

INSPECTION REPORT

**PILTON THE BLUECOAT VA
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Barnstaple, Devon

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113447

Headteacher: Mrs Sandra Barnett

Reporting inspector: Mr P Mathias
21945

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st November 2002

Inspection number: 247376

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Marion Sanders
Date of previous inspection:	6 th – 9 th May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21945	Mr P Mathias	Registered inspector	Science History Physical education English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What the school should do to improve further
19639	Mrs G D Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12116	Mrs C Morgan	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30705	Mr G M Stephens	Team inspector	English Geography Music Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

With 268 pupils on roll, the school is average-sized. It caters for boys and girls between the ages of seven and 11. An about average number of pupils enter or leave the school at times other than normal. Overall, pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment, although recently there is evidence to suggest that standards on entry are rising.

There are 20 pupils who are considered to have some degree of special educational needs. Of these, five pupils receive outside support for specific learning difficulties. As proportions, these are average figures. In the last two school years 6.8 teachers left and 11.6 teachers have been appointed.

Pupils come from homes with a wide range of different social and economic advantage and disadvantage. While some pupils come from further afield, most come from areas close to the school. About 15 per cent of pupils are considered eligible for free school meals, which is in line with most schools in the country. No pupil has English as an additional language, and nearly all the pupils come from white, British backgrounds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Pilton is an improving school which has made significant progress since the appointment just over a year ago of a new, permanent headteacher who gives it a very strong sense of direction. The quality of teaching across the school is now high and is beginning to have an impact on the standards pupils achieve. There is now a clear commitment from all staff to work together purposefully. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress. The school provides a very attractive environment for learning where opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are a very strong feature.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is consistently good.
- The provision for pupils considered to have some degree of special educational needs is very good.
- There is a strong and purposeful senior management team which now works well with the governing body to raise standards and to ensure that the school is well run.
- Accommodation is very good and the school is an attractive and stimulating environment for its pupils.
- Opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in the national tests for 11-year-olds in mathematics and science are well below those reached in English, and insufficient emphasis is given to teaching pupils how to conduct scientific investigations.
- Standards in information and communication technology vary significantly between classes, and teachers do not plan to include and teach the skills of information and communication technology in other subjects.
- The school has not completed medium-term plans and schemes of work in all subjects or set out clearly the standards pupils should be expected to reach in them annually.
- The roles of most co-ordinators are not sufficiently well developed and they have had only a limited impact on the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.
- The good standard of marking found in some classes is not consistent across the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection in May 1997 found that Pilton was a school where the standards achieved by pupils needed some improvement. The quality of education provided was good, as was the school's climate for learning. However, the management and efficiency of the school required substantial improvement. The report highlighted the need to improve the leadership of the school in order to:

- foster greater parental involvement and make parents better informed of their children's progress;
- ensure that all statutory requirements for child protection and the health and safety of children were met;
- improve arrangements for staff development in the appraisal of teachers;
- use the school's accommodation more effectively;
- increase the amount of taught time for pupils.

Overall the school has made good progress towards addressing the key issues of the last report, particularly following the recent appointment of a new permanent headteacher. A thorough analysis has been made of what the school needs to do to improve and a detailed, workman like plan has been agreed with the governing body and teachers. Standards in pupils' latest work show substantial improvement on their previous efforts. Parents now receive good information about their children's progress and have a much greater impact on the life of the school than previously. Arrangements for child protection and the health and safety of pupils now fully meets statutory requirements. The school has in place an appropriate and carefully organised programme to ensure that teachers receive additional professional development which is well focused on the needs of the school. The accommodation is well used. The school environment is very attractive and provides a stimulating setting for teaching and learning. The length of the school day is now in line with that in most schools.

The quality of teaching is good, and better than it was. The leadership and management of the school are now significant strengths. The school is very well placed to improve further.

Since 1999 standards in the national tests for 11-year-olds have been average in English and below average in mathematics and science. The overall trend of improvement in the tests over this period is broadly in line with the national trend.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	C	C	C
mathematics	C	E	D	E
science	B	D	E	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows that standards in the last three years have generally been below average. In 2000 they were above average in science and average in English and mathematics. In 2001 and 2002 the results were lower, except in English, where they were in line with the national average. Results in English in 2002 were in line with the average for similar schools. However, in mathematics and science standards were well below the average for these schools. When the performance of 11-year-olds in 2002 in English is compared to the standards they reached in the national assessments when they were seven, they make the progress it was reasonable to expect of them. However, in mathematics and science levels were well below those which could reasonably be expected. This below average performance is closely related to the long term problems regarding leadership and management. In the last three years, in the tests girls outperformed boys in English, and boys outperformed girls in mathematics. In science they performed about the same.

Pupils begin Year 3 with broadly below average standards, although there is evidence to suggest that standards on entry are rising. In classes, standards at the end of Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in literacy and numeracy reflect the same pattern as in English and mathematics. Currently, standards in other subjects of the National Curriculum are at the levels expected nationally, except in swimming and singing, where they are above the expected levels.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show mature attitudes and want to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils have a clear understanding of the standards of behaviour expected and nearly always respect each other both in and out of classes.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils and adults are strong and pupils are very aware of the impact of their actions upon others.
Attendance	Average. Pupils arrive punctually and records of absence are properly kept.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

This represents a strength of the school. Good teaching is found across the school and in all classes. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. Teaching in science is satisfactory, but insufficient attention is given in some classes to the systematic teaching of investigative science. The careful analysis of what pupils need to do to improve, and the higher expectations which teachers now hold for their pupils, are beginning to raise standards.

During the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers and their support assistants work very well together and the support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Staff know these pupils well and give them very good help so that they play a full part in their lessons. The quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy is good.

Particular strengths of the teaching are:

- the very effective way support assistants are used in classes to support the work of teachers;
- the teachers' infectious enthusiasm for and knowledge of the subjects they teach;
- the high expectations teachers hold for their pupils;
- the way teachers make sure that everyone in classes is fully involved in the lessons;
- the lively and expressive way in which teachers teach;
- and the way pupils are increasingly challenged to think hard or to do more and to work independently.

