

INSPECTION REPORT

WILLOWBROOK SCHOOL

Exeter

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 132778

Headteacher: Mrs J Humphreys

Reporting inspector: Mr J Sorsby

14042

Dates of inspection: 30th June – 4th July 2003

Inspection number: 248996

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First and Middle

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 5 to 12

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Summerway
Whipton
Exeter

Postcode: EX4 8DF

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Kaye Beales

Date of previous inspection: N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14042	J Sorsby	Registered inspector		<p>Information about the school</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well the school is led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
13762	N L Shelley	Lay inspector	Educational Inclusion	<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
20950	R W Burgess	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>Physical education</p> <p>Religious education</p>	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2229	D Hansen	Team inspector	<p>Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage</p> <p>Science</p> <p>Music</p>	
22685	N Moss	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p> <p>Provision for pupils with English as an additional language</p>	
22157	M Roussel	Team inspector	<p>Art and design</p> <p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Design and technology</p> <p>Provision for pupils with special educational needs</p> <p>The work of the special educational needs unit</p>	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Willowbrook School serves the area of Whipton in Exeter. With 327 pupils including 39 children who attend the nursery part time and 53 pupils in Year 7, it is bigger than most other primary schools. One pupil is of Pakistani origin, two are of mixed origin, three are from various countries in Europe and all others are of white British descent. Four pupils speak English as an additional language, two of them fluently. Thirty-two per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. In the last school year twenty-five per cent of pupils joined or left the school at a time other than normal, which is high. In Years 3 to 6 the percentage was 50 per cent. Forty-one per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is very high and almost six per cent have statements of special educational needs, which is also very high. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have behavioural or speech and language difficulties. Ten pupils attend the Early Years Support Centre because of their special educational needs. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This effective school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Standards are below average because of standards on entry, the high proportion of special educational needs and pupil mobility, some pupils' very difficult home circumstances and weaknesses in the teaching and coordination of English. The school has yet to fully become "one school" since being formed from two closed schools in September 2000 and coming together on one site in September 2001. The school moves to new purpose built premises in October 2003. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is good but varies significantly from year to year and subject to subject. Because of weaknesses in the teaching of English, and because many pupils are not there long enough to benefit fully from their schooling, pupils achieve only satisfactorily. The quality of the school's leadership and management is satisfactory as is the value for money provided by the school.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in art and design throughout the school and science in Years 3 to 6. Standards in art and design are above average.
- It provides well for pupils with special educational needs including those who attend the centre, so that they make good progress. They constitute almost half of all pupils.
- It ensures that all pupils are involved in all aspects of school life and work and cares for them well.
- It provides well for pupils' personal development, helping them to become mature and ready for the next stage of their education.

What could be improved

- Improve pupils' standards in English so that they have sufficient skills in literacy and language to better support their studying of other subjects.
- Further improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of their pupils in all subjects and that information collected about what pupils know, understand and can do is always used effectively to ensure that all pupils always do work appropriate to their ability.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was opened in September 2000. This was its first inspection.

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	N/A	E	E	D
mathematics	N/A	D	E	E
science	N/A	E	E*	E

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Throughout the school, standards in subjects that rely on pupils being able to express themselves orally and in writing are noticeably depressed by their weak language and literacy skills. Results at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were well below the national average in English and mathematics and in the bottom five per cent nationally in science. The standards of pupils currently in Year 6 and 7 remain well below average in English but are average in mathematics, a very significant improvement. Standards in science in Years 6 and 7 are below and well below average respectively, another improvement since 2002. Very few pupils in these year groups are working at levels above those expected for their age. Pupils currently in Year 6 have achieved well in mathematics and science and satisfactorily in English. Achievement of pupils currently in Year 7 is satisfactory in English and science and good in mathematics. The school has been open for too short a period for trends in standards to be identified. However, standards in English have remained constantly well below average while those in mathematics have improved significantly and those in science have improved slightly. In comparison to similar schools in 2002, pupils in Year 6 were well below average in mathematics and science and below average in English.

The standards of pupils in Year 2 in 2002, as demonstrated by their national test results, were well below the average for similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 2 remain well below average in reading, writing and science but are below average in mathematics. They have achieved satisfactorily in reading, writing and science and well in mathematics.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, design and technology and physical education are as expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. Those in art and design are above expectations while in history and geography they are below expectations. In music, standards are average at the end of Years 6 and 7. Standards in ICT, design and technology and art and design are as expected at the end of Year 7 while those in French are below expectations. Insufficient evidence was available to measure standards in music at the end of Year 2 or in religious education, history, geography or physical education at the end of Year 7.

In 2002 the proportion of pupils who achieved Level 4 in English and mathematics fell well short of the school's target as a consequence of the high proportion of pupils who joined or left at times other than normal. The school is well placed to meet the more realistic targets set for 2003.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall. Pupils in nursery and reception and those with special educational needs have good attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. This is a strength of the school given the proportion of pupils with emotional and behavioural problems. There has been an above average level of exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good and pupils become mature and responsible and ready for the next stage of their education.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory due to above average rate of unauthorised absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 7
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good, but pupils' learning is only satisfactory. The good and sometimes very good teaching seen in the majority of lessons during the inspection does not impact on standards as much as might be expected because of pupils' weak literacy and language skills, the lack of a strategy to teach literacy across the curriculum, and the number of pupils who only spend a relatively short time at the school. There are some important differences in the quality of teaching of different subjects and in different classes. The teaching of English, geography, history and religious education is only satisfactory. No judgments were possible concerning the teaching of music or French. In Years 2, 3 and 4 teaching is only satisfactory, and this undermines pupils' continuity of learning. In the Year 1/2 classes, as in Years 3 and 4, the weakness in teaching is in the use of information about what pupils know, understand and can do to plan lessons that meet the needs of more able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs have their needs addressed well. Teaching for the ten pupils in the Early Years Support Centre is very good. The teaching of numeracy and science is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The strategy for teaching mathematics is good but that for literacy is poor.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Lessons are planned appropriately and teachers and teaching assistants give good support. Provision in the Early Years Support Centre is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Because of good support and timely use of external advisors, the very small proportion of pupils concerned learn as well as all other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school provides very well for pupils' social development and well for their moral development. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for pupils well and their well-being has a high priority. Insufficient use is made of assessment information to plan lessons that meet the needs of each individual pupil.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactory overall. The school enjoys a good relationship with many parents, including those of children with special educational needs. However, some parents condone their children missing school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong leadership. Management overall is satisfactory, but unsatisfactory in English and science.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body has a working knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and works very hard in its support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall, because it is good in some subjects but unsatisfactory in English and science.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses all its resources effectively and considers the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress that pupils make • Teaching is good • Expectations of pupils are good • School promotes personal standards well • The good support provided for pupils with special education needs • Teachers are very approachable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the accommodation • Behaviour in school • The amount of homework • Information about pupils' progress • The range of extra curricular activities • The quality of communications

Parents' views include questionnaire responses from 57 parents, comments from the few who attended the registered inspector's meeting and from more than 40 parents interviewed during the week of inspection. Inspectors agree with the views expressed by parents, other than the following. Pupils only make satisfactory progress because of weaknesses in the teaching of English and because of pupil mobility. Teachers' expectations are not high enough. Annual school reports do not clearly describe pupils' standards of attainment. Parents are right to have concerns about the behaviour of some pupils but behaviour overall is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' standards in almost all subjects are lower than appropriate for their age and in some subjects they do not achieve as well as might be expected, given the quality of the teaching they receive. This is the result of a number of factors, each of which has the prospect of reducing standards and slowing progress. Firstly, over 40 per cent of pupils have special educational needs. Despite the good support they receive and the often good progress they make, this lowers overall standards. Secondly, a high proportion of pupils have difficult home circumstances. Some pupils have seen or been the victim of violence, and others tell of nights when they were unable to sleep at home. While such extreme circumstances are rare, many pupils find little support for their learning at home and some find it difficult to concentrate at school. A high proportion of pupils have little experience of learning before they join the school. This is most marked in their limited social experiences and their very limited acquisition of language. These problems are further exacerbated as pupils move through the school because a quarter of all pupils join or leave at time other than normal. In Years 3 to 6 this applies to half of all pupils, disrupting their education and that of their classmates, slowing progress and lowering standards.

2. When children join the Reception class, attainment is well below that expected for their age, with a higher than average number of pupils having special educational needs and in particular seriously delayed speech and language acquisition. This area of special need has a great effect on overall standards. As a consequence of good teaching, most children, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress towards the expected standards but by the end of the Reception year, it is not expected any will have achieved the levels expected for their age in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical understanding, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, or physical development. For the Reception class this last area of learning is limited by an insufficient range of equipment.

3. Standards in English and in particular in literacy are low. Standards in reading and writing at the end of the current Year 2 and English at the end of the current Year 6 and 7 remain well below average, as they were in 2002. Given their starting point as described above, pupils have achieved satisfactorily. Standards in literacy have been demonstrated to be the reason for depressed standards in a range of other subjects. For example, in science, pupils with an inadequate grasp of literacy have performed less well in national tests in previous years than the pupils in 2003 who were, in accordance with the rules, helped with the reading of questions and with framing their answers. Some weaknesses in the teaching of English by a minority of teachers have contributed to pupils only achieving satisfactorily.

4. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 have improved slightly since being well below average when tested in 2002. They are now below average, pupils having achieved well. At the end of Years 6 and 7 there has been very significant improvement in standards in mathematics. In 2002 results were well below average. Now, they are average. Given their standards when they were in Year 2, this also represents good achievement by these groups of pupils.

5. At the end of Year 2 standards in science remain well below average. At the end of Year 6 standards, as seen through inspection are below average. This is a good improvement since 2002 when results were in the bottom five per cent nationally. 2003 tests are likely to confirm these findings because of the literacy support given to pupils in the national test and confirms that pupils' knowledge of science in previous years was almost certainly better than their test results demonstrated. It is not therefore possible to ascertain if there has been real progress in pupils' scientific knowledge. There has been good achievement by pupils in Year 6 and satisfactory achievement in Year 7. The weaknesses identified in science standards are largely as a consequence of unsatisfactory co-ordination of the subject.

