

INSPECTION REPORT

HEATHCOAT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tiverton

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113343

Headteacher: Mr J Statton

Reporting inspector: Mrs R Onions
18354

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 January 2003

Inspection number: 250926

Short inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Broad Lane

Tiverton

Devon

Postcode: EX16 5HE

Telephone number: 01884 252445

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Hannon

Date of previous inspection: July 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Heathcoat Primary is a school of above average size, with 397 three- to eleven-year-old pupils on roll, 40 of whom attend the nursery part time. The school has approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. Ninety-eight per cent of the pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school is situated near to the centre of Tiverton and draws from the nearby area. Twenty per cent of pupils take free school meals, which is broadly average. The school has a nursery class, but not all pupils who enter the reception class attend this. Children enter the nursery and reception classes with a range of attainment but overall it is below average. Their language and social skills are often well below average. Almost half of the children in the reception classes began attending school full time in the week of the inspection. Some children started attending the nursery during the inspection week. The school has traditionally had an above average number of pupils with special educational needs. There are 53 pupils (15 per cent) identified by the school as having special educational needs. Three pupils have statements of special educational need. The school has pupils with a range of special needs, most of whom have mild or specific learning difficulties, but some have more complex physical, behavioural or educational difficulties. An above average number of pupils who complete their primary education at Heathcoat have attended other schools. A number of these pupils have experienced behavioural difficulties in the past. Over the last year, the school has been through a period of staff change due in the main to promotion. At the time of the inspection, nine of the sixteen teaching staff had been in post for less than two years and most of these teachers had started at the school at the beginning of the preceding term.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Heathcoat is a good school. Pupils achieve well and, by Year 6, an average number attain the nationally expected level (Level 4) in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is good. Pupils are very successfully helped to behave well and to enjoy school. The school is well led and managed and there is a very hardworking staff team. Parents think highly of the school, which provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Year 6, pupils have made good progress and achieved well in English, mathematics and science and in art and design.
- The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. This is particularly the case for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils like coming to school and join in enthusiastically with activities provided for them both in lessons and at other times. They generally work hard and behave well.
- The headteacher, key staff and governors lead the school well. They have a very clear determined vision for the education of the pupils that is seen in all the work of the school.
- The school provides a particularly rich curriculum for older pupils in the school.
- Parents hold very positive opinions about the school.

What could be improved

- There is a lack of systematic, planned teaching of listening and speaking skills. This slows learning for many pupils, but particularly affects those in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1 and 2.
- The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is not as broad and well managed as it should be.
- Systems for managing some aspects of the school's work are not efficient enough. This places an unnecessary additional workload on the headteacher and staff.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvements since it was last inspected in July 1998. Standards for Year 6 pupils have risen more than they have nationally in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is more successful and pupils make better progress in these subjects. Pupils' attitudes to school and to work have improved. The school has successfully addressed all the issues raised in the last report, although there remain some aspects of the education provided in the Foundation Stage that need further improvement.

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	D	E	C	A
mathematics	B	B	A	A
science	C	D	A	A*

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Children enter the nursery class with below average attainments overall. They have a particular weakness in their language skills and many have very limited social experiences and skills. Personal, social and emotional skills are well taught and children make good progress in gaining these, both in the nursery and reception classes. In other aspects of their development they achieve in a satisfactory way overall. When they enter Year 1, they continue to have below average attainments.

In English and mathematics, pupils achieve in a satisfactory way over Years 1 and 2. Despite considerable thought and effort by the school, standards in Year 2 in the 2002 national assessments were well below the national average and those attained in similar schools in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing were below the national average but in line with those attained in similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that standards are rising somewhat and that the school now has a close to average number of pupils who are attaining expected levels. Because there are a smaller than average number of pupils attaining higher levels, standards overall remain below average. Standards are not higher because pupils have particular difficulty in listening and speaking. This affects their ability to learn in all subjects and, currently, listening and speaking is not receiving systematic enough teaching to help pupils achieve well enough in this aspect.