While there were no major shortcomings, areas for improvement are:

- to maintain a lively pace in some lessons;
- to make sure that work is always well matched to all the different abilities in the classes;
- to manage the time available so that opportunities to review pupils' learning at the end of lessons are not missed;
- to plan carefully to use the skills of information and communication technology where appropriate when teaching other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, but there is insufficient emphasis in science on investigative work and on using information and communication technology in other subjects. There are no school-based, medium-term plans and schemes of work in most subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school provides very good facilities which are used very well to meet the needs of these pupils. All pupils are fully included in every aspect of the school's life. Teachers and support assistants work closely together to make sure that pupils' work is well matched to their individual needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	At the moment there are no pupils with English as an additional language. There are appropriate arrangements available if required.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and a strength of the school. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about what is right and wrong and to take on some responsibilities.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. There are secure procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. Arrangements to promote good behaviour are good. The school is now beginning to use the information it has from national and other assessments to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. There are no agreed examples of pupils' work in most subjects to indicate to the teachers standards pupils should aim to achieve year on year. The quality of marking varies unduly between classes. There are sound procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very purposeful leadership for the school. The senior management team works closely and constructively together, but the roles of some co-ordinators are currently underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body gives experienced and knowledgeable guidance to the work of the school and fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas of weakness in the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are very well thought out procedures which are newly in place to gather information on pupils' achievement in the national tests. These procedures are yet to have their full effect on standards achieved at the end of Year 6 in the national tests, particularly in mathematics and science.
The strategic use of resources	Good. There are thorough procedures to link the school's financial planning to its educational needs, following a recent detailed review of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is carefully addressed in the school's plan for improvement. There are good procedures to monitor spending decisions and to ensure that they provide good value. The school uses grants and additional funds well. Resources for learning are adequate in quality and quantity. The school is an attractive environment which provides a stimulating setting for the work of pupils and staff.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• The progress their children make.• The quality of teaching.• The way the school expects children to work hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour.• The amount of homework set.• The information provided by the school about how their children are getting on.• The approachability of the staff.• Links with parents.• Leadership and management at the school.

The inspection team agrees with the majority of parents, who have positive views of the school and the quality of education it provides. After several years in which the leadership and management of the school were adversely affected by the lack of a permanent headteacher, the school is now improving rapidly. Some parents expressed concerns, some of which related to previous situations which have now changed. The leadership of the school by the headteacher and senior management team is now a significant strength. Much has been achieved recently in improving standards of behaviour amongst pupils and in providing parents with information. There are appropriate arrangements for parents to meet with teachers and for regular homework to be set.

A meeting was held between the Registered Inspector and parents. Thirty-five parents attended. They were generally happy with the current quality of education the school now gives, which they rightly felt is better than it was.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards within the school are average at the end of Year 6. During the inspection there was no significant variation between the performance of boys and girls. However, in the last three years in the national assessments at the end of Year 6 for 11-year-olds, girls outperformed boys in English, and boys outperformed girls in science. In mathematics standards were the same.
2. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 standards were average in English when compared to those in schools nationally. In mathematics, they were below the national average and in science, they were well below the national average. Results in English were in line with the average for schools considered broadly similar. In mathematics and science, standards were well below the average for similar schools. The school's overall results in the national tests in 2002 at the end of Year 6 are lower than they were in 2000, when they were just above the national average. This is closely related to the difficulties the school has experienced in establishing a permanent lead for the school.
3. When the results for pupils in Year 6 in 2002 are compared to their levels of attainment when they were seven years of age, pupils make the expected progress in English but achieve much lower results in mathematics and science than those predicted for them four years before. In the period between 1998 and 2002, standards in English have risen from a below average position in 1999. In mathematics, results have declined from an average standard in 2000. In science, results have dropped sharply from an above average position in that year. This overall decline in standards is directly linked to the numerous changes to staffing in the school and the lack of consistently effective leadership. Now the school has a stable teaching staff and a determined leadership which is beginning to raise standards in all subjects.
4. Overall, pupils have joined Year 3 with below average standards. However, recently there is evidence to suggest that more pupils entering the school are attaining average standards by the age of seven.
5. In English at the end of Year 6, pupils attain average standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Spelling standards are generally below average. Overall this is the same picture as at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Year 6 most pupils listen well to stories, explanations and instructions. They speak clearly and with confidence, read widely and enjoy books. Pupils in Year 6 can read with expression and discuss the authors that they prefer. They are able to locate books quickly in the recently refurbished library and use the index, contents pages and glossary when searching for information. Older pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are able to evaluate the content of stories in national newspapers. They learn to distinguish between tabloids and broadsheets and to question the content of the reports they are reading. In writing by the end of Year 6, pupils are able to write in a legible style and all have opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences because there is insufficient emphasis placed upon this aspect. The standard of spelling varies but is generally below that expected.

6. In mathematics, standards are average at the end of Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. From Year 3 to Year 6 most pupils are able to add and subtract accurately and to multiply and divide confidently. However, some do not understand that multiplication and division are inverse operations and are unsure of their multiplication tables. By the end of Year 6, higher-attaining pupils know how to calculate the area and perimeter of regular and compound shapes. They appreciate that shapes with the same area do not necessarily have the same perimeter. They are beginning to solve problems and to apply their knowledge gained in one area of mathematics to other aspects for the subject.
7. In science, standards are average. In Year 4, pupils are able to conduct some simple investigations to find out, for example, how shadows lengthen during the day. They know that sound takes time to travel. They are able to group materials according to their physical properties. Older pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 know something about food chains and that physical and chemical changes occur when solids and liquids are heated. However, pupils have only a limited understanding of how to conduct fair tests and how to carry out scientific investigations accurately. They have a sound knowledge of scientific facts but limited experience of scientific methods.
8. At the end of Year 6, standards in information and communication technology, design and technology, art, geography, history, music and physical education are in line with those expected, and the school has maintained but not improved upon the standards found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils sing well and many exceed the standard expected of 11-year-olds in swimming (to swim 25 metres).
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the school. The school provides a secure environment in which these pupils can feel confident in the support they receive and the relationships they form with both adults and friends. They receive good support from well-trained and experienced learning-support assistants, who question well, encouraging the pupils to explain their thinking, and successfully reinforce their understanding and learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Overall, pupils show a positive attitude to school, and their behaviour is good. These strengths, which are recognized by most parents, have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils of all ages and all groups respond well to the school's strong spiritual, moral and social ethos, and to the teachers' very good management of their behaviour. There have been no recent exclusions in the school. Bullying is not a significant issue, as it is handled satisfactorily.
11. Pupils like school and learning. They want to work well and are keen to do their best. Their positive attitudes and attentiveness in class make a positive contribution to their learning and achievement. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson pupils showed very positive attitudes and behaviour in response to good expectations from the teacher. They have a clear understanding of the standards of behaviour expected of them, and the vast majority live up to these expectations. In a numeracy lesson in Year 4, pupils worked well even when not directly supervised. Overall, pupils are very interested and involved in their work, enjoy their tasks and concentrate well. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson behaviour was good, but pupils showed little initiative in trying to solve problems. They were not independent learners but waited to be led through the problem, constantly seeking reassurance. Pupils with special educational needs show positive attitudes to the school. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson all felt included and knew what they had to do.