6. Standards in ICT, religious education, design and technology and physical education are as expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. Those in art and design are above expectations while in history and geography they are below expectations, largely as a consequence of pupils' difficulties with literacy. In music, standards are average at the end of Years 6. Insufficient evidence was available to measure standards in music at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 7, standards in ICT, design and technology and music are as expected, while those in French are below expectations. Insufficient evidence was available to judge standards in religious education, physical education, history or geography.

7. Pupils with special educational needs, who constitute over 40 per cent of the school, make good progress and have a good attitude to their learning. This is because their special needs are well planned for and they are well taught and given good support by the Learning Support Assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Their personal development is good. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

9. Pupils hold mostly positive views about the school. They say that teachers are kind, the school is friendly and that learning is often fun. They particularly like mathematics and design and technology and also like poetry, stories and reading. Pupils are enthusiastic about extra curricular activities but are disappointed that there are so few. The school council plays a significant role in the school, demonstrating both the level of responsibility and of maturity reached by pupils. It has been asked to produce ideas for clubs that could be considered when they move to new school premises.

10. Behaviour is satisfactory overall taking account of the large number of pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many pupils behave well. In a lesson about growing up, pupils' behaviour was exemplary despite the fact that all pupils in the class have either statements of special educational need or have learning or behavioural difficulties. They listened in silence with rapt attention, not speaking until invited to do so after raising their hands. They worked in pairs or groups in a most responsible way, respecting others' views and making very positive and serious contributions in a thoughtful manner. Not one moment was wasted and pupils' attitudes and conduct made an extremely positive impact on the quality of learning in the lesson. In another class, disruptive behaviour had an adverse effect on the amount and enjoyment of learning about the same subject owing to far less effective teaching and class management.

11. Although behaviour during breaks and lunch times was generally good at the time of inspection, records indicate that incidents of unacceptable behaviour have occurred during the year and have led to a higher than usual number of exclusions. Parents and pupils confirm that some incidents of bullying continue to occur although persistent offences are committed by a relatively few pupils. The attitudes and behaviour of many pupils improve over time because of the support and guidance that they and their families receive. The secondary school that provides some lessons for Year 7 pupils also comments on their often unacceptable behaviour.

12. Relationships amongst the vast majority of pupils are good. Most pupils are friendly, tolerant and mutually supportive. Most respect the views and characteristics of others and have appropriate attitudes towards the moral and social issues of the times. Pupils accept responsibility well and, for example, are proud to be members of the school council. They take well the opportunity to use their initiative, for example, by organising fund raising activities.

13. Attendance has improved during the present school year but is still unsatisfactory because it is below the average for primary schools. Reasons for absence include condonement by some parents, some long term illnesses, approximately twenty pupils whose attendance is below 80 per cent and family holidays although the incidence of these is approximately average. Most pupils are well motivated to attend and arrive punctually for the start of the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good, with a third of lessons seen being very good, one third good and one third satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. However, for several reasons, pupils' learning is only satisfactory. There are significant differences in the quality of teaching between different year groups and subjects. In particular, weaknesses in the teaching of literacy in a minority of classes and the lack of a policy to guide the cross-curricular teaching of literacy are having an effect on pupils' standards and achievements in those subjects that rely most heavily on their ability to write or express themselves clearly. Learning is also adversely affected because many pupils, for example, half of all pupils in current Years 5 and 6, join or leave the school at times other than normal. Many pupils therefore have insufficient time to benefit fully from the good teaching.

15. Teaching is best in the nursery and reception. Here, having joined the school with very low standards, pupils learn well and receive a sound start to their education. Teachers and support staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and motivate them well.

16. Teaching is weakest in a minority of classes in Years 2, 3 and particularly 4. Particular weaknesses include the management of pupils by some teachers, a lack of monitoring of what pupils know understand and can do in some subjects, a resultant failure to address the individual needs of pupils, in particular those who are more able. Additionally, the teaching of literacy skills is less effective in some classes in these year groups than is generally the case in the school. These are problems for the school to address as it disrupts the flow of pupils' learning. Despite good teaching in Years 5, 6 and 7, because of their ongoing difficulties with literacy, pupils never quite recover to the standards they might otherwise achieve.

17. The teaching of English is satisfactory overall. The best features of teaching include teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and their management of pupils' behaviour, their lesson planning, the effectiveness of their methods of teaching and the use made of homework. However, teachers' expectations are sometimes too low, particularly in relation to higher attaining pupils. They are held back by tasks that are too simple for them. Teachers do not receive appropriate guidance on how to constantly be aware of what pupils know, understand and can do or how to use such information in the planning of lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. Some aspects of the curriculum, such as speaking, listening and writing, are not covered in sufficient depth.

18. A significant weakness in the school's provision is the teaching of literacy across the curriculum. There is no policy to guide teachers in the reinforcement and use of language and literacy skills in other subjects, so this is seldom done. Few opportunities are created to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills or to practise writing long pieces of work. Opportunities are missed, for example, in subjects such as history, geography and religious education.

19. The teaching of mathematics is good and contrasts very noticeably with some of the weaknesses in English. Teachers prepare effective lessons based on their rigorous measurement of what pupils know, understand and can do. Despite this, the needs of more able pupils are not always met because of lower than appropriate expectations. Lessons are well organised with an appropriate balance between whole class and individual work. All areas of the curriculum are covered in appropriate depth. Teachers have a good knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and teach numeracy well. Pupils learn well and this is resulting in improving standards.

20. Science is taught well in Years 1 to 6. Pupils in Year 7 are taught science at the High School, and no judgements are therefore made. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on pupils learning through practical and investigative work. Consequently, pupils learn well and make sound progress in Years 1 to 4 and good progress in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' progress is restricted in Years 1 to 4 by their limited literacy skills and in Years 1 and 2 by an unsatisfactory curriculum that does not cover all aspects of the subject in sufficient depth. Teachers give clear instructions and introduce new concepts well, including the appropriate vocabulary. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply about science when posed challenging questions. However, not all teachers monitor what pupils know, understand or can do, or use this information to ensure that lessons meet all pupils' needs.

21. Overall, the quality of teaching of art and design, design and technology, information and communications technology and physical education was good. Teaching of geography and religious education was satisfactory. Insufficient evidence was available to judge the quality of teaching of history and no judgment was made concerning French, which is taught by High School staff.

22. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and they learn well. The special educational needs coordinator has been in the post one year, but previously was the teacher in the Early Years Support Centre, combining this with the special educational needs coordinator role for two terms. Each morning the special educational needs coordinator teaches a group of more able pupils in Year 2 classes. The responsibility for teaching pupils

with special educational needs is with the class teachers and this is mainly undertaken in their classes, supported by the work of the Teaching Assistants, who also monitor their progress. However, a particular weakness in this provision is that no monitoring of the teaching and learning of pupils, other than those that she teaches each morning, is at present undertaken by the special educational needs coordinator.

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

23. The school's curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. In addition, religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus. The curriculum is satisfactorily balanced in most subjects, in that the time allocated on the timetable to each subject is appropriate. The science curriculum is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 3 and is particularly good in Year 6.

24. There are policies and schemes of work for each subject although some are in need of updating. Teachers base their long-term planning on national guidelines ensuring that they satisfactorily cover the components of each subject. Planning does not always sufficiently take into account mixed age groups in the three classes with pupils from Years 1 and 2, or the needs of pupils with different levels of attainment. The result of this is that pupils of average and particularly those of above average attainment are sometimes not challenged to achieve their full potential.

25. The lack of guidance to teachers on how to reinforce pupils' literacy skills in the teaching of other subjects is a shortcoming that is having a negative effect on standards across the curriculum. Similarly, because of the problems with the current building and ICT resources, ICT skills are not reinforced in any subjects other than mathematics, art and design and technology.

26. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are fully involved in all that is on offer. For the most part pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and make progress, as well as participating in all curricular activities. Higher attaining pupils do not always receive work that reflects their previous achievement. Pupils with special educational needs account for almost half of the school population. They receive good support in lessons from a large team of learning support assistants. The school follows the revised Code of Practice in its assessment of pupils with special educational needs. The individual education plans drawn up for these pupils are satisfactory overall, but vary in quality, sometimes providing targets that are too general. There is little setting of homework on a regular basis to extend and reinforce pupils' learning.

27. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good although the current practice was only introduced in Spring 2003. There is a clear intent to prepare pupils for adult life. The scheme of work includes citizenship, personal safety, hygiene and relationships. It is taught through aspects of the curriculum such as science and religious education as well as dedicated lessons, which are timetabled for every class. The personal, social and health education programme is linked to expectations of right behaviour in and out of school and recognises the need to raise the self-esteem of many pupils. Governors have not yet agreed a sex education policy although there is structured appropriate teaching taking place supported by the personal, social and health education programme. Drugs education is also included in the programme and is supported by local authority trainers and specialists.

28. The range of available extra-curricular activities is poor. The school only participates in netball and football matches with other schools, and very few opportunities are provided for pupils after or before school hours. Given the difficult home circumstances of many pupils

this is an omission in the school's provision that the school plans to deal with after moving to its new premises.

29. All pupils experience a variety of visits to arts centres, environmental sites and local places of interest. Visitors to the school also enhance the curriculum. For example a successful project involving artists, the local community and Years 3 and 5 in 2002 resulted in the production of attractive mosaic panels that are now displayed in the school. The school has been involved annually with the Devon Arts in Schools Initiative and is currently preparing for a project with a Circus theme in which all pupils will be involved. Visitors to the school include the local clergy and representatives of various agencies working within the local community who make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. There is very good liaison with these agencies which enhances the involvement with the local community.

30. There are good links with other schools and teacher training institutions. Year 7 pupils attend the local secondary school to further their studies of science, French and design and technology. The school has links with a local beacon school and with other local schools in developing assessment procedures.

31. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, whilst that for their social development, despite the lack of extra-curricular activities, is very good and provision for moral development is good. The daily assemblies meet the requirements for collective worship. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their knowledge of a number of the world's faiths, including Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam as well as Christianity. Pupils show good respect for others' values and beliefs.

