

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bideford, Devon

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113385

Headteacher: Miss S M Lane

Reporting inspector: Mrs R Onions
18354

Dates of inspection: 23rd - 26th September 2002

Inspection number: 250960

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chanters Road Bideford Devon
Postcode:	EX39 2QN
Telephone number:	01237 477288
Fax number:	01237 423450
E-mail	admin@bideford-st-marys-primary.devon.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Ker
Date of previous inspection:	19 th January 1998

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18354	Ms R Onions	Registered inspector	English	How high are standards? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What the school should do to improve further?
10329	Mr B Sampson	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents
16038	Ms J Bavin	Team inspector	Religious education Foundation Stage Special educational needs	
13307	Mr I Hancock	Team inspector	Design & technology Geography History English as an additional language Educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21090	Mr D Manuel	Team inspector	Science Information & communication technology Physical education	How high are standards? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development
15409	Mr D Whalley	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music	

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Limited
 National Westminster Bank Chambers
 Victoria Street
 Burnham-on-Sea
 Somerset
 TA8 1AN

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 33 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's C of E Primary is a school of above average size, with 377 four to eleven-year-old pupils on roll. The school has approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. Ninety-six per cent of the pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. There are two pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school is situated near to the centre of Bideford and draws from the nearby area. Fifteen per cent of pupils take free school meals, which is broadly average. The pupils enter the reception class with a range of attainment but overall it is below average. At the time of the inspection, the youngest children in the reception class had been attending school for mornings only for just over two weeks. There are 69 pupils (18 per cent) identified on the school's special educational needs register. This is about average. Seven pupils have statements of special educational need. The school has pupils with a range of special needs, most of which have mild or specific learning difficulties, but some have more complex physical, behavioural or educational difficulties. Since the last inspection, the school has been through a period of considerable change involving a 25 per cent increase in size. This has caused the school to need additional classrooms. Many pupils who currently complete their primary education at St Mary's have attended other schools. There has been a high turnover of staff, in part due to the increase in size of the school and in part to the promotion of staff to posts in other schools. At the time of the inspection, 10 of the 17 teaching staff had been in post for less than two years and five of these had started teaching at the school only three weeks earlier.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Mary's provides pupils with a satisfactory education overall. There is currently a good deal of variability in most aspects of the school. Standards in Year 6 are largely average and pupils achieve in a satisfactory way. Much of the teaching is good, but the variability in its quality means that it has only a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning and thus teaching is satisfactory overall. There are strengths in the leadership and management of the school, however, there are some aspects that require development. Overall, both leadership and management are satisfactory. The school currently provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although there is a substantial amount of good teaching in lessons. Teachers and other staff are dedicated and hard working.
- There are very good relationships between staff and pupils, good behaviour management and good provision for spiritual, moral and social education. As a result, most pupils behave well and become increasingly mature.
- All pupils, including those with different backgrounds and those with special educational needs, are fully included in all activities.
- The headteacher has led the school well through a period of considerable change.
- There is a very good range of activities outside lessons.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science, although average, could be better.
- Standards in design and technology are unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum for children in the reception year is unsatisfactory.
- The way the work of the school is checked, including the way senior staff and governors check the effect of spending on pupils' achievements, is not as good as it could be.
- The school's accommodation is poor.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Despite the change in size of the school, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in January 1998. Standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are average as they were at the time of the last inspection. Standards in information and communication technology have risen substantially. Standards have also risen in art and design and in singing. The quality of teaching has improved. There is more good teaching and less unsatisfactory teaching evident. Curriculum planning has improved, as have systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainments. The curriculum for reception-age pupils is now less effective. The provision for spiritual, social and moral development has improved. The school has paid due attention to the matters raised in the last inspection and most aspects identified as weaknesses show 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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	C	C	C
mathematics	A	C	C	C
science	B	C	D	D

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

By the end of the reception year, children have achieved in a satisfactory way in most aspects of their development. Because they entered the school with below average attainments, they do not meet the national goals set for this aged child. They achieve well in their physical and in their personal, social and emotional development. In these aspects they meet and sometimes exceed the national goals. Pupils do not get enough chance to write independently. Their attainment in this aspect of development is well below average as they enter Year 1 and they have not achieved well enough. Pupils achieve in a satisfactory way in Years 1 and 2. However, they continue to have below average attainments in reading and well below average attainments in writing and mathematics when they reach the end of Year 2.

Results of Year 6 national tests show that pupils in both 2001 and 2002 had achieved well in Years 3 to 6, but were starting from a low base. Inspection evidence is that this achievement was at its best in Years 5 and 6. As a result, standards were average in English and mathematics. They were below average in science. Standards have risen little in the school since the time of the last inspection and have not kept pace with the improvements seen nationally. This is partly due to a slight fall in the attainments of the pupils as they enter the school and in part due to the large numbers of pupils who enter the school having first attended other schools. There are, however, things in the school, in particular the variability in the way in which pupils are taught, that are causing standards not to rise faster. The school has now set ambitious targets for future attainment by pupils. Standards in most subjects are average throughout the school. Standards in design and technology are below average and pupils are underachieving. This is because not enough time and attention is devoted to the subject. Art and design is well taught, as is singing, and in these two areas pupils achieve well and attain above average standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like school and join in well with the activities provided for them both during lessons and after school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils conduct themselves well in class, around the school and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good, pupils show increasingly mature behaviour. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good and make a good contribution to the achievement of the pupils.
Attendance	Good. Attendance at the school is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Almost all teaching in the school is at least satisfactory and there is a substantial amount of good teaching. There are many new teachers in the school and, at the moment, this is causing the quality of teaching and learning to be variable. A small amount of less than satisfactory teaching was seen in one class where the teacher had not yet fully settled the pupils into their new class. Aspects of teaching, for example the planning of lessons, are good in some classes and in some subjects, but less effective in others. In some lessons, it is made clear to pupils what they will learn; this helps them to target their energies more effectively and they learn more quickly. This is not the case in other lessons. Some teachers make sure that pupils are actively involved in the lessons, while others are inclined to talk to the pupils for too long at the beginning of the lesson. In most lessons, teachers manage pupils well and pupils behave well and try hard. In the very small number of unsatisfactory or poor lessons, pupils were not as well managed and their behaviour was unacceptable and stopped others learning. The variability of teaching in these and other aspects means that pupils do not build their skills, knowledge and understanding as quickly as they might. The quality of teaching in English is good in Years 1 and 2. The co-ordinator has worked well with these year groups and there is a consistency in the way in which the pupils are taught that enables them to learn well. Teaching in English in Years 3 to 6 and in mathematics through the school is only satisfactory because the consistency has not yet been fully established in these subjects. Good attention is paid to the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills in English and mathematics lessons, but there is not sufficient systematic planning of how these skills will be consolidated through work in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught by both teachers and teaching assistants. This helps them to make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers are careful to involve all pupils and there is no evidence that there are differences in the rate at which boys and girls or pupils from different backgrounds learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Pupils are taught all subjects but not enough time is devoted to the teaching of design and technology. The quality of the curriculum for children in the reception year is unsatisfactory because it does not provide sufficiently for independent working and structured play. Insufficient use has been made of national guidance when planning this curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Through the good quality support they receive, pupils are given full access to the curriculum and they achieve well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Support is provided for these pupils where necessary and they make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Throughout the school, suitable provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education, with sex education and issues of drug awareness being covered. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good in most aspects. The school has good child-protection procedures and takes good action to ensure the health and safety of the pupils. Pupils' personal development is well monitored. The school undertakes many assessments and these are recorded for each pupil; they are not yet being systematically used to plan work for pupils in all subjects. In this aspect, the care for pupils is satisfactory.

The school works well with parents. Parents are given good information about what goes on in the school and about the progress their child is making. Parents are encouraged to be full partners with the school in the education of their child.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher has shown good leadership in developing a team of enthusiastic, hardworking staff. The work of the teachers who lead two age-group teams is having good effects. Co-ordinators are clear about the developments they want to see in their subjects, but many are inexperienced in the role and need further support to enable them to manage their subjects more effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are a hardworking group of people who successfully ensure that all statutory requirements are met. There is a need, however, to continue to improve the way in which they both support and challenge the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Although a good amount of monitoring has been done by the headteacher and some key staff, there has been insufficient use of the information to identify strengths and areas for improvement and insufficient action as a result. In addition, many subject co-ordinators have not yet had the opportunity to check and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The priorities identified by the school have been satisfactorily supported. Good use has been made of specific grants. There is not yet, however, a full understanding of how the effect of spending decisions should be evaluated in the light of standards attained and thus whether the school is providing 'best value' for money.

There are a good number of teachers and other staff to teach the pupils. There are also sufficient resources to enable this teaching. Despite the staff and governors' best efforts, the school's accommodation is poor. There is no proper library, the hall and classrooms in the main building are small and the number of outside classrooms makes it more difficult to ensure consistency in teaching and learning.