12. Pupils respond well to the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Whole-school assemblies at the start of the school day can be inspiring, reinforcing Christian values of hope, care, love and friendship, which are reflected in the pupils' behaviour. When a story in assembly was dedicated to the teacher whose favourite story it is, all children spontaneously smiled and looked at her. This special time at the start of the school day creates calmness in the pupils and a good approach to their day ahead.
13. Pupils' personal development and relationships are good. Pupils mix well in lessons and generally play together well, although at lunchtime occasionally minor problems arise related to the playing of football, but the school is alert to them. In personal, social and health education in Year 6, pupils show maturing attitudes and good strategies for dealing with such issues as playground behaviour. Parents recognize the increasing maturity in their children. All pupils, whatever their background, ethnicity or gender, are fully involved in the school and there is good integration of pupils from the local special school. Pupils follow the good role models provided by adults, who show mutual respect, care and courtesy in their relationships with pupils and each other. In a science lesson in Year 3 pupils talk confidently with adults, and are encouraged to think things out for themselves because of the guidance of the teacher. Pupils' initiative and personal responsibility are developing satisfactorily and respond well to initiatives like the new school council. They take these responsibilities seriously and put forward sensible ideas for discussion, confident that the school listens to them.
14. The rates of attendance and unauthorised absence are satisfactory and broadly similar to the national average. Pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and for lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the time of the last inspection. This term several new teachers joined the school. In the last two school years 11.6 teachers were appointed and 6.8 teachers left the school. All teaching is now satisfactory or better, whereas at the time of the last inspection some teaching was unsatisfactory. Now in nearly seven out of ten lessons teaching is good and occasionally very good. A particular strength is that good teaching is now found across the school and, particularly since the beginning of this term, is having an important impact on the standards pupils are achieving and the progress many pupils are now making.
16. The teaching of literacy is at least satisfactory and often good. Lessons are now well planned to meet the structure of the literacy hour. Teachers have a firm understanding of how to teach reading. The National Numeracy Strategy is now followed carefully.
17. Across the school, where teaching is good or very good, lessons are well organised so that resources are readily to hand and have been carefully selected to illustrate a point or to assist pupils to learn; for example, when handling objects relating to their study of World War II. The learning-support assistants are given active parts to play in the lessons so that, as in a physical education lesson relating to rugby, they work energetically to foster pupils' ball-handling skills. The teachers show high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and encourage them to think for themselves and to become independent learners. They have good subject

knowledge; for example, about the local area, and make their lessons come to life by acting out a part dramatically. They make their lessons vivid through the skilful way they tell a story; for example, in drama. Very good and appropriate links are made between subjects so that pupils are successfully encouraged to realise the relationships between the different subjects they are studying; for example, in developing skills and knowledge in writing and in history when studying World War II. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that both boys and girls all play a full part in the lessons and are increasingly challenged. They praise pupils' efforts warmly. As a result, pupils behave maturely, are eager to please their teachers and take part enthusiastically in the activities provided.

18. Some teachers mark pupils' work very constructively and make them aware of what they need to do to improve. Often individual efforts are recognised warmly. However, the school has indicated the need to make this good marking more consistent and is beginning to do something about it. For example, during the inspection teachers were involved in professional discussions after school to agree why and how they should mark pupils' work.
19. In the three out of ten lessons where teaching was satisfactory but had some weaknesses, the pace of learning was allowed to slow from its original brisk beginning. The work was not always well planned for the different abilities in the class, so that the most able were occasionally insufficiently challenged. Opportunities were missed because of a lack of time to review pupils' learning. In some circumstances teachers did not give sufficient attention in their planning to developing pupils' skills in information and communication technology while teaching other subjects.
20. Arrangements for the setting of homework are in place. This work is often closely linked to what pupils are studying in school. Teachers often either plan with or seek the advice of the learning-support assistants when planning to meet the needs of the pupils with special educational needs. These pupils often receive very good additional support from either the teacher or learning-support assistant during lessons, especially in English. A very good range of resources is used well to motivate and interest these pupils. The learning-support assistants are very skilled and establish very good relationships. They are very well briefed by teaching staff, especially at the beginning of the morning session. Questioning by both class teachers and learning-support assistants included pupils with special educational needs well in the lessons observed.

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

21. The provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. At the last inspection it was identified that provision for spiritual development required further development. The improvement in this, particularly in the last year under the inspired leadership of this aspect by the headteacher, has been considerable. It is now very good, and is the foundation of the work of the school. It has a profound impact on the ethos of the school and is beginning to influence many aspects of personal development very favourably. Assemblies have a major impact at the start of the school day, giving very good opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their relationships with others. Hymn singing, prayer, music and story telling are all used very effectively to enrich the experience for the whole-school community. Personal, social and health education lessons are used well to promote spiritual, moral and

social development. For example, in Year 6 pupils show mature and sensible thinking about how to deal with difficult behaviour in others.

22. Pupils are given very good opportunities to understand those human qualities which do most to enhance relationships with all and promote inclusion. Pupils clearly recognise this as important. Those qualities of giving of oneself to others: hope, care, love and friendship, were developed and reflected on in an extremely well planned and executed assembly. Pupils were encouraged to reflect on the theme all day as these strands of human consideration were woven into a "giving board" left in the hall.
23. A wonderful message in an assembly about South Africa and working for the future inspired pupils. They learnt about recycling and also listened to Nelson Mandela talking about the future. Pupils were silent, as a flower was passed round. They took turns to say "I look to the future with peace" and, "I look to the future with love". Pupils sang in Swahili and African choral music was played. The creative curriculum is fundamental to the school, and there are rich contributions from local culture, including willow sculptures, artists in residence and music. Spirituality is swiftly becoming embedded and inspiring, and having a positive impact on the moral, social and cultural provision that the school makes. This in turn is having a very beneficial impact on the behaviour and attitudes of pupils and their personal development overall.
24. The school has embarked on a new initiative to strengthen its curriculum through emphasising meaningful links between the different subject areas. At the time of the last inspection the curriculum was broad but insufficiently balanced. In particular, insufficient time was devoted to investigative work in mathematics and science. Following the last inspection the curriculum lacked organisation. There was no overall coherence and subjects other than English, mathematics and science were marginalized and taught in isolation. In response to this, existing policies are now being revised and new schemes of work are being developed with a strong emphasis on art and music. Outline schemes are already in place, but these have yet to be fleshed out.
25. Existing strategies for the development of basic literacy skills are successfully embedded and literacy is carefully integrated into other subjects such as history and geography. Efforts are now being made to ensure that there is a comparable emphasis on the development of numeracy skills across the school. The new information and communication technology suite is already having an effect on the development of pupils' information technology skills, but these are insufficiently applied to other curriculum areas at present.
26. The school makes good use of visits, such as those to Watermouth Castle and Barnstaple Fair. They feed into art projects, history and geography topics and into work in literacy lessons. Other visits and visitors to the school such as theatre companies, visiting artists and visiting authors bring added dimension to the curriculum and broaden pupils' horizons. All teachers run at least one after-school activity. These are well attended and make a valuable contribution to the overall curriculum.
27. Regular times for discussion are established as a vital part of the school's provision for personal, social and health education. Drugs and sex education are integrated effectively into the science curriculum.