32. The school strongly and consistently reinforces the difference between right and wrong behaviour and encourages pupils to think through their actions, considering their impact on others. Classroom rules are prominently displayed. Pupils all know that the school has high expectations of their best behaviour. There is a clear policy to curtail and prevent bullying, with precise rules for class, playtime and lunchtime, based on respect for others and safety. The policy has necessitated the exclusion of an above average number of pupils, but as a consequence is working. Rewards and affirmation of good behaviour as well as sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are known and appreciated by all pupils. The success of these policies is evident in overall satisfactory behaviour and good relationships between pupils and with adults. Inspectors found pupils to be friendly, courteous and eager to talk about their school.

33. The school has a number of effective strategies for promoting pupils' social development. Pupils take responsibility in practical ways. For example, older pupils give out equipment at playtimes. The school council of elected class members is a good forum where all pupils can channel their ideas and suggestions, though pupils would like increased roles in making decisions. Representing others is good training for the council's members in responsible citizenship. The "peer mediator" arrangement enables trained older pupils to play and talk with younger ones. They are trained to listen to younger pupils' problems and anxieties and offer help either on their own behalf or through an adult. Various visits and excursions develop pupils' relationships and interaction with each other and their teachers well. The school organises a residential experience for pupils in Year 3 and Year 7. These also make a positive contribution towards pupils' personal development.

34. Religious education helps pupils to understand the culture, traditions and values of different religious faiths. There are good links with the local church. The school aims to

celebrate the cultures of all in its community but there is insufficient provision to develop awareness of the many different cultures in modern society. Art and design and music offer some opportunities for pupils to experience cultures other than their own.

35. All pupils with special educational needs receive their full curriculum entitlement and their specific needs are identified with a programme of support drawn up on an individual education plan. These individual education plan have identified targets and are written by the class teachers with advice from the special educational needs coordinator. At the present time individual education plans are reviewed once a term and new targets are set once targets on the individual education plan have been achieved, a necessary procedure to ensure progress is maintained over time.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The arrangements for pupils' welfare are good and the monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory. Educational and personal support and guidance are good and parents are pleased with the standard of care their children receive.

37. Child protection procedures follow local arrangements and appear to be appropriately implemented. Health and safety procedures are satisfactorily undertaken but risk assessments are not fully in place. First aid and medical care arrangements are good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are such that pupils feel safe, valued and supported. The school goes to considerable lengths to help pupils, and often their parents, who have social or emotional problems and find it difficult to cope with school, their work, relationships or influences out of school. Specialist education, health and social agencies contribute very well to the school's work. The contribution of all concerned enables many pupils to benefit more fully from the education provided and enjoy more their experiences in school.

38. Attendance is carefully monitored and absence is followed up when explanations have not been received. The persistent follow up of absence has contributed to improved attendance during the current school year. Most pupils are well motivated to attend but the school has not engaged the co-operation of some parents despite their efforts and those of the educational welfare officer.

39. Behaviour is very well monitored and comprehensive records are maintained throughout the pupils' time in school. The range of strategies employed to support pupils is usually effective but does not have a lasting effect on some pupils. The system of rewards and sanctions works well with most pupils. The management of behaviour in lessons is good. The behaviour of many pupils is challenging and many require considerable support to exercise self- control. The number of teaching assistants is not always adequate in lessons for the amount of support that is required to meet the relevant pupils' needs.

40. The school's procedures to discourage bullying and deal with the consequences when it does occur are satisfactory overall. Appropriate social attitudes are promoted throughout the curriculum and bullying is usually effectively dealt with when reported. However, some parents and pupils confirm that incidents recur in some instances. Pupils confirm that the peer mediation arrangements work well in most cases. The school has reduced anti-social behaviour rather than eliminated it.

41. Whilst pupils' personal skills are not formally assessed and tracked throughout their time in school, teachers know the pupils well, provide guidance and opportunities for example in decision making and team work and report some aspects of their application in the annual school reports. Good opportunities are provided for initiative and responsibility for example via the school council.

42. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. Teachers measure what pupils know, understand and can do in English, mathematics and science. This has led to a significant improvement in standards in mathematics, but not yet in English or science, where the information collected is not being effectively used to ensure that lessons meet individual pupils' needs. This information is also used in agreeing targets with individual pupils although this is not fully consistent across all classes in the school, notably Year 5 where records related to autumn 2002. The use of assessment information to guide the planning of the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall, particularly in the development of literacy skills. In mathematics, where the school is concentrating its efforts to raise standards, information has been very well used by the mathematics coordinator and this is having a positive impact on raising standards in this subject.

43. There are very few pupils in the school for whom English is not their first language. These pupils are assessed on entry to the school and their progress is reviewed by the headteacher. Class teachers are made aware of their needs. When necessary, the local authority language specialists are asked to provide advice and help. The school does much to help these pupils settle and improve their literacy skills as quickly as possible. As a consequence of the support they receive, they reach similar standards to the majority of pupils.

44. The school has a good system of early intervention in the Nursery and Reception class and close liaison is maintained with the special educational needs coordinator to ensure that all pupils in need of extra support are identified and their educational support needs are planned for. Throughout the school, class teachers monitor well, pupils who may have cause for concern in their learning. Further advice and support is obtained through other agencies, such as the educational psychologist, speech and language therapy service, Pastoral Care Coordinator, Family Centre and Joint Agency Team.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents are satisfied with the quality of education and care that the school provides. The partnership between school and parents is satisfactory.

46. Parents' views are mixed. Some are pleased with the work of the school and some feel that standards have fallen since the merger of the two previous schools. They think that the merger has caused many problems that have been hard to deal with. The poor facilities and larger numbers of pupils also contribute to their view that it is a barely satisfactory situation. Those questioned during the inspection believe that the head teacher and staff are doing their best and trust that the situation will improve when the delayed move to new premises comes about. Parents are pleased with the overall standards of teaching and pupils' academic achievement and they are satisfied with the pupils' personal standards although they are justifiably concerned about the behaviour of some. They are right to be disappointed with the inadequate range of extra curricular activities. Parents have some justification to be

dissatisfied with information about pupils' progress. The opportunities for discussing their children's progress are good. The three meetings per year for parents are well attended, targets for improvement are shared with them and teachers are easily accessible daily and parents are welcome in the school. The annual school reports provide detailed information about what is taught and what pupils understand, know and can do and their efforts. There are spaces for pupils to comment on their own progress and for parents to respond. The reports do not clearly describe pupils' standards of attainment or how they perform with regard to expectations for age, but these points are well covered in parents meetings. The computer bank statements and language used are not easy for some parents to understand. Those parents whose children have special education needs, and they are nearly half the parents in the school, are well aware of their children's progress because they are closely involved in the review process.

47. Monthly newsletters are informative but are plainly produced. They are not presented in a style that promotes interested reading and enthusiasm for the school. Information provided for parents when their children start in the Nursery is also uninspiring.

48. Parental involvement in their own children's learning is at an early stage in many instances. Several external agencies and initiatives such as Sure Start work alongside the school. They are making a good contribution to developing parents' awareness of how they can be more involved in their own children's education and are providing various forms of assistance and guidance for families.

49. Some parent volunteers regularly help in school, mainly in the Nursery and Reception. Parental attendance at pupils' performances is good. Their attendance at curricular information evenings or workshops is low. The parents', teachers' and friends' association is supported by a small core of workers but works hard to provide useful contributions to the school. The school does not formally seek the views of parents on a regular basis. Overall, parental involvement in their children's education is satisfactory.

50. Pupils' individual education plan targets are shared with parents regularly at parents' evenings and they are involved in reviewing the plans and setting new targets. The school sees the links with parents with pupils with special educational needs as crucial and parents are very supportive and attend all reviews and parent interviews. To support parents' involvement the special educational needs coordinator has held two parents meetings, accompanied by the Nursery staff and speech and language therapist to inform them of the pilot project that is being run in the Nursery in language development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, very well supported by the special educational needs coordinator, provide strong leadership. They have a clear vision of where the school should be. Most importantly they believe that standards can and should rise significantly and that some teachers' expectations of pupils, in terms of how well they can succeed and behave, are too low. These are problems that are being tackled, but about which there is a history.

52. This school was opened in September 2000 after the closure of two predecessor schools, which are described by teachers and governors as having had two very different

cultures. Merging the two and developing one single culture of striving for excellence was never going to be easy, but it was made more difficult by the two schools not physically merging on one site until September 2001. Progress has been made in creating a feeling of “oneness” in the school, but the process continues. Not all managers and staff share the team spirit of most, and not all play as active a role as others in working towards the school’s objectives. Undaunted, the headteacher continues to try to “bring them on side” and hopes that the move to new premises in October 2003 will help in this respect. Be that as it may, the headteacher enjoys the confidence and support of governors, parents and pupils and the great majority of staff. The headteacher has done all that is reasonable to create unity and has introduced good management structures.

53. Governors work hard and apply their sufficient knowledge of the school’s strengths and weaknesses to help set the school’s direction. With the exception of agreeing a sex education policy, which has not yet happened, governors carry out their statutory duties satisfactorily.

54. Many aspects of leadership and management are satisfactory, some are good and one is unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory element of leadership and management is the work of some subject co-ordinators. The coordination of English is unsatisfactory and this is having a direct effect on pupils' standards in a range of subjects. The coordination of science is also unsatisfactory. Those aspects of leadership and management that are good include the manner in which the school adheres to the principles of best value. Comparing the school's results, standards, the progress pupils make, levels and patterns of expenditure, and challenging itself as to whether it is doing things to best effect are a constant theme in the school. The school consults very widely and considers advice it receives very seriously. Only in relation to parents' views has the school not consulted sufficiently.

55. The school's aim of providing well for every pupil is very well entrenched in all its activities, except the manner in which it uses information on what pupils know, understand and can do in relation to more able pupils. In relation to other pupils, and the very large proportion who have special educational needs and the small number for whom English is not their home language, the school uses data well and provides well.