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 is led • That the school helps children to become mature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Activities outside lessons • The way the school works with parents

The inspection team agrees overall with the positive views of the parents. They find that homework is well organised and supports learning in school appropriately. Evidence shows that the school works effectively with parents. There is a very good range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the reception year with a range of levels of attainment but these, overall, are below average. This means that the current groups of children entering the school attain less well than those at the time of the last inspection, when attainment on entry to the school was found to be average. Some of these children have particularly impoverished language skills. In the aspects of their learning concerned with their personal, social and emotional and their physical development, they receive good teaching and achieve well during the reception year. In these aspects, their attainments are average by the time they enter Year 1. In their communication, language and literacy, mathematical and creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, they achieve in a satisfactory way but their attainments are still below average as they enter Year 1.
2. With the exception of the 2000 year group, standards at the end of Year 2 have fallen below the national average in reading, writing, and mathematics. Standards rose steadily until the last two years, when they fell back to those seen at the time of the last inspection. The decline in standards can be attributed in small part to the changes in the attainments of the children as they enter the school, and in small part to the challenging situation in which the school finds itself, whereby 29 per cent of the pupils who have just completed Year 2 entered the school having attended schools elsewhere. This 'mobility' of pupils is evident in all year groups from Year 2 upwards, reflecting the recent growth in the size of the school. Despite these factors, inspection evidence shows that pupils could be doing better. Although they have achieved in a satisfactory way overall in reading, writing and mathematics, there are elements in the school's provision that are inhibiting greater achievement. Pupils could, therefore, be doing better. Work in English has begun to identify and improve these aspects of provision, and standards are already rising amongst the current Year 2.
3. When pupils leave the school in Year 6, standards, despite some fluctuations year on year, are at much the same level in English, mathematics and science as they were at the time of the last inspection. This means that they have not kept pace with the improvements seen nationally. Results of the 2001 national tests showed that standards in English and mathematics were close to the national average and the average attained in similar schools. Standards were below average in science. Standards in 2002, for which there are, as yet, no national comparisons, rose slightly in mathematics, but fell a little in English and science. Evidence is that pupils in the 2001 group had achieved well over Years 3 to 6, when their prior attainment is taken into account. The achievement of the 2002 group was satisfactory overall.
4. The school has collected extensive data from assessments made in English and mathematics at the end of each term. This data has been used to set targets for individual pupils, but the work is fairly new and the targets set currently are not sufficiently precise and have not yet had an impact on standards. The overall targets set for groups of pupils at the end of Year 6 have proved accurate over the last two years, but in the future should reflect the more settled population in the school and be more demanding.
5. Pupils' achievements in speaking and listening are satisfactory. At the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, their attainments are average. Year 2 pupils are able to communicate clearly, for instance when talking about work in hand. They relate the story they are reading and the higher-attaining pupils give opinions about their books. Year 6 pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to other pupils, for example when discussing the different types of fiction they have read. They talk about various issues, for example pollution, and begin to use their discussions to help them organise their ideas. Efforts are being made to further improve pupils' vocabulary through the identification of key vocabulary to be learned in lessons in other subjects. Pupils are also given opportunity in English lessons to talk about their views, for example which of various endings for a story they prefer. Opportunities for the development of

language are evident in lessons such as mathematics where pupils discuss the different ways in which a problem can be solved. These opportunities and the development of language are not sufficiently systematically planned and implemented to ensure that maximum progress is made.

6. In reading, good efforts are made to teach pupils the basic skills involved in reading unknown words. Pupils are taught a number of different strategies, including phonics. Current Year 2 pupils' knowledge of these is satisfactory. These pupils read simple books with a satisfactory degree of fluency. Until recently, pupils have not been introduced sufficiently early to the skills involved in understanding what they read, or how to translate this understanding into the ability to answer written questions. By Year 6, most pupils read with confidence and understanding. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of a range of authors and most enjoy reading. Their ability to use reading skills for research is unsatisfactory, in the main because they have had too little opportunity to do this. The failure to promote the children's ability to write independently in the reception year slows their progress in Year 1. A significant weakness is their reluctance to write without something to copy and this has to be overcome before more progress can be made. Currently pupils are making this step more quickly than they have in the past. Their progress is now good, and standards are rising. Basic skills in spelling, punctuation and handwriting are regularly taught throughout the school. By Year 6, pupils write with a satisfactory degree of accuracy. There is a lack of consistency in the teaching of writing that is evident in both lessons and in the work produced by the pupils over the last year. As a result, progress is not smooth. Pupils achieve better in some classes than they do in others and this means that their overall achievements, although satisfactory, are not as good as they could be.
7. In mathematics, current standards are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Pupils throughout the school are systematically taught a good range of mathematics and are given opportunities to consolidate their skills as each piece of mathematics is learned. Pupils' books show that, at the end of Year 2, they add and subtract numbers within 100, calculate with money, measure with appropriate degrees of accuracy and describe shapes using correct vocabulary. By Year 6, pupils are applying the four rules of number to numbers within 100, with the more-able pupils being able to calculate with decimals. They use a number of different metric measures and translate one metric measure to another. They measure and draw angles and talk about shapes, talking about such properties as symmetry. Pupils throughout the school lack mental agility. They are not sufficiently good at deciding what mathematics they need to use when solving a problem. This is in large part because they are not given sufficient practice in doing so. Their lack of attainment in this aspect of mathematics is depressing standards.
8. Standards in science throughout the school have been affected by the way that the curriculum has been managed over recent years. Standards in the 2001 and 2002 teacher assessment for Year 2 and national tests for Year 6 pupils were below average and pupils had not achieved enough. Pupils have been taught in mixed-age classes and there has been insufficient challenge for the older members of the class. This has meant that pupils have not made consistent progress, having achieved better when they were in the younger age group than the older. This problem is now being addressed. The co-ordinator has reorganised the planning of science so that lessons are planned for single age group classes. There is evidence that standards are rising and that currently pupils are achieving well. There remains, however, some low expectation in some classes and this causes underachievement.
9. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with complex difficulties, are well taught both in class and in withdrawal groups. As a result, they make good progress against their previous attainments and against the targets set for them. This means that they achieve well in both English and mathematics and in a satisfactory way in other subjects. There are two pupils with English as an additional language. They receive appropriate help and support when needed and their achievement is satisfactory.

- Standards in art and design and in singing are above average and pupils are achieving well. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are now average and are rising rapidly and pupils are achieving well. Standards in design and technology are below average and pupils do not achieve enough. This is because too little time and attention is devoted to the teaching of the subject. Standards in other subjects are largely average and achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- Pupils have good attitudes to school. These good attitudes make a significant contribution to the calm working atmosphere that prevails in the school. This judgement agrees with the standards found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils listen carefully to each other and to adults, as for example in assemblies, when they share discussion and explore values on issues such as helping others and showing respect for their efforts. Relationships between pupils and teachers and amongst pupils themselves are very good and help demonstrate the good personal and social skills observed in pupils. This represents an improvement on the good standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are respectful in the way in which they treat pupils and this is a key factor in the high standards of pupils' personal development. Staff manage pupils with special educational and additional physical needs with great sensitivity. Teaching assistants build strong relationships with pupils and support them very effectively. The very good relationships that they share make a significant and positive contribution to pupils' willingness to participate in lessons. As a result, these pupils have good attitudes to their work and are keen to improve. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs show obvious enjoyment in the activities provided for them in lessons and out of school. In discussions with pupils, for example, there were good levels of enthusiasm shown for class lessons, concerts, sporting activities and other aspects of school life. Pupils gain a sense of achievement looking at their own and other cultures, and gain from sharing the successes of others.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons, assemblies and at break-times. Pupils of all ages conduct themselves well and are polite and courteous to staff and to visitors to the school. In the good and very good lessons observed, pupils' behaviour made a significant contribution to their achievements and the good progress they made. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's code of conduct. Older pupils present good role models to younger pupils in their mature conduct and sense of responsibility. A significant aspect of pupils' personal development is the emphasis the school places on valuing each other's efforts. This is promoted very well by all staff and is a positive feature of pupils' achievements in religious education lessons and assemblies, where respect for the feelings and beliefs of others is evident. Consequently, the very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are reinforced.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They are keen to accept responsibilities and pupils of all ages contribute to the smooth running of the school in the tasks they undertake. Each class, for example, elects a representative on the new school council and house captains and vice-captains perform a range of duties throughout the year. Class monitors support their teachers most willingly and Year 6 pupils act as librarians to help other pupils of all ages. The example set by adults by which all pupils are included in all activities successfully promotes such behaviour amongst the pupils. Pupils work and play well together and all are included, irrespective of their background or abilities.
- The attendance at the school is good and figures are above the national average for this type of school, whilst unauthorised absences are well below the national average. These figures compare well with those of the previous inspection. Most of the pupils come to school and into classes on time. The majority of the lessons commence promptly and the school has no long-term absences which are unaccounted for. This good attendance contributes well to the pupils' attainment.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory. Whilst this overall judgement remains the same as at the time of the last inspection, the overall quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 has improved, as has the amount of good teaching in lessons. The overall judgement that the quality of teaching is satisfactory hides considerable variability. Lessons observed and the pupils' books show that the quality of teaching and pupils' learning varies between classes, between year groups and between subjects. The large majority of lessons were satisfactory or good and some were very good or excellent. A very small proportion of lessons were, however, unsatisfactory or poor.
17. The teaching of children in the reception classes is satisfactory with a number of strengths as well as some weaknesses. Teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with parents and carers as well as with the children. These provide good examples for the children. The teaching of personal, social and physical development is good and, at the time of the inspection, the children were already happily settled in school and prepared to learn. Teachers pay good attention to the teaching of most of the basic skills that underpin reading and writing, but do not give children sufficient opportunity to 'write' independently. This means that most pupils at the beginning of Year 1 are overly dependent upon adults when writing. Teachers are successful in making classrooms stimulating places for pupils to work in. The main weakness in teaching is related to the way the curriculum is organised (see paragraph 25 of this report). There is insufficient attention paid to planning for a breadth of experience for the children. Although there is a range of activities available for them, there is too little planning that clearly states what the children are learning from these activities and how this relates to the stages of learning identified in the curriculum advice for pupils in the Foundation Stage. As a result, learning is not as systematic as it should be and this affects achievement. Planning also fails to show how and when children will learn through working on their own and through play. As a result, many in Year 1 are over-dependent on adults; they do not, for example, show the level of scientific curiosity expected for their age.
18. Over the last two years, 11 new teachers have joined the school and, at present, there are considerable differences in the strengths and weaknesses evident in lessons and in work. Elements, such as the clear identification of what will be learned by pupils of different attainments in lessons, are a strength in some classes and a weakness in others. Some teachers make efforts to explain to pupils what they will learn in a lesson and are clear in telling them why they need to learn this. In a Year 6 English lesson, for example, the teacher clearly explained why pupils needed to look carefully at language used in a description of 'The Bird Man' in order to gain skills for their own writing. The good teaching that followed was reflected in the thoughtful descriptions produced by the pupils. In other lessons, pupils are unclear about what they should learn and are not able to target their efforts as effectively.
19. The quality of teachers' planning is also variable. The best planning is in English and mathematics where the planning is based on the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. In subjects other than mathematics and English, the curriculum has only just been adapted to meet the needs of the new single-age group class structure of the school. In some lessons high expectations are evident, with pupils being challenged to greater effort and thought, and in others pupils are not as challenged and their learning is not as rapid. Some teachers use good teaching techniques to ensure that lessons move quickly, and they balance very well the amount of talking they do with pupils' activity. They give pupils clear information about how long they have to complete a task and how much is expected of them. The good pace of such lessons means that pupils remain interested and put in good effort. The amount of work in the English books of Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrates the results of such teaching, and as a consequence, the rate of learning by these pupils in writing is good.
20. The most consistent element of the teaching in the school is the successful management of pupils. In almost all lessons, discipline is good and this allows pupils to learn in an orderly environment. Relationships between adults and pupils are generally very positive, with teachers treating pupils with respect and demonstrating skills such as listening and valuing

what is said very well. Pupils are quick to adopt such behaviour and show respect to each other in their turn. There are a number of pupils in the school who have more difficulty in controlling their behaviour. In most classes, teachers successfully use a range of methods to ensure that these pupils behave well. There are, however, rare occasions, when these pupils are not well managed and their behaviour is unacceptable. These lessons are unsatisfactory or poor because the class is disrupted and pupils' learning suffers as a consequence.