Standards in the 2002 national assessments showed that, compared with all schools, pupils had achieved very well and had attained well above average standards in mathematics and average standards in English. Standards compared with similar schools were well above average in English and results in science were in the top five per cent attained in similar schools. Standards are currently somewhat lower with standards in mathematics being above average and those in English being below average overall. Compared with the results this group attained at the end of Year 2, they have made good progress overall. The good progress seen is due to the consistent way in which these subjects are taught. Data from regular testing has been used well to identify weaknesses and to pinpoint ways in which these can be improved. The school has set realistic targets for the pupils' attainment and staff work hard to ensure that these are met and exceeded.

Throughout the school, good support means that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils with higher attainments achieve in a satisfactory way. Due to a knowledgeable and

enthusiastic approach on the part of staff and to the importance that the school places on it, pupils achieve well in art and design and, by Year 6, standards are above those seen nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like school and generally work hard in lessons. They are proud of their school and appreciate what is done for them there.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In the main, pupils behave well in class. They are polite to adults. They are sensible as they move around the school and play with due self-control in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils have very positive relationships with staff and work and play well together. As they grow older, they show themselves capable of accepting increasing responsibility for the way in which they work and behave.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is close to the national average. The incidence of unauthorised absence is a little above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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.

Although there are differences in the effectiveness of teaching in different parts of the school, there are some strengths that are evident in all teaching. Work is thoughtfully planned and teachers work very hard to ensure that they present pupils with lessons that have been carefully prepared. The quality and impact of this planning is, however, more consistent in Years 3 to 6, in part because there is a greater proportion of established teachers in this part of the school and in part because there has been more precise use of assessments to set targets for these pupils. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs, and the good quality work of teaching assistants is important in helping these pupils make good progress overall. Teachers are aware of the needs of the higher attaining pupils in their classes and generally provide them with suitably challenging work that helps them learn in a satisfactory way. Throughout the school, pupils are very well managed. In the nursery class, children very new to school settled very quickly because of the quiet, friendly approach of the teacher and teaching assistant. In the rest of the school, a very consistent approach to behaviour management means that even the pupils with more difficulties in controlling their behaviour, gradually learn to do so. This enables all pupils to concentrate and apply themselves increasing well. Teachers are enthusiastic in the way they teach and this enthusiasm is effectively conveyed to the pupils. The good use of praise and encouragement means that pupils try hard because they believe they can succeed. In many ways, both literacy and numeracy are well taught. The consistent way in which many of the basic skills are taught means that pupils gradually and effectively build their skills and knowledge. There has, however, been too little attention given to the systematic teaching of listening and speaking skills. Although teachers are aware of this, there is no whole-school scheme of work to help them teach pupils better skills. This has particular impact on the quality of learning for children in the nursery and reception classes and pupils in Years 1 and 2 who find listening to teachers or to each other very difficult.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The school provides a very rich curriculum for older pupils. There is very good use made of visits and visitors to make work 'real' and interesting. The school places very positive value on subjects such as art and design and physical education. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is, however, unsatisfactory. There is insufficient opportunity for children in the reception class to work outdoors and there is not sufficient planning of the balance of each day and the way this will gradually change and develop over the nursery and reception classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The provision is very well organised and effective. Pupils and parents are included in the setting of targets and this assists these pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. There is very good provision for personal, social and health education. The provision for promoting pupils' social and moral development is very good. There is good cultural education and satisfactory provision for the promotion of spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Each pupil is known and valued as an individual. The school provides a safe and secure environment, which parents and pupils greatly value.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides very determined and clear-sighted leadership. He is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. There is a strong staff team that works together very well. Although most management systems are effective, they are not sufficiently efficient and this adds unnecessary pressure and work for the headteacher and staff. In particular, too little use is made of computer-based systems.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governors have very good understanding of the strengths and relative weaknesses of the school. They maintain a very good balance between supporting the school and challenging it to improve further. They play a good part in deciding upon the priorities for the school's future development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are many systems to ensure that all in the school are well aware of its strengths and areas for development and this information is used well in planning improvements. There is, however, no overall system for co-ordinating this work.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All spending is carefully considered and linked to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The principles of 'best value' are well established and are applied to all aspects of the school's work.