28. The school has well-established links with the community. The vicar takes a weekly assembly and pupils make use of facilities at a local army camp, using the assault course and undertaking problem solving and shelter-building exercises. Links with the neighbouring secondary and special schools are strong and productive. Currently a special-school pupil is integrated into Year 6 on a regular basis. The local secondary school is providing access to specialist music teaching and musical facilities. The school's new ICT suite is used by the public and by the local community college. Links with the infant school from which most pupils come which were weak, are currently being strengthened.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS

29. The steps taken to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. The teachers know their pupils well, recognize their needs and give them sound support and guidance. The school has a health and safety policy which is about to be updated, and there is a fire policy. There are no issues outstanding. Training for playtime supervisors and meal-time assistants has provided the school with eight trained first-aiders. The addition of the playtime supervisors and good games provision ensure the satisfactory monitoring of playtime. There are proper recording procedures for all incidents. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. There is a child-protection policy with appropriate procedures in place. The headteacher has overall responsibility but her training is not up to date. The key issue at the last inspection relating to statutory requirements and procedures for child protection, health and safety has now been satisfactorily addressed and overall care has been improved.
30. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are satisfactory. All pupils now have one target for improving their personal attitudes.
31. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory and the benefits of information technology are just beginning to take effect. The member of staff responsible is tackling this area with enthusiasm and is beginning to identify areas where attendance can be further improved; for example, the taking of holidays in term time. There are proper procedures for checking in pupils who are late for school.
32. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good. The school prefers them not to be too formalized. It fosters them through the spiritual, moral and social values it promotes so effectively through assemblies, personal, social and health education, and other aspects of the school's work. This is creating an ethos of good behaviour. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. There are a very few instances of bullying and the school deals with these to the satisfaction of nearly all pupils and parents. New ways of dealing with incidents can take time to adjust to. Good work is done in lessons, group discussions, circle time and assemblies to address such issues. Newly appointed and trained playtime supervisors increase adult supervision at playtime, and their role is enhanced by attractive new games which they teach pupils. This has led to an overall improvement in the quality of play and behaviour at lunchtime.
33. At the time of the last inspection the impact of the school's established assessment procedures was limited. However, both the procedures and the way in which data is used in English, mathematics and science are now good. In the past 12 months since the appointment of the new headteacher the school analyses the outcomes of

tests and assessments and makes full use of data from national tests provided from the local education authority. Staff use this information to group pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons, ensuring that those who are unlikely to achieve national standards are offered more support and those who are coping well with the demands of the curriculum are further challenged. Pupils are also regularly interviewed about their work, congratulated on what they are doing well and encouraged to reflect on what they need to do in order to improve their performance in the National Curriculum. However, in most subjects there is a lack of collections of pupils' work to illustrate the standards pupils should aim to achieve year on year.

34. The school has recently set realistic individual targets for pupils in literacy. These are frequently referred to both in lessons and in teachers' written comments in books. However, the school's marking policy is currently being reviewed. Some marking supports the learning of pupils further, while other marking does not and this adversely affects pupils' progress. The school is beginning to build on the best examples.
35. The school gives very good support to pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are identified, and appropriate procedures exist for obtaining advice from outside agencies when required. The school meets the requirements outlined in the pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need. Detailed targets for learning are set and on-going assessment procedures ensure that the progress of every pupil is carefully measured. Progress is celebrated with the pupils in order to boost their self-esteem and encourage a culture of high achievement. The school places great emphasis on including all pupils in the full range of activities offered and is successful in this regard.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. Parents think the school is satisfactory. Only a fifth of parents responded to the survey. Of this minority the views were mostly positive. The evidence of the inspection supports the strengths that parents identify. The headteacher agrees with the concern of parents over homework and is developing a homework package. Workshops are planned to take this forward.
37. Furthermore, criticisms about the information parents receive about how their children are getting on appears at odds with the statement that nearly all parents make, that their children are making good progress. The new headteacher has made significant efforts to successfully address the key issue from the last inspection. This was to encourage more parental involvement by improving the quality of information to the parents about the school and about their children's progress, and by arranging more regular and effective parents' meetings. The inspection considers that the quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress, is now good. There is a home/school agreement, and weekly, comprehensive newsletters ensure that all parents are well informed and up to date about what is happening in the school. Good information is received about progress through annual reports and consultation interviews.
38. A few parents say they would feel uncomfortable approaching the school and yet it makes a variety of good opportunities available, both formal and informal. The evidence of the inspection does not support the criticisms of a minority of the leadership of the school, which is judged to be a great strength.

39. The school's links with parents are satisfactory. Parental support is increasing, particularly for activities involving their own children. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. There are a small group of parents who work very hard to support the school financially and socially through the home/school association. Good support by parents for actual functions ensures generous levels of extra funding and facilities for the school. These events have been very successful in contributing significantly to improving the school's resources for pupils to learn and make progress.
40. The partnership with parents, which at the last inspection was judged unsatisfactory, is now at least satisfactory and developing strengths. Overall, the school has the confidence of all communities, but there is a lack of perception by a small number of parents of the significant progress that has been made.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The quality of leadership and management in the school is good with some very strong features. This is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection, when the leadership and management were not sufficiently focused on the quality of the education the school provided. Since the last inspection there have been several short-term, acting headteachers, culminating in the appointment of the current headteacher on a permanent basis just over a year ago. Before that appointment the current headteacher had, for a term, acted as an "alongside" headteacher, providing the acting headteacher with advice and guidance. The deputy headteacher is newly appointed. Despite these difficulties the school has made good progress recently to address the shortcomings indicated in the last inspection report. For example, following the appointment of the new headteacher there has been a rigorous evaluation of the needs of the school. A detailed plan for improvement has very carefully been put together. It accurately indicates the needs of the school and provides an excellent foundation for future developments. It is already beginning to pay off; for example, in raising standards in literacy and numeracy and in generally increasing teachers' expectations of their pupils. The quality of information provided for parents is now good. Procedures for child protection, health and safety are now met in full. There has been a strong focus on improving teachers' expertise and looking critically at the strengths and areas of development in subjects, particularly in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. There are now thorough procedures in place to appraise teachers and to judge their effectiveness.
42. Now, despite the large class sizes, the school uses all its accommodation well to provide adequate space for pupils to be taught. For example, the work areas adjacent to the main classrooms are used very well by teaching assistants and other teachers to provide support for identified groups of pupils; for example, to help boost their skills in literacy or their understanding of issues relating to their personal and social development. Throughout the school the very high standard of displays of pupils' work, alongside artefacts and colourful pieces of art, makes the school a very attractive and stimulating environment for pupils and their teachers. The school day is now the same length as in most primary schools and time is well used.
43. The headteacher and senior management team work very closely and constructively together. They have very successfully raised teachers' morale and sense of purpose. For example, one member of staff was of the opinion that the headteacher had put the "T back into teaching". There is now a clear lead to teachers to enable them to raise standards systematically and to provide an all-round education for pupils which is