21. Teachers use a good range of methods to teach their pupils. These include direct teaching, individual and group work. There are some opportunities for pupils to work independently, for example in creating graphic art pictures in ICT, but in many lessons activities are very closely controlled, and pupils do not learn how to work independently. The lack of a library, for example, means that pupils are unable to undertake independent research as often as they should. This lack of independence is also evident in mathematics, where pupils have too few opportunities to solve problems independently and this significantly lowers the standards attained. Teachers generally use resources well to interest and involve pupils in their lessons. The good use of a video in a history lesson enabled pupils to gain good knowledge of Victorian life. Use of toys with the younger pupils is also successful. Pupils in Year 1 greatly enjoy 'helping a puppet to learn phonics' in literacy lessons. There is some use of ICT to support and extend learning, for example to enable pupils to research in history. The use of ICT is, however, not systematically planned and opportunities to use it are sometimes missed.
22. The marking of work is yet another area where there are too many inconsistencies between the practice of different teachers. There are examples of very good marking which shows pupils clearly what is good about their work and how aspects could be improved. Other examples of marking seen do not provide the pupils with sufficient help or analyse the work done adequately. Homework is well organised and set regularly. It extends the work pupils do in school in a satisfactory way.
23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants know the pupils they are working with very well and use their positive relationships with them to provide sensitive and effective support. During one session observed in the library, a teaching assistant demonstrated exemplary patience and considerable communication skills. This enabled her to successfully move a pupil with a statement of special educational needs from not wanting to co-operate to completing the required history and literacy work. Throughout the school, teachers plan to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs by modifying work or providing extra adult help. There is, however, a lack of consistency in this aspect, with some teachers correctly and usefully identifying what these pupils will learn in the lesson, while others merely note how the pupils will be supported to complete the activity set for all. This adversely affects the quality of learning in some lessons. Teaching is, however, particularly effective for the pupils with more complex difficulties.
24. The most consistent teaching seen in the school is in English in Years 1 and 2, where the structure of the National Literacy Strategy and the way work is planned is having a positive effect. The learning evident in these lessons and seen in pupils' books is good. The overall quality of teaching in other subjects is satisfactory.

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

25. The curriculum for children in the reception classes is currently unsatisfactory. There is insufficient planning of what children will learn in each term and over the complete year to ensure a good balance of activity that develops the children's skills and knowledge systematically. In spite of national guidance that children do not need to experience a full and continuous 'literacy hour' until the end of the reception year, governors require teachers to deliver it from the very beginning of the year. Consequently, the methods used to teach these young children are more appropriate for older pupils and are not as effective as they should be. As a result, best use is not currently being made of the time available. Teachers are not sufficiently aware of the national guidance related to helping children become independent learners through access to well-planned play activities. Consequently, children have too few opportunities to learn through activities they plan or initiate themselves.
26. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is broad and includes all required subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. It has satisfactory balance overall. Insufficient attention is given to the teaching of design and technology across the school and consequently standards are below average. This lack of attention to design and technology was identified at the time of the last inspection and too little has been done to remedy the situation.
27. Currently, the timetable is planned around existing breaks. This means that lessons sometime expand to fit the time slot available. Some literacy and numeracy lessons are overlong, some pupils find difficulty maintaining their concentration, and this slows the overall pace of their learning. In addition, because the use of time is not always optimised, time for other subjects is squeezed and some lessons in other subjects, for example a design and technology lesson timed for 20 minutes are too short to be meaningful. Provision for ICT has improved since the installation of the new ICT suite and the successful development of the subject. All pupils, including those with more complex difficulties, are fully and successfully included in all aspects of the life of the school and all have good access to the curriculum.
28. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. A satisfactory proportion of time has been allocated to the teaching of literacy and numeracy and most teachers are using the National Literacy Strategy well to support pupils' learning. The use of reading skills in other subjects is hampered by the lack of a library where pupils can develop and extend their research skills. Although pupils have opportunities to speak and to write in other subjects, opportunities to consolidate and use both speaking and writing skills are not specifically planned and do not relate directly to what has been taught in English. This means that pupils are not as aware as they might be of the use of what they learn. Satisfactory use is made of the National Numeracy Strategy in planning work. Opportunities are taken to use mathematical skills in other subjects, for example the use of graphs to chart the stretching of a rubber band under load in science but, these are not identified in planning so are not as consistent as they could be. Skills and knowledge in ICT are now being successfully developed through lessons specifically for the teaching of ICT. Because there has been a need to build pupils' skills and knowledge in ICT and because there is only limited access to classroom computers, there are currently too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support learning in other subjects.
29. Curricular planning has improved since the last inspection where the school has adopted national guidance and strategies for all subjects to help pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a logical sequence. In the main, this is ensuring that pupils make secure gains in each subject. The school has begun to adapt the curriculum that has been used until the current year, in the light of the move from mixed-year group classes (those with pupils from two year groups) to single-year group classes, but work remains to be done. There are, therefore, still some inconsistencies in lessons and tasks are not always matched to challenge pupils of different attainments.

30. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school takes good care of all its pupils, including those with special educational needs, where they are all encouraged to work well together in class and play amicably on the playground. Sex education and issues of drug misuse are taught as part of the science programme, using videos and through outside visitors such as the school nurse and youth affairs police officer. The school curriculum is effectively enriched by visits to local places of interest related to topics studied. These include Bideford, Barnstaple, Westward Ho! and further afield through residential visits to Paignton and the Isle of Wight. Visitors include musicians, theatre groups, history workshops and the animal service. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended and effectively support many aspects of the curriculum including art and design, music and physical education. All such activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
31. The good quality of help from learning support assistants makes a valuable contribution to pupils with special educational needs ensuring that they have equal access to the full curriculum. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and most targets on them are clear and useful. For example, *'to read and write letters 'b', 'd', 'p' and 'q' correctly'* is unambiguous so success can be easily measured, whereas some targets, particularly those relating to behaviour, are open to interpretation, for example *'to acknowledge how he feels'*, and this makes measuring success more difficult.
32. Satisfactory community links have been established to support curricular activities. These include local music concerts at Christmas time, singing carols to elderly residents, and members of the local community talking to pupils throughout the year. There are good links with the local church with, for example, the Rector visiting on a regular basis to take assemblies. Constructive links are being developed with local playgroups and nurseries to help children settle into school and for older pupils with Bideford College before they transfer at the end of Year 6.
33. The school makes good provision for the personal development of pupils. This shows improvement since the previous report when standards were satisfactory. The provision made to develop pupils' spiritual awareness is good. It is promoted effectively through religious education and very effectively in assemblies. An atmosphere of spirituality is created in assemblies when the candle is lit representing God as the light of the world. Such special moments create a calm and peaceful start to the day. Pupils are helped to reflect on their own feelings and behaviour, and this encourages them to think about the effect of their actions on others. Teachers use good strategies that value pupils' views and relate their learning to a wider context, such as, *'Why do we need to help each other?'* Teachers also provide a range of opportunities to encourage pupils to appreciate the feelings and emotions of others.
34. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. A strong moral code is taught throughout the school that encompasses all aspects of school life and forms the basis of the very good relationships observed during the inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good examples by dealing with pupils in a calm and confident manner; as a result, pupils respond in a similar way. The school's values are reflected in the school rules that are displayed clearly in classrooms. Pupils know and understand these rules and show high levels of respect for each other and all adults in the school. Individual classes add their own ideas for encouraging respect for promoting all forms of equality and care of property.
35. The good provision for pupils' social development is firmly rooted in the school's position as a part of the local community. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to share and work co-operatively and this is clearly evident throughout the school. Pupils understand that there are people less fortunate than themselves and enthusiastically raise money for charities such as the Leprosy Mission. This caring attitude supports their social development well. The school has created a school council at the start of this term. Meetings are planned on a fortnightly basis to enable all pupils to have an active and constructive input into the daily life of the school. In the playground, pupils are encouraged to share their games together in small groups, boys and girls, and in mixed ages. Well-organised educational visits provide good

opportunities for pupils to extend their social interaction, while at the same time extending their learning in a range of subjects.

36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. This is a similar judgement to that at the time of the previous inspection. Examples of interest in other cultures include a range of music such as African drum music. Following the great interest in the performance by an African visitor to the school, two teachers started an African drum club. This group meets each week and is much enjoyed by the participants. Year 5 pupils are currently studying the style of West Indian poetry in literacy. Pupils also appreciate and learn about other faiths, such as Hinduism and Judaism, and their special festivals. Pupils learn about their own culture through visits to local museums and Exeter Museum and to the theatre at Barnstaple. They perform in a range of concerts and other performances. The adequate provision is effective in helping pupils develop an awareness of the multicultural society in which they live and prepare them to play an active role as citizens of the future.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school is a very safe and caring community within which the pupils learn appropriately. There are good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare, and these procedures compare well with those identified at the previous inspection. The headteacher has been trained in child protection matters. She has ensured that all staff are regularly briefed on relevant routines and incidents. There is a very detailed and up-to-date written policy and very good liaison with the local social services and police protection team.
38. Attention to health and safety is good. All fire-fighting, physical exercise and portable electrical equipment is 'in date' tested. Fire exercises are held and recorded every term. Escape routes from the school are well marked and accessible. Although the school takes steps to assess risk, for example by visiting places to which they intend to take the pupils, they do not put anything in writing and this is a weakness. The school has a caring and efficient accident and medicines routine and several of the staff are trained in first aid. There is an up-to-date Internet safety policy.
39. The school takes good care of pupils with special educational needs. It works closely, through the special educational needs co-ordinator, with outside professionals such as speech and language therapists and the educational psychologist to enhance their achievement. Parents are involved with such consultations where relevant. The school ensures that specific requirements for pupils with statements of special educational need are meticulously met. Children in care are very well monitored by the special needs co-ordinator to ensure that their needs are met.
40. The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Well-maintained, computerised registration sheets are returned to the office both morning and afternoon, for checking. Parents are made well aware of their relevant responsibilities and good use is made of the educational welfare officer. Any unusual absences are investigated before mid-morning on the first day of absence. Although the school staff know who the persistent latecomers are, details are not sufficiently well recorded.
41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating that of an aggressive nature are both good and are successfully used in all but a few lessons. The school has a detailed written behaviour policy with realistic rewards and sanctions. In addition, there are school rules and specific ones in each class. The latter are made-up by the pupils themselves. The pupils report that they are given confidence, by talking in assemblies and at 'circle time', to report incidents, either directly to staff or by using the school's suggestion box.
42. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are also good. Detailed files are maintained in the school office that contain records of achievement and other personal details. The teachers know their pupils very well and have access to detailed pupil pastoral care and observational assessment files, compiled and passed onto them by

their predecessors. The school's personal, social and health education successfully helps pupils mature, as does the extensive extra-curricular programme and regular assemblies.