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 pupils make• The quality of the teaching• Behaviour in the school• That the school expects pupils to work hard• The way the school works with parents• The way the school is led• That the school helps children to become mature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework• The activities provided outside lessons

The team agrees in large part with the parents' positive views. There is a good policy for the giving of homework that is implemented effectively in many, but not all, classes. The school should address this lack of consistency. The team finds that the school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons and these are very well attended.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

By the end of Year 6, pupils have made good progress and achieved well in English, mathematics and science and in art and design.

1. Over the last four years, results of national tests for Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science have shown an upward trend. These improvements in standards are greater than those seen nationally. Results in 2002 were particularly good in mathematics and science. The pupils achieved very well in these subjects. They also achieved well in English and standards were average. When compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in English and mathematics and in the top five per cent of results in science. The school is aware that the good results were in part gained because of the overall ability of the group of pupils concerned. The current group of pupils are not attaining as high standards, but nevertheless are achieving well in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2. An average number of pupils are set to attain the expected level (Level 4) in English by the end of this year but, because a smaller than average number of pupils are likely to attain higher levels, attainment is currently below average overall. Current standards in mathematics are above average. The school has set appropriately high targets for the standards to be attained by this and subsequent year groups and is putting in place thoughtful measures to help pupils attain these. As a result, throughout Years 3 to 6 pupils are currently achieving well.
2. Good emphasis is given to the teaching of reading. In the reception class and in Years 1 and 2, skills such as phonics (the relationship between letters and sounds) are regularly taught. A greater emphasis, however, on the teaching of listening skills could assist pupils to make better progress. In Years 3 to 6, teachers successfully use a range of strategies to teach pupils to gain skills. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the teacher provided a good demonstration of reading aloud and, through a discussion about the words that showed the author was writing about a particular part of the world, successfully encouraged thought about what was being read. Throughout the school, there is good use of sessions in which the teacher guides a group of pupils through reading and comprehending different types of writing. In addition, pupils are given a good amount of individual practice in reading. As a result, by Year 6, most pupils read with reasonable fluency and confidence. They understand and comment on what they read. They talk about the way a plot is built up and how the characters are important to this. They have a good knowledge of different types of writing and use this both in selecting books to read and when reading for information. Library skills are well developed. Pupils find books on particular subjects easily and use well, skills such as scanning for specific information. A small number of lower attaining pupils lack fluency and independence in reading; however, these pupils are given good quality extra help in small groups and individually to help them progress.
3. The teaching of writing is good throughout the school. Teachers provide pupils with good examples of different types of writing and help them use these to learn to write for different purposes. By Year 2, for example, pupils write instructions for making a sandwich, ordering them correctly and using correct sentence structure for the purpose. They write stories, sometimes using a known story as a pattern, and through this have learned to structure a story with a clear beginning, middle and end. Pupils use simple punctuation, with higher attaining pupils punctuating speech correctly. Spelling is less good, but is improving with the additional emphasis currently being given to it. Writing skills continue to be specifically taught. Pupils are taught, for example, to plan a

piece of work quickly and effectively and are then taught how to turn a plan into a piece of work. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were taught how to sketch out the elements of a story and then to consider how to join these together before embarking on writing the story itself. By Year 6, pupils write for different purposes, for example writing a clear letter to give a point of view as to whether a golf course should be built, poetry to express thoughts and feelings and short stories. They use their skills in other subjects, for example making notes during a science investigation about conductivity.