56. Teaching is monitored very regularly and teachers are advised on how to improve their work. Monitoring has identified the problems with the teaching of literacy and measures have been recently introduced to rectify the deficiencies. Performance management is used well to further develop teachers' skills in line with the requirements of the school development plan and the priorities it is addressing from time to time. New teachers are well inducted into the school and are well supported and monitored during their initial time with the school.

57. Also good is financial management. The school takes great care to use specific funds it receives, such as those in support of pupils with special educational needs, for their intended purpose. The headteacher and governors plan very well, taking account of all factors that will impinge on the school's finances. That is why, in anticipation of significant expenditure at the time of the imminent move to new premises, the school has built up its reserves appropriately.

58. The main problem preventing standards rising in a range of subjects is pupils' very weak grasp of language and literacy. This is amply demonstrated by two facts. Pupils achieve best in art and design and mathematics – two subjects where language and literacy are of limited significance. Secondly, the improvement in progress in science by pupils now in Year 6 demonstrated by their test results at the end of Year 6 in 2003 was achieved because pupils didn't have to write their test answers but were helped, appropriately, by "scribes". This demonstrated that the scientific knowledge and skills were present, but the ability to write it down was not. It is therefore of considerable concern that there is no policy for teaching literacy skills through other subjects, no sharing of good practice following monitoring by the coordinator of colleagues' teaching and no clear strategy for improving standards. Pupils' work is monitored and test data is analysed, but the results of these actions are not sufficiently used to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met or to allow pupils to know and address clear targets for improvement. Marking is inconsistent and rarely constructive in letting pupils know how they can improve their work. The co-ordination of planning does not ensure continuity and progress in literacy skills throughout the school. Insufficient use is made of ICT software to help with writing skills. As stated, measures have now been put into place to alleviate these problems.

59. The management of special educational needs is good overall. The quality of documentation is very good. The procedures for special educational needs are in line with the requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice. The governors are very supportive to the special educational needs provision and provide extra funding. Resources for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs are sufficient, but there is a need to increase the range of resources in terms of hardware and software for ICT, which is presently underdeveloped. The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall in terms of rooms to use in the school for special educational needs.

60. Overall, the number, qualifications and experience of staff, the resources for teaching and learning other than in ICT and the schools accommodation are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. The building and a significant proportion of all resources are to be replaced in October 2003.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to raise pupils' standards in most subjects of the curriculum, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Improve standards in English and pupils' skills in literacy and language by:
 - Introducing a policy to guide teachers in the reinforcement and use of language and literacy skills in other subjects, in particular, history and geography;
 - Planning and promoting opportunities to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills;
 - Planning and providing many more opportunities for pupils to practise writing long pieces of work;
 - Ensuring that coordination of English provides support and guidance to teachers on:
 - planning lessons which meet the needs of each pupil, particularly those who are higher attaining
 - how to continually be aware of what individual pupils know, understand and can do and what they need to do next
 - covering all aspects of the curriculum in sufficient depth
 - Ensuring that the coordinator recognises and shares good practice so that all teachers can benefit from the skills of colleagues.

(Paragraphs: 3, 14, 16-18, 25, 42, 54, 58, 87-90, 114, 140)

- (2) Further improve the quality of teaching by:
 - raising teachers' expectations, in particular concerning the potential of more able pupils;
 - ensuring that information collected about what pupils know, understand and can do is always used effectively to ensure that all pupils always do work appropriate to their ability.

(Paragraphs: 14, 16, 17, 20, 24, 42, 55, 87, 93, 101, 117)

The following minor issue should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Pupils' rate of attendance is unsatisfactory.
(Paragraph: 13)
- The science curriculum does not allow for in depth study of some topics in Years 1 and 2. The coordination of science is unsatisfactory.
(Paragraphs: 5, 20, 23, 54, 99, 103)
- ICT equipment is poor and is being replaced. This has resulted in unsatisfactory use of ICT in teaching and learning other subjects.
(Paragraphs: 25, 58, 118, 120, 121)
- There are too few extra-curricular activities.
(Paragraph: 28)
- The governing body has not yet agreed a sex education policy.
(Paragraphs: 27, 53)
- There are insufficient resources in reception for physical development and in music throughout the school.
(Paragraphs: 81, 132)

THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNIT

62. The unit is known as the Early Years Support Centre and provides ten places for pupils who have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils attend for up to two years, in a safe and secure base on the first floor of the school, in the hope of preventing the need for them to have statements of special educational needs. Although the accommodation is poor in quality, staff have made every effort to make the area interesting and comfortable for the pupils to work in. In the new building, the Early Years Support Centre will have the benefit of brand new accommodation, new furniture and a wider range of learning resources. This initiative will raise the profile of the Early Years Support Centre and should impact beneficially on the learning and achievement of the pupils. However, despite the poor state of the accommodation the quality of provision for pupils in the Early Years Support Centre in terms of teaching and learning is very good.

63. Pupils attending the Early Years Support Centre are between five and seven years old and have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties. Up to four places are made available for similar pupils from other schools. Their timetable is well balanced to ensure that they receive their full entitlement to the curriculum. They join their own classes for registration and for lessons at 2.30pm each day, including all afternoon on a Wednesday, thus ensuring that they continue to feel they belong and are part of the main school. The Learning Support Assistants look after the centre children in the playground and lunchtimes.

64. During their time at the centre pupils make very good progress and this can be seen in the results of the National Curriculum tests and the successful re-integration of pupils back to their mainstream schools and classes in the school. Pupils leaving the centre receive continued in-class support and in Year 3 they work with a Social Inclusion Worker to help their integration back into the ordinary classes in the school.

65. Lesson observations and an analysis of pupils' work indicate that their achievement is good. By Year 2 pupils can count in 2's, 5s' and 10s and understand the value of coins from 1p to £1. In a series of lessons concerning money, pupils had work matched to their ability that ranged from matching coins to a price on a card to exchanging smaller coins to match larger coins. For example, in the first task pupils were matching to the card price of 7p and this was achieved by 5p+1p+1p, extending to 5p+2p. Pupils know that £1 is made up of 2x50p or 5x20p and so on. This work led to solving money problems and then moving on to sorting, classifying and organising information into graphical representations, such as in a pictogram and block graph. Pupils progress to knowing number bonds to 10 and when given a number less than 10 they can say the number to make 10 by adding on.

66. Some good work was seen when pupils wrote their own rhyming sentences, following on from the stimulus of the book 'A Dragon in a Wagon' and revisiting their work on animal and rhyming words. For example, in the discussion pupils were contributing some good ideas, such as 'Imagine a pig with a wig' and worked very well in their groups composing their own rhyming sentences. Although, at first some pupils found working with others difficult, staff work on helping pupils to form relationships is beginning to impact on the development of improving collaborative skills, with pupils working alongside each other and sharing practical tasks. Pupils like listening to stories read to them and are beginning to show an interest in books and in learning to read.

67. Pupils' achievements are appreciated by the parents who are involved very early on in their child's learning in school and at home. One Grandma visits weekly to play games with her grandson and a friend of his choosing. Furthermore, efforts are made to encourage parents to help in classes and the Early Years Support Centre teacher keeps an 'Open Door' invitation to any parent who wishes to discuss any concerns they may have from 2.30 each afternoon.

68. Within the unit, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently very good. Lessons are focused and very well structured to retain and extend pupils' concentration and interest. Planning and monitoring of pupils' behaviour and achievements are very good. Personal targets, which are constantly reviewed by teachers, ensure that each pupil's academic and personal needs receive very good attention. The support staff, helping pupils through the transition back into mainstream lessons and to establish or re-establish friendships among their peers provide high quality in-class support. This further encourages pupils' social interaction and personal development.

69. Management of the unit is very good. For example, every afternoon at 2.30 the centre staff meet to discuss and update the daily behaviour records of the pupils. In addition, the centre teacher meets regularly with the Social Inclusion Worker and attends panel meetings with the headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator and Educational Psychologist. At times, outside agencies attend these meetings, such as the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, and close links are maintained with the Joint Agency Team in Exeter. The teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator meet weekly to discuss the work of the centre and the progress pupils are making. Very good links exist between the unit and the rest of the school, and with outside agencies. These contribute well to pupils' progress.

70. Planning is securely matched to pupils' individual needs and alongside this, effective assessment procedures are implemented consistently, with pupils' achievements closely matched to appropriate national expectations. A record of progress is kept on each pupil from the moment they enter the Early Years Support Centre and is regularly updated. The staff in the centre work as a co-ordinated team under the effective leadership of the teacher. It is because of this good working relationship that they present themselves as good role models that results in the improving attitude and behaviour of the pupils in their care. Staff training is ongoing and is relevant to the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	17	20	21	0	0	0
Percentage	2	29	33	36	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 one percentage point. Six lessons were ungraded.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	307
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	99

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	19
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16	134

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	45

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.8
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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	19	14	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	11	12	11
	Total	20	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (68)	67 (63)	67 (83)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	15
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	21	22	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (73)	67 (73)	82 (78)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	21	32	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	11
	Girls	20	14	18
	Total	29	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (54)	47 (59)	55 (76)
	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 (51)	N/A (62)	N/A (73)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	301	9	2
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	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	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.4
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	434

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	11
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
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	£
Total income	1 153 511
Total expenditure	1 042 160
Expenditure per pupil	3 029
Balance brought forward from previous year	125 569
Balance carried forward to next year	111 392

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	327
Number of questionnaires returned	57

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	40	7	11	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	47	5	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	46	7	18	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	44	14	14	5
The teaching is good.	44	46	7	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	39	18	9	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	51	7	7	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	53	4	5	0
The school works closely with parents.	23	44	23	11	0
The school is well led and managed.	21	26	32	18	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	44	16	7	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	21	30	26	2

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

Strengths

- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good.
- Children are happy and most are motivated to learn new skills.
- Children with special educational needs are fully included in all activities.
- The curriculum is well organised so that children experience all they should.

Areas for improvement

- Physical development for children in Reception class is unsatisfactory because of a shortage of appropriate equipment.

71. The Nursery class provides a sound start to children's education. The quality of teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good, and children achieve well in most of their learning. The curriculum is planned in accordance with the expected standards for young children. With interesting displays and areas for investigative learning, the staff have succeeded in providing an attractive environment under difficult circumstances.