43. Procedures for making and recording assessments of pupils' attainments and progress are good; the use made of the information collected is not yet as strong. Teachers assess their pupils each term against key objectives. The assessments are recorded electronically. This information clearly identifies the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and this aspect of the procedure is useful in informing parents of progress. Because the system is still being developed it is not yet fully refined. At present, when the data is put together for a whole class, it produces a vast array of information that is difficult to use in planning the next steps for the class, or for groups within it. Plans are in place to further develop the system to make it more easily used.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Overall, the school has good links with its parents and these links contribute well to pupils' progress. Most parents have a good opinion of the school. In particular, parents say that their children like school, that behaviour is good, that children make good progress and they are kept well informed of that progress. A minority are unhappy about the homework given; feel that the school does not work sufficiently closely with parents and that it does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. In the main, the team agrees with parents' positive opinions. Homework is well thought out and organised and contributes appropriately to pupils' progress. The school has an extensive range of clubs and activities outside lessons, well in excess of that usually seen. The staff make suitable efforts to work with parents. Meetings have been held to give parents information about literacy, numeracy and work in the reception class. Although these were poorly attended, good numbers of parents attend formal parent evenings. Home/school agreements are well received and the school has an open-door policy for quick visits by parents.
45. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress is good. There are regular, informative newsletters. The home/school homework book is appreciated by most parents as a good link with the school, as is the home visit from a teacher when a child joins the reception class. All parents receive a copy of the school prospectus and the annual governors' report. Pupils' academic reports are individual and report on all subjects; but they do not always show what a child can do clearly enough, nor how they could improve. Additionally, they do not report on personal development.
46. Parents value the education and support that pupils with special educational needs receive. Most parents attend the termly reviews of their child's individual education plan and sign to acknowledge that they are happy with the next target. Parents are not yet fully consulted at the time that targets are drawn up, so these targets are not systematically negotiated with parents. This does not fully reflect the spirit of the new special educational needs code of practice.
47. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning is good. A good number of parents come into school and help teachers with reading, numeracy, spelling and art, and a good number help their child at home with homework, projects and topics. Others volunteer to accompany visits out of school. Although the school does not currently have a parent/teacher association, an equivalent funding committee raises considerable sums of money. Such funds have helped towards computer equipment and visits out of school for the pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The overall quality of both the leadership and the management of the school are satisfactory. Within this overall judgement, there are aspects of leadership and management that are good and aspects that are currently unsatisfactory.
49. St Mary's has been through a period of considerable change. There are now only five of the fourteen class teachers who have been in the school for longer than one year. This has been the result of the growth of the school and the number of teachers gaining promotion or retiring from teaching. The headteacher has shown good leadership in developing a team of teachers who work well together, supporting each other and looking to improve the education provided by the school. She has developed a 'middle management team' composed of teachers who have responsibility for two year groups each and teachers who have responsibility for literacy and numeracy. This team is beginning to be effective in channelling the enthusiasm of the staff into more focused change. There is now a shared vision for the school that is beginning to lead to improvements. Subject co-ordinators share a determination to raise standards in their subjects. For the majority, their co-ordinator role is relatively new and many have yet to take on fully the management of their subjects. The staff changes leave the school in a relatively similar position to the one it was in at the time of the last inspection, when the development of the leadership of the co-ordinators had only recently begun. The special educational needs co-ordinator makes a considerable contribution to ensuring that all staff are sufficiently informed in order to provide effective support to pupils with a wide range of varying educational needs. She leads with imagination and creativity to ensure that the curriculum they receive is relevant to them. She devises, for example, individual programmes enabling pupils to join different classes for different lessons in order to work in situations best suited to them. This has a direct, positive impact on their learning.
50. The school has clear aims and values and, in the main, these are seen in the outcomes of the work. The headteacher has a particular vision for the way in which all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, should be included in the school and in all aspects of school life. This vision is clearly seen in the way in which, for example, pupils with complex difficulties work and play with others. The school has a race equality policy in place and the promotion of this is seen particularly in the role models set by staff.
51. The overall management of the school is satisfactory. Systems have been put into place that organise how the school will review its performance, decide upon priorities for improvement, and identify how this improvement will be brought about. The school improvement plan is a better document than it was at the time of the last inspection and now successfully links areas for improvement, action and the financial implications of these actions. Performance management of staff is in place and reflects well the priorities set in the school improvement plan. The areas identified for improvement in the current plan are appropriate and action is already beginning to have effects, for instance in the improvement of standards in English in Year 2. The document does not, however, identify some of the important actions needed. There is insufficient reference, for example, to the induction of the many new staff and the way inevitable variations in teaching will be monitored so that inconsistencies are ironed out where needed.
52. The way that the school checks on the quality of its work is currently unsatisfactory. There is a considerable amount of observation of teaching undertaken by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and team leaders. Planning is also reviewed regularly, as is the work of some pupils. At present, there is lack of rigour in the action taken as a result of these observations. In most instances, a note is made of the observation but no record is kept of the agreed findings of the evaluation, what will happen as a result, and how this action will be followed up. Consequently, opportunities to share expertise and to improve weaknesses are not sufficiently systematic. Because they have been in the school for such a short time, many subject co-ordinators have not yet had the time allocated to them to undertake this type of activity in their subject. Most are also co-ordinating subjects for the first time and are in need of help to enable them to take on their role more fully.

53. The school has collected a large amount of data as a result of end-of-term assessments. Some use is made of this in tracking individuals, in setting targets and in the identification of areas in need of improvement. There is not yet, however, sufficient use of the data in looking at the progress of different groups of pupils over time so that this can be checked against the progress seen nationally and in similar schools. This means that support is not as carefully targeted as it could be.
54. The governors are a hardworking group of people who want the best for the pupils in the school. They successfully ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They have good general knowledge of the work of the school and are able to pinpoint some of its weaknesses as well as its strengths. There is a growing awareness of the need to both support and challenge what goes on in the school. The governors are using an increasing range of measures for checking the outcomes of the school's work. There remain a small number of governors who do not fully appreciate the need to use external measures of success, for example the national test results, as well as more subjective measures.
55. The school governors, through their finance committee, keep a close control over budget expenditure. In setting the annual school budget, the governors work diligently to ensure that funds available are spent appropriately. Additional funding, such as that to raise standards in Year 1, has been appropriately spent and standards have been raised. The principles of 'best value' are, however, not yet fully in place in the school. There is not yet full understanding of the need to look at the value for money provided by spending decisions, for example the appointment of a number of extra teaching assistants and the decision to maintain a non class-based deputy headteacher, in terms of the attainment and achievement of the pupils. Governors do not yet systematically set criteria by which such decisions can be measured. The rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of particular aspects of work has sometimes been undertaken. The report prepared on the effects of the early literacy support in Year 1 provides a good model for the school to follow. The school makes suitable use of new technologies to plan work and maintain assessments of pupils' attainment and attendance. The school's day-to-day finances are very well managed by the school administrative staff.
56. There are sufficient teaching staff in the school to support the teaching of all pupils. The large classes are, however, having negative effects on the achievement of some pupils in some subjects. In music, for example, the overcrowding means that pupils cannot engage in sufficient playing of instruments or composing to achieve as well as they are able. In history and geography, too, teachers are unable to give pupils the attention they need in these large classes. There are a good number of teaching assistants who work very hard to support pupils' learning. The school has a sufficient number of learning resources to support teaching and learning in all subjects.
57. Despite the best efforts of the staff and governors, the school's accommodation is poor and has a negative effect on the education provided. Although, as the school has grown, additional classrooms have been provided, there have been no additions to the other parts of the school. The library is little more than a corridor and is used for work with groups of pupils with special educational needs. This inhibits its proper use and pupils' ability to research is not sufficiently well promoted. The school hall is not big enough for regular whole-school assemblies and classrooms are too small, particularly in the main school building, inhibiting ease of movement for teachers as they work with children. In addition, the fragmented nature of the school with its large number of outside classrooms increases the difficulty of ensuring consistency in teaching and learning. There is no access for pupils, parents or carers with physical disabilities and the governors have yet to draw up a plan of how such access will be enabled in the future. The premises themselves are well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff, and teachers make great efforts to produce very good quality classroom displays that successfully create a bright, stimulating place in which the pupils can work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. To improve the education provided in the school the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) Further improve standards in English*, mathematics*, science* and design and technology by:

- improving the consistency of teaching in all classes;
- ensuring that all planning shows clearly what pupils of different attainments will learn over a unit of work and in each lesson, consistently sharing these objectives with pupils and using them when marking work;
- using the data collected about pupils to identify the attainment of different groups of pupils and using this information to plan work and to set targets;
- planning how skills in English and mathematics will be consolidated through other subjects;
- ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunity to practise mental mathematics skills and to use these in solving problems;
- building on improved planning/coverage in science to focus on the progressive development of knowledge, skills and understanding year-by-year;
- in design and technology: ensuring that sufficient time is allocated to the subject, providing teachers with opportunities to update their knowledge in how to teach the subject and improving the resources available.

(see paragraphs 4-8, 10, 16, 18-22, 28, 43, 66-73, 77-83, 84-88, 93-95, 98, 101, 120)

(2) Improve the curriculum provided for children in the reception year by:

- ensuring that planning takes due account of the latest national guidance and shows clearly what children are learning in each activity they undertake;
- ensuring a good balance of activities that are suitable for the age group;
- improving the teaching of writing, in particular the development of independent skills;
- developing the role of structured and independent learning through play.