4. The good progress seen in mathematics is also due to the consistency of teaching of basic skills. Throughout the school, pupils receive daily practice in mental mathematics and the particular emphasis on number is paying dividends. By Year 2, pupils have secure knowledge of addition and subtraction of numbers within 20 and begin to use larger numbers to 100, having understanding of the value of each digit in the number. They have a developing understanding of multiplication, for example, counting in threes and fours. Progress is accelerated in Years 3 to 6. This is the result of a number of factors. Dividing pupils into groups, based on their attainment, enables teachers to very closely and successfully focus on their particular needs. Good and very good teaching is seen in these groups, with the lower attaining pupils receiving targeted help to enable them to be confident when adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing numbers within a hundred. There is good emphasis given to mathematical language and this assists the thinking of these pupils. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to work accurately and at speed. They are taught to work thoughtfully, for example estimating an answer before working it out or by answering the teacher's probing questions. Another factor in the good progress made by pupils is the use that is made of data from testing to focus effort and set targets for individuals. This enables both teachers and pupils to make the best use of their efforts.
5. Work seen around the school, in the school art portfolio and in a Year 6 lesson, shows that pupils achieve well in art and design and that, by the time they reach Year 6, standards are above those seen nationally. The knowledge and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator has led to good teaching and learning of specific skills. Art and design has high status in the school. Pupils learn to draw skilfully, for example drawing very good quality pencil landscapes of Dartmoor. Landscape was also the subject of collage work, in which pupils showed themselves to have an above average ability to consider colour and texture to create effect. They are taught to use the work of others to inform their own, for example looking at the work of Henry Moore making sketches prior to making sculptures. Sculptures previously completed by pupils were of a good standard. Pupils become increasingly informed about the work of artists through projects, such as the ongoing one in Year 6, about artists in the twentieth century.

The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. This is particularly the case for pupils in Years 3 to 6.

6. The overall good teaching in the school is characterised by a number of significant factors. Pupils are very well managed and this creates a positive, calm atmosphere in which pupils can learn. Very productive relationships are forged early in a pupil's school life in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers are skilful in managing all pupils, including those with particular difficulties. They treat all pupils with a respect and concern that is communicated to them and this helps build very positive relationships. A consistency in the way pupils are managed adds to the security they feel in the classroom. Teachers use praise and encouragement well, choosing carefully when to use this so that its value to pupils is maintained. Encouragement makes pupils believe

that they can succeed. This means that they are prepared to put in the extra effort that helps them learn.

7. Teachers have an enthusiastic approach to lessons and to the subjects they teach. They take care to make classrooms lively and interesting. A reception class lesson, for example, began with the teacher asking "Guess what we are going to learn about this week" and the encouragement of the children to look about them to see the new things in the classroom. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. In a physical education lesson, the teacher's own knowledge of the key skills involved in playing a game was very clearly communicated to the pupils. Teacher knowledge about databases was also a key factor in the good learning seen in a Year 5 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson. Their interest in what they teach is very successfully communicated to the pupils. This enabled pupils to relate their past experience of playing games to learning a new one. In many lessons, good use is made of example with teachers demonstrating to pupils what it is that they have to do. This not only means that pupils are clear about their work, but also provides them with a good model for them to follow. Good use of this technique with Year 2 pupils helped them learn how to use a number line when counting in groups of numbers, while demonstration of story planning was made particularly effective by the way the teacher verbalised what she was doing while providing an example.
8. Lessons are well planned. Activities are generally chosen to add variety and interest and for the most part there is a good balance during the school day of practical, written and oral activities. In many lessons, teachers judge well how long pupils are able to listen to direct instruction. There are lessons throughout the school, but particularly in the reception year and in Years 1 and 2, where this is not the case and pupils are asked to sit for too long at the beginning of a lesson listening to the teacher. This, combined with poor listening skills and some inadequacies in the organisation of the school day (see paragraphs 23-27) means that the good aspects of teaching do not have the impact on learning for younger pupils that they do for older ones.
9. Teachers often make good use of the beginning and end part of lessons to link the learning in the particular lesson to that which has gone before or that which will follow. In a Year 3 English lesson on poetry, for example, the teacher made careful reference to previous work on shape poetry, in order to point out the difference between that and the performance poem they were about to read. This effectively both revised knowledge and gave the pupils a known context for the new work. Work on conductivity, in a Year 6 science lesson, effectively revised pupils' knowledge of solutions. Teachers ensure that pupils have good understanding of what they should be learning in a lesson. What will be taught is clearly stated at the beginning of lessons and referred to during the activity. In a Year 4 English lesson about non-fiction books, for example, the ongoing reference to the learning objective throughout the lesson meant that pupils made good gains in understanding and using indexes. In the best lessons, the last few minutes of a lesson are very well used to draw together what has been learned. An (ICT) lesson for Year 3 pupils ended very positively with a drawing together of experiences of the two halves of the class, which gave the teacher a chance to give the pupils some feedback that reinforced the gains in understanding they had made in the use of a computer music program.