stimulating and of a high quality. A particularly strong feature is the all-pervading sense of community which has recently been successfully fostered. In this all members of the teaching and support staff are made to feel that they have important contributions to make. Teaching assistants, for example, are very well trained and encouraged to be actively involved in all areas of the school's life.

44. Teachers now have clear job descriptions, and subject co-ordinators are beginning to evaluate the needs of their subjects and to put together action plans to address areas for improvement. These are realistic and workman like. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have been appropriately involved in reviewing the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and in evaluating the impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. However, due to changes in the teaching staff and some long-term absences, other co-ordinators have not had the same opportunities. The school recognises this as a priority for future development.
45. There is a very positive ethos to the school and much has been achieved in a short time. Arrangements for the induction and support of newly-qualified teachers and newly-appointed teachers are very good.
46. The special educational needs co-ordinator, well supported by the headteacher, provides good leadership. Together they have a very good overview of need throughout the school and monitor pupils' progress well through the review of individual education plans, and discussions with teachers and pupils. They have a clear vision and plan well strategically, ensuring that sufficient staff are available to support the needs of individual pupils. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs, who was absent during the inspection but who was very well supported by fellow governors, is well informed and visits the school frequently. Detailed reports are presented to the full governing body regularly.
47. The school functions smoothly and day-to-day administration is very efficient and sets a positive and welcoming tone for visitors. Overall, there is a very strong commitment to improve and the capacity to succeed.
48. The governing body is actively involved in the life of the school, and governors are well informed about the school's progress and are actively involved in making longer-term decisions; for example, about the developments recently completed to improve facilities for the teaching of information and communication technology. They keep a careful eye on spending and have well-developed procedures to ensure that funds are used appropriately and provide best value for the school.
49. There is an appropriate number of teachers and a good allocation of support staff to match the needs of the curriculum. Resources for teaching and learning are generally adequate and the school has recently improved its resources through the creation of a new, appropriately stocked library and a room for information and communication technology which has a good range of good resources. The school buildings and grounds are spacious and well maintained.
50. Pupils enter the school with levels of basic skills which are on the whole below average. By the time they leave at the age of 11, pupils now achieve generally average standards in classes, although below average results in the national tests. Overall, pupils now make good progress. Taking into account the overall good quality of teaching, the positive and purposeful way in which the school is now led and managed, and the overall good standards of behaviour and attitudes shown by pupils, particularly in classes, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. The governing body, headteacher and staff should:-

- (1) raise standards in the national tests for 11-year-olds in mathematics and science so that they match more closely standards attained in English and give greater emphasis to the teaching of the skills of scientific enquiry; (Paragraphs 2, 3, 7, 24, 59, 68, 69, 72, 73)
- (2) make the good standards in information and communication technology found in some classes more consistent across the school and plan for and teach the skills of information and communication technology in other subjects; (Paragraphs 25, 67, 72, 80, 87, 90, 91, 92)
- (3) complete medium-term curriculum plans and schemes of work in all subjects and put together examples of pupils' work in all subjects to indicate the standards pupils should aim to achieve year on year; (Paragraphs 24, 33, 73, 87, 92)
- (4) extend the roles of co-ordinators so that they all have appropriate opportunities in the longer term to visit classes to review the quality of teaching and learning and the progress of initiatives they are pursuing. (Paragraphs 44, 87, 102)

Minor Key Issue

- (1) Make the good standards of marking found in some classes more consistent across the school. (Paragraphs 18, 34, 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	98

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	29	17	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12	56	33	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	Y3– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	268
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	20

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	36	32	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	25	31
	Girls	27	20	25
	Total	54	45	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (74)	66 (65)	82 (88)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	N/A (65)	N/A (58)	N/A (78)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
253	0	0
0	0	0
7	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
6	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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.2
Average class size	33.5

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	127

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	551,100
Total expenditure	547,848
Expenditure per pupil	1,943
Balance brought forward from previous year	24,048
Balance carried forward to next year	27,300

Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11.6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	268
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	46	6	4	2
My child is making good progress in school.	35	50	7	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	54	13	4	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	44	26	9	2
The teaching is good.	30	56	6	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	17	35	43	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	30	13	13	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35	57	4	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	19	37	28	11	6
The school is well led and managed.	17	44	9	17	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	39	17	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	44	7	9	2

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

ENGLISH

52. National test results this year indicate that standards are average at the end of Year 6, an outcome similar to that of the last inspection. Standards in reading, speaking and listening are higher than in writing, but inspection evidence indicates that the school is aware of this and is actively addressing the need to raise standards in writing still further. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that standards in writing are improving because of good teaching and exploring opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences in subjects across the curriculum. The very good support of the learning-support assistants for groups of pupils that need extra help is also having a positive impact.
53. Standards in speaking and listening are average by the end of Year 6 for most pupils. All pupils listen well to stories, explanations and instructions. Both teachers and learning-support assistants present very good role models to pupils, speaking clearly and asking questions that demand considered answers. Sometimes teachers have to exercise all their questioning skills in order to encourage pupils to answer questions and discuss issues raised during the lesson, as happened in Year 6 when the pupils were discussing Anne Frank's diary. In Year 5, the teacher skilfully seized the opportunity and encouraged a boy to explain the meaning of the term 'aggregate' to the rest of the class, and praised him well for his clear description. In Year 4, the teacher motivated pupils well during a science lesson and encouraged them to listen to explanations carefully and contribute. One reflected and expressed himself well as he explained, 'Unless we record temperatures at exactly the same time it's not fair because the other liquids will be cooling down.' In Year 3, a pupil used the word 'relaxful' and the teacher sensibly gave him time to reflect and praised him when he said, 'I meant relaxing.' Learning-support assistants support pupils with special educational needs very well. They quietly clarify what the teacher is saying and also encourage these pupils to contribute to discussions. In this way they include them well and boost their confidence and self-esteem.
54. The standard of reading is average at the end of Year 6, but well above average for a significant minority of pupils. Most pupils read widely and enjoy books. Pupils in Year 6 can read with expression and discuss the authors that they prefer. They can locate books quickly in the recently-refurbished library and can use the index, contents page and glossary when searching for information. A pupil in Year 3 discussed poetry with enthusiasm and appreciated the humour in the poem about dinosaurs that he read. Teachers prepare resources well, ensuring that pupils can both read and understand the texts. They provide opportunities for pupils to compare and evaluate different versions of the same story, as occurred in Year 3 when different versions of 'The Secret Garden' were compared. In a reading session in Year 4, the teacher blanked out the text from a 'big book' and through very good questioning encouraged the pupils to try and explain what was happening by looking at the pictures. They developed very positive attitudes during the lesson and groaned with disappointment when the teacher informed them that the text would be revealed the next day. In Year 5, pupils evaluate the text and content of stories in national newspapers. They learn to distinguish between tabloids and broadsheets, and to question the content of the reports they are reading. In Year 6, pupils study extracts from Anne Frank's diary and learn to infer meanings from the text. Learning-support assistants read books and explain texts and extracts to pupils with special educational needs. This helps them not only to develop positive attitudes but also to be fully involved in lessons.