(see paragraphs 17, 25, 59-65)

(3) Improve the way the work of the school is monitored and the effect this has on standards by:

- providing co-ordinators with the time and training they need to assist them to carry out this part of their role;
- ensuring that all monitoring undertaken is followed by a clear written agreement about what will be done to share strengths or improve weaknesses identified and show how these agreements will be followed up;
- ensuring that major spending decisions are evaluated in the light of the effect they have on standards.

(see paragraphs 49, 51-55, 73, 76, 83, 92, 95, 102, 116, 121)

(4) Seek to improve the effect the school's accommodation has on learning and standards by:

- providing a library to which the pupils can have good access;
- increasing the space for classroom activities;
- seeking to minimise the effects of the number of separate temporary buildings;
- drawing up a plan that shows how the access to the building for disabled pupils, parents or carers will be improved over time.

(see paragraphs 6, 57, 69, 91, 99, 101, 110)

* *These aspects are already identified in the current school improvement plan*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	37	31	2	2	0
Percentage	1	6	47	40	3	3	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	377
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	58

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	69

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	53
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	35	18	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	22	29
	Girls	15	15	16
	Total	42	37	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (86)	70 (93)	85 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	31	31
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	45	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (93)	91 (93)	91 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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
	2001	21	29	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	19	16
	Girls	23	15	21
	Total	38	34	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (76)	68 (73)	74 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	15	16
	Girls	21	17	17
	Total	33	32	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (71)	64 (73)	66 (76)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
356		
1		
4		
2		
1		
3		
1		
9		

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)	15.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	274.75

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	750,533
Total expenditure	730,365
Expenditure per pupil	1,917
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,223
Balance carried forward to next year	37,391

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	13
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	377
Number of questionnaires returned	137

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	40	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	39	4	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	47	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	52	17	1	10
The teaching is good.	54	42	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	55	9	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	35	1	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	41	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	27	55	13	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	49	41	4	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	50	1	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	42	14	4	12

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

59. At the time of the inspection, children in the reception classes were attending part time and had been in school for only two weeks. Judgements about attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage are, therefore, based upon an analysis of work undertaken by children over the previous school year and observations of pupils who have just joined the current Year 1 classes. The recommended curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage has changed since the last inspection. It is therefore not possible to make any direct comparisons between standards then and now. The provision for children in the reception classes is satisfactory overall as it was when the school was last inspected.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. Children make good progress in this area of learning and in most respects exceed the expectations of the early learning goals (national goals set for the end of the reception year). Teaching is good because members of staff have a good understanding of how to provide children with secure routines and consistent expectations. As a result of adults' high expectations, they quickly learn to become independent in such things as tidying equipment away and finding their snacks independently. In whole class lessons, they behave well, want to learn and usually listen attentively to the teacher. When they work in small groups without direct adult intervention, for instance in the 'home corner', they share space and equipment harmoniously. They form good relationships with all adults who help them, including student nursery nurses. At the time of the inspection, although they were very new to the reception classes, children had settled very confidently and well.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Most children start school with limited speech and language skills and a significant minority have little experience of making marks on paper. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory and helps children to make sound progress. Nevertheless, most do not fully meet the early learning goals by the time they join Year 1. There are strengths in the systematic teaching of letter sounds and early reading skills. Most children quickly learn how books work. Consequently, children enjoy sharing books with an adult and most meet the expected level of early reading skills. While children have plenty of opportunity to copy writing and form letters, this is not equally balanced with opportunities to write independently. The imbalance of experiences for children is not a satisfactory situation. When children join Year 1, they lack confidence in writing independently and their writing skills do not meet expected levels. Similarly, because most teaching is adult led and directed, there are insufficient opportunities for children to develop their speaking and language skills in a wide range of situations.

Mathematical development

62. Satisfactory teaching in this area of learning helps the children to make reasonable progress in sorting, counting and recognising numerals. In spite of this satisfactory level of learning, children do not fully meet the early learning goals in mathematical development by the end of the reception year. They do not use mathematical language as much as is expected for their age. While teachers work hard to plan numeracy lessons where they successfully direct children's learning, for example counting and combining sets of objects, they do not plan equally to encourage mathematical development through careful questions and suggestions when the children are working on their own at a self-chosen activity. Consequently, children enjoy participating in number rhymes with adults and in showing their counting skills to adults;

however, they seldom explore mathematical ideas such as size and shape or talk about addition and subtraction in practical activities of their choosing. This is another area where shortcomings in planning for a suitable variety of activities for children at this age constrain their learning so, when they join Year 1, their work does not meet expected levels.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. Teaching and progress in this area of learning are satisfactory but most children do not meet the expectations of the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. In adult-directed activities, for example drawing a 'map' of a journey of a dog, adults support the children skilfully. They talk about the work in hand and thus increase the children's vocabulary and ability to think about the world in which they live. Most children show satisfactory skills using the mouse to control images on the computer screen because they have regular, well thought out access to the computer. When they build with construction kits their skills in joining materials are at expected levels for their age. However, their limited vocabulary and lack of confidence in developing their ideas means that many children do not ask questions about how things work or comment upon what they see as freely as is expected for their age. As a result, when they join Year 1, they are more dependent upon adults' questions to help them explore than is expected for their age. For example, they needed significant help in talking about their experiences in a Year 1 lesson about sight and touch. Although the children do have access to learning in each of the several aspects of this area of learning, its planning is unsatisfactory because there is no clear overview that identifies how each strand will be developed over the time that the children are in the class. Thus, the children's skills and knowledge are not built as systematically as they could be.

Physical development

64. Good teaching in this area of learning ensures that children achieve well and reach the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. Children benefit from the large hall and good expectations of their ability to move in this space. They use this area confidently with good levels of co-ordination and control. The very new outside play area is too recent to have affected children's learning but they have regular access to another good-sized outside area where they use tricycles and climbing frames. Children make satisfactory progress in using small equipment such as construction materials, the computer mouse, pencils and crayons.

Creative development

65. Because there was little recorded evidence, and opportunities to observe Year 1 pupils engaged in creative activities were limited, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about the overall attainment or the quality of teaching and learning in creative development in the reception classes. However, there are strengths in the planning of dance that incorporates developing children's imagination. There are also strengths in the planning of adult-led music sessions using commercial guidance. Consequently, Year 1 pupils know a number of songs that they can sing with reasonable control. They also know how to play a range of percussion instruments correctly. Though children, when they join Year 1, have clearly had opportunities to experience a wide range of creative work, for example, painting, printing and making collage pictures, their efforts vary from below average to good. During the inspection, children in reception classes had regular opportunities to use their imaginations and develop stories in the 'home corner' but, as this time was not specifically planned for, opportunities were missed for systematically promoting skills in these.

ENGLISH

66. Standards in English are currently average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Because pupils enter Year 1 with below average attainments in communication, language and literacy, this means that they are achieving well in Years 1 and 2. The good leadership of the new English co-

ordinator is playing a significant part in raising standards in these year groups. Standards in English at the end of Year 6 have been close to the national average for the last three years. Although standards have risen somewhat over the five years since the results reported on in the last inspection, they have not improved to the extent that they have nationally. Pupils are currently achieving in a satisfactory way in Years 3 to 6. They are, however, doing better in some classes than in others and this inconsistency is inhibiting better progress.

67. Standards in speaking and listening are average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Throughout the school, pupils make steady gains in their ability to communicate clearly and effectively and their achievements are satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, pupils listen carefully and respond to questions appropriately, for example being able to describe what features of the non-fiction book they were looking at made it different from a fiction book. Pupils gradually increase their vocabulary. Lesson planning now contains a note of what vocabulary will be developed during the unit of work. This is a positive move, but is not yet influencing the way teachers teach in all lessons. As a result, opportunities are sometimes missed for promoting the words identified. This lack of consistency means that not all pupils are gaining vocabulary as fast as they could. Opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss; for example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were encouraged to discuss the feelings and images evoked by reading a passage from Michael Morpurgo's novel 'Why the Whales Came'. This very successfully promoted the pupils' ability to use language and had a positive effect on the writing they did next. Once again, the lack of consistency and planning for this aspect of language development means that some pupils do not make the progress they should.
68. Except in one particularly able year group, standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 have been lower than the national average for the last five years. In reading, inspection evidence shows that there is systematic teaching of basic skills such as the relationship between letters and sounds. There is not, however, a consistent approach to the way that pupils are taught to use these skills when reading a book. In one Year 1 class, pupils are actively taught within group reading sessions how to apply their skills and are given plenty of opportunity to do so. Progress in these sessions is good. In other classes group reading sessions are simply used to hear pupils read in turn and pupils do not learn as much as they could. In addition, pupils have not been introduced early enough to the skills of written comprehension and this has significantly reduced standards at the end of Year 2. This problem has been identified by the co-ordinator, and the current school improvement plan contains details of how this is to be addressed. The use of national funding to give extra help to some Year 1 pupils is also contributing well to the increased progress seen.
69. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in reading in relation to their previous attainment. Some literacy lessons are used well to promote pupils' ability to read and to comprehend what they read. Year 5 pupils, for example, enjoyed reading and discussing a passage from 'Toothie and Cat' and were able to draw from their reading details about the text. This kind of teaching is also creating an enthusiasm for reading, with pupils keen, for example, to read whole books from which they have read extracts in class. This enthusiasm increases the amount pupils read independently and raises standards. By Year 6, most pupils read fluently and with expression. They talk about what they are reading and about the styles of the text, likening one book to another. Pupils' ability to use their reading skills to research information is not as well developed. This is caused in part by the lack of a library that is accessible to pupils and in part by the lack of consistency in the planning of links between English and other subjects.
70. Pupils enter Year 1 with poorly developed attainments in writing without the assistance of an adult. Many are reluctant to write without work to copy and this sets back their ability to make progress in Year 1. Because they are now being taught well in Years 1 and 2, their difficulties are being gradually overcome. Pupils are now making good progress and, in relation to their attainment when they enter Year 1, are achieving well. Current standards in writing in Year 2 are average. Pupils write stories, book reviews, simple descriptions of characters, and instructions, for example a recipe for making bread. Pupils have secure knowledge of the sounds that letters make and use this knowledge when spelling new words. They punctuate

simple sentences correctly with capital letters and full stops and the more able use exclamation marks and question marks in their writing.