Pupils like coming to school and join in enthusiastically with activities provided for them both in lessons and at other times. They generally work hard and behave well.

10. Parental questionnaires and comments show that pupils enjoy coming to school. In conversation, pupils also say that they like the school. A number even said that they prefer school to holidays! Pupils talk enthusiastically about activities they have undertaken, for example the work they have done in working on the school landscape, and they look forward with keen anticipation to activities to come, for example the residential trips in Years 4 and 6. Pupils join in well with the wide range of clubs and activities offered to them outside lessons, with the only complaint that clubs are sometimes full and they have to wait for a while before they can join them. Pupils are very proud of sporting achievements, for example talking of the success of the tag rugby team. A good number of pupils learn to play a musical instrument. The school makes every effort to ensure that pupils are not excluded from activities for reasons of finance.
11. Due to the good management by teachers, discussed above, pupils generally behave well in class and relate very well to both teachers and teaching assistants. These good relationships are evident with other adults in the school. Members of the school council spoke, unprompted, of the meal time assistants and the work that they do at lunchtimes. These relationships have been developed as a result of hard work and good systems put in place by the management of the school. Meal time assistants, for example, are well trained and their work is well thought through. The link that each class has with a particular assistant and the system of reward stickers awarded by these staff were both given as examples of good systems by the school council. Throughout the school, the example set by adults in the working relationships they show with one another, sets a high standard for the development of relationship by pupils.
12. The school accepts a number of pupils who have had difficulty settling in other schools. These pupils, together with others who experience particular difficulty in controlling their behaviour, are actively and productively helped to learn to control themselves. Teachers and other staff show very positive skills in supporting these pupils. Parents of these pupils are very well included. A number spoke very positively about the advice and support they had received to help their children at home and the part they had been encouraged to play in assisting their children to succeed in school.
13. Pupils and parents speak highly of other formal reward systems in the school. Accolades such as 'Pupil of the week' and 'Worker of the week' are highly prized and sought after. Informal systems too are evident, for example on a classroom door where a notice stated that the class were good singers and in a badge worn by one teacher saying, 'I teach the best class in the world'. Notices and posters, around the school, such as 'like a parachute, to work a mind must be open', 'believe in yourself' and 'together everyone achieves more' remind adults and pupils alike of the aims of the school. Such systems and strategies are effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and their capacity to learn.
14. In ways such as these, the school promotes very well the moral and social development of the pupils. A clear moral code is presented to the pupils and they are assisted to understand the difference between right and wrong. There is a gradual increasing emphasis placed on pupils learning to take responsibility, both for everyday organisational matters, for example maintaining the library, and for their work. The feedback from an inspection observation of a lesson, for example, was discussed with pupils. They were given praise for their good behaviour and they then discussed the

comment from the inspector that they needed to learn to write more quickly. The outcome of the discussion was to decide to make this the next class target. Pupils are also expected to take responsibility for their actions and staff are always willing to take time to talk with a pupil along these lines. Wider responsibility is discussed through work in subjects such as geography and science and in whole-school activities. Care for the planet, for example, was the focus of a display in the hall and in a developing display in a school corridor. As a result of all these actions, pupils gain considerable maturity before they leave the school.