72. Children join the Nursery class just after their third birthday. Most children have a range of knowledge and skills well below those typical for their age in most areas of their learning, with a significant number having delayed speech and limited linguistic skills. There is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Most children make good progress, but because of their low standards on joining the school, still achieve below national expectations at the end of Reception class. None are expected to achieve the levels expected in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical understanding, knowledge and understanding of the world, or in their physical and creative development by the end of the Reception year.

73. The class teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants understand how young children learn. They plan together, manage the children well and provide a range of interesting activities. As a result, most children are enthusiastic and start to learn to concentrate and show interest. They play happily together both indoors and outdoors, and generally co-operate when sharing equipment. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good because teachers' expectations are high, tasks are explained clearly, and work is matched to the needs of most children. The teachers regularly assess children's understanding and provide tasks appropriate to their development. The staff have good relationships with the children and provide them with good role models. Children with special educational needs receive good support from their teachers and special needs assistants and make good progress. The recent Sure Start funded initiative providing specialist provision to address children's underdeveloped speaking and listening skills is too recent to form a judgement on its impact on standards. Few parents help in the classes, but some help their children's learning at home by reading with them, and by encouraging them to behave well in school.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. Social skills are being developed effectively. Children enter the classroom confidently and sit in the correct place waiting quietly for the session to begin. They are learning to put their hands up to answer questions, and to take turns when sharing resources. Children are encouraged to make their own choices after they have finished the main activity. In one lesson, three children played happily together 'under the sea' wearing goggles and flippers while they retrieved shells of sea creatures such as mussels and limpets. They are observant and able to discuss the differences between the shells. Children put art overalls on sensibly and at the end of the session, most put their own coats on unaided. The teachers encourage the children to look after one another and show them how to say "sorry" when they have upset each other. Consequently, children make good progress in developing social skills although on occasion, some are quick to lose their self-confidence and as a result, cry.

Communication, language and literacy

75. Teaching of language and literacy is good, but this good teaching is not reflected in pupils' standards. Most children enter the Nursery class with speech and language well below that typical for their age. Teacher and the learning support assistant constantly talk with the children to widen their vocabulary. They ask open-ended questions to develop children's fluency and confidence. Children are encouraged to explain the activities they are doing, and to discuss the books they are reading. At the start of one lesson, 'show and tell' was used as a means of increasing children's confidence. They shared a reading of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* and are beginning to link letter shapes and sounds. Stories are treated as a special time and children are encouraged to choose stories to be read to the class or group. Children look carefully at the pictures in storybooks, and most can recite some nursery rhymes unaided. The Reception teacher has set up a 'seaside beach' in the classroom, and encourages role-play activities to stimulate children's language development. As a result, children make good progress but their speaking and listening skills are below those typical for their age at the end of the Reception year. Pupils with English as an additional language make similarly good progress.

76. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to recorded stories. They hold the books correctly and most turn the pages carefully. They are taught the sounds and the names of letters, and most can soon identify the initial sounds of common words. By the end of the Reception year, most pupils recognize a range of words that occur frequently, and most read very simple sentences accurately. Children make good progress, but most are not yet reading as well as expected for their age.

77. Children are given opportunities to develop their writing skills and children make attempts at early writing through being taught to write the letters of the alphabet and to recognize the sounds associated with each letter. Children are taught to write their own name. By the end of the Reception year a few can attempt short sentences unaided, using whiteboards and felt tip pens such as: *I went to metch (watch) my mum*, but use letters that are not always well formed or of the same size. Overall, children make good progress, but standards of writing are below those expected nationally for children of their age.

Mathematical development

78. Teaching is good and children are given many opportunities to use numbers and to explore shape and size. During the inspection, they made good use of solid shapes to

recognize the differences between cubes, cuboids, cones and spheres. Children benefited from working in small groups, counted the correct number of faces to each shape and were able to use appropriate words to describe particular features. Children sing a range of counting songs. By the end of the Reception year, some children can count accurately to ten, and add and subtract numbers within ten correctly. They recognize simple shapes such as circles, squares and rectangles. The teachers and their assistants help children with special educational needs effectively so they are fully involved and make progress. At the end of the Reception year, most children have made good progress and have mathematical skills that are below those expected for their age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. Good teaching ensures that there are many opportunities for children to learn about the world around them during lessons and on visits made in the local area. Children examine different uses of water and gain a simple understanding of the properties of water. They carry out their own investigations to discover how bubbles are made, discovering it is impossible to maintain a bubble blown in plain water for more than a second or two, and that you need to 'blow' or 'whisk' to introduce the air to make a bubble in the first place. By adding detergent to water they find bubbles 'last longer' and describe the surface as 'rainbows'. They study a variety of creatures and their young, and identify the differences between living things and inanimate objects. Children explore the local area and draw the flowers and insects they find near their school. They can sequence pictures of a growing plant in the correct order. They learn well through being encouraged to ask questions. Children make good progress but their levels of knowledge and understanding are below that typical for their age at the end of the Reception year.

Physical development

80. When children join the Nursery class, their manipulative skills and co-ordination are below those typical for their age. The teachers ensure that there are many opportunities for children to develop better control by using pencils, crayons and paintbrushes. They pour dried pasta, water and sand onto waterwheels and into moulds, play with small plastic farmyard animals, assemble construction toys and learn how to use scissors. More energetic activities for the Nursery take place in the small dedicated area outside their classroom and for the Reception class in the school hall or outside on the school field or playground. During a Reception year lesson, children moved around the hall like 'sea creatures' working co-operatively to link movement phrases. They followed instructions well. Outside, children develop co-ordination and balance on the limited range of pedal and pushing toys and rode scooters taking care not to collide with anyone else. They co-operated happily, taking turns and sharing equipment. The provision of a dedicated outdoor play area next to the Nursery classroom has aided development in this area of learning for the Nursery class.

81. There are insufficient resources for outdoor play, resulting in teaching which is no more than satisfactory. The school is aware of this weakness and has plans to augment resources for this area of learning when it moves into new premises in a few months time using funds donated by parents and other well-wishers. Overall, children make satisfactory progress but their physical development is below that expected nationally by the end of the Reception year and some still show uncoordinated movement in physical education lessons although they are becoming aware of performance and evaluation.

Creative development

82. Good teaching provides for children to make good progress in developing their creative skills. Children use a variety of paints, paper, card, printing media, fabrics and construction materials. They discover how to create different patterns by mixing blue and green colours using paintbrush tips or by blowing bubbles to represent 'the sea', and learn how to float and lift paper when using a marbling tray. They used glue to stick cut out pictures. Children enjoy singing nursery rhymes and join in happily with the actions that often accompany the songs. As a result, children's artistic and musical skills are developing well

although because of their low standards on joining the school, they are still below those expected at the end of the Reception year.

ENGLISH

Strengths

- Pupils with statements of special educational need are well supported.
- All pupils are well integrated and cared for in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- The raising of standards in English, particularly in writing and pupils' achievement in the subject, particularly that of boys.
- The introduction and implementation of a whole school literacy policy and programme.
- Teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve, particularly the higher attaining pupils and their planning of work to suit the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- The use of monitoring and assessment of pupils' work to set appropriate and realistic targets that pupils understand and work to suit the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- The leadership and management of the subject.
- Greater use of ICT.

83. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment which are well below the national average in literacy and a high percentage of pupils have special educational needs, both of which affect the standards of attainment in English. Standards in reading in the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 2 were very low, in the bottom 5 per cent nationally and well below average when compared with similar schools. In writing, they were well below the national and similar schools averages. The provisional results for 2003 show a very similar picture of standards attained. In both years, few pupils attained the higher than expected levels. The performance of boys in 2002 was three times as low as that of girls in both reading and writing. Inspection evidence indicates that these results are an accurate reflection of current standards.

84. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002, pupils attained well below national average results in English and below average results when compared with similar schools. Standards have fallen since the previous year, there were very few higher than expected grades attained and boys' performance remained very much lower than that of girls. In the provisional 2003 results, standards again appear to have fallen a little, especially in writing. Inspection evidence agrees with this indication of attainment.

85. By the end of Year 7, pupils are also attaining at a level well below national expectation. Progress throughout the school is therefore only satisfactory, since pupils are achieving at the same level throughout. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is better than for other pupils, through the good support of learning assistants provided for them. The school ensures that all pupils are enabled to participate fully in lessons by dividing them into ability groups within lessons.

86. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are weak throughout the school. Their vocabulary is thin and sentence structure is poor, so that most are unable to speak in a sustained manner or with a sense of the purpose of their speech at any given time. They do not listen well and

are easily distracted from heeding teachers' instructions. Reading is insufficiently supported by a range of strategies that would help pupils to deal with unfamiliar words and the majority read with little expression or full comprehension of what they are reading. Pupils' writing is thin in quantity, done in short bursts during literacy lessons, such as that seen in a Year 6 lesson in which pupils were comparing the style of descriptions from two Michael Morpurgo novels, where very little written work was accomplished in the short time allocated to it. Spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence structure are weak. Pupils do not learn to write in a sustained fashion, in order to produce longer units of work, which would better equip them to raise standards in the national tests.

87. Despite these concerns, the strengths in the teaching of English outweigh the weaknesses and teaching is therefore judged to be satisfactory overall. Three quarters of the teaching seen in Years 1 and 2 was good as was half of the teaching in Year 7. However, in Years 3 to 6, four out of five lessons were only satisfactory. Balanced against this, the provision made for pupils with special educational needs, who constitute over forty per cent of all pupils, is good, and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. There are several good features in the teaching of English, particularly in teachers' knowledge and understanding and their good management of pupils. However, some teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities is too low. This is particularly the case for higher attaining pupils, who are sometimes held back by tasks that are too easy for them and fail to encourage them to greater effort. Teachers' planning does not always ensure the provision of graded work to cover the needs of pupils of all abilities. The work set for pupils with special educational needs is good and appropriate, in line with their individual educational plans, but too often the outcome of work done is the only way in which the appropriateness of work set can be measured.