55. Standards of writing are rising and inspection evidence indicates that the majority of pupils in Year 6 are achieving average standards. Work is well presented. Pupils are developing clear handwriting styles and all have the opportunity to write for a range of purposes and audiences. For example, a pupil in Year 3 began a description of a visit to Barnstaple Fair by writing, 'Barnstaple Fair is blue like the dark blue sky at dusk.' Computers were not used regularly in classes to support writing, although leaflets describing a recent visit to Watermouth Castle in Year 5 showed that some pupils can use a publishing program well to support their writing, varying the fonts and importing pictures to illustrate the text. In Year 6, pupils reflect on the meaning of Remembrance Sunday and respond by writing poetry sensitively. The last four lines of one poem read:

"Different groups of people stand,
Where we remember the fallen
We stand for a minute silently
Where we remember the fallen."

56. The standard of spelling varies but is generally below average. The school recognises that this needs to improve and is currently reviewing procedures to ensure that pupils are taught systematically as they progress through the school. Renewed emphasis was recently given to handwriting, and pupils' work is generally well presented in their English books. In other subjects across the curriculum, for example, geography and history, pupils take great pride in the presentation of their work and write for a variety of audiences and purposes. For example, in geography they write letters that argue a case and also stories about India to be read by very young children.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The scrutiny of work indicates that the monitoring of teaching and the high expectations of the headteacher are having a positive impact. In the very good lessons observed the teachers plan well, are confident and enthusiastic, prepare their resources well and have high expectations of the pupils. The consequence is that pupils in these lessons are alert and interested, listen and are keen to complete work to a high standard. Teaching is less successful where the pace of the lesson is slow. Pupils are expected to spend a disproportionate part of the lesson listening to the teacher. Tasks are not explained clearly and the teachers' expectations of both the quality and pace of work are not made clear to all groups. All teachers use the final part of the lesson well to consolidate learning and to assess the success of the lesson. All work is marked, but too often marking does not question and challenge the pupils to improve their work still further. Some marking is exemplary and provides an excellent role model for the rest of the staff to follow. Teachers generally match work well to the needs of the pupils. However, in some lessons the more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and often complete 'more of the same,' rather than being expected to apply or evaluate what they have learned. Learning-support assistants support teachers very well and reinforce learning for groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, that are withdrawn from the class after the teacher's input.
58. The co-ordinator has responded very well to the initiatives and expectations of the headteacher and provides good leadership. She has a clear view of what needs to be done to raise standards still further and is currently leading staff training sessions on raising the quality of marking throughout the school. She oversees a satisfactory range of resources. The library has recently been reorganised, audited and re-sited.

It now contains a satisfactory range of fiction and non-fiction books and is situated in a small area near the main entrance. Plans to improve the library still further are in hand.

MATHEMATICS

59. Standards in mathematics are average. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in mathematics was also average, although the school's results in national tests for 11-year-olds were below the national average that year. Since then the school's results in national tests have fluctuated but have largely been below the national average. The results have also been below those in schools with a similar intake.
60. Evidence from the current inspection indicates a considerable improvement in the current school year and pupils are making good progress in lessons. The work in pupils' books demonstrates higher expectations of what they can achieve, extended opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and closer monitoring of individual pupil's progress. This indicates that the school's target for 81 per cent of pupils to reach the nationally expected level (Level 4) in mathematics is achievable.
61. Pupils enter Year 3 with a wide range of ability in mathematics, but about half are insecure in a range of basic skills. For example, many do not understand that multiplication and division are inverse operations, many are unsure of simple multiplication tables, and are reliant on a number square or other practical material to support their learning.
62. By Year 6, more able pupils understand how to calculate the area and perimeter of regular and compound shapes. They appreciate that shapes with the same area do not necessarily have the same perimeter. They are beginning to solve word or pictorially-presented problems and to apply knowledge gained in one area of mathematics to other aspects of the subject.
63. Average and less able pupils are still unsure of the difference between area and perimeter and many have a weak grasp of basic number processes. For example, when asked to draw a compound shape with an area of 100 centimetres square, pupils struggled to think of two numbers which, added together, would make 100. When led carefully through a process, many appeared confident but were very uncertain when asked to apply their knowledge on their own.
64. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils have fully understood what is being taught and frequently approach learning objectives from a variety of different angles. More able pupils are challenged by a range of problem-solving approaches which thoroughly challenge their thinking and give them the confidence to learn from their mistakes. The majority of mental/oral sessions are designed to help pupils develop their own mental strategies for solving number problems. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, and pupils understand classroom routines and settle quickly to work. Teachers plan their lessons in considerable detail.
65. In the less successful lessons, the planned activities are not related to what pupils know and can do. As a result, they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
66. Pupils are set in ability groups for mathematics in Years 4 and 6 and this enables teachers to match the challenge of the task to the range of ability in the class. There

is some flexibility in the setting process and pupils are moved according to the progress they make. Generally the use of additional teachers ensures that the class sizes are remain manageable, except in Year 4, where the numbers in the lower set are too large. In those year groups additional adult help is used only to support small groups of pupil. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

67. The mathematics co-ordinator provides good leadership. He monitors the planning and works with groups throughout the school in order to assess progress. He has observed teaching throughout the school and is aware of areas in need of development. A range of assessment procedures are in place which are analysed in order to identify issues for the school improvement plan. This has already resulted in an increased emphasis on effective questioning in lessons, a focus on thinking and reasoning skills, and the more active participation of pupils in their own learning. Procedures for individual pupil assessment and target setting are in an early stage of development and happen only at an informal level. Resources are satisfactory and are regularly updated and supplemented. At present, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning.

