is an outstanding feature of the school's work. From their earliest days in school, children are encouraged to make independent choices. For example, in a reception class music lesson, children chose which instruments they wanted to play. In many lessons, pupils have the opportunity to work alone or in small groups without the direct supervision of the teacher. They enjoy this, concentrating well and working hard. For example, in a Year 2 numeracy lesson the teacher had planned challenging, timed activities that demanded teamwork so that the better pupils worked together, the more they enjoyed their work the more they learned.
23. Behaviour at playtimes and lunchtime is almost always very good. Pupils play very well together in the playground and enjoy the play equipment provided. Games such as "What time is it, Mr Wolf?" are organised by groups of pupils. Pupils take care to avoid bumping into others when running around. Lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion when pupils are encouraged to be independent and to clear up after themselves. Older pupils help younger ones. Movement around the school is very orderly and quiet. There is calm atmosphere in the school. There has been one exclusion in the last school year.
24. Almost all parents state that school helps their children to become mature and responsible. The youngest children are encouraged to grow in self-confidence by the respectful way staff listen to their ideas and value their input into activities. Even at this early stage in the school year, the consistent repetition of routines and the excitement of the lessons means that the children in the reception class are confident and well settled. Pupils enjoy being chosen to help their teacher and take a pride in carrying out their tasks well. All pupils have the chance to be able to share their feelings with others in a safe environment, and teachers use this well to instil a sense of social and moral responsibility. Two pupils from each class in Years 1 and 2 represent the class on the school council. They take this responsibility very seriously because the council makes positive changes and contributions to school life. For example, it has been responsible for the design of the cover of the school brochure and the logo, has helped decide what outdoor play equipment is needed, and is actively involved in discovering what pupils want to see improved. Councillors change regularly so that a large number of pupils are able to take an active part. Pupils enjoy the frequent opportunities they have to work together in pairs or small groups. These occur in most lessons. Some special events, such as art week, enable pupils from the reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes to work together towards a common goal. The beautiful artwork produced shows how successfully pupils were able to do this. Pupils almost always work very sensibly together, help one another with their work and share equipment without squabbling. Pupils' mature attitudes

enable them to benefit from the many opportunities they have to work independently. Older pupils are expected to set a good example to younger ones and to take care of them; they do so willingly and well. Pupils raise money for a range of charities.

25. Relationships throughout the school are very good and there is a strong sense of community. There are very high levels of mutual respect between staff and pupils. Teachers and other staff support pupils very well. Praise is used very well to provide motivation. Pupils almost always co-operate very well together and they develop a mature understanding of the impact of their actions on others as they move through the school. Bullying occurs rarely and is not tolerated. There are no incidents of racism or sexism. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that there is always an adult to turn to in time of need. The very good relationships make a very significant contribution to the very high standards of independence shown.
26. Attendance is consistently very high, at around 96 per cent and is well above the national average. Attendance figures were similar at the time of the previous inspection. Almost all absence relates to illness or term time holidays and there is very little unauthorised absence. Pupils routinely attend on time in the morning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

27. Pupils are organised into five classes, one reception, and two classes each in Years 1 and 2. There are six full-time teachers including the headteacher. One member of staff, not permanently attached to a class, works with groups of pupils throughout the school until the second reception intake in January. During the inspection a member of staff was absent, their place being taken by temporary teacher.
28. The quality of teaching is a strength. It is very good throughout the school, there is very good teaching in all classes. Its high quality is the main reason for the high levels of achievement across the curriculum. In the 37 lessons observed during the inspection, well over half of those seen were very good or excellent, with almost three-quarters of the rest being good. None of the teaching was unsatisfactory. The school has inclusion for all pupils as a high priority. In all lessons this aim is fully realised and social inclusion is a strength both of teaching and of the life of the school as a whole.
29. Since the last inspection teaching has shown a very significant improvement. At that time no teaching was judged to be very good and the proportion of good teaching was very considerably below that seen in the present inspection. This improvement is because of the very good leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team. They have generated a shared commitment to improvement and have ensured that the school's aims and values are reflected across all aspects of teaching and learning. The governing body also plays an important part in supporting teaching, by having a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors help to shape the school's direction through a process of continuous improvement set out in the school development plan.
30. In the Foundation Stage the quality of teaching is very good and provides a range of high quality learning experiences across the curriculum. Learning experiences are very rich and

carefully planned, resulting in children being well motivated, enabling them to progress well. The teacher and support staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the learning needs of young children. Planning and teaching for the achievement of the Early Learning Goals, including the use of the excellent facilities available, enhances all aspects of children's intellectual, social and physical development very effectively.

31. Teaching in English is good. Teachers ensure the goals of the learning activity are clear and are clearly set out in terms of targets for pupils to achieve in the lesson. Teaching in mathematics is very good, with lessons being conducted at a good pace. Teaching in science is good overall with some very good teaching. There is very good teaching overall in mathematics, information and communication technology, music, design and technology, art and design and physical education. In English, science, history, geography and religious education teaching is good.
32. In the literacy and numeracy lessons observed all teaching was good or better. This ensures that pupils have the skills to learn effectively across the full range of the curriculum. The teaching of phonics and other basic skills is very good. Literacy skills are taught very well because teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy Framework for teaching and of children's needs. Phonics skills are taught effectively, enabling pupils to tackle new words confidently by blending sounds. In addition, pupils are encouraged to use a range of other strategies such as using clues from pictures and re-reading a section of a story to guess what might be coming next. Teachers ensure that there is a balance in literacy lessons between shared reading and writing with the whole class, reading in groups and individual work. These strategies make a key contribution to pupils' progress, particularly in reading.
33. In numeracy lessons, objectives are always clear to pupils and tasks are often given a time boundary for their completion. The pace of teaching is very good and this results in pupils making very good progress. Activities are well matched to the pupils and explanations by teachers of the steps in learning are clear enabling pupils to learn well. Teachers take numerous opportunities to strengthen literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects. In physical education pupils were required to use their knowledge of number to carry out tasks. For example, at registration, where they are asked to work out how many pupils are missing, how many boys/girls are present, how many pupils require a hot school meal and how many will take a packed lunch.
34. The quality of learning is very good overall and can be attributed to the quality of teaching. Teaching is successful because:
 - Teachers' planning, knowledge and understanding of the material they are to teach and of their pupils are very good.
 - The use of school resources and time are excellent.
 - Teachers create a purposeful working atmosphere with very good relationships.
 - There are very high expectations of what the pupils can achieve.
 - Support staff make an excellent contribution to the quality of teaching and are fully engaged in the process of learning.

- Teachers design methods that are very carefully matched to the requirements of what pupils need to learn, providing challenging and stimulating activities.
35. As a result, pupils are well motivated and are encouraged to develop independence. They work at a good pace and put effort into learning, consequently, they learn very well and make very good progress. The provision of homework is appropriate and pupils generally receive the right amount. Homework makes a good contribution to supporting learning in school.
 36. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are very effective in helping pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers termly planning is very good, being detailed, covering all statutory requirements and taking into account the range of teaching strategies required. Short-term weekly planning however is more variable and is used inconsistently by the school to ensure that work is matched to pupils' needs. While teaching is very good overall, marking is not used consistently to indicate to pupils why work is good, or how it might be improved. In a small number of whole class teaching sessions, the behaviour of a small number of boys was not consistently well managed. This resulted in slower progress in the lesson.
 37. Pupils in the school have a diverse range of special needs. The school caters for them extremely effectively and pupils with special educational needs are taught very well. Their needs are catered for both in lessons and in the general life of the school. The school policy of inclusion is fully realised in practice. Teachers know their pupils and their very diverse range of needs very well. All staff are familiar with pupils' individual education plans, which are detailed and up-to-date. They ensure that learning tasks are relevant enabling pupils with special needs make very good progress. Basic skills are taught very well. Support staff are used very effectively and make an extremely important contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Records of gains in skills, knowledge and understanding are immaculately maintained by the co-ordinator who provides a very high level of skilled advice to all staff. In addition to supporting pupils with special educational needs the co-ordinator also offers advice and support in those cases where pupils' progress gives cause for concern. Overall special needs support for teaching and learning is of very high quality. One pupil has English as an additional language and is making very good progress because of the very effective integration process the school has devised.
 38. Talented and gifted pupils are identified at an early stage. They are effectively catered for in the planning and delivery of lessons and the school has plans to further develop its programme for these pupils.

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

39. The last inspection reported that while the school provided a broad curriculum it did not have a good balance and that the proportion of time devoted to art and design, geography, music and physical education had declined. Since that time there has been very good improvement and the curriculum is an important strength of the school.