88. Although teaching is judged to be satisfactory overall, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because of the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching described, and also because there is no whole school literacy policy. There is therefore no programme to ensure that teachers concentrate on the basic skills of speaking, reading and writing across the curriculum, and many opportunities are missed to emphasise these essential skills. In particular, writing would benefit considerably from its practice across a range of tasks and subjects, such as geography, history, science and religious education.

89. The curriculum, too, is unsatisfactory, partly because the skills of writing are insufficiently emphasised and promoted, partly because higher attaining pupils are not stretched to their full potential and partly because the low standards attained by boys, although identified, are not being addressed.

90. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory because of the lack of clear direction offered to teachers throughout the school. Pupils' work is monitored and test data is analysed, but the results of these actions are not sufficiently used to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met or to allow pupils to know and implement clear targets for improvement. Marking, too, is inconsistent and rarely constructive in letting pupils know how they can improve their work. Priorities for future action to improve standards are not clear and the co-ordination of planning does not ensure continuity and progress in literacy skills throughout the school. Although teaching is observed by the subject co-ordinator, its results are not used to share good practice with other teachers. Because of insufficient emphasis on literacy skills, there is too little commitment to raising standards in the subject. Not enough use is made of ICT software to help with writing skills.

MATHEMATICS

Strengths

- Very strong leadership and management of the subject by the co-ordinator.
- Good use of assessment in setting targets.
- Good teaching.
- Pupils' good attitudes and concentration.
- Very good provision for pupils with learning needs.

Areas for improvement

- The development of pupils' literacy skills in investigation work and problem solving.
- The use of ICT.
- The range and quality and quantity of resources.
- Challenge for higher attaining pupils in some lessons.
- Inconsistencies in marking.

91. The performance of pupils by the end of Year 2 in the 2002 national tests was well below the national average and the average of schools in similar contexts. In the same year, by the end of Year 6, standards were also well below the national averages and those of similar schools. The early results from tests in 2003 indicate a significant improvement in the number of pupils attaining the levels expected for their age, so that pupils are now in line to achieve and overtake the targets set by the school. A significant number of pupils in Year 2 now attain standards at Level 2, which is the average and a greater number of pupils in Year 6 are reaching the above average level 5. All these results indicate good progress. Standards in the scrutiny of pupils' work were below average overall. Standards in lessons seen during the inspection were still below levels expected for their age at the end of Year 2. They were similar to levels expected for their age for pupils at the end of Year 6 and in Year 7. These judgements reflect the recent and continuing improvement in standards. This improvement is the result of very strong leadership by the coordinator in setting clear targets and providing support to colleagues for modifying teaching to cater effectively for pupils' weakness in literacy. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language receive very good support in class and they make good progress.

92. Year 1 pupils make good progress in counting on and back and adding and taking away numbers to 20. They understand the difference between odd and even numbers and know that shapes have three or more sides and corners. They successfully use number lines and multi-link cubes to help solve number problems. Year 2 pupils build well on the number work of the first year. Their books show understanding of place value in hundreds, tens and units and they solve money problems to 50p. They correctly draw diagrams illustrating halves and quarters and begin simple division and multiplication. Pupils recognise different shapes and their properties although there is less recorded work on solid shapes. They solve word and number problems and record different types of data using tallies and bar charts. The books of average and higher attaining pupils show satisfactory levels of accurate work. Pupils' achievement overall is good. Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils with learning difficulties well so that their work shows improving standards. Pupils of above average attainment are not always sufficiently challenged to achieve the standards of which they are capable.

93. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 7. The impact of the high number of pupils with special educational needs means that pupils' limited use and understanding of language makes the solving of written problems difficult for them. Average and higher attaining pupils' books show satisfactorily development of their skills as they cover the curriculum, but too much work is identical for different ability groups. This means that some higher attaining pupils are not always being challenged sufficiently.

94. Year 7 pupils work successfully in the four operations of number. They understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and solve problems involving these. They correctly measure angles, know the difference between regular and irregular shapes and work out the perimeter and area of various shapes. Higher attaining pupils correctly use co-ordinates in graphs and geometric shapes and have begun to work on the theory of probability. In one lesson they were challenged well to solve a problem requiring deduction rather than calculation. Most pupils were able to see the logic of the problem and solve it.

95. Pupils' attitudes to their mathematics lessons are good. They are attentive and anxious to learn. Most pupils, including the youngest, maintain their concentration well throughout the hour-long lesson. Teachers contribute to this by moving the lessons along at a good pace and using resources, such as white boards, number sticks, squares and lines, well. Pupils work harmoniously together in groups and continue to concentrate when the teacher is working with another group. The presentation of their work is very variable. Many pupils take a pride in their work, setting it out neatly and writing legibly and carefully. Others are too easily satisfied with work that is untidy.

96. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly in accordance with the National Numeracy Strategy. Their knowledge of mathematics is secure and they teach with confidence. In a particularly good Year 6 lesson the teacher overcame the pupils' weakness in literacy skills by modifying her input to the lesson. As a direct consequence almost all pupils in this lesson attained a clear grasp of Prime numbers. Lessons are well organised and the balance between whole class learning and individual and group work is appropriate. There is good coverage of the range of the curriculum in all years. The use of ICT is unsatisfactory, mainly due to poor resources. The many support staff support the learning of pupils substantially, especially those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English. Teachers do not always set work that sufficiently challenges other pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils. Their expectation of what these pupils can or should achieve is sometimes too low. Teachers regularly set homework to extend and reinforce pupils' learning in class.

97. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is good. Results of regular tests are recorded and teachers carefully note pupils' attainment and progress at regular intervals, giving grades in accordance with National Curriculum levels. Teachers build up a good knowledge of individual pupils' achievement. The marking of pupils' work generally provides helpful comments and suggestions. Sometimes marking is unsatisfactory, giving little or no helpful feedback to pupils and failing to criticise poor presentation of work.

98. The subject is very ably led. All teachers are familiar with the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning, especially their

evaluation of lessons and scrutinises pupils' workbooks. Since her appointment in autumn 2002, she has helped teachers to improve their lesson planning and has contributed significantly to improved teaching through training for colleagues in the use of visual materials to overcome weaknesses in literacy skills. She has rightly identified the need to further refine assessment to ensure targets set are clearly understood by pupils and recognise the steps in their progress. Resources for the subject are unsatisfactory but there are good plans to rectify this when the school moves to its new building in autumn 2003.

SCIENCE

Strengths

- Improving National Curriculum test results.
- The emphasis on learning science through scientific investigation.
- Educational visits with scientific content.
- Provision for Year 7 pupils, who are taught science at St James High School.

Areas for improvement

- Literacy skills in science are poor in Years 1 to 4, reducing the quality of pupils' written science work and hence their standards.
- Unsatisfactory subject co-ordination.
- The curriculum in Years 1 and 2.

99. In 2002, pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 were in the bottom five per cent nationally and those at the end of Year 2 were well below average. In 2003 the provisional results of national tests show significant improvement over the immediate past year, with standards in Year 6 being in line with expectations. However, the two years' results are not directly comparable. This is because in 2003 the school provided pupils sitting the Year 6 tests with reading and writing help in the tests. This is allowed for where the results of tests are likely to be severely distorted as a consequence of pupils' weak literacy skills and their special needs. While the two years' results cannot therefore be compared, the 2003 results present an accurate picture of pupils' science standards. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now achieving well in science. Pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is limited by inadequacies in the curriculum being taught. The curriculum does not cover all aspects of the subject in sufficient depth.

100. The quality of teaching is good in Years 1 to 6. Pupils in Year 7 are taught science at the secondary school and the quality of teaching is therefore not graded. There is appropriate emphasis on pupils carrying out their own practical and investigative work. As a result pupils make good progress and are developing an appropriate range of investigative skills. In a Years 1-2 lesson pupils carried out their own investigations into the seeds found in fruits such as a pomegranate, apples and an avocado pear. They tried to estimate the number of seeds present in each fruit, and made observational drawings. They planted dried runner beans in pots and withheld water from half the pots in order to observe how successful the conditions for growth with, and without water, will prove to be. They worked sensibly and effectively in pairs and attempted to predict the expected results.

101. Teaching has a number of good features. Teachers give instructions clearly and introduce correct scientific vocabulary. They ask questions to make pupils think, and encourage them to explain their observations. Teachers make use of a range of resources to maintain pupils' attention and concentration. In a lesson in Year 5, for instance, pupils could discuss domestic water use and recycling and are familiar with terms such as purification, precipitation, reservoir and solar energy. Some teachers monitor pupils' progress by assessing pupils' knowledge and skills at the end of each topic but this practice is inconsistent and teachers do not use this information sufficiently to plan work that closely matches pupils' individual abilities, or improves their weak literacy skills.

102. Teachers generally have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and this helps them to explain scientific ideas in a way that pupils can understand. Occasionally, however, teachers do not always plan investigations carefully enough or take steps to ensure pupils' work is recorded. This occurred in a Year 4 lesson, when pupils devised keys to discover and determine the animals and insects that are found in a range of different habitats. At the end of the lesson their work was erased from the individual whiteboards used during the lesson so no record was available from which the teacher could plan the next lesson to best meet pupils' needs. Teachers manage their classes well, and, as a result, most pupils are keen to answer questions and have good attitudes towards their work. Displays of pupils' work show pupils that their efforts are valued. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants and make sound progress as a result.

103. Although the coordinator has drawn up a science action plan that addresses present weaknesses in the subject, the co-ordination of science remains unsatisfactory. The coordinator has not monitored pupils' work in sufficient depth and across the school to identify, and address the effects of weak literacy skills. He has not sufficiently influenced planning in the subject in Years 1 to 4, or rectified the inadequacies in the curriculum in Years 1 and 2. The limited opportunity to observe and evaluate teaching in the subject, including that of Year 7 who are taught at another school has had a negative impact on his effectiveness. The school uses a scheme of work that covers the National Curriculum. Learning objectives are clear in teachers' short-term plans but opportunities for the assessment of pupils' progress are not identified. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and accessible, but there is very limited use of ICT resources such as CDs and the Internet to assist teaching and pupils' research. Good use is made of visits, for example, to the Eden Project, and Pennywell Farm where pupils go pond dipping and investigate a variety of plant and animal habitats. Visitors during the current year included a teacher from the local high school who taught 'Planet Science'. Such visitors make a useful contribution to pupils' scientific understanding. The school policy for the subject is muddled and requires revision.