15. Very good attention is given to the welfare of the pupils. Each is known well and staff are very vigilant in identifying and seeking to solve problems when they occur. The personal development of pupils is valued highly and a close check is kept on this. Parents speak very highly of the work of the headteacher and deputy headteacher in helping them manage difficult situations. They speak very positively of the help and support they receive and the ease they feel in coming into school to discuss problems or seek advice. Child protection procedures are very good and help to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils.

The headteacher, key staff and governors lead and manage the school well. They have a very clear determined vision for the education of the pupils that is seen in all the work of the school.

16. A key element in the effectiveness of the school is the common principles and aims that are clearly stated and evident in its work. The stated school aim of striving 'to be a place where children enjoy their schooling and achieve their best' by 'creating an atmosphere of happiness and security and confidence where children acquire skills and concepts in the context of an environment in which teachers can teach and children can learn' is clearly seen in the day-to-day work of the school. The headteacher's dedicated and determined vision and leadership is instrumental in making this happen.
17. Staff work together as a cohesive team. The skills of the headteacher are very well complemented by those of the very able deputy headteacher. Together they have built the staff team, no mean achievement given the number of new staff in the school. Many of the key co-ordinators, for example those for English, mathematics and ICT are newly appointed. They have been given good opportunities to find out about the quality of the education provided in their subject. They have worked hard to understand what is strong and what needs to be improved. Each now has a clear view and plan for improvement. Longer standing co-ordinators, for example, the special educational needs co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for art and design, demonstrate the effectiveness of this level of leadership and management in the good progress made by the pupils in these aspects of the school's work. Everyone involved with the school feels part of this team. The interest shown in the children in the nursery by the road-crossing control person and the contribution of office staff and meal time assistants, mentioned by pupils, are further evidence of the breadth and effectiveness of the team.
18. Governors too are very much part of the school team. The governors are a very clear thinking and effective group of people. They have very good understanding of the school's strengths and the ways in which it could improve, for example they were very aware of the pressure being placed on the headteacher and staff by the lack of use of ICT based systems and had begun to explore with the headteacher ways of installing and using these. They have good understanding of the need to challenge thinking and working in the school but are also overwhelmingly supportive of it. By careful financial

planning and management they make sure that the priorities of the school are funded and that spending is effective in assisting school improvement.

The school provides a particularly rich curriculum for older pupils in the school.

19. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils in Years 1 to 6. There is good emphasis on the basic skills in English and mathematics, but the school also values and promotes learning in subjects such as art and design and sporting activities. There is a willingness on the part of staff to work hard to promote their particular area of enthusiasm and this is encouraged by the headteacher and governors. Much of the good quality work seen in art and design, for example, is a result of the enthusiastic approach to the subject encouraged by good curriculum leadership. Drama is also promoted in the school and is useful in assisting pupils to understand emotions and relationships.
20. The curriculum for the older pupils in the school in particular is extended and enhanced by visits and residential trips. The Year 4 residential trip, for example, is focused on art work and pupils are given opportunities to see work of artists by visits such as that to the National Gallery. Older pupils are given opportunities to undertake a wider range of physical activities such as canoeing, hiking and rock climbing. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to undertake a survival and problem-solving week on Dartmoor. When studying Tiverton in geography lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to visit places such as a factory to see things 'firsthand'. Good use is made of the school environment to extend learning. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting commented on the way that learning was made 'real' by projects such as planting trees in the school grounds and then watching closely growth and the factors that affected it.
21. Teachers and volunteers provide a very wide range of clubs and out-of-school activities for the pupils to join in with. There are sporting and musical clubs as well as such activities as gardening and art, which are very well attended and further promote enjoyment of learning and liking for school.