SCIENCE

68. Standards in the current work seen in science are average at the end of Year 6. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. In the most recent tests for 11-year-olds in 2002, standards were well below the national average and that for schools considered to be broadly similar. These results are lower than the below average results in 2001 and the above average levels of attainment in 2000. When compared to the standards these pupils attained four years previously in the assessments at the end of Year 2, their performance is well below what could be reasonably expected of them. Between 2000 and 2002 boys have performed better than girls in the tests. This is not reflected in the standards observed in classes, where boys and girls attain about the same standards. Overall, from a scrutiny of pupils' previous work, it is clear that standards have risen sharply this term as teachers' expectations of their pupils have increased in response to the clear leadership of the headteacher.
69. Within Year 3 and Year 4 pupils are able to conduct some simple investigations to find out how the length of shadows alter during the day. They know that sound takes time to travel. They are able to group materials according to their hardness. Older pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 know that 'food chains exist' and that there are complex relationships between consumers, producers and predators. They know that physical and chemical changes occur when solids and liquids are heated. However, pupils have only a limited understanding of how to conduct fair tests and to carry out scientific investigations accurately. They have a sound knowledge of scientific facts but limited experience of scientific methods.
70. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, the teachers have very secure subject knowledge and question thoroughly to remind pupils of what they have learnt previously. The teachers encourage pupils to begin to start to think things out for themselves, by 'turning your statements into questions' and by reminding pupils of the need for them to take responsibility for conducting their own experiments and to 'come up with something yourselves'.
71. The teachers stress how to make a test fair and to ensure that all pupils are fully involved in the lessons. They successfully encourage the pupils to use scientific

vocabulary carefully. In response, pupils work hard and wish to please their teachers, who praise them warmly for 'being sharp as knives'.

72. Where teaching has some shortcomings, the teachers miscalculate the time available so that the end of the lesson is rushed and opportunities to review what has been learnt are missed. In some circumstances, insufficient emphasis is given to developing pupils' skills of scientific investigation and in using information and communication technology to record and interpret data.
73. The co-ordinator, who is new to the post, is experienced, well qualified and beginning to provide a positive lead. The co-ordinator has recently looked carefully at the priorities for future improvement in this subject. This audit has correctly identified the need to review the school's policy for teaching and learning in science in order to give greater emphasis to the skills of scientific investigation and to raise standards further. Currently the co-ordinator is in the early stages of assembling medium-term plans which will enable pupils to build systematically on what they already know and can do. Arrangements to improve the way the school evaluates and assesses pupils' progress are underdeveloped. But the co-ordinator is starting to address this problem rigorously. Resources are adequate but not always readily to hand, which makes teaching and learning more difficult than they need to be.

ART AND DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

74. At the time of the last report, standards in both art and design, and technology, were judged to be in line with national expectations. Evidence from the current inspection suggests that attainment remains broadly in line at the end of Year 6.
75. Both subjects are central to the school's philosophy of a creative curriculum and are used extensively to support other subjects. However, the development of specific skills is uneven across the school. Colourful displays of pupils' work help create a positive and attractive learning environment. The present art policy needs updating and the scheme of work requires more detail.
76. In Year 3, pupils experiment with a variety of media in observational drawing of plants and objects. Charcoal drawings of a hedgehog were particularly effective. In Years 5 and 6, pupils look at paintings by Henry Moore of sleeping figures in the London underground. This links effectively to work on World War II in history. Pupils were encouraged to draw each other wrapped in swathes of material in order to explore what they had learned of Moore's sculptural style.
77. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good. Effective additional training for teachers is increasing staff expertise across all aspects of the curriculum. Where teachers have good subject knowledge, they give good guidance to pupils in their classes about how to develop specific skills. Teachers manage their pupils well and a purposeful working atmosphere is maintained in all lessons.
78. The school is a member of Devon's 'Arts in School' initiative, and pupils' knowledge and skills have benefited because artists and craftspeople have given a number of workshops in a variety of media, including willow, textiles and pottery. Soon there will be a visit to Exeter museum to see the 'Love, Labour and Loss' farming exhibition. There are plans for pupils to paint watercolours inspired by Devon's agricultural heritage as a result.

79. A book-making workshop has been instrumental in raising standards of presentation across the school, particularly in work in literacy, history and geography. Art has been used as a useful stimulus for literacy; for example, when pupils looked at Tunnicliffe's illustrations for Henry Williamson's 'Tarka the Otter'.
80. The co-ordinators are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and provide good support for colleagues. They provide good leadership through the quality of their own teaching. Resources are adequate and well used. The impact of information technology has been limited in art, but pupils have used buffer boxes to develop traffic lights and disco lights as part of a control-technology project. The accommodation is generous, and practical areas are used well to support learning.

GEOGRAPHY

81. No geography was observed because it was not a focus of the curriculum during the inspection. Therefore no judgement can be made on the standard of teaching. However, from a scrutiny of previous work and from discussions with pupils it is clear that standards are in line with those expected nationally, a picture similar to that observed at the time of the last inspection.
82. Pupils follow the nationally-recommended scheme of work. In Year 6, pupils have recently studied India and, before that, 'Mountains'. However, information and communication technology is insufficiently used to support learning. Work is very well presented and teachers have explored every opportunity to use pupils' artistic skills to illustrate their writing.
83. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and talk with enthusiasm about work recently completed. They are less confident when looking at atlases and talking about changes in the local environment.

HISTORY

84. Standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 6. They are much the same as the standards found at the time of the last inspection. Currently there is strong evidence from pupils' recent work to suggest that standards in the shorter term have improved significantly. By the age of 11, pupils know something about the ancient Egyptians' way of life and their religious beliefs. They know that in the time of Henry VIII the Priory at Pilton was dissolved, the Prior, John Rosse was sent away and the Priory lands were divided. They know that Queen Victoria had a large family and they have a good understanding of everyday life in the 19th Century; for example, from their study of a copy of the North Devon Journal in July 1824. Older pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are able to describe the major events of World War II and know how to find out more about what happened through investigations and by talking to people who were alive at the time. They are able to empathise with the experiences of wartime evacuees and write sensitively about them.
85. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and is significantly enhanced by the very attractive displays of artefacts and reference books which teachers have worked hard to assemble. In the best lessons, the teachers use different sources of first and second-hand evidence to encourage pupils to evaluate and draw conclusions for themselves. The teachers have very good subject knowledge and use questions in a lively way to encourage pupils to hypothesise and to be aware of 'red herrings'. They explain with insight why teachers in a Victorian classroom expected very high

standards of behaviour and discipline. They take on the role of Victorian teachers dramatically so that pupils have a strong empathy with pupils of that period.