40. The school now provides a very good curriculum for all its pupils. It is broad and balanced and fully meets statutory requirements. This results in pupils making very good progress in their acquisition of skill, knowledge and understanding. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent, enabling them to make excellent progress in relation to their prior learning.
41. The Foundation Stage curriculum continues to provide the children with an excellent foundation for their future learning, promoting their spiritual, intellectual, physical and personal development. The quality and range of the learning opportunities are excellent, offering a wide range of stimulating activities. The outdoor area enhances curriculum opportunities further and it is extremely well used to develop children's physical and social development. The quality of planning is very good, and ensures the full and rich coverage of each recommended area of learning related to the Early Learning Goals.
42. The quality and range of curriculum opportunities provided for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is very good. Policies and schemes of work for all subjects are in place and are based on national guidelines. Schemes of work include references to what pupils will learn, subject specific vocabulary and resources. The school meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, but the learning experiences offered to pupils are not always as rich as in other subjects.
43. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and is a strength of the school. There are excellent guidelines for responding to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and these are fully realised in practice. The fully inclusive nature of the school curriculum ensures that pupils with special educational needs are given the same curricular opportunities as others both inside and outside the classroom. The school provides excellent support for these pupils, who are fully integrated into school life. Additional support in lessons is carefully planned and learning support assistants make an excellent contribution to ensuring that the pupils' particular needs are met.
44. The school's strategy for teaching literacy and numeracy is good. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are securely in place. To promote higher standards in these key areas, the school has proposals to continue to teach in ability groups for aspects of literacy and for numeracy. The school has identified that results in writing are relatively lower than for reading and these sessions will focus on this aspect.
45. The school has identified its talented and gifted pupils and monitors their progress well. This close monitoring enables teachers to help them make the appropriate progress. The overall richness of the school's curriculum programme, including investigative science, art and design projects, and a range of extra-curricular opportunities, enables more able pupils to be stretched. Homework is set to reinforce pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy and does so well. On some occasions, however, pupils do not get feedback on homework they have done.

46. South Molton Infants' is a fully inclusive school, which makes excellent provision for its pupils. There is a dynamic positive commitment to the full inclusion of the whole school community in the education process and this is a strength of the school. Girls and boys are encouraged to be involved in a wide range of activities including a school council. The curriculum richly enhances and supports pupils' learning through visits in the local area and further afield. These are closely linked to the topic being studied and include the local churches, and other places of local interest as well as the National Trust property at Killerton House where pupils were able to experience a Victorian Christmas. There is a clear policy and guidelines on educational visits. The school provides additional enrichment through its very good extra-curricular activity programme. There is provision for a broad range of music, sports activities and horticulture.
47. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The school encourages the development of positive attitudes and the growth of self-esteem through its well planned and well taught programme. Circle time (an opportunity for group reflection and discussion), special thinking time, the collective act of worship, visits, visiting speakers, artist in residence activity weeks and opportunities for pupils to take part in carol services and concerts all promote pupils' personal development effectively. A healthy lifestyle is promoted through good relationships, the schools' healthy eating programme and the science curriculum. Sex education is included as part of the science programme. This provision is effective.
48. The school has very good links with the community. There is good liaison with the local churches and police, health agencies and the library service, all of which make a valuable contribution to the breadth of pupils' experiences. Very good relationships exist with parents and grandparents, who periodically share their memories and experiences in lessons. These links enhance pupils' learning very well.
49. There are good links with partner institutions. These include pre-school providers in South Molton, the nurseries and playgroups from which young children enter the pre-reception class. The headteacher and staff support liaison with the junior school, sharing expertise and some in-service training. Joint staff meetings and training take place. There is an effective transition programme from Year 2 to Year 3. The school accepts college students and work experience placements, they also accepted a Primary Returner Teacher in January 2002.
50. The overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. The high quality opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are a reflection of the school's philosophy and aims based on the development of the whole child. The school has shown marked improvement since the last inspection, all aspects of provision are now very good. In the previous inspection, moral development was judged to be good, while spiritual, social and cultural development were sound.
51. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Religious education and collective worship contribute very effectively to the development of pupils' knowledge and insights into religious values and beliefs. Many opportunities are provided for reflection, enabling pupils to make a

personal response and to reflect on their own experience and that of others. The use of 'special thinking time', promotes a good focal point for such reflection.

52. The school provides numerous opportunities for reflection on the wonders of nature. Poetry and music contribute well to the creation of a range of rich spiritual experiences. In many lessons, spiritual development is evident. Pupils learn, not only about their own and other's beliefs, but begin to develop an understanding of the effect such knowledge has upon their lives.
53. The provision for moral development is very good. Adults provide very good role models for pupils. They encourage pupils to behave responsibly, and to work hard and succeed. Pupils from an early age have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong because this is taught effectively. They are expected to behave well, and behaviour in lessons is good or very good when well managed by the teacher. Through the use of circle time, moral issues and relationships are addressed and early seeds of citizenship are sown. The school council makes a valuable contribution to developing moral and social values. Personal development and relationships are very strong in the school.
54. The provision for pupils' social development is also very good. The very supportive relationships in the school are central to this school's success. Provision for teaching good social habits begin with the youngest children who are well guided so that they quickly learn to follow rules for working and playing together in lessons, co-operating well and sharing ideas. There is a very good emphasis on developing pupils' independence as they undertake an increasing range of responsibilities in the classrooms and around school, for example, collecting registers, taking part in assemblies and school performances. They show very high levels of care and respect for their classrooms and the school environment. They show compassion and concern for people who are poor or suffering in some way. These opportunities contribute very effectively to pupils' growing understanding of community and citizenship.
55. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school has worked hard since the previous inspection to ensure that cultural awareness permeates the curriculum as well as assemblies. Pupils gain a good depth of knowledge about other beliefs and aspects of life in different contexts in their study of other world faiths and through areas of the curriculum such as geography in their learning about India. They showed very good knowledge and understanding about differences in the Indian culture and way of life. Very good links to other subjects such as music, and literacy extended their knowledge very effectively as well as their aesthetic awareness. The very good support from parents contributes to the strong sense of community in the school. Pupils are being very well prepared to take their place as responsible future citizens in society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The school provides a very high standard of care for all its pupils. Pupils in the school are cherished and their individual needs are very well met by all staff. The climate of care is established in the aims of the school and strongly promoted. Thoughtful consideration for

pupils' welfare and learning lies at the heart of school life and extends through all its work. The school has built on the high standards noted in the previous inspection report. Procedures for assessment are very good and have improved since the time of the previous inspection. However, the school does not always make sufficient use of the information gained from assessments when planning the next stage of learning for pupils.

57. The school is strongly committed to the well-being and welfare of its pupils. The procedures for child protection are very good and comply fully with legal requirements. The headteacher is the designated person responsible and has received relevant training, regularly updated. The school has thorough policies and procedures covering health and safety. Regular health and safety checks and emergency drills are carried out. Staff pay good attention to issues of health and safety in lessons. For example, when a Year 1 class used the apparatus for the first time in a physical education lesson the teacher took care to ensure that they knew how to use it safely and stood clear when others were working. Equipment, such as electrical appliances, is tested in accordance with requirements. Clear procedures are in place for any pupil who becomes ill in school and for dealing with accidents. The school is currently working towards achieving the National Healthy School Standard and pupils are encouraged to make healthy choices about diet and exercise. Parents are confident that their children are safe and well looked after. The very good relationships that staff develop with pupils and their parents contribute to the effectiveness of the care they give.
58. The programme of visits before children enter the reception class ensures that they settle well into school and its routines, quickly becoming confident members of the school community.
59. Throughout the school there is excellent support for pupils with special educational needs because all staff work with imagination and commitment to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. For pupils with statements the support is excellent. Special educational needs are identified at an early stage. Parents are involved at all stages and encouraged to support their child's work at home. Individual education plans are clear and well focused so that pupils are able to make very good progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator works with teachers and with the learning support assistants to ensure that every pupil is supported very well. The school has very good facilities for physically disabled pupils. External support services, such as the behaviour support service and speech and language service, are involved when necessary and staff make sure that any specialist advice or programmes are followed thoroughly. All children are able to take part in the full range of activities. One example of the thoughtful approach is that toilet doors have been rehung to enable physically disabled pupils to use the same toilets as their peers. There is access to all areas of the building for children and adults with physical disabilities. The school has recently admitted a pupil for whom English is an additional language; he has settled into school very quickly because of the sensitive support provided.
60. The school promotes the importance of prompt, regular attendance very well so that almost all pupils attend regularly and on time. Absence is monitored daily, helping to ensure that levels of attendance are consistently very good. In almost all cases parents are meticulous about informing the school of the reason for absence, so that it is rare for any absence to go unexplained. The headteacher tries hard to discourage parents from taking their child out of

school for holidays, especially when national tests are being taken, but holidays account for a high proportion of the absence. Lateness is also monitored, but is infrequent. The school works closely with the education welfare officer when any concerns arise.

61. The behaviour policy has clear aims and sets high expectations. However, it does not provide a framework for rewarding good behaviour or for dealing with unacceptable behaviour across the whole school. This leads to some inconsistencies between teachers in the way they manage it. Although pupils clearly understand what is expected of them they are unsure of the consequences of misbehaving. Teachers consult early with parents when there are concerns about behaviour so that parents and staff work together for improvement. Teachers and other adults provide very good role models for pupils. All adults in school treat pupils with respect, listen to their views and take time to sort out any problems in ways that the pupil understands. Procedures for eliminating bullying and other forms of harassment are very good, securely based on the respect pupils are encouraged to show to others. Circle time is used to discuss feelings so that pupils grow in understanding of the consequences of their actions and words on others. Pupils and their parents are confident that, when bullying does occur, it is dealt with promptly and well. The school has an effective policy for promoting racial equality.
62. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' academic performance are good. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. Information from national assessments in English, mathematics and other information gathered and analysed in detail to compare the school's performance with that of other schools nationally and with other schools in the local education authority. The use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is satisfactory and procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good.
63. There is skilful analysis of data about the school's academic performance information. Additional evidence is drawn from teachers' analysis of pupils' finished work and from discussions with them about it. The information is used to identify areas for improvement and provide teachers with a good basis for planning future school improvement. Good use is made of information, and the school's present focus on writing is a direct result of this analysis. Pupils requiring additional support are identified and the whole school is committed to ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met, in order that they can achieve as well as possible. The thorough procedures for analysing results at a whole-school level have raised teachers' own expectations about achievement and developed their confidence in making judgements about levels of attainment. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent and all statutory requirements are met. The requirements of the Code of Practice are implemented fully. Needs are identified early and outside agencies are used effectively. Teachers ensure such pupils receive all the support necessary. The good provision enables all pupils to make good progress towards their personal targets in their individual education plans. The targets are shared with pupils, parents and teachers, along with regular reviews of progress.
64. Teachers and support staff know their pupils very well as individuals and this enables them to respond sensitively and positively to their needs. In the Foundation Stage, early assessment information is used particularly effectively to plan children's learning. Teachers' assessments

are detailed and help to identify specific learning needs. The targets are shared with pupils, parents and teachers, along with regular reviews of progress. Teachers' assessments are detailed and help to identify the specific learning needs of individual pupils.

65. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is satisfactory. While longer-term planning takes account of pupils' progress over time, the links between on-going assessment and teachers' short-term planning are not clear as there is no monitoring of teachers' short-term planning, thus reducing its effectiveness. The marking of pupils' work is variable. There are very good examples of effective marking in English, where teachers explain why work is good and how it can be improved. In other cases marking consists of ticks and brief comments which do not help pupils to move their learning forward.
66. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. The school overall has good systems in place to track the academic progress of all pupils and to make comparisons of progress year-on-year. This assessment is used well to guide provision in school, such as support for pupils with special educational needs and aspects of the curriculum highlighted for improvement.
67. The school has worked hard to improve assessment procedures in response to the criticism in the last inspection of the use made of such information. Assessment overall shows considerable improvement over that reported in the previous inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

68. The responses to the parents' questionnaire, comments at the parents' meeting and discussion with parents during the inspection indicate that parents are satisfied with the school and very supportive of it. Without exception, parents state that their child likes school. Parents believe that the teaching is good. Almost all would feel comfortable to approach staff with any concerns. They are confident that the school achieves a high standard of good behaviour, that their child is making good progress, is encouraged to work hard and is helped to become a mature and responsible individual. They have confidence in the way the school is led and managed. There is an unusually high consensus that the school provides the right amount of homework. However, some parents are concerned that they do not receive sufficient information about the progress their child is making and some do not feel that the school works closely with parents. A significant number stated that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.
69. Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views of the school. Inspection evidence bears out concerns that parents could be better informed about how their child is getting on in that, although parents are informed about the targets set for their child, they are not kept up to date on the progress made towards meeting them. However, the school is working hard to involve all parents as active partners in their child's education and responds quickly to any concerns raised by parents. The range of activities outside lessons, such as clubs, visits and visitors to school, is greater than commonly seen in infant schools.

70. The school encourages parents to become involved from the time they are considering sending their child to the school. There is a very good programme of visits for parents and children prior to starting school and the “Starting School” booklet is very helpful. Parents appreciate the fact that they are able to get to know their child’s teacher before he or she starts school.
71. The school has established a wide range of good links with parents, including the well established home-school agreement. Parents are encouraged to help children at home and the “Starting School” booklet provides a lot of useful information about how to do so. Meetings are held for parents about a range of topics, such as the literacy strategy, and the school tries hard to ensure that these are at a convenient time. Those who are unable to attend are provided with written information. Parents have two opportunities each year to consult with their child’s teacher, including a meeting to discuss the annual report. They are also welcome to talk to the teacher at any time, by arrangement. Many parents make use of the time at the beginning and end of the school day to talk to the teacher, but a significant number of working parents are not able to do this on a regular basis. Pupils all have a reading record book but these are not fully developed as a channel for communication between home and school. The school is planning to produce a home-school book to encourage a greater degree of communication and involvement in other work as well as reading.
72. The school has recently established a parents’ working group that will be involved in discussing any proposed changes and in ensuring that parents’ views are heard. The headteacher has sent a questionnaire to parents and the information gained will be used when planning improvements. The parent-teacher association is a successful group that holds events throughout the year and raises a significant amount of money to support the work of the school as well as providing opportunities for parents to meet socially. Support for the events is very good. The association was actively involved in the successful campaign for the new school building.
73. The school provides a wide range of good quality information for parents. The school brochure and governors’ annual report to parents are full of useful information, although some details are missing. For example, the sections on special educational needs do not provide information on the success of the policy and there is no detail about the progress made towards the action plan. Information about the curriculum is sent out on a regular basis to all parents. Newsletters are frequent and informative. School policies are available to parents on request and are written in a clear jargon-free style. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed and involved at all stages.
74. The quality of the annual progress reports on pupils to their parents is good overall. Reception class reports are very good; they provide a very clear picture of the child’s attitude to learning and of their progress. In Years 1 and 2, comments on English, mathematics and science are usually detailed and provide a clear picture of attainment. Comments in other subjects are often brief but usually provide sufficient information about the standard the pupil has achieved. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 are encouraged to make a contribution to their own reports. Although the reports give a clear picture of what each pupil knows and can do, there are few comments to help parents understand the progress made by their child. However, parents have the opportunity to discuss their child’s progress in detail at the subsequent

consultation meeting. Attendance at this is very high. Parents are informed of the targets set for their child early in the school year, but currently they are not kept informed throughout the year. This means that some children achieve the target and parents do not know whether a more challenging one has then been set. The lack of ongoing involvement limits the opportunities for parents to help their child achieve and leads to some dissatisfaction with the process.

75. Parents are welcome to help in school in a variety of ways and a small number provide regular support. Special events are very well supported. After art week, for example, the work was put on display and a video was shown so that parents could see how the finished artwork was made. The school runs regular community groups; Books for Babies and Family Workshops, which are well attended by parents and other members of the community.
76. Overall, the school has maintained the positive partnership with parents noted in the previous inspection report. The headteacher is committed to involving all parents as active partners in their child's learning. The school works hard and has made good progress in this area and ensures that parents' views are sought and considered when decisions are made.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

77. The leadership and management of the headteacher and members of the senior management team is very good. The headteacher has a clear, child-centred vision, which encompasses the development of the staff team as well as the education of children. She has empowered the team through focused training, including the 'Investors in People' award, and strengthened their commitment to achieving high standards. The headteacher's philosophy is manifested in the aim of the school; 'growing in confidence' which applies equally to staff, pupils and other members of the school community. The commitment to raising standards driven by the headteacher is also owned by the governors, senior management team and staff. There is a strong commitment to the pastoral care and total well being of pupils, but not at the expense of rigour. The headteacher is an efficient manager. She has delegated many of her previous teaching and subject responsibilities well and has established very secure systems for evaluating the work of the school and sharing the information with staff and governors.
78. The School Improvement Plan is a very useful document, which enables staff and governors to focus on the areas for improvement and measure their success. The plan has been instrumental in raising standards because it is the result of careful analysis of the school's results and accurate self-evaluation. It contains a small number of manageable priorities, states what needs to be done, who will do it, by when, how the success will be measured and who will monitor it. Staff and governors have their roles clearly identified and all priorities are rooted in pupils' achievements. Staff and governors are sure about the main focus for development and can talk about the progress the school has made in raising the attainment of more able pupils, how they had achieved it and what remains to be done. Parents are less well aware of the main priorities for development and do not contribute sufficiently to self-evaluation, but the school has plans in place to improve communication in this area. Senior managers are developing an increasing role in evaluating the success of the plan and priorities for future development.

79. The school demonstrates excellent commitment to its aims and values. The way in which pupils are valued, cared for and taught, speaks loudly of the central aim to 'nurture the development of children, catering for their emotional, spiritual, social, physical and learning needs'. There is a dynamic commitment to inclusion for all members of the community. Excellent relationships and a very effective team approach enrich the quality of teaching and learning and lie at the heart of the school's success.
80. The headteacher has provided good quality guidance and training for subject managers to enable them to contribute to school improvement. Teachers are clear about what they need to do to monitor their subject and the link with subject governors is particularly strong. All managers have conducted some evaluation of how well pupils achieve. Monitoring is carried out on a rolling programme. The monitoring of teaching by subject co-ordinators is at an early stage in some subjects, and comments are too often descriptive rather than helpfully critical. Staff have a good knowledge of standards from the thorough assessment procedures in place for all subjects, but their procedures for investigating the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils are not consistent enough. For example, lesson plans are not checked to ensure that the agreed objectives are being taught or that the teaching is matched to the different needs of pupils. Not all teachers monitor their subject in the same way and some methods are more effective than others. Self-evaluation is strongest in the subject areas identified for improvement, and appropriate time and resources have been devoted to ensuring that monitoring takes place. The headteacher monitors teaching, but there is insufficient use of the senior managers to monitor whole school planning and teaching.
81. The governing body fulfils its duties very well. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. They have established very effective methods of monitoring the performance of the school through a range of committees. The action planning management committee has been particularly effective in steering the developments of the school since the last inspection. Governors linked to subject areas have a very good knowledge of their role and use their planned visits to the school very well to seek and receive information from subject managers. The relationship with the school is now one of 'critical friend'. Governors are well aware of the challenges the school has faced and have been very effective in working with the headteacher to bring about an improvement in standards. All committees receive information from school staff and report it to the full governing body. Governors have demonstrated very well that they seek information beyond that offered by the school and have engaged local education authority advisers and external management consultants in order to gain an objective view. Since the previous inspection, governors have demonstrated their faith in the headteacher and staff and their determination to prove the effectiveness of the school. They have sought and received training, established a range of working sub-groups, monitored subjects regularly, met regularly with the headteacher and helped to manage the challenging process of moving the school into a new building.
82. The improvements since the last inspection are the result of a very effective approach to self-evaluation and action planning. Results have been analysed and the information used to work on areas of weakness. All pupils have targets set for their level of attainment by the age of seven. These targets are shared with all teachers and progress towards them is monitored

regularly by the headteacher. School development planning has improved and has involved a team of governors to monitor the trail of evidence towards success. Teaching groups have been reorganised into year groups and more able pupils have been given more challenging work. The headteacher and the local education authority have successfully monitored teaching. Training has been given to teachers in mathematics and literacy and the school has invested in a wealth of training for non-teaching staff. As a result, the quality of teaching is greatly improved and pupils are reaching higher standards in many subjects.