Parents hold very positive opinions about the school.

22. The pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting, together with informal conversations with parents during the inspection, show that parents hold the school in very high regard. They speak particularly positively about the dedication and hard work of the headteacher and staff.
23. This very positive relationship with parents is actively promoted by the ethos of the school. Good relationships with parents are highly valued. The headteacher sets a very good example in the way he greets and works with parents. Good relationships are quickly formed by the positive way in which the nursery teacher communicates with parents and these relationships are maintained throughout the school. Staff make themselves available to talk with parents as and when the need arises. Parents feel full partners in the education of their children.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There is a lack of systematic, planned teaching of listening and speaking skills. This slows learning for many pupils, but particularly affects the learning of the pupils in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1 and 2.

24. The lack of listening and speaking skills is a key factor in limiting pupils' attainment. For younger pupils this is causing them to learn more slowly than they could. Older pupils lack the subtlety of language that is needed to comprehend what they read in more depth and to express themselves more fluently and precisely in both speech and writing.
25. When children enter the school in the nursery and reception classes they frequently have poorly developed listening and speaking skills. Although staff are conscious of this and expect pupils to listen to adults and children, at present there is no planned overt strategy for teaching them how to do this. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are frequently not able to sit and listen for the required times and this means that sometimes time is wasted when teachers have to repeat themselves and sometimes pupils miss the point of what is being said. This diminishes the effectiveness of the teaching. Getting pupils to listen remains a struggle in some classes in Years 3 to 6, not because pupils are disobedient, but because they do not know how to do this. Some teachers have very good strategies for teaching pupils to listen, for example insisting that eye contact is maintained with the teacher, or by planning lessons in which pupils do not have to listen for long periods of time because material to be listened to is broken into manageable chunks. In other very well taught lessons teachers actively teach language skills, in a personal, social and health education lesson, for instance, pupils were reminded of the 'rules' of taking turns and listening to each other, and were then helped to do this by the passing of an object to indicate when they could speak. These are examples of strategies that should be shared and built into a whole-school approach.
26. Similarly, teachers are aware of the need to build pupils' spoken and written language and good emphasis is given to the building of vocabulary in subjects such as mathematics. The development of mathematical language is identified as a priority in the school development plan. In some lessons this is very well done. Lower attaining Years 3 and 4 pupils, for example, were very effectively helped to improve their mental skills by being actively encouraged to explain the methods they were using to solve an example. This type of strategy is not evident in all lessons.

The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is not as broad and well managed as it should be.

27. The curriculum in the nursery class contains all the elements contained in the national 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage' (nursery and reception classes). Children in this class have suitable opportunities to work both indoors and outdoors. The children in the reception classes do not, however, have such opportunities to work out of doors. This has an effect not only on time for physical activity and on their ability to explore an outside environment, but has an impact on the overall organisation of the reception classes. At present, the style of the school day is much like the day for older pupils, being organised around playtimes outside. There are opportunities provided for children to be involved in self-initiated play and there are timetabled dedicated sessions for aspects such as literacy and mathematics that are much in the style of the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lessons for older pupils. This style of organisation does not provide as well as it could for the stage of maturity of the children. Teachers hold

the attention of the pupils well for the first few minutes of dedicated sessions and learning is good in this time. In a reception class, for example, lively reading of the book 'Mr Big' held the children's attention and gave them a very good example of how to read with expression. However, there is then some wasted time because the children find it very difficult to concentrate for more than short periods, in part, because the listening skills, to which reference has already been made, are so poor. In addition, opportunities are lost for using activities, such as having a snack, to promote personal, social and communication skills because these are either eaten in the playground, in the way that older pupils do, or very quickly before the beginning of the next timetabled session.