71. Current work shows that standards in writing are below average in Years 3 and 4 but that, given the below average standards with which they entered Year 3, pupils are achieving in a satisfactory way. Standards in Years 5 and 6 are average and pupils are making good progress and are achieving well. Over Years 3 to 6, careful attention is being paid to the development of the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting. This means that, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils spell a range of longer words accurately, punctuate using paragraphing and speech and sentence punctuation, and write neatly and legibly. This enables them to write with satisfactory clarity. Pupils write in a number of ways, for example, as well as writing stories, they write about issues such as vivisection, write poetry and about books they have read, for instance writing about their thoughts after reading 'Tom's Midnight Garden'. They use this writing in their work in history, geography and in writing scientific reports but, as with reading, there is an inconsistency between classes and year groups in the way these links are planned.
72. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English. The provision for these pupils is well planned and careful identification of their needs helps teachers target their teaching well. The extra support provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the teaching assistants is of good quality and is helping the pupils achieve well and to meet the targets set for them. Teachers take good care to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their background, are able to benefit from lessons. There are, however, some differences in the ways in which boys and girls achieve. This has been identified by the school, and measures have been taken to try to promote boys' achievement, such as the purchase of more non-fiction books. There remains an inconsistency between year groups as to the emphasis given to non-fiction work that needs to be addressed. The achievements of pupils with English as an additional language are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress.
73. The quality of teaching in English is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. There are considerable variations in aspects of teaching throughout the school. The subject co-ordinator is aware of these and has been working productively to reduce them. Most work has been undertaken in Years 1 and 2 and this is paying off. The inconsistencies rise in large part from the significant turnover of staff. This means that staff have received training in the teaching of English in a number of different schools and have a variety of different approaches, strengths and weaknesses. There is now a need to improve the way the subject is monitored so that these can be identified, strengths shared, and weaknesses improved. This aspect of the management is currently unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has not yet had sufficient opportunity to observe others teaching or to look at planning or pupils' work in a focused way. Although some use of the extensive data from assessments has been made, for example in identifying differences between the attainment of boys and girls, this data has not yet been used to identify differences between other groups of pupils or classes in order to target support more carefully.
74. There is a consistency in the overall format of English lessons that is based on the recommendations in the National Literacy Strategy. This means that pupils are given good access to the different skills involved in reading and writing. Teachers are planning conscientiously but inconsistencies remain. There are good examples in the school of planning that clearly identifies what will be taught to the class and groups within it. Where this is the case, pupils understand what it is that they have to learn and are able to concentrate their efforts more productively. In one lesson, for example, the teacher had talked to the pupils about the word endings 'ip' and 'ed' and had these written on the board. Several pupils were referring to these written reminders as they were thinking of new words with these endings. They were learning very well. Teachers are using a variety of methods to try to involve pupils actively in the lessons. In the most effective lessons, they balance teacher talk with activity, such as the use of individual 'wipe clean' boards that allow each pupil to be involved with the activity in hand. In other lessons, teachers talk too long at the beginning of the lesson and pupils become restless and are unable to concentrate as well. This affects their learning.

Some use is made of ICT in promoting writing skills, but there is little systematic planning for this to be a regular part of English teaching.

75. In most lessons, teachers manage pupils effectively and maintain good discipline that allows pupils to work well. Pupils work at a good pace and good amounts of work are generally completed. The amount of written work that pupils in Years 5 and 6 in particular produce over a year is instrumental in producing the good progress seen in these year groups. Teachers use good quality books and other resources to inspire the pupils. It is, in part, the quality of such texts that makes pupils wish to read further. Teachers' enthusiasm for English, in particular for reading, is effectively communicated to the pupils and improves their wish to learn. Teaching assistants are used well to support and teach individuals and groups of pupils. Their good quality work is important in raising standards.
76. As identified above, the leadership of the subject is good. In the short time she has been in the school, the co-ordinator has identified aspects of weakness in the provision, taken a number of actions to improve these and has formulated a clear plan for the development of the subject. The management of the subject is satisfactory. There are strengths in the actions taken by the co-ordinator to improve standards. Raised standards are already evident in Year 2. The inadequacies in the current monitoring systems in the school mean that there has been insufficient monitoring in English to promote a consistency in teaching.

MATHEMATICS

77. The standards attained by pupils in national tests at the end of Year 2 are below average, both when compared with all pupils and in comparison with similar schools. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainments are in line with the average standard for all pupils. Since the last inspection, the results in these national tests have varied but overall there has been a slight improvement. This improvement is not as great as that seen nationally. Analysis of test data shows that, despite not reaching average standards, pupils had made good progress in their mathematics between Year 2 and Year 6. The higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress. The school has set very ambitious targets for pupils to achieve by the end of the current school year.
78. Inspection evidence largely confirms the pattern of the test results. The attainment of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is below that expected. Their achievement is satisfactory, however, because they enter the school with a limited understanding of number. In Year 1, pupils count up to 10 and recognise simple numbers. Most are beginning to understand simple addition. In Year 2, most pupils have a better grasp of number and can count beyond 20. They recognise even and odd numbers and simple number patterns. They describe shapes such as circle and triangle. Their ability to calculate mentally is below the levels expected and they have more difficulty in solving simple number problems than most pupils of a similar age.
79. By Year 6, the majority of pupils are able to add and subtract numbers up to 1000. In their workbooks they add and subtract decimal numbers. They have an understanding of simple fractions and find the fraction of a number. Where pupils have more difficulty is in using this knowledge to solve mathematical problems. They are not always sure which method they need to use to solve a problem. This is because they have not been given sufficient practice at thinking this out for themselves. In tackling problems that involve multiplication by 25, for example, pupils use long multiplication. Although this is an accurate method and produces the correct result, pupils do not have the confidence to try other quicker methods. By Year 4, pupils recognise and describe shapes such as a hexagon and octagon. Few are able to explain the mathematical properties of shapes such as a square or a rectangle. Many pupils find it difficult to express themselves using mathematical language. The current achievement of pupils in Year 6 is satisfactory overall. Pupils have secure knowledge of individual skills in mathematics, but still do not have the confidence to investigate mathematical questions and this inhibits their learning in key aspects of the subject. A satisfactory amount of mathematics is taught across the curriculum to reinforce skills taught in mathematics lessons. In science,

for example, pupils learn to draw graphs to plot the temperature of a cooling liquid. In ICT, pupils sometimes use and reinforce their mathematical knowledge by, for example, using their knowledge of shape. This provision is, however, not systematically planned and opportunities are therefore sometimes missed.

80. The pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress throughout the school. In class, these pupils are well supported and given work that is appropriate to their previous knowledge and understanding. The high quality of the teaching assistants who take a share in their teaching programme makes a positive contribution to their learning.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. During the inspection there were many strengths in teaching but a lack of consistency of approach, due in part to the recent changes in staffing, was evident. All teachers are dedicated to doing the best for the pupils in their care. They work conscientiously. In lessons, they establish good relationships with the pupils who in return respect their teachers and try hard to do their best. This results in a good atmosphere in most lessons with pupils behaving well. The teachers are using the guidance within the National Numeracy Strategy to provide pupils with a sound mathematical experience. This national strategy is supplemented by a commercial mathematics scheme that has recently been purchased. Inspection evidence shows that there is sometimes an over-reliance on this commercial scheme. Teachers do not always take sufficient account of what pupils already know and can do. They try to make pupils conform to a national expectation, making them do the work appropriate to their age rather than taking sufficient note of their actual attainment. This results in some pupils being able to get sums correct in their books, but who do not always understand the mathematical methods to achieve the answers. This accentuates their lack of mathematical skills and means that they do not have secure mathematical foundations on which to extend their knowledge and understanding.
82. Following the textbook too closely has also resulted in lessons where pupils are not encouraged to think for themselves. Despite the school's general philosophy of valuing pupils, teachers do not give sufficient opportunities for pupils to understand what they are learning, or why. This weakness is not, however, consistent throughout the school, and there is already some good practice. In a Year 3 class, for example, pupils were learning about addition. Their teacher told them not only what they had to do but also what they should learn as a result of their efforts. At the end of the lesson, she gave good opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they had learned, and what they still needed to improve. In lessons, all teachers prepare tasks well. They ensure that pupils have enough work to occupy them. In many lessons, however, there is not enough thought given to making mathematics fun or as to how to encourage pupils to take an active enjoyment in exploring number. All teachers mark work carefully, but insufficient attention is presently given to using the marking as a way of showing pupils what they have learnt or to identify how they could improve their mathematical skills.
83. The leadership of mathematics is satisfactory. The mathematics co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that all teachers have been able to introduce the National Numeracy Strategy, and is aware of the need to raise standards further. The management of mathematics in the school is unsatisfactory. The monitoring of teaching has not been sufficiently evaluative and has not made an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The monitoring has not identified the inconsistencies in teaching and learning or extended the good practice already in place. Through their good general teaching skills, teachers are able to provide a satisfactory mathematical curriculum for their pupils.

SCIENCE

84. Over the last three years, there has been a steady decline in standards as shown by the results of the end of Year 6 tests and the end of Year 2 teacher assessments. Over the past year, pupils' achievement in science throughout the school has been good and attainment has improved in that same period. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in science are currently average. Improvements are due to the new planning for separate year groups instead of a two-year rolling programme for mixed classes, and the focus on investigative work within practical activities that develop pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. The quality of teaching has improved due to support provided by the new co-ordinator. Similar good progress is made throughout the school by higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, due to the carefully planned provision by teachers to meet the full range of needs.
85. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, develop suitable levels of skills, knowledge and understanding across all aspects of the science curriculum. This is because the curriculum is planned to provide secure coverage of the required areas of learning and suitable opportunities to carry out investigations. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, for example, learn about the wonders of living things. Year 1 pupils work well together to learn about the human senses and Year 2 pupils discover the importance of water and light to the seeds that they plant. They also learn about different materials and test which will bend, tear or twist. They extend their knowledge when investigating the properties of different household materials such as 'natural' ones like stone and slate and 'man-made' ones such as brick and glass.
86. In Years 3 to 6, pupils made expected gains in their knowledge and understanding as they investigate how certain solids dissolve and others do not. They make sure that the tests are fair by using the same amounts of water and solid, and made predictions before starting the tests. They compare these to their findings and record them in chart form and with diagrams. By Year 5, pupils learn about the major organs of the body, such as the heart and lungs, and their functions. They compare their pulse rates at rest and after strenuous exercise and show their results in the form of graphs. Year 6 pupils study information from graphs to identify the weights of different objects and the stretch of elastic. They then successfully predict the amount of stretch that would take place given the weights of other objects. All pupils respond well to these learning situations and enjoy the different areas of investigation.
87. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory but it is also variable. In those lessons where the teaching was good a significant characteristic is the way teachers motivate pupils through their own evident enjoyment of the activities. As a result, pupils of all ages, gender and abilities show a high level of interest in science activities and make good progress in their investigative and experimental work. Teachers have a better understanding of how to teach scientific skills based on the improved provision of areas to be covered. As a result, pupils show good levels of concentration during activities and carry out their investigations carefully and accurately. Teachers manage and organise pupils well and this ensures that a good working environment is maintained. Effective use is made of questioning and prompts to encourage pupils to describe and explain what they observe, using correct vocabulary and terminology. Great care is taken to ensure that boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs are totally involved in all aspects of science lessons. Very effective use is made of teaching assistants to help pupils with educational and other needs in particular to achieve well. Weaknesses include inconsistencies in some teaching below Year 5, in terms of challenge to reach the expected levels.
88. Resources are adequate and are used effectively to stimulate and support pupils' learning. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. He has worked closely with colleagues over the past year to improve pupils' scientific skills and monitors the quality of teaching, learning and standards effectively. He is aware of the inconsistencies in teaching and intends to provide the necessary support. Planning has improved to ensure effective development of skills, and teachers have higher expectations. Insufficient tracking of pupils' progress over time has contributed to the drop in standards in national test results. The use of ICT to develop pupils'