83. The headteacher has maintained a strong team and there have been few new additions to the staff since the previous inspection. When new staff are employed, there is an effective induction process in place. The school has offered provision for long-term Initial Teacher Training since the last inspection, but this was not taken up. The school has great potential to be an effective provider.
84. The arrangements for appraising and developing staff are very secure and have contributed to the school's success. The governing body has set targets for the headteacher using objective consultation with external agencies.
85. The School Improvement Plan indicates that appropriate funding supports priorities. The school has, rightly, used a considerable underspend to ensure that pupils have access to furniture and learning resources of comparably high quality to the building itself. The improvement in standards has resulted from carefully planned spending in the targeted areas, for example literacy and numeracy. The wider educational opportunities offered by the excellent environment for indoor and outdoor learning have also had a positive effect on the standards of education provided by the school.
86. Finances are well managed by the headteacher and governors, with considerable input from the administration officer, who operates efficient systems for the control of spending within agreed limits. Administration is efficient and good use is made of new technology including the increasing use of Email.
87. Grants designated to the school are very well used, particularly in the areas of staff development and special educational needs.
88. The headteacher and governors ensure that comparisons are made with the performance of other similar schools locally and nationally. These comparisons influence the targets the school sets itself. Governors are very experienced in seeking best value for contracts and purchases and have managed the process very well during the building and equipping of the new school. They have a good understanding that cheapest is not always best in terms of the effect that purchases have on pupils' progress.
89. Teachers and support staff provide an excellent range of expertise to ensure that all subjects are well taught. The contribution to success made by the team of learning support assistants is outstanding. They provide exceptional care and professional support to pupils with a very wide range of physical, emotional and learning needs. Their commitment to the progress pupils make is on a par with that of the teaching staff. They plan and prepare exciting,

challenging activities for groups and individuals, monitor and record their progress and celebrate their daily achievements. Staff responsible for individual pupils with particular special educational needs are devoted to ensuring that those pupils are cherished, valued and fully included in all aspects of school life.

90. The accommodation for learning is excellent. The new building is outstanding in its provision of an exceptionally well-planned environment for learning and play. The classroom and outdoor spaces make possible the full range of learning experiences, particularly for children under five. The excellent quality of the building, internal furnishings, displays and resources reflects the aims of the school and enables all those who work and learn within it to feel valued. Outdoor areas for learning are exemplary. All pupils have access to outdoor spaces where learning can be taken beyond the classroom, even on wet days. The spaces are enhanced by living and man-made structures which are exciting and attractive; willow hideaways, play houses, hills and ramps enhance social and spiritual development. The preservation and use of a large hedge, garden areas, sand and beach cobbles all add rich opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills, including the use of talk and imagination. Pupils constantly experience new invitations to touch, smell and look at objects of natural beauty through a wide array of displays. Selections of mirrors provide ways for pupils to discover the wonder of a reflected object or admire themselves wearing a hat they have just designed and created. Pride is taken in the care and maintenance of the new building by staff and pupils. It is in excellent condition.
91. Resources for learning in the areas of the curriculum are very good overall. The school has invested a substantial amount of money to provide very good resources for literacy, numeracy, music, art and design, information and communication technology, design and technology, and physical education. Resources for geography and history are good and for religious education they are satisfactory. Quiet areas on the main corridor are well resourced with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books which pupils enjoy reading and sharing with others. Attractive bean bags and other comfortable seats make the book areas inviting. Even pupils' chairs in the reading area are made to contribute to spiritual development as they are decorated with a range of phrases to provoke reflection; e.g. 'tread softly, for you tread on my dreams'.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

92. In order to sustain the improvement the school has achieved and build on the already very high standards, the headteacher, governors and staff should work together to:

- (1) Provide regular and meaningful feedback about learning to pupils and parents by:
 - Improving teachers' use of day-to-day assessment and the quality of feedback to pupils, including marking.
(see paragraphs 45, 113, 119, 122, 132, 140, 150, 171, 176, 185)
 - Informing parents more regularly about their children's progress towards their learning targets.
(see paragraphs 36, 68, 69, 71, 74, 78)
- (2) Improve the behaviour of a small number of boys by:
 - Introducing a consistent approach to promoting positive behaviour, which is understood by staff, pupils and parents.
(see paragraphs 19, 21, 36, 129, 130, 144)
- (3) Raise the standards in religious education to the levels achieved in other subjects.
(see paragraphs 14, 91, 182, 184)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	18	10	8	0	0	0
Percentage	3	49	27	22	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		118
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		13

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	26	12	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	25
	Girls	10	12	12
	Total	34	37	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (100)	97 (100)	97 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	23	25
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	35	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	89 (100)	95 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	134	1	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	1	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	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	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 – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	319,753
Total expenditure	325,931
Expenditure per pupil	2,194
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,000
Balance carried forward to next year	6,178

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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

138

Number of questionnaires returned

43

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	32	2	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	36	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	46	7	0	0
The teaching is good.	64	33	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	31	7	7	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	14	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	36	2	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	40	43	12	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	52	38	5	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	36	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	31	12	5	21

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

93. The Foundation Stage of education includes children who are four and five years old in the reception classes. At the time of the inspection only half the children were present as the school takes children in September and January. Although it is a very effective provider of early years education, the school has no pre-school provision and takes children from the pre-school providers in the town. Good links exist between the school and the play groups, but children were only just beginning to establish themselves as a group at the time of the inspection. Much of the teaching during the inspection was based on conducting extensive assessments in all the areas of learning from which targets are set and the various needs of groups and individuals are established.
94. Overall, the provision of education in the Foundation Stage is very good. The high standards of the last inspection have been maintained and the quality of the learning environment and resources have improved. Evidence from previous assessments indicates that children's development when they enter the reception class is broadly average. There is a range of children with special educational needs and some with above average ability. These children are recognised early and supported very well in their learning. At the time of the inspection the reception group was showing achievement higher than that typically known in the school.
95. Children make very good progress in the majority of areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. The teaching in reception is consistently very good. Activities are very well planned to match the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. The learning objectives are made very clear to the team of learning support assistants, who make an excellent contribution to the education of children in the Reception class. The excellent resources the school now has are used very well to provide a very stimulating and exciting range of experiences covering all the areas of learning. The exceptional outdoor area is used extensively to develop physical skills, personal and social skills and knowledge and understanding of the world. Teaching offers a good balance of formal delivery and learning through carefully designed play activities. Children's own ideas are frequently used to influence learning experiences. For example, children were fascinated by cobbles of a variety of shapes, calling them 'aliens'. The teacher then developed the planning to include a construction activity around making vehicles to fit the 'aliens' and talk about 'alien' journeys. Children are constantly required to make choices and bring their own ideas to the learning. They are secure in routines and understand what is expected of them. Very good assessment procedures and very effective marking and feedback result in children having learning experiences that will lead them on to the next stage.
96. Curriculum planning is very detailed at the medium term stage. Topics and themes are planned to deliver the learning from the Foundation Stage curriculum. Well-designed activities are presented to enable learning through play and exploration in line with a strong philosophy based on the approaches to learning used in the Reggio Emilia region of Italy. As a result, children develop a fascination for learning and enjoy being creative. They quickly develop concentration and care in the way they carry out their tasks and remain absorbed for long

periods of time. For example, children age four carefully selected a designing and making activity and stuck at it for 30 minutes. When it was finished they were able to admire their work in a mirror and talk about it, taking great pride in what they had done, before moving on to another activity in which they became equally absorbed. Session planning is not as detailed as longer term planning and is more flexible. Learning intentions are very secure, but are not shared with children and parents as well as they could be.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

97. By age five children show standards in this area that are above the national expectation and many reach a higher standard.
98. Teaching in this area is very good. Routines are very well established and children are made to feel very safe and secure in school. Two weeks into the year children showed that they knew how to sort out their own belongings at the start of the day, sit in a circle and look after the books and resources they were working with. Children dress and undress themselves for physical education and look after their own hygiene very well. All children showed confidence in talking in the class circle and respond very enthusiastically when asked to share ideas for making sets of letters and numbers. Children play in a variety of groups and include each other in role play and other games. They actively seek new people to join in new ideas for role play, decide what they need and set up new play situations, for example a café outdoors with kitchen area, menus, waitresses and customers. Those children with special educational needs make particularly good progress in their personal and social development with the help of the learning support assistants. Children also respond well to quiet thinking times and changes of mood, listening attentively with wonder to the wind chimes and soft music. They show great pleasure in their learning and use the range of natural objects and resources to develop admiration and imagination. Mirrors provide opportunities for children to explore things from different angles, admire themselves and each other wearing hats they have made, and gasp with delight when they watch their breath mist the mirror over and then disappear.