ART AND DESIGN

Strengths

- Displays of art and design around the school and the value that is placed on pupils' artwork.
- School residential visit to the Beaford Art Centre and other venues to stimulate pupils' creative ideas in art and design.
- Study of the work of other artists.

Areas for improvement

- More consistent use of sketchbooks across the school to develop pupils' artistic skills and techniques.

104. Standards in art and design are above those expected of pupils of a similar age by the ages of seven, eleven and twelve. Evidence was gained from observing lessons, looking at pupils' work and displays around the school and talking to pupils and teachers. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress overall.

105. The school environment is enhanced by the wall paintings that cover all corridor walls, including very colourful batik drapes and examples of pupils' artwork. These demonstrate well pupils' above average standards throughout the school. For example, outside the Nursery there is a good example of pupils' work in a community mosaic. Other notable examples on display are pupils' sculptures using natural materials following the work of the artist Andy Goldsworthy. In this work pupils used sand, clay, pebbles, wood and bark and the photographic evidence shows examples of their creations and the pride in the faces of the pupils who produced them. Pupils in Year 3 have also been on a residential visit to Beaford Art Centre in 2003. There are some very good examples of batik patterns in card frames that resulted from that visit. A Year 7 class had their own art week and part of that week included a visit to the Mythical Gardens in Devon and, as a result, pupils produced some very good still life sketches and very colourful imaginative landscape designs. In addition, they have a very good 'Pop Art' display in their classroom. Pupils are proud of their work and keen for visitors to see it. They are aware that the school also takes pride in their achievements. There are also some very good examples of paintings from Year 5 of seaside scenes in the style of Richard Tuff, a painter of Cornish seaside scenes.

106. Right from the early years pupils get many opportunities in working with a range of media, to learn new skills and to develop and refine earlier learned skills. For example, in the Year 1 and 2 classes pupils have studied the work of Vincent Van Gogh and produced their own still life painting of flower arrangements. In connection with their environmental work pupils have made some clay slabs and modelled clay minibeasts to attach to the slabs. Good use is made of pupils' artistic skills in other curriculum subjects. For example, older pupils have illustrated booklets of coastlines and coastal features in connection with their geographical studies and in a link with literacy they have written and illustrated postcards after a visit to Dawlish Warren. In an ICT lesson Year 7 pupils were using a paint program to create their own landscapes. Computer art is beginning to impact on pupils' art and design, with examples of greetings card designs and the study of the work of famous artists, such as Kandinsky and Mondrian.

107. The quality in teaching is good overall. No lessons were observed in nursery or reception, but the judgement on the quality of teaching was gained from the scrutiny of pupils' work on display in the classrooms and corridors. All lessons seen in Years 3 to 7 were good or better. Teachers managed their classes well and had a good understanding of how to motivate pupils to give of their best. They gave concise and clear explanations of the work pupils were to do and supported less able pupils well. Teachers struck a good balance between directing lessons so as to achieve their objectives and allowing pupils to be creative. One weakness in teaching is inconsistencies in the use of sketch books in some classes. As a consequence of good teaching pupils learn and achieve well. Pupils have good attitudes towards their work.

108. Overall, the coordination of art and design is satisfactory. The subject coordinator has only been in post for a short while and is undertaking an audit of the subject in preparation for the move to the new school. The school has already highlighted art and design to continue to be a high priority following the move to the new premises. The policy has recently been written and the scheme of work follows national guidance on the teaching and learning of art and design. Resources are sufficient to teach the subject. Through the examination of artists' work, residential and other visits, the involvement of visiting artists and encouraging pupils

creativity, art and design makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Strengths

- The quality of work carried out by older pupils.
- The opportunities for pupils in Year 7 to receive their design and technology lessons in St James High School and the skills gained in using a wider range of tools and equipment.

Areas for improvement

- Increased professional development would be achieved if the co-ordinator observes the school's Year 7 pupils being taught in the High School.
- When moving to the new school to ensure that the storage of design and technology tools and equipment is easier to access for the teaching staff.

109. Standards in design and technology by the age of seven, eleven and twelve are in line with those expected of pupils of the same age. Judgements on standards were made after observing lessons, looking at samples of pupils' work, displays in classrooms and through discussion with teachers and pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress over time.

110. Pupils' past work on display show a range of examples of satisfactorily produced items. For example, Year 1 pupils have designed and made a moving vehicle out of recycled boxes, adding axles and wheels and finally completing their project by painting the body of their vehicle. In an observed lesson, Year 1 and 2 pupils were cutting paper templates for marking and cutting a felt puppet shape that will be sewn to make a glove puppet. Other work with joining material with stitches was observed in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were practising the running, hem and back stitch to sew material together to make a hat. At the end of both Years 2 and 6 pupils have achieved satisfactorily and their standards are appropriate for their age.

111. Overall, the teaching of design and technology is good and has resulted in pupils' good attitudes to the subject and the satisfactory standards they achieve. A particularly strong element of teaching has been the development of cross-curricular links in some project work. For example, Year 4 pupils have designed and made torches. This had a direct link with science when pupils made their circuits to light a bulb with a switch to switch the bulb on and off. Year 5 pupils have designed and made musical instruments, and have undertaken a biscuit survey that had close links with work they were doing in ICT. Another cross-curricular link was in the art and design work pupils have been engaged in looking at furniture designers and following this they designed and made their own chairs. A weakness in teaching is inconsistency in the quality of design briefs and of finished products. In some classes the quality is not as good as in others and this results in inconsistencies in pupils' rate of progress as they move through the school.

112. Year 7 pupils go to St James High School for their design and technology lessons and are taught by the teachers at the high school. This is the first year that pupils have visited the school for their lessons. They are making satisfactory progress as they learn new skills in the

design and make process. By the end of Year 7, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, as are their standards. There are missed opportunities for the professional development of Willowbrook teachers because they do not stay and observe how design and technology is being taught at the high school.

113. The policy for design and technology is at present in draft form and staff have yet to be consulted about its content. The scheme of work is based on national guidance in the teaching and learning of design and technology. Resources are sufficient to teach the subject, but are not easy to access from cupboard below the school stage. However, it has been recognised that there is a need to acquire more resources to teach the subject and also to ensure that all staff are fully conversant and consistently apply the design and make process in their planning and teaching.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Strengths

- Pupils' interest in and enjoyment of the subjects.
- Good use of local resources and fieldwork.

Areas for development

- Raising standards of attainment and improving achievement in the subjects.
- The introduction of longer pieces of organised written work to develop pupils' literacy skills throughout the school.
- Provision for higher attaining pupils.
- Ensuring the sharing of good teaching practice.
- More extensive use of ICT.

114. Despite satisfactory teaching and learning, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below those expected, largely as a consequence of pupils' unsatisfactory writing skills and therefore their inability to record their work in a sustained and orderly manner. Pupils with special educational needs and those who do not speak English as their first language attain similar standards to their peers. Overall, in Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory. Insufficient evidence was available to judge standards or achievement in Year 7.

115. Pupils enjoy their work in geography. Those in Years 1 and 2 show enthusiasm as they learn of the world travels of the fictional character, 'Barnaby Bear'. The youngest pupils learn about light sources and shadows, they acquire knowledge about the physical features of the United Kingdom, such as the Year 1 / 2 lesson observed, in which they studied the features of Wales, finishing the lesson by listening to a Welsh male voice choir and eating welsh cakes. In Year 5 pupils were observed comparing their own locality with that of the coastal town of Llandudno, looking to see how human activities affect the environment. In Year 7, pupils were studying Bangladesh with interest. Throughout the school, pupils learn about the features of our world, care for the environment and mapping skills. The curriculum is enriched by field trips in the local area and to other areas, such as the one to Dawlish.

116. The curriculum in history, based on National Curriculum Programmes of Study, is appropriate and suits the needs of pupils. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 study events of the past, such as the Great Fire of London. They become aware of the differences between past and present, especially in relation to their own families and lives. In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, topics such as the Vikings, the Romans, the Tudors and World War Two are studied. Some interesting work was seen on the lives of Victorian children, the ancient Greeks, and Greek myths and legends. In Year 7, pupils study a period, currently medieval times, in more depth, looking at the Norman invasion, the Crusades and the murder of Thomas a Becket. Throughout the school, pupils acquire a satisfactory understanding of chronology, are able to use source material to make deductions about the past and enjoy being 'history detectives'.

117. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge and grasp of the subject and manage pupils well. However, work does not always extend higher attaining pupils fully and too much work is completed on worksheets, rather than in

sustained written form in exercise books. Little individual research work is undertaken, even in Year 7.

118. The subjects are led and managed satisfactorily. Insufficient opportunity exists for the sharing of good teaching practice. The new Geography co-ordinator has compiled detailed portfolios of graded work to help teachers in their assessment of standards. As yet, there is too little use of ICT to aid research and learning in either subject. In history, work is monitored and assessed at the end of each topic and planning is in line with the demands of the National Curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Strengths

- The work of the subject coordinator.

Areas for improvement

- The efficiency of the way in which computers are deployed, and hence their accessibility to all pupils.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum.

119. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in ICT and standards are in line with those expected by the age of seven, eleven and twelve. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress. The subject policy is in need of review, but a new policy for the safe use of the internet has recently been written. The scheme of work is based on national guidance for the teaching and learning in ICT and satisfactory measuring if what pupils know, understand and can do is undertaken at the end of each unit.