- 86. Where teaching is satisfactory but has some weaknesses the teachers do not match the tasks carefully enough to the needs of all pupils, so that the more able are under-challenged.
- 87. The co-ordinator provides enthusiastic leadership for the subject and has succeeded in linking work in history and English closely so that time is well used and pupils have a good understanding of the links between the literature of a period and the events which took place. There have also been recent initiatives to enrich the curriculum through visits to places of interest; for example, to Watermouth Castle and the North Devon Museum. However, there are no arrangements to help teachers judge the standards pupils should work to achieve or to judge their progress. Currently, while pupils are learning the skills of history, they have little opportunity to use information and communication technology; for example, as a tool to investigate and to publish finished work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 88. At the time of the last inspection, standards in information technology were broadly in line with national expectations. With the recent introduction of a new suite for information and communication technology, attainment remains in line with expectations and the school is coping well with an increase in the range and scope of new curriculum initiatives. The current emphasis is on ensuring that pupils in all year groups have a sound mastery of basic skills. Teachers are good at using an interactive whiteboard to lead pupils through new skills. This helps to ensure that pupils make good progress in lessons.
- 89. Pupils in Year 4 are confident in logging on and accessing programmes. They use the icons on the 'storybook weaver' programme, importing pictures and word-processing simple text. Pupils in Year 5 use a desktop publishing programme, creating borders for their work and designing a simple poster to link with their history project. In Year 6, pupils can write in columns for a newspaper format, create headings and sub-headings, and insert pictures into the text.
- 90. Information technology is less well used at present to support learning in other subjects, and skills learned in the information technology lessons are insufficiently reinforced in other lessons. A small number of additional computers are available in shared practical areas.
- 91. The quality of teaching is good, although there are disparities in teacher expertise and confidence across the school and between teachers in parallel classes. An extensive programme of additional training for teachers is ensuring that overall teacher expertise is developing. A skilled support assistant provides both good technical back up and additional support for pupils in lessons.
- 92. The scheme of work is detailed and covers the full range of skills to be learned in all aspects of the curriculum. It does not indicate where these skills can be specifically used to support learning in other curriculum areas. Currently there are no agreed procedures to access pupils' progress. It is intended to introduce assessment procedures once the full range of basic skills has been introduced.

93. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and provides good support for colleagues. There is a clear vision for development of the subject and good use is made of the very good resources.

MUSIC

94. Overall, standards in music are in line with national expectations and, by the end of Year 6, standards in singing are above average. The school employs a singing teacher who takes every year group for 30 minutes each week and pupils in Year 6 also benefit from a weekly session with the specialist teacher from the local community college. Visiting teachers come each week to teach the violin and guitar to small groups of pupils.
95. All pupils sing a range of songs well and are enthusiastic to learn more, as observed in a 'house' assembly when pupils enjoyed singing 'One Man Went To Mow' in Swahili! Pupils have a good understanding of the beat in music and can vary the dynamics, singing either loudly or softly, as the song requires. Older pupils can vary the tempo and volume in their performances and very effectively sing in parts. This was clearly demonstrated in both a school assembly, and when Year 6 sang 'Blue Moon' and 'Dreaming' simultaneously. The diction was clear and the pupils showed that they were able to sustain their own parts when listening to others. Pupils in Year 6 understand the meaning of the words 'ostinato' (repeated pattern), 'tempo' (speed) and 'dynamics' (volume).
96. The quality of teaching is good. In the best lessons, there was good planning, the teachers were confident and the pupils were enthusiastic, developing very good attitudes to this subject. This is reflected in the comments of a Year 6 pupil, 'I really enjoy music – next I want to do a big performance using lots of instruments.' Expectations in all lessons observed were high and as a result pupils made very good progress. For example, pupils in Year 4 and 5 responded well to the teachers' demands and by the end of the lesson were singing in unison and harmony.
97. The co-ordinator was recently appointed. She realises that most work has focused on singing and that composition and appreciation are less well developed. She has a clear vision of how she wants the subject to develop and is determined to use the musical talents of existing staff further to increase the range of musical experiences for the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

98. Standards in physical education are at expected levels at the end of Year 6. Pupils reach the standard (to swim 25 metres) expected in swimming by the time they are 11 years of age, and many exceed this. Overall, this is the same picture as at the time of the last inspection.
99. From Year 3 to Year 6, pupils prepare themselves thoroughly for exercise, warming up their muscles carefully and sensibly. In dance, they are able to interpret a piece of music; for example, when making a series of movements to represent Victorian toys they are studying as part of their work in history. They are able to make a representation of an air raid as part of their study of World War II so that 'It looks like a Henry Moore painting'. They are able to keep pace with the music and demonstrate confidently to the rest of the class. They are able to evaluate their own and others' performances fairly. In games, they are beginning to learn how to send and receive

passes and to apply these new skills in different situations. They are able to play together as a small team and appreciate how to use space to their own advantage. They are beginning to appreciate how to 'mark' and 'tackle'.

100. The quality of teaching is good. In the best lessons, the teachers have a very good subject knowledge based upon their own sporting interests and background. They have a clear picture of the standards pupils should achieve and set very good examples themselves for the pupils to follow. They involve their teaching assistants well so that there are good levels of support and encouragement for all pupils. As a result, all pupils are actively involved in the lessons and find them fun. The teachers use specialist vocabulary appropriately; for example, when explaining the importance of 'warming up' and 'cooling down'. Pupils are praised energetically when they succeed and try hard to please their teachers. The teachers set increasingly-challenging activities and hold pupils' attention very well by the dramatic ways in which a story is told; for example, when describing the Wise Men.
101. In the less successful lessons the teachers do not give enough attention to developing pupils' ability to develop high-quality shapes. They accept pupils second best work. When helping pupils to evaluate the work of others, they miss opportunities to encourage them to criticise positively as well as negatively.
102. The co-ordinator has a strong interest in the subject and works hard to provide a positive lead. For example, the curriculum has been significantly enriched recently by the introduction of links with outside agencies; for example, in cricket and in golf. There are also a good range of after-school sports clubs led by teachers, many of whom are enthusiastic and well qualified to teach this subject. However, the co-ordinators do not have planned opportunities to visit classes to look at the quantity of teaching and learning going on and to see the progress of initiatives in their subject. These are well supported by pupils and parents. There is a good range of resources which are in good condition and readily available. The school has recognised the need to update its policy and scheme of work as part of its improvement plan. The co-ordinator is in the early stages of agreeing with teachers the details of this.