Communication, Language and Literacy

99. By age five children's attainment is above national expectation in reading, writing and speaking and listening. The children seen in the inspection week were still gathering confidence with each other and the staff, but were still able to hold conversations with adults and explain what they were doing and why. Children with special educational needs make very good progress. Children in the role play area of a station were able to tell each other that they needed a ticket, what time the train would leave and where it was going. In literacy sessions children showed that they can read repeated phrases from a big book along with the teacher and join in simple rhymes. They can identify who the author is and begin to recognise some text with the help of the teacher. The majority of children can recognise initial letter sounds and write them in rows from left to right with very little guidance. Teaching is very good.
100. Staff are very skilled in developing children's talk, and take every opportunity to engage them in conversation, to develop new vocabulary. Activities are carefully designed and supported.

101. By age five the majority of children are attempting writing on their own with some recognisable words and letters, reading simple texts in the reading schemes and sharing more difficult books talking about the pictures and the story with an adult.

Mathematical Development

102. By age five children's mathematical development is above national expectations. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during the time in reception. Children show that they can count to ten, recall simple number facts, order objects from large to small, identify a range of shapes and find simple ways to record data such as eye colour by drawing pictures and counting them.
103. Teaching of mathematical awareness is very good. Children are encouraged to count using routines and rhymes, name and talk about shapes, their numbers of sides and properties. Feely bags and objects introduce an element of surprise and develop language. Children are encouraged to think of ways to sort shapes and other objects and can give reasons for their ways of sorting. Use of a wide range of resources encourages children to make and explain patterns in number, colour size and shape. Mathematics is also encouraged through play and in other subjects such as physical education, where the shape is explored using movement.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

104. Children achieve above the national expectation by the age of five in this area of learning. They make very good progress.
105. Children are introduced to computers from their earliest days in school. They show that they can move the mouse with confidence to move and position objects on the screen. By the time they leave Reception they are producing simple charts using a data program and using the computer to word process their ideas.
106. Teaching in this area of learning is consistently very good. The high quality equipment and the outstanding outdoor environment provide many opportunities to learn about the world. Children can handle play maps, position buildings and people and talk about why they are there. The role play areas provide good quality dressing up clothes and well planned play tasks based on themes. Children playing in the station have the opportunity to use spoken and written language and work out times and numbers when pretending to organise the trains and sell the tickets. The garden area provides opportunities for children to arrange paths and plant seeds. Design tasks are often linked to ongoing themes, or taken from stories, encouraging children to transfer ideas and skills from one area of learning to another. The willow dens and play houses provide many rich opportunities for role play. Termly plans indicate that there are opportunities for children to experience other cultures and to learn about the past.

Physical Development

107. Children age five achieve well above the national expectation in physical skills. The excellent quality resources in the outdoor area and the indoor hall enable children to confidently develop the use of their bodies in many different ways.
108. Children enjoy riding a selection of bikes with increasing skill and balance. They can talk about riding safely and why they need to wear helmets. They experience crawling, balancing, jumping and swinging through the large play equipment indoors and outdoors. Physical education sessions develop children's skills in moving around using their bodies to crawl in all directions and make shapes at a variety of levels. Children can move around freely without crowding or bumping and talk about the effect of exercise on their bodies. Teaching in this area is very good.
109. Fine motor skills are well developed through the use of tools, pencils, paint brushes and small construction kits. Most children can use scissors well without help and can select a range of different ways to join card together to make a caterpillar, for example sticking, tying, punching holes and fastening with paper fasteners and sticky tape.

Creative Development

110. Teaching in this area is very good. Children achieve above the expected levels by the age of five. The very high standards reflect the school's commitment to developing creativity through as many areas of the curriculum as possible. Children show that they can mix and use paint to create patterns and pictures. They confidently choose paper and fill the page with colour, using brushes in different ways. They work with others to make collages and large paintings choosing textures, shapes and three-dimensional objects, placing them carefully and attaching them using the most appropriate type of glue. Children can imagine animals and then choose fabrics, paper and other found materials to represent the colours and features of the animal, telling what they mean. Even the youngest children can use their own ideas to make a hat, wear it and tell you what they were thinking of when they made it, for example, a crocodile, a dinosaur, a scary hat, a happy hat. By the end of the year children can create pictures in the style of an artist using a range of painting techniques and apply the finishing touches with a very fine brush.
111. Skills in music are developed through very effective teaching. Children learn to listen to a range of different music in different situations. Sometimes music is used as they enter the classroom to change the mood. They are encouraged to listen and describe the sound of the rain on the roof and the wind chimes. In more formal settings children learn to play percussion instruments in response to a signal from the teacher and other children. They clap in time to music and enjoy singing simple songs linked to the curriculum theme.
112. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The co-ordinator has a wealth of experience and understanding about how young children learn, which is reflected in the planning and teaching in the Reception classes. There is a strong commitment to learning through high quality first hand experiences, but this is not at the expense of

progress and assessment, which is very secure. The very high quality provision has much to offer to the under fives in the community.

113. The judgements are similar to those made at the last inspection when the provision for the Foundation Stage was very good. The excellent range of resources and equipment now available has improved the quality of learning.

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards in speaking and listening are good.
- Standards in reading are higher than those found nationally.
- Higher attaining pupils reach very high standards in reading.
- Pupils can write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences.
- The quality of teaching is good.

Areas for improvement

- Marking needs to give more consistent feedback to pupils.
- Presentation is too variable and lowers the standard of some potentially good written work.

114. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were average in reading and above average in writing. Teacher assessment indicates average speaking skills, with reading and writing being assessed as above average. Results from the unvalidated 2002 data from the national tests show that overall reading standards are above national averages, but the percentage of pupils who attained the higher levels in reading had doubled. In writing, by contrast there was a small decline in the test results in the numbers of pupils who achieved the expected level, and a very slight decline in those achieving the higher levels.
115. When compared to similar schools, the same pattern emerges. Teacher's assessments in 2002 were similar to the test results. Over time, there has been a steady and sustained improvement in most years, which has matched the trend of improvement nationally, and there has been satisfactory improvement overall since the last inspection, with good improvement in reading.
116. The school has been very successful in its efforts to raise standards in reading, particularly for higher attainers and for those pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils achieve well and make good progress in reading. Careful planning, very good teaching of basic skills and rigorous assessment procedures, the outcomes of which are used very well to plan future work, are major reasons for the school's improvement. In addition, teachers' high expectations and brisk use of time in lessons also contribute to the high standards being attained. Pupils, teachers and support staff are committed to hard work and high standards. Support staff are particularly well used and work diligently to ensure the inclusion of all pupils in the learning activities, particularly pupils having special educational needs.

117. The inspection findings indicate that speaking and listening skills are on target to be above the standards expected at the age of seven. Rich opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in extended conversations. Effective questioning extends pupils' use of English, promoting confidence in speaking aloud. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and ideas about texts in literacy hours. In a Year 2 lesson pupils spoke confidently and with clarity, describing the rules of a game requiring complex explanation. The higher attainers spoke very articulately and read expressively and fluently, but all children demonstrated a good level of confidence when speaking aloud to an audience. Pupils are well motivated by a range of exciting and challenging texts and learning activities. They are eager to volunteer their ideas and to respond to questions. In a Year 1 class, pupils were keen to give their suggestions about what might happen next in the story, *Who's in the Shed?*. The teacher drew in pupils with special educational needs into the discussion well, praising their efforts. They responded very positively to this. Pupils respond well to imaginative and exciting teaching styles.
118. Pupils are on course to attain above average standards in reading by the age of seven, with higher attaining pupils on course to achieve standards well above levels expected nationally. The majority of pupils has secure phonic skills and employ a range of strategies to help them read. Average and below average pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of initial sounds and make good use of picture clue, when tackling unfamiliar words. They read competently but lack the fluency and expression of the higher attainers, who make very effective use of punctuation for emphasis and read confidently with good comprehension. Higher attaining pupils read with fluency and expression appropriate to the story. Pupils are happy to discuss their reading, and higher attainers express their preferences, having an increasing knowledge of authors and reading an increasing range of fiction, and non-fiction. Higher attaining pupils particularly read a wide range of material including, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Mrs Wobble the Waitress* and *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*, although the range of material read by all pupils is appropriately broad. They can appreciate the humour in the stories. Pupils write very good reviews of books that they have read and can compare two books, giving reasons for their judgements, explaining clearly why they prefer one book to another. Some pupils understand alphabetical order and how books are classified in the library. Book provision is adequate and the location of the library makes the material accessible to pupils. However, though the range of material is adequate they would benefit from more extended stories by a range of significant authors. There are 16 pupils involved in the local library partnership project, 'Book Track'. Year 2 pupils develop enthusiasm for reading as they eagerly work towards the different awards. Library skills are effectively developed and the role of learning support assistants contributes significantly to this. Pupils with special educational needs receive excellent support in lessons and this enables them to make good gains in their learning. The very good focus on language in other areas of the curriculum reinforces these important skills and contributes very well to pupils' confidence in, and enjoyment of, reading.
119. Standards in writing are average and pupils are on course to reach average levels of attainment by the age of seven at the end of Year 2. Within this overall picture there are considerable variations in performance. Standards of the higher attaining pupils are well above those expected for pupils of their age. Their written book reviews are of a very high

standard and their imaginative writing also reaches very high standards in its use of language and expression. In one imaginative piece of writing a description of a girl walking on a beach alone was of particularly high quality. Other pupils too produce very good work but, on occasion, the standard is lowered by variable presentation. All pupils can write for a variety of purposes and audiences. They can write instructions clearly on how to play a game or making flapjacks in a cooking lesson. They can write letters and good accounts of trips that they have been on. Skills in handwriting are developed systematically. Pupils write with increasing competence as they move through the school. Many write neatly and begin to join their writing in Year 2, demonstrating good skills. The good attention to punctuation, spelling strategies and patterns ensures good standards in these areas. Sometimes however, untidy presentation and errors in common spellings reduce the quality of potentially good work. Some use is made of ICT to produce book covers for small topic books compiled by the pupils. Marking plays an important part in giving feedback to pupils about the progress they are making. In the best marking clear comments enable pupils to understand the strengths of their work and how to improve it in the future. Sometimes marking is variable. On occasion, where it consists of ticks and brief comments, pupils receive insufficient feedback to as to how they could improve their work and avoid common errors.

120. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan their work carefully so that it is matched well to pupils' needs. In most classes learning objectives are shared at the start of lessons so that pupils are clear about what is expected. Time is used very effectively; the brisk pace to lessons ensuring pupils cover a good amount of work. Learning support assistants are very well deployed and clearly briefed so that they make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. Basic skills are very carefully taught and opportunities to extend learning are created. Effective use is made of the ends of lessons to reinforce teaching and learning as well as to promote speaking skills. In most classes and around the school, work is displayed to a high standard, the learning environments enhancing learning as a result and celebrating success. Pupils work hard in response to the teachers' high expectations. Their positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning are very apparent. Teachers are conscientious and work hard. The use of setting for some aspects of English has improved attainment. Good links are made to all areas of the curriculum, for example, pupils are encouraged to write about different aspects of their learning in history, geography, religious education and design and technology. Teachers present pupils with a wide range of purposeful reading, writing and speaking and listening experiences. Planning is thorough and there are very good assessment procedures in English. Results of national and school assessments are used well to inform medium-term planning. All assessment information is rigorously analysed to identify weaknesses, which are then targeted through thorough and effective planning. The National Literacy Strategy has been very successfully implemented and resources improved to support this. Purposeful monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinator and headteacher is effectively improving learning. The use of target setting and careful tracking of progress from year-to-year ensures pupils are challenged and make good gains in their learning. These improvements are contributing to sustaining and improving standards in English. Pupils with special educational needs receive excellent support and work is well matched to their needs. Targets within the individual education plans are clearly drawn up and provide a specific guide to teachers when planning work.

121. Parental support for pupils' learning in English is good. Parents enter into a dialogue with school through the reading log that is sent home, enabling regular two-way communication to take place between home and school. Learning is well enhanced by a well-planned programme of information meetings for parents. The next step is to improve pupils' knowledge of their own learning.
122. The subject is well managed. The recently appointed co-ordinator provides a very good example, with detailed and comprehensive guidelines, and works closely in conjunction with the headteacher. There is a strong focus on monitoring teaching and learning. The effective team approach underpins the good quality of teaching and learning taking place and is contributing effectively to the raising standards.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**

Strengths

- Standards achieved by age seven are very high.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- Pupils learn to apply mathematics very well and explore a range of methods.
- Teaching is usually very good.

Areas for improvement

- Improve marking and feedback to pupils.

123. During the inspection five numeracy lessons were seen and teaching was observed in all classes. The work done by pupils in the previous year was examined and discussions took place with the numeracy co-ordinator.
124. By age seven standards in numeracy are very good. In 2001 the test results for pupils aged seven indicated that the school achieved in line with the national average and with schools in similar contexts. Although more pupils were gaining the higher Level 3 in 2001 than in previous years, the numbers of pupils achieving the higher level was below the national average and well below that of similar schools. The 2002 test results and the work seen during the inspection indicate further significant improvements in mathematics. In 2002 all pupils achieved Level 2, 78 per cent of pupils achieved above the higher Level 2b and 36 per cent achieved Level 3. One pupil achieved Level 4. In the last three years the school has increased the numbers of pupils achieving the higher levels and attainments have remained above the national average.
125. There is very little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and those of higher ability are now making good progress. Standards have improved very significantly since the last inspection.
126. Other subjects in the curriculum link very well with numeracy. Through art and design activities pupils have opportunities to measure, count, fit shapes together and compare size. Giving directions and using data is part of science and geography. Counting and performing

calculations are part of other activities such as registration and calculating numbers of pupils staying for lunch. Pupils use computers to produce graphs and use data.

127. By age seven most pupils show that they can count objects and recall number facts to make 20. Pupils age six were confident in solving problems using mental calculations. They could suggest different combinations of coins to total a range of amount up to 50p. Most could partition numbers into tens and units and perform addition using this method. Skills in using and applying mathematics are well developed because of teaching methods, which encourage questioning and practical tasks. Pupils age five were confident in making and discussing patterns on a 100 square. Pupils age six could find a number of ways to make the number 30 using addition, subtraction and simple multiplication and talk about their methods.
128. Teaching in the infants ranges from satisfactory to very good and is very good overall. Very good teaching has strengths, which include:
 - Detailed planning with clear learning objectives.
 - Swift pace, moving quickly from one activity to the next.
 - Tasks designed to make pupils of different abilities think for themselves and solve problems.
 - Good relationships and behaviour management.
 - High levels of expectation and challenge.
129. Where teaching was less effective it was because routines for managing excited behaviour were not secure, particularly in whole class teaching sessions. Sometimes tasks were not well understood by some pupils and they missed the point of the learning.
130. The majority of pupils progress well in lessons and over time. They enjoy mathematics and their behaviour in lessons ranges from satisfactory to very good. When pupils behave very well they are attentive and keen to answer questions putting hands up, they work well in pairs and groups, they stay on task for long periods and concentrate well. Where behaviour is less consistently managed a small number of pupils call out and lose concentration in whole class teaching sessions and slow the pace of learning for the rest of the class. Pupils' behaviour is generally much better when they are absorbed in problem solving and independent tasks than when they are being taught formally as a class.
131. The school has responded very well to the issues raised in the previous report. The reorganisation of classes into year groups, training for staff in the teaching of numeracy, the use of setting, and the increased match of tasks to pupils' needs has resulted in better progress. The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to very good since the last inspection and results have improved, particularly for more able pupils.
132. Mathematics is well managed. The co-ordinator has analysed results and assessments to identify what needs to improve. Pro-active management has resulted in improvements in standards. The school improvement plan has been well used to plan actions, which have focused work on raising standards in mathematics. The headteacher monitors progress against individual targets. The numeracy governor is involved in monitoring teaching and

standards with the co-ordinator. Resources are of a high quality and the new building has provided many more opportunities for the study of mathematics in the outdoor environment. Planning is monitored at the termly stage, but there is insufficient monitoring of lesson plans and marking is not always used to give meaningful feedback.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- Attainment in science is good.
- Pupils work hard and make good progress in the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The attainment of girls is below that of boys.

133. Standards of attainment in science are on course to exceed those normally expected for pupils aged seven. Teachers' assessments in 2001 show that the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above was similar to national average in all elements of science. The proportion of pupils being assessed at Level 3 was below average. The unvalidated data for 2002 shows a marked improvement in these results, with all pupils achieving Level 2 or above and 25 per cent achieving Level 3. These standards are higher than those attained nationally. An analysis of the results showed that the area of science pupils were not as good as those nationally was in scientific enquiry. Pupils achieve above average standards compared to similar schools. A significantly higher percentage of boys attain higher levels in all aspects of science than girls. The school is aware of this and has measures in place to monitor the progress of girls more closely in lessons and over time.
134. In work seen during the inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving standards that are above those expected for their age. Pupils can identify a range of common materials and describe the properties; for instance, they can describe the ways that materials are changed by heating and cooling. Pupils understand the need for nutrition in living things and can link this knowledge to their own physical needs for healthy living. Pupils' basic understanding is good. They can make accurate measurements of weight and temperature and record these on a chart. In these activities, boys work more confidently than girls and make quicker progress in their learning.
135. At the last inspection, teachers assessed the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 as being very high compared to national results, but the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels was below national averages. Since the last inspection there has been a satisfactory improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in national assessments.
136. In the three lessons seen teachers were very well prepared and had a thorough knowledge of the aspects of science they were to teach, as a result the quality of teaching was good. They used questioning of pupils effectively and encouraged them to predict what would happen. In one lesson, pupils were given large ice cubes that they had to weigh and chart the rate of melting. In another they had to predict what would happen when a range of different kinds of

items were subjected to heat. Careful questioning demonstrated to the pupils that in some cases the process was reversible, but that in others it is permanent.

137. Pupils responded well in these lessons and their attitudes to science are very positive. They maintain concentration throughout the lessons and, although in some cases they were over-exuberant, the pace of learning was brisk and pupils learned well. They worked well together enthusiastically answering questions from the teacher and recording results. They work collaboratively and shared equipment; recording results logically in a table.
138. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator with high expectations. The school uses the Devon advice for school co-ordinators on assessment. This emphasises focusing on a target group of pupils, and the system is now being operated successfully by the school. In the current year the school is aware of pupils' lower performance in the area of scientific enquiry. As a result it has been made a priority this year. Links have been made between science teaching and art and design. The new premises have a pond on the site and this will provide a valuable resource in the future when safe access for classes has been put in place. The medium-term plans have adapted the contents of the most recent curriculum guidance. In each unit of work, suggested investigative activities, assessment strategies, resources, and a list of useful vocabulary to aid staff and pupils to use more scientific language are included. A number of initiatives to stimulate an interest in the subject throughout the school have been introduced. This is an important reason for all pupils to look forward to and enjoy their science lessons.
139. There has been a clear focus on raising the standards of the higher attainers. Activities are planned to meet pupils' needs. Teachers are encouraging pupils to achieve greater independence and to take greater responsibility in lessons.
140. All pupils enjoy investigative work and this is particularly beneficial to pupils with special educational needs, who receive good quality support from classroom assistants and other pupils in the class.