28. Work has begun to try to plan the development of learning over the nursery and reception classes, but there has not yet been sufficient thought given to the development of a curriculum that not only promotes learning in each area of early development but also systematically builds children's abilities to concentrate for increasingly long periods, and gradually prepares them for the organisation of the school day in Years 1 and 2.

Systems for managing some aspects of the school's work are not efficient enough. This places an unnecessary additional workload on the headteacher and staff.

29. In a number of ways, systems used in the school are not sufficiently well organised and streamlined to ensure that they are fully used or that manageable demands are placed on the headteacher, deputy headteacher and teaching staff.
30. There is a lack of use of ICT based systems in a number of aspects of the school's work. Assessment data, including that for pupils with special educational needs, is, for example, systematically kept and effectively used to promote learning. It is, however, largely paper based. This means that its analysis is laborious and time consuming. It also means that the school cannot make full use of all the potential information it carries because time does not allow for this. Attendance data too is manually kept and analysed and the same problems exist. Teachers rightly use and adapt plans that have been used to teach a given year group in former years. Because these are hand-written, any adaptations made mean that teachers have to rewrite the whole plan, using precious time unnecessarily.
31. In some other ways, a lack of co-ordination of systems decreases their overall efficiency. The school has had a period of considerable staff change and in many ways the induction of the new staff has been good. There is already a strong team and productive relationships have been forged. There is, however, no induction policy and this has meant that some aspects of school life have not been effectively communicated to the new staff. Homework policy is now, for example, not consistently implemented and there is now a wider variety of types of planning, increasing the difficulty of using planning from this year to inform that of subsequent years. The work of the school is well monitored and ensures that staff are aware of the quality of the education provided and how this can be improved. There is, however, no overall plan for how this monitoring is organised over the school year. This means that the headteacher cannot be sure that the overall programme is efficient and manageable and that it is not placing undue pressure on staff.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

32. In order to further improve the education provided by the school the staff and governors should:
- (1) Improve pupils' listening and speaking skills by:
 - identifying and sharing the good practice seen in some classes;
 - drawing up and implementing a whole-school approach to the development of pupils' skills and vocabulary;
 - clearly identifying targets for attainment in listening and speaking for pupils of all levels of attainment.
(See paragraphs 24-26)

 - (2) Provide the children in the Foundation Stage with a broad and balanced curriculum by:
 - ensuring that they have secure facilities for working and playing outdoors;
 - structuring the school day to meet the needs and stage of maturity of the children;
 - using a whole key stage scheme of work that, as well as identifying the progression in what will be learned, shows a planned development of the way the children are taught and the way in which the school day is organised in the nursery and reception classes.
(See paragraphs 27-28)

 - (3) Streamline and make more effective the way the school is managed by:
 - introducing ICT based systems where these are more efficient and effective;
 - drawing together into a whole-school policy and timetable the work that is done to check the quality of the education provided;
 - producing a policy that identifies how existing school policies and practices will be conveyed to staff when they join the school.
(See paragraphs 29-31)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	17	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0	19	53	28	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	351
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1	71

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	53

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
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	22	20	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	18	16
	Girls	15	20	16
	Total	28	38	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (88)	90 (83)	76 (85)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	16	18
	Girls	17	16	20
	Total	35	32	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (90)	76 (88)	90 (95)
	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	24	22	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	21	23
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	37	41	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (69)	89 (80)	93 (86)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	18
	Girls	20	16	20
	Total	37	35	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (57)	76 (67)	83 (76)
	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	312	0	0
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	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.1
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	174.75

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	26.25

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	746479
Total expenditure	741035
Expenditure per pupil	2030
Balance brought forward from previous year	£28,183
Balance carried forward to next year	£33,627

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8.5

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)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	397
Number of questionnaires returned	281

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	27	3	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	66	31	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	40	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	47	7	1	1
The teaching is good.	70	29	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	40	4	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	23	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	27	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	58	37	5	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	76	23	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	34	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	36	10	1	9