120. Because of the inadequacies of the present school building, there are a range of deficiencies in how computers are used in the school. This is well understood by managers and plans are in place to have an efficient computer system when the move to new premises takes place in October. Currently teaching and learning suffer from computer systems regularly breaking down, printers not working and intermittent access to the internet. During the week of the inspection a significant number of class lessons were cancelled because the staff were concerned that the computer systems would not work and therefore there was no opportunity to judge the quality of teaching and learning in those classes. However, five classes and the pupils from the Early Years Support Centre did use the computer suite to undertake their lessons and the computers all worked well and the lessons were conducted successfully as planned. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in those lessons seen was good and the attitude of pupils to their learning was also good. The school acknowledges that because of the difficulties often experienced by teachers, only those who are confident users of ICT taught lessons during the inspection. For this reason, no overall judgement has been made on the quality of teaching or learning.

121. Not all classrooms have computers systems and this restricts pupils' ongoing progress because they are not able to use the computers regularly to practise and refine newly learned skills. However, in the classrooms with computer systems, although a few pupils were seen using them in their lessons, not all computers were used regularly by pupils and some were not even switched on during the week of the inspection.

122. Where ICT was being used successfully in lessons it was where the teacher clearly identified the use of ICT in the planning. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 3 pupils were using control technology to program instructions to a programmable vehicle, to

move it backwards and forward and carry out left and right turns. Other uses of control were seen where Year 6 pupils were using the program 'Superlogo' to input commands to create a square, hexagon and pentagon shape. This was not an easy exercise and pupils were practising using the ruler and angle measurer to gain the information needed to enter the instructions. However, when assessing the outcome of the lesson the teacher concluded that a significant number of pupils were not confident in the procedure and planned to repeat the lesson. This was a sensible decision and once the pupils had practised again they were much more confident and commenced writing their own procedures whilst working in pairs.

123. Three lessons were seen where pupils were using paint programs to create designs and study the work of famous artists. For example, Year 1 and 2 and pupils from the Early Years Support Centre were studying the work of the artists Kandinsky and Mondrian and were using computers to produce work in their styles, combining geometric shapes to successfully design very creative artwork. A Year 7 class also concentrated on art and design when they created very colourful landscapes to enhance the landscapes that they were studying in their art and design lessons. Some evidence was seen of pupils past work using spreadsheets and word-processing. However, the use of ICT in cross-curricular work is undeveloped and few examples of reports, recounts or extended writing were seen in the scrutiny of work or on display around the school. Because of the inadequacies of the school's computer systems, the use of ICT in teaching and learning other subjects of the curriculum is also unsatisfactory.

124. The subject coordinator only took over the management of the subject this term, but has already made good progress in auditing the hardware and software and has written an action plan. This plan is focused on the move to the new school and the provision of new resources for ICT, including a new ICT suite and new computers and computer systems in all classrooms. The school has earmarked a substantial amount of funding to update all equipment for ICT in the new school. The subject coordinator has arranged for a Local Education Authority advisor for ICT to visit the new school and advise on the development of ICT and to support teaching staff through in-house training.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

125. In Year 7, pupils go to the local secondary school for two lessons each week in French, in order to prepare them for their entry to the school the following year. They are taught by one of the secondary school's teachers and follow the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in the subject. No judgement is made on the quality of teaching, as the teacher is not from Willowbrook School. Insufficient evidence is available to judge the quality of learning.

126. Standards attained at the end of the year are below those expected nationally. Pupils achieve less well than they should because they are hindered by their poor literacy skills, which make the learning of a foreign language more difficult.

127. They learn basic conversational French, are able to recognise familiar words and phrases and, in the lesson observed, were consolidating their vocabulary and sentence structure in preparation for the end of year assessment.

128. The study of another language is helpful in the cultural development of pupils, as well as easing the transition to the secondary school.

MUSIC

Strengths

- Singing is of a high standard throughout the school.
- Pupils experience excellent piano accompaniment to their singing.

Areas for improvement

- Instrumental resources are in a poor state and limited in quantity and range.
- Inconsistency in provision and teaching that means that pupils do not develop musical skills in a logical order.
- There is an unsatisfactory range of recorded music to support teaching and learning and little use is made of CD-ROMs or the Internet.

129. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection because of lack of firsthand evidence. By the end of Year 6 and Year 7 standards are in line with national expectations. Too few lessons were seen to judge the quality of teaching or learning.

130. Class teachers teach most music. In the lesson observed in Year 3, the teacher used a poem with challenging vocabulary to encourage pupils to think about sounds associated with summer. Pupils suggested 'calm' 'quiet' 'happy' 'relaxed' then devised a variety of percussion sounds to represent the words of the poem. They co-operated sensibly, albeit noisily and responded well to the teacher and to their peers when performing the finished compositions. There was a good emphasis on using correct musical vocabulary during the lesson. Pupils were able to name percussion instruments correctly, and change the way they are usually played in order to meet the difficult challenge of playing them together quietly, in a small group, as the poem was read softly at the conclusion of the lesson.

131. Pupils in other years develop their musical appreciation by listening to a range of music from different places. Music is played as pupils enter and leave school assemblies and included music from Africa, supporting pupils' cultural development well. Pupils sing a selection of hymns and modern worship songs during times of collective worship. The whole school sings tunefully together and pupils clearly enjoy such opportunities, accompanied as they are by a competent pianist.

132. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership of the subject. The school has adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority curriculum programme and a commercial scheme of work. Despite this there is inconsistency in provision and teaching that means that pupils do not develop musical skills in a logical order. Classes generally receive sufficient time for weekly music lessons. The school has an unsatisfactory range of musical resources and recorded music, and no keyboards were seen in use during the inspection. Little use is made of CD ROMs or the Internet to assist teaching and learning in the subject. There is no regular choir practice, but pupils practise for special singing events during the year and are well supported by parents at the Christmas carol concert. Visiting musicians from centres in Exeter come into school occasionally to perform for the whole school, and these have included Japanese and African drummers. This makes a helpful contribution to pupils' social and cultural development and occasionally a limited amount of extra-curricular provision arises from their visits. The school also provides a weekly music club.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Strengths

- Pupils' attitudes in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Range and quality of resources.
- Range of extra curricular activities.

133. Pupils' standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language receive very good support in class and they make good progress.

134. A significant number of pupils start Year 1 with levels of physical development and skills that are well below what are expected for their age. They make good progress so that by the end of Year 2 most are achieving well and attaining levels in line with national expectations in gymnastics and athletics, though throwing and catching, for example, are still not as strong as they might be. The pupils are interested in physical education and understand the need for warming up exercises and for cooling down afterwards. They are careful of each other when running and dodging in the hall and they quickly find a place in which to exercise.

135. Pupils develop skills in throwing balls for a partner to hit with a racquet, doing so with increasing confidence and accuracy. They learn and then practise hopping and skipping and enjoy the movement. At different times in the year, the pupils work on balancing activities, devising sequences of movements and exploring different ways of moving.

136. Pupils in Years 3 to 7 extend the range of their physical activities and swimming is included in the curriculum. It is anticipated that almost all the pupils will be able to swim the nationally expected minimum by the time they are 11 and some of the more talented pupils do very much better than that. The older pupils set themselves targets in athletics and then set out to exceed them in running and jumping. They improve their throwing, catching and batting skills. All the physical education activities are open to all of the pupils and the staff take particular care to ensure that pupils with special educational needs benefit from the activities as well as their fellow pupils. The same is true of those pupils with English as an additional language. The staff are also careful to promote sensitive responses to pupils' attempts at new activities. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6 and in Year 7.

137. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. A small proportion of lessons seen were very good. Where the teaching was good, the planning was careful and anticipated what the pupils might do and need. The teachers' control was effective, so that the lessons proceeded well. Most of the teachers have a sound understanding of their pupils' physical development and of how that can be developed effectively. They also share with their pupils what they are to learn from the various activities so that they come to understand the purpose of physical activity and its value for healthy living. This aspect of physical education is also being amplified in the developing programme of personal, social and health education.

138. In most classes, the pupils enjoyed the work set, responded appropriately and behaved well. They generally worked co-operatively and when the opportunities were given, they made sensitive and careful observations about others' performances.

139. The school has a clear policy on physical education. The curriculum is well planned. There is a clear overall framework that covers all the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and there are detailed plans for each unit of work. The recently appointed coordinator contributes significant expertise to the teaching of physical education. The range of extra-curricular sports clubs is limited to netball and football. Resources are unsatisfactory, in part due to losses as a result of intruders. The facilities are good with a large hall and extensive grassed areas as well as good sized hard play areas.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Areas for improvement

- Range and quality of resources.
- Use of ICT.
- Use of literacy skills.

140. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve standards in religious education that are broadly in line with what is expected by the local agreed syllabus. Insufficient evidence was available to judge standards at the end of Year 7. Contributing to pupils' satisfactory standards is the good support provided for the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language, which enables them to make good progress. Detracting from the standards achieved are pupils' limited literacy skills which impacts on their ability to write extended pieces about the topics they study.

141. Pupils study a range of faiths, including Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism, learning about similarities and differences. By the end of Year 2 they begin to have an appreciation of the importance of faith to individuals and the role of religion in family life. By the end of Year 6 they have a deeper understanding of some of the books and artefacts associated with different faiths and their importance. For example, in Judaism they learn that the Torah is the main holy script and that it contains the Ten Commandments. The school takes particular care to ensure that pupils respect the various faiths that are represented among its pupils, contributing well to the calm atmosphere in the school, where pupils value each other regardless of faith or background.

142. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and of the locally agreed syllabus. Lessons are satisfactorily planned and because teachers ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are involved in activities, they meet the needs of all pupils. The range of pupils' written work is unsatisfactory reflecting pupils' weakness in literacy although, in discussion, their knowledge and understanding are better than their written work suggests. There is very little use of ICT for teaching or learning. For example, no evidence was seen of pupils using ICT to research religious education topics. Teachers' marking of pupils' written work is inconsistent. Teachers do not always make sufficient comment on poor handwriting and presentation of work. As a consequence of satisfactory teaching, pupils learn and achieve satisfactorily.

143. The coordination of religious education is satisfactory. Although there has been no monitoring of classroom practice, some informal support is provided to colleagues and their plans are monitored termly. Resources are adequate for the current curriculum. ICT is underused in the subject and links with other subjects, such as history and geography, are not

sufficiently promoted. The developing course on personal social and health education contributes to aspects of the religious education curriculum.