ART AND DESIGN

The provision for art and design is **very good**.

Strengths

- The quality of experiences pupils are given are rich and exciting.
- Teaching is very good.
- Standards are very high by age seven.
- The school encourages use of ideas and imagination in art and design.

Areas for improvement

- Better use of the assessments teachers make to give different work to more and less able pupils.
141. Three art and design lessons were seen during the inspection. A wide range of work was seen on display and in pupils' books. The co-ordinator was not available for discussion, but planning and management files were examined.
 142. By age seven standards in art and design are very good. Pupils grow in skills and knowledge and creativity from a rich experience in reception. By the time they are at the end of Year 2 they show that they can use a very wide range of materials in many different ways to represent images and abstract ideas. Pupils are confident in making choices of paper, tools, colours, textures and materials and can explain why they make the choices and what their pictures represent. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the sculpture of Andy Goldsworthy and represent the ideas in their own work with natural objects outdoors. They then developed their ideas into pictures using materials from nature, which they could then work on as a group to arrange and rearrange as a larger sculpture of a tree. Work with local artists has resulted in abstract paintings and sculptures that would not be out of place in an art gallery, as they are of such outstanding quality. Some pupils with special educational needs in other areas achieve very well in art and design and their talents are acknowledged and developed.
 143. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection, when they were satisfactory. The exceptional environment has provided many more stimulating resources, space and storage. The cathedral-like design of the main area in the school has provided an excellent space in which to display art to its best advantage.
 144. The teaching seen during the inspection was good overall and ranged from satisfactory to very good. The planning and evidence of work on display and in books suggests that the quality of teaching is generally good and very good. High quality teaching is well planned and very well resourced. Pupils are well informed about artists and their work and then encouraged to develop similar ideas and skills. Teaching enables pupils to improve their skills and develop their own ideas. Organisation is very secure and allows pupils to be independent and successful. Where teaching was less than good, behaviour was restless from a small number of pupils and they distracted others in the class.
 145. Pupils thoroughly enjoy art and design and are keen to tell others so. They remain absorbed in their work for long periods of time and take great pride in their finished pieces. Pupils readily share equipment and ideas. When being taught by artists, they worked very successfully with pupils from other classes including the reception class. Art and design makes a very valuable contribution to spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about the work of famous artists and learn to appreciate a range of artistic styles, they express ideas from music in group paintings and learn to reflect on beauty and form as they are encouraged to look very closely at patterns in nature.
 146. Management of the subject is good. Planning links art and design to other curriculum areas and gives a selection of good ideas for teaching. The approach to art and design reflects the

aims and ethos of the school very well. Assessment is good and is used to ensure that gifted and talented pupils are identified and challenged. Monitoring of the subject is at an early stage. Resources are very good. Information and communication technology is well used to present art work using slideshows. This worked particularly well with the temporary structures created in the style of Andy Goldsworthy.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The provision for design and technology is **very good**.

Strengths

- The very high standards pupils achieve by age seven.
- The interesting range of activities planned.
- The teaching of design technology.
- The range of materials offered to pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Include more ICT.

147. During the inspection no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 because the subject is taught every alternate half term. Teachers' planning and a good selection of pupils' work was seen, including pupils' models and structures with their plans and evaluations.
148. By age seven standards in design and technology are well above average. By the end of Year 2 pupils can take examples of working objects to pieces to find out how they move. They can design a range of things they want to make using their own ideas, select and use their own materials, using a range of ways to connect them and evaluate what they have done. The quality of the models of insects, moving vehicles, recipes and magicians' coats seen was very high. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make very good progress.
149. Teaching in lessons was not observed, but the quality of teaching represented in teachers' plans, the activities designed for pupils and the marking of the work was good. Design and technology activities are planned to relate to other subjects in the curriculum. Pupils obviously take a pride in their work and use a wide range of techniques and materials with care. The subject has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory.
150. The subject co-ordinator was not present during the inspection, but the recording and monitoring information provided indicates that the subject is well managed although the monitoring of teaching is at an early stage of development. Assessment procedures are good. The subject has a very good range of resources, well stored. The co-ordinator has redesigned the planning of the subject to ensure progression and contributes to the subject development plan.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards are above those expected for pupils of this age.
- The quality of learning in geography is good, pupils are enthusiastic and learn well.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The range of the geography curriculum is wide.

Areas for improvement

- More use of ICT.
- Better use of assessment to match work to pupils' abilities.

151. Standards in geography are above those expected for pupils of this age and are on course to exceed those expected nationally at the end of Year 2. Pupils can describe the physical and human features of places. They can describe what it is about the features that give particular character to an area. Pupils use resources and their own observations to ask and respond to questions about places and environments. They are aware that their own area and distant places have both similar and different characteristics.
152. Although standards were reported as being in line with those expected nationally at the last inspection, there is evidence of improvement since then. The geography policy has been updated and the scheme of work adapted to incorporate the national guidance. There has been a development in planning more closely to meet pupils' needs, and assessments are built into the planning to determine both the pupils' knowledge and the quality of the teaching programme. These improvements are having a good effect on the progress the pupils make.
153. Year 1 pupils begin by studying routes around the school and learning about the different areas of the school and its location relative to the town. They study the area of South Molton in the vicinity of the school and can locate prominent local landmarks and their relationship to the school and to where they live. They make plans of the town and place prominent buildings on it in the correct location to one another. In their study of the seaside, they are able to recognise physical as well as human features. Pupils use literature, for example, *Dear Daddy* to make comparisons between different places across the world.
154. In Year 2, the pupils are developing mapping skills and beginning to understand landmarks. They are able to follow their route to school and can explain well how they get there. Pupils are beginning to use good geographical vocabulary in their explanations. Pupils can identify human and physical features in landscapes and list them. Links between English and geography are made through a Katie Morag story, set on the imaginary Isle of Struay off the Scottish coast. Pupils compare the similarities and differences in life between South Molton with that on Struay. Pupils are able to describe what it is like there and identify the place on a 'map'. They continue to identify differences between locations through the study of a village in India. Pupils are able to make judgements about the value of changes that could occur in the village. They pointed out that more houses built of brick would be more substantial, but

could lead to overcrowding and a reduction of farmland, and that while washing machines would save washing by hand and be quicker, the waste water could pollute the drinking water supply. For all pupils in Years 1 and 2 the curriculum is broad, rich and varied.

155. Pupils' attitudes are good in Years 1 and 2. There is a prompt and orderly start to lessons. Pupils begin work enthusiastically and all become involved with the topic. They work well together and listen well to each other and to the teacher. They are keen to answer questions from the teacher and comment constructively on those from other pupils. They show interest in their work and sustain concentration. Relationships are very good between pupils and between pupils and teachers.
156. Teaching in geography is good overall and enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to learn well. Teachers know the areas they are to cover well and there is a well designed programme, based on developing pupils' understanding from the immediate familiar area to further afield. Teachers use methods that are effective in building pupils' confidence and understanding. Lessons are well planned and many activities are rooted in first-hand experience. Opportunities are given for pupils to explain their thinking and good pace is maintained.
157. The co-ordinator is effective. The teaching and learning programme, which has been drawn up, is well constructed and builds pupils' geographical understanding effectively. The co-ordinator is keen to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are covered in depth with more emphasis on real people rather than fiction. Geography has shown improvement since the last inspection.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils achieve good standards in history.
- The range of the curriculum is broad with some rich opportunities for learning.
- The subject is well managed.

Areas for improvement

- Blocks of time allocated to the subject need to be reviewed.
- Improve the use of ICT.

158. During the inspection it was not possible to see any history taught, and evidence is based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with staff and pupils. This judgement has been based on the scrutiny of work from the previous year and the first term of the present school year.
159. Standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven are good. All pupils make good progress including those with special educational needs. This is a better picture than that reported at the last inspection when standards were satisfactory and pupils made steady progress. This is

because the school has developed its policy and ensured that tasks are matched to pupils' needs. Teaching is judged to be good from the work and planning seen.

160. Pupils can talk freely about 'a long time ago' and 'not so long ago'. They are able to sequence the events during their study of the Fire of London well. Pupils can write 'personal accounts' of the Great Fire of London putting themselves in the place of people who lived over three hundred years ago. They can draw up a timeline of the sequence of events of the fire and explain its rapid spread. Pupils know about changes that have occurred over time. They are able to relate similarities and differences in houses, clothes and technological amenities in homes, contrasting today with 30 years ago and 90 years ago. They are able to explain what the differences are between holidays today and holidays in Victorian times and they know that there was no electricity in the scullery 100 years ago. Pupils are beginning to give reasons why some things have changed.
161. Pupils visited the National Trust property at Killerton to experience a Victorian Christmas and played Victorian games. Teachers build on the very good experiences provided through visits to consolidate and extend learning. When learning about the work of Florence Nightingale, pupils study photographs and lithographs of the period to gain effective insights into aspects of life in the Victorian era. Year 1 pupils study the differences between modern and old houses, using direct experience of old houses in South Molton. Through these visits and studies of children and events, the pupils are beginning to understand something about life in their area in the past.
162. Pupils make good progress in history. All the pupils are learning effectively about the past, and identifying some of the different ways in which the past is represented from a very good range of secondary and primary sources, handling artefacts first hand, posters, books, pictures and photographs. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They use reference books well to find information from the pictures and text.
163. The development of pupils' historical skills is a high priority in the curriculum and is focused on the interpretation of evidence from primary and secondary sources. Half-termly reviews of the subject are carried out at designated staff meetings and a history day is planned.
164. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator ensures that the work in history is very effective as well as enjoyable. One drawback with the school programme of planning is that pupils may only do a little history when geography is the main focus for the term. This can result in pupils having too long a period between learning historical facts, skills and concepts. The co-ordinator is aware that the use of information and communication technology to support learning in history is an area for further development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards in ICT are very high.
- Pupils make very good progress in the subject.
- ICT is very well taught and teachers are confident in the subject.
- The facilities in the ICT suite support learning very well.

Areas for improvement

- ICT needs to be used more widely in the classroom across the curriculum.

165. Standards in ICT are on target to exceed those expected by the age of seven and pupils are making very good progress. Pupils with identified special educational needs also make very good progress. Pupils can enter, save and retrieve work they have done. They can use word processing programs and alter and adjust text. They can produce bar graphs and pie charts using data handling programs and can talk about their work and explain what they are doing. Pupils worked in small groups or independently and have built up a core of skills rapidly, enabling them to make good progress.
166. At the last inspection, standards in ICT were judged to be in line with those expected for their ages. The school has made considerable progress in the intervening period and the level of improvement has been very good.
167. Only a small number of lessons were observed in ICT but a scrutiny of pupils' completed work, reviews of teachers' planning and discussion with pupils and staff gives a clear picture of the attainment and progress of pupils. Teaching is very good. In those lessons that were observed, teachers were well prepared and planned exciting activities which motivated pupils well and ensured they made good progress. The pace of teaching was brisk and pupils were fully engaged in the lesson. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 can name parts of the computer and know their basic functions, with pupils in Year 2 having sophisticated knowledge about the function of computers. They are competent and confident in the basic skills such as using the mouse to move the cursor and opening and closing applications when retrieving work and in using word processing programs.
168. These skills have been strongly supported by the establishment of a computer suite in which all classes have regular extended teaching time. Pupils use word processing programs confidently and are making very good progress. They can use the functions of the program effectively. Pupils in Year 2 were able to use a sound function to enable the computer to read aloud what they had written and vary the speed of the reading by using the program controls. They could alter the size of the font by highlighting the text and changing the size and font-type. Their keyboard skills are developing very effectively, with pupils able to type in text efficiently. On other programs, pupils were able to move objects around the screen and place them in particular positions, showing very good control using the mouse.

169. The school is beginning to develop opportunities for using ICT in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils have used computers to produce bar graphs and pie charts in mathematics, recording data. Pupils have used word processing skills in other areas of the curriculum to produce the covers for small workbooks. Part of the good progress that pupils make is due to the increased skills of teachers. Staff have completed training through the New Opportunities Fund. They are using ICT extensively in producing staff documentation and other materials. This has increased their confidence and enabled them to take advantage of the improved facilities to enhance pupils' progress. In the lessons that were observed, the pace of teaching was brisk and purposeful leading to the pupils making good progress and attaining high standards.
170. In addition to the computer suite, there is one machine in each classroom and these are linked to the Internet. However, during the inspection, pupils made little use of these machines and their potential has yet to be fully developed. The school has a digital camera, and this is used well by staff to record pupils work including artwork, some of which was turned into a digital 'Art Show' using a program which pupils operated on the screen.
171. The subject is very well led and the co-ordinator. There is a policy and a modified version of the national scheme of work has been adopted. The school covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum in a systematic way, building upon earlier learning. Assessment arrangements are at an early stage of development with assessments at the end of each unit of work. However, there is no specific tracking of the development of pupils' skills. This is an area for development.

MUSIC

The provision for music is **very good**.

Strengths

- The standards pupils achieve by age seven.
- The teaching of music is very good overall, with some excellent teaching.
- The quality and range of resources to support music.
- The interesting and imaginative activities pupils experience.

Areas for improvement

- Use the assessments made to challenge more able musicians.
- Improve the quality of singing still further.

172. During the inspection two lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. Time was spent talking to the co-ordinator and viewing displays and resources. Singing and the use of music was observed in other contexts such as acts of worship.
173. By age seven pupils achieve standards in music which are well above average. The majority of pupils in Year 2 at the beginning of the year including those with special educational needs are able to sing songs in tune and are beginning to sing in rounds. They can clap and play instruments in time to voice and music accompaniments. They can recognise and describe

pitch and tempo, work in groups to combine the use of percussion instruments and voice to represent sounds they have heard on a walk around school, and represent sounds in simple notation. Standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were satisfactory.

174. The quality of teaching in music is generally very good and sometimes excellent. The use of one teacher to take half the class at one time for music gives pupils increased opportunities to learn and perform well. Lessons are very well planned to fit in with other themes in the curriculum. Pace of lessons is swift and pupils experience a wide range of games and activities to teach them a wealth of different skills. The teacher's knowledge and understanding of music is very good and she encourages the pupils to use high quality instruments with confidence to perform simple pieces of their own making. Pupils enjoy making and listening to music, they co-operate very well with each other, take turns and share instruments and concentrate hard on a range of short tasks. As a result all pupils make very good progress. Those with special educational needs make good progress because they are fully included in music lessons.
175. Music makes a very valuable contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural development of pupils. It is used to create changes of mood, describe emotions and encourage awareness of the lives of famous composers. Pupils learn to work together from age five to perform simple pieces with confidence, they learn about musicians and orchestras and have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular experiences in the community with local musicians. Whole school singing sessions have helped to raise standards.
176. Music is well managed by an able co-ordinator who has worked with teachers to design a challenging, but relevant range of topics to deliver the National Curriculum. Monitoring of teaching, standards and progress is at an early stage. Assessment procedures are good, but the use of the information to match music tasks to pupils of different abilities, particularly the most able, is insufficient. There is a very good range of instruments, well stored and cared for. The subject has a good plan for development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **very good**.

Strengths

- Pupils attain high standards in physical education.
- Pupils learn well and make very good progress.
- In the lessons observed teaching was very good.

Areas for improvement

- The use of assessment information to inform activities.

177. Pupils in Year 2 currently attain the standards well above those expected of this age. Pupils with special educational needs attain similar standards to others in the class and also make very good progress. They can run, throw, catch and use a bat and ball with high levels of control and co-ordination. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate a good awareness of space. They

understand how to exercise safely and can describe how their bodies feel during different activities and know about some of the important effects of exercise on the body. Pupils are familiar with routines such as observing rules for putting out apparatus and equipment, and for working quietly.

178. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in physical education were judged to match the expected levels when pupils are seven years of age. The school has improved on these standards considerably and pupils make very good progress as they move through the school.
179. Only a small sample of lessons were observed and in those that were seen, teachers provide interesting and challenging tasks through carefully planned lessons. They used praise and examples of good practice to demonstrate, helping others to improve their performance as a result. Skills are always built upon systematically. Teachers provide good role models, dressing appropriately for physical education. Teaching is very good. Pupils responded enthusiastically showing high levels of motivation. Their attitudes to physical education are very positive. Pupils make considerable efforts to improve their skills and this together with their enthusiasm results in them making very good progress.
180. The school's excellent facilities have enhanced skills in physical education, particularly games skills. Outside play equipment provides for climbing activities and the development of self-confidence in pupils' own physical abilities. The opportunities to use a variety of games equipment during break and lunchtimes play a very important part in developing throwing, catching and striking skills.
181. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. The school documentation sets out the expectations for each term and there is a balanced weekly programme with two gymnastics lesson per week, one dance lesson and one games lesson. There are clear guidelines for staff and this enables the subject to be taught with confidence. The school has assessment procedures for physical education and this is based on two assessment areas per term, but weekly planning does not include a sufficient range of activities for those pupils who achieve well in physical education. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is linked to the Early Learning Goals.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 182 Provision for religious education is satisfactory. Although many of the judgements made during the inspection were good, by Year 2 pupils have limited knowledge of Christian beliefs and practices and those of the other religions chosen for study by the school.

Strengths

- The subject is well managed.
- The school encourages pupils to respect the views of others and reflect well on their experiences.

Areas for improvement

- The range of learning experiences linked to Christianity and other religions.

- The standards pupils achieve compared with other subjects.
183. During the inspection three lessons of religious education were seen and the work of pupils from the previous year was looked at. A discussion took place with the co-ordinator for religious education and teachers' planning was scrutinised.
184. By age seven pupils achieve standards expected by their age as described in the locally agreed syllabus. The majority of pupils can reflect on their own experiences and say what is special to them and why. They are aware of some of the main stories associated with Christianity, and know that the symbol of a cross is linked to the life of Jesus. Pupils are less sure of what can be found in a church and have a limited knowledge of a range of stories from the Bible. Their understanding of stories and symbols from Judaism is at a very early stage. Skills in reflecting on their own thoughts and the thoughts of others are better than their knowledge about religious traditions. All pupils make satisfactory progress, which is the same as at the least inspection.
185. Teaching in religious education is never less than good. Pupils' own views are received with respect and they are taught to respect the views of other people. Lessons are well planned to link personal, secular thoughts and feelings with those of believers. Resources are used in a satisfactory way. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is generally satisfactory. Assessment is in place for all areas of religious education, but is not used in lessons to provide harder or easier work. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons are never less than good and are sometimes very good. Pupils in Year 1 can sit very still and reflect on a selection of natural objects, take turns, say what they are thinking and value other people's thoughts.
186. The co-ordinator has provided good support for the planning of the curriculum and is beginning to monitor teaching and attainment. There is a very good system for regularly assessing progress, but the quality of marking is inconsistent. Plans are in place to extend and enrich religious education as it takes its place in the school's priorities for development. Subject leadership is good.