skills is limited. The co-ordinator has plans to use sensors to monitor temperature changes and data handling to show evidence in a range of presentations. More detailed assessment information and better use of the information to measure pupils' progress and set new and relevant targets are also planned.

ART AND DESIGN

89. Standards in art and design are in line with expected levels at the end of Year 2 but, by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, standards are above those expected. Throughout the school, the quality of pupils' learning is good and pupils achieve well. The above average standards attained are due to good, enthusiastic teaching and the rich range of curricular experiences offered to pupils. Standards have improved since the time of the last inspection.
90. The youngest pupils have good opportunities to express themselves through art. In a lesson in Year 1, for example, the pupils were encouraged to respond to different music by making their own individual artistic impressions on paper. This made the pupils aware that it is possible to express emotions through art and gave them a good experience. By the end of Year 2, there is clear evidence that observation skills are developing appropriately. Pupils show secure control over line and shape in their drawings of sculptures. Snail prints on display show that pupils have learned to observe objects closely. Pupils are able to make simple observations about the differences in their own work from that of others and do so with sensitivity to their classmates' feelings. Pupils in Year 6 have had good opportunities to extend their artistic skills. They have studied great artists such as Picasso, Monet, Lowry and Kandinsky, and are able to reflect what they have seen in their own work. Their attempts to produce their own interpretations of objects in Picasso's style, for example, showed a good awareness of texture and pattern. Very good watercolour paintings entitled 'A Sense of Place' illustrate pupils' ability to express emotion in visual form and showed that, by this age, pupils have gained good control over colour and form when they are painting. Activities, such as those described make a good contribution to pupils' cultural and spiritual knowledge and understanding.
91. There are a number of factors that contribute to the good standards in art and design. The teachers are enthusiastic and make sure that the curriculum is rich and varied. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers encourage pupils to enjoy their work and, in return, the behaviour in lessons is almost always good. Lessons are well planned. Teachers encourage pupils to experiment with different styles and to learn from their mistakes. The sketchbooks that pupils use to make their initial sketches show the development of their artistic skills over time. These books are not only useful to establish a pattern of working, but also they give pupils the chance to see the extent to which their own skills have improved and enhance standards in art and design. In lessons, teachers give due attention to the teaching of artistic skills. In painting, for example, pupils are shown how to mix colours and how to produce colour contrasts in their paintings. A limiting factor in the quality of artistic standards is the cramped accommodation. This is particularly apparent for those classes in the original school building. The small classrooms limit the ability of teachers to provide the space pupils need when using large pieces of paper. Despite these cramped conditions, the pupils get on very well. They are tolerant of each other and manage to cope with the conditions. Work in art lessons is now being usefully extended by work in ICT lessons, in which pupils have opportunity to use art programs to create designs and pictures.
92. The leadership of art and design is good. The subject co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject and has helped staff to promote artistic skills. The management of the curriculum is good and ensures the breadth and balance noted.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. Standards of attainment in design and technology are below national expectations throughout the school. The subject has been neglected since the last inspection when standards were reported to be in line with expectation at the end of Year 2, but below expected levels at the end of Year 6. The subject has been given low priority and timetables show that insufficient time is allocated to it to support pupils' learning. The school has yet to agree whether the subject should be taught in blocks of work or regularly included in the timetable. Because they have limited experience of design and technology skills, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory. During the inspection, it was possible to see only two lessons on the timetable. Judgements are based on other sources, including the minimal records of previous work, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils.
94. Year 2 pupils have designed or made various articles, for example a plastic mug for an individual or a simple hand puppet using felt and other materials to decorate facial features. They have, however, limited ideas on how to design or how to join or assemble products. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop an understanding of food safety and hygiene by making Tudor biscuits as part of food technology. They design and make a simple bridge using newspaper and sticky tape and test its strength by using weights. They look at the type and uses of magnets before designing a simple fridge magnet. Inspection evidence shows that Year 6 pupils have had few opportunities to learn design skills and limited experience of evaluating the purpose and practicality of their designs and how they could improve them. The school has an unsatisfactory range of resources with inadequate storage facilities. There is, consequently, insufficient opportunity for pupils to use a range of tools and materials or to use ICT to support their learning in design and technology. Pupils have had only limited opportunity to produce step-by-step plans, to use more advanced equipment involving motors or gears or to disassemble products to evaluate design and purpose. This has reduced the extent of their achievements.
95. Because there were very few lessons in design and technology available to be seen during the inspection, no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in lessons, but it is clear that the overall impact of the provision on pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. Discussions with pupils during inspection showed they have positive attitudes towards design and technology lessons. They talked enthusiastically about their work and finished products made. Inspection evidence shows that teachers need to plan their work more carefully so that they identify the skills and knowledge pupils are required to learn in a lesson, as well as identifying what activities pupils will undertake. The tasks pupils have undertaken have often been prescriptive and there has been little opportunity for them to experiment or develop their own creative skills. Despite being appropriately supported in the lessons seen, the learning of pupils with educational needs is affected by the same factors as other pupils and they also do not achieve as much as they could. There has been no recent professional training for teachers and many lack confidence and subject knowledge, and this has had an adverse effect on pupils' learning. The new co-ordinator has worked hard to produce a new scheme of work to help teachers plan their work more effectively by clearly defining a logical approach to developing pupils' skills. This scheme has only just been introduced and there has, therefore, not yet been time for it to have had an impact on pupils' achievements. Because the subject has not been given high priority in the school improvement plan, the co-ordinator's role is underdeveloped, as she has no opportunity to check or improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

GEOGRAPHY

96. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards of attainment in geography are in line with expectations and have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve in a satisfactory way. During the inspection, due to school timetabling arrangements by which geography is taught in blocks of work, it was possible to see only a limited amount of

geography teaching. Judgements are based on information from other sources, including discussions with teachers and pupils, teachers' planning and examination of previous work.

97. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop a sound understanding of their own environment, for example by identifying the main places of interest on a map of Bideford. As part of a seaside topic, they have visited Northam Burrows and can identify human and physical features including tourist attractions and rock pools. Year 6 pupils show satisfactory map reading skills, for example identifying holiday destinations they have visited or would like to visit on a world map and globe. They are able to identify the route taken and suitable clothing for the climate. They make good use of a video to develop their knowledge and understanding of the major physical and human features found in the British Isles. They gain first hand experience of coastline features by visiting Westward Ho! They are able to successfully compare the local climate, together with human and physical features, with those found in India and thus their multicultural awareness is developed.
98. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, which is a similar picture to the last inspection. Most teachers manage their pupils well and effectively use resources and visits to support pupils' learning. In such instances, pupils have positive attitudes, behave well, and are interested in learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and this enables them to achieve appropriately and make satisfactory progress. There is, however, variability evident in the quality of teaching and learning between classes. Work is not always planned effectively to challenge and stimulate pupils, the pace of lessons is sometimes slow and very occasionally teachers do not manage and control pupils well enough. In such lessons, learning is less effective. The variability in the effectiveness of teaching is in part because the scheme of work needs to be reviewed in line with the current single-age class structure of the school. The current scheme does not clearly enough identify a development of skills, knowledge and understanding for each year group and this means that too much is left to individual teachers to adjust work planned for a double-age group to meet the needs of their class.
99. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and is keen to make the curriculum planning relevant to pupils' needs. She has, however, had no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school in order to support teachers, improve consistency in teaching and to raise standards further. She accepts that cross-curricular links between geography and subjects such as English and mathematics and the use of ICT are underused to support pupils' learning and there are limited opportunities for independent research caused by a lack of library facilities.

HISTORY

100. At the end of Year 2 and in Year 6, standards of attainment in history are in line with expectations and have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve in a satisfactory way. Apart from lessons, judgements are based on information from other sources, including discussions with teachers and examination of past and present work.
101. By the end of Year 2, pupils are developing a sense of chronology and an awareness of differences between the ways of life now and in the past. They are able, for instance, to compare ancient and modern houses and old and new toys. They know about the everyday life of famous people and events, such as Samuel Pepys and the Great Fire of London. By the end of Year 6, pupils' knowledge of daily life and customs of various periods is extended by studies of the Aztecs, Romans, Tudors, Victorians and Life in Britain in the 1930s. They compare past and present. Pupils, for example, identify ways in which recreation activities have changed since Victorian times and talk about why these have occurred, for example identifying the effects of television. Pupils have begun to build up a secure sense of chronology, knowing, for example, the time order of the periods of history they have studied. Pupils also undertake research by asking questions, but their limited access to ICT and library facilities during history lessons means that this ability is not as developed as it should be.

Pupils in Years 3 to 6 use their writing skills appropriately, for example when writing about the wives of Henry the Eighth, and they have used ICT to research during their studies. The lack of formal planning of these aspects, however, means that other opportunities to develop ICT, writing and speaking skills are missed.

102. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with a number of good lessons observed. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the best lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and confidence in handling the lesson. They manage pupils well, have high expectations, and have a good understanding of the needs of pupils. This has a positive impact on the learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, who behave well and have positive attitudes in history lessons. Resources are well used and pupils' learning is effectively reinforced by giving them first-hand experiences whenever possible. These include numerous visits to such places as to Exeter Museum and Coldharbour Mill where pupils dress up and deepen their understanding through imaginative role-play. Visiting drama workshops are very popular and thoroughly enjoyed by pupils who benefit from gaining a deeper understanding of historical periods such as the Tudors and Victorians. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has clear ideas of how to develop the subject, including improving resources, identifying more writing opportunities and using ICT more effectively to support pupils' learning. She has as yet, however, had no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning across the school in order to identify how to improve standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, most pupils attain average standards. Pupils are currently achieving well. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be below expected levels. Improvements are due to better resources, including the creation of a new computer suite and an increased number of computers and the improved quality of teaching.
104. From an early age, pupils are keen to use computers. They learn to switch on and log on to programs and acquire basic skills, using the mouse control and the keyboard. Pupils' work supports learning in literacy and numeracy and the links with art and design are good. Year 1 pupils develop early modelling skills when accessing a range of simulation programs. They took turns and shared the time well. Year 2 pupils extend skills effectively when creating their own patterns in the style of a famous artist. They click on and drag different shapes, changing their sizes and adding a range of colours and design good quality representations. In lessons, pupils are filled with enthusiasm as they learn the basic commands required to access text and graphics programs. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good. The new guidance for what pupils should be learning is helpful to teachers and provides better support for the planning of more challenging experiences for pupils. Access to classroom computers to extend skills in links with other subjects, however, is limited.
105. In Years 3 to 6, pupils build effectively on their knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. They are aware of the importance of ICT in their lives when searching for information about particular topics. Pupils work independently and in small co-operative groups with interest in their tasks, and behave very well. Pupils of all ages work well together in pairs sharing ideas. Year 4 pupils were observed extending their knowledge of art programs. They designed their own pictures in different ways, using repeat or random pattern controls. Year 6 pupils were observed building on data-handling information to calculate areas and perimeters of rectangles. They co-operated well together, refining ideas and organising relevant tables, graphics and text.
106. Overall, teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good based on improved planning of the new guidance provided. Teachers and teaching assistants have good knowledge of computing and are beginning to plan some ways in which ICT can be used to help pupils learn in other subjects. More use could be made of computers to support the development of pupils' writing skills by encouraging the drafting and re-drafting of written work in classroom links with other

subjects such as science, geography and history. Currently a weakness is the lack of assessment procedures to enable teachers to track pupils' progress. These factors have been identified by the co-ordinator in his action plan for the coming year. In lessons observed, good support is provided for special educational needs pupils by teaching assistants to help them achieve at the same good rate as other pupils. Taking account of pupils' varied backgrounds and needs, teachers provide adequate opportunities to help all pupils. As a result, achievement is good and has improved from an unsatisfactory level.

107. Since the previous inspection, the computer suite has been created and many new computers have been acquired. Resources are now good. National funding has been used well to improve the poor resources identified at that time. The co-ordinator provides good guidance and has opportunities to monitor and observe teaching and learning. Pupils' use of the Internet is supervised and parental permission is obtained for this. The subject co-ordinator has successfully improved resources with the purchase of new computers and software and has led staff well in improving provision and standards in the subject.

MUSIC

108. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils throughout the school attain average standards overall. By Year 6, pupils attain higher than expected standards in singing. These are promoted through enthusiastic teaching and a good range of music offered to the pupils. Overall, the achievement in music is satisfactory but that in singing is good. The school drumming group and the school choir are very effective and make a significant contribution both to pupils' enjoyment of music and to the standards attained by older pupils. Indeed there is a very good range of extra-curricular musical activities including instrumental tuition, whereby pupils have good opportunities to produce a high standard of musical performance. Because a good proportion of the pupils are involved, these extra-curricular activities also make a positive contribution to the standards attained throughout the school.
109. The younger pupils sing enthusiastically, although their pitch and rhythm are not always well controlled. They are able to recognise that instruments make different sounds. When making their own music they are beginning to recognise the differing types of sound made by musical instruments. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 are able to sing with more control over pitch and dynamics. The oldest pupils are able to maintain a line, for example when singing 'Stand By Me', and begin to use musical expression in their singing. The higher-attaining pupils are able to improvise melodic and rhythmic phrases as part of their group performances. When making their own music most of the older pupils work collaboratively with others to express themselves. Pupils have an acceptable musical vocabulary with which to describe the work they have done, for example describing a particular type of singing they had been learning or their work in composition. They have suitable experience of different types of music and of different composers and this knowledge is extended through the careful choice of music used in assemblies.
110. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers are enthusiastic and convey this enthusiasm to their pupils. Although there is presently no music co-ordinator, the good work undertaken by the previous co-ordinator has left staff well prepared to develop the subject further. Some members of staff do not possess an expertise in the subject, but there is a willingness to 'have a go' at every aspect of music. This results in a curriculum that is broad and well balanced. Due to the variable subject expertise amongst some teachers, some of the teaching of musical skills is patchy and this sometimes results in a lowering of the quality of learning. In particular, the most-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. The quality of learning for the older pupils in Years 5 and 6 suffers because of the very large class sizes. In these classes pupils make good progress with their singing, but the constraints of class size and limitations in the accommodation adversely affect their learning in playing and composing. There are, however, examples of very good teaching in music. In a Year 5 class, for example, the teacher's expertise in music enabled pupils' learning to be good despite the large class size. The teacher was able to extend the

pupils' understanding of musical composition and build on what they already knew. At present, however, teachers with specific expertise do not have opportunities to help other teachers to learn from them.

111. The leadership and management of music in the school are in a state of uncertainty. Thanks to the good work of the previous music co-ordinator, the staff are able to follow a well-structured teaching programme. There are some outline plans for the co-ordination of music to be shared by a number of staff. Whilst these staff are enthusiastic and willing to shoulder the responsibilities, the division of tasks has not yet been clarified. There is not yet planned use of ICT in music in all year groups, for example, tape recorders are not systematically used to record pupils' efforts so that they can listen to their own performances and identify ways in which they could improve them. The music curriculum is enhanced by the use of visits and visitors. The school's drumming club, for example, was begun after a visit from an African drumming group. The overall quality of the experiences provided for the pupils means that music plays a significant part in the good provision for spiritual and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. By the end of both Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve in a satisfactory way and attain expected levels for their ages. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged average. The school provides a full programme of physical activities over time but gymnastics was not timetabled during the inspection. Boys and girls participate in physical education lessons with equal enthusiasm and work well individually, in pairs or in larger groups.
113. Year 2 pupils were observed in a dance lesson demonstrating different moods of anger and uncertainty as they stamped and scurried about. They practised and developed their own sequences of movement and performed with good awareness of the space around them and the need for safety. The teacher exercised good control and set relevant challenges for pupils of all capabilities through good comments and encouragement. Teaching overall is satisfactory.
114. Older pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on their skills systematically and enjoy all aspects of the subject. Year 4 pupils practise different games skills effectively and boys and girls alike enjoy improving their skipping and ball control. Extra help is also given in the younger classes to enable pupils with physical disabilities to participate up to their levels of capability. By Year 6, pupils are interested in the different forms of country dancing. Pupils learn and perform traditional English folk dances and dances from other cultures such as Africa. Their good levels of concentration and co-operation were evident in a lesson where they learnt the 'Pat-a-cake Polka'. Good organisation and management by the teacher, linked with elements of fun and enjoyment, enabled all pupils to achieve well. In games, the school participates in competitions with other schools in the area with some success. Their performances reflect the hard work of the staff and pupils and significantly add to the good social and personal development in the school.
115. Gymnastics is successfully taught and encouraged in lessons planned at different points in the year. The school also competes in the North Devon Schools' Gymnastics Competition and has gained some individual successes. Swimming is taught in the school pool in the summer term. Records show that standards attained by the current Year 6 pupils are broadly as expected at this stage of the year, with potential for improvement. Three-quarters of pupils swim the required 25 metres or more and the remainder range from non-swimmers with water confidence to early stages of learning to swim. Year 6 pupils enjoy the provision for outdoor and adventurous activities in the form of a 'Life Skills' course at the local leisure centre.

116. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen, teachers had high expectations of pupils who, as a result, responded positively to challenges, behaving well. Pupils work hard to practise and refine their skills, particularly their control of the ball. Teachers provide regular support for individuals and groups by showing them how to improve their techniques. Lessons are also characterised by effective warm-up sessions, close attention to safety and a cool-down session. In a small proportion of teaching, there are inconsistencies in how well skills are taught. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator, who has, with the support of her colleagues, extended the range of learning opportunities within the subject in order to ensure greater consistency in teaching and coverage of skills. These opportunities contribute to the good development of pupils' personal and social skills and enhance the quality of the experiences provided by the school for all pupils. The co-ordinator has had insufficient opportunities to monitor the consistency of teaching across the school but is aware of the need to do so. She also has plans to improve assessment, including self-assessment by pupils, and intends to extend the provision for outdoor activities by introducing orienteering and problem-solving activities within the school grounds. The quantity and quality of resources are good, with a reasonable-sized hall and outdoor facilities in both the hard surface and field areas.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

117. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils reach the level of religious knowledge and understanding expected in the locally agreed syllabus. This means that the school has successfully maintained the satisfactory standards of the previous inspection.
118. By the end of Year 2, pupils recall and re-tell Bible stories with the level of detail and understanding expected for their age. They outline, for example, the sequence of events in the story of 'The Good Samaritan' and volunteer their understanding of its moral as *'to show us to love'*. They know that special events such as christenings, marriages and funerals take place in church, and that these are accompanied by special music. They are beginning to understand that different people hold different beliefs, for example *'one religion has lots of gods'*. They are also beginning to learn that symbols such as candles are important to many people, *'because God is the light of the world'*. Learning in religious education provides them with a secure basis for increased understanding as they move through the school. For example, one boy in Year 3 volunteered to an inspector, *'Religions are like friendship'*.
119. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed a clearer understanding and more knowledge of the major world faiths, such as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. Although they are not entirely confident with the terminology, they know that these religions have in common sacred books and places of worship. They are developing their understanding to identify ways in which religions influence how people live. They are keen to demonstrate their developing knowledge of a variety of subjects, such as the Creation versus the 'big bang' theory and engage in discussions about difficult questions. For example, they ask each other and adults, *'Who made God?' 'If not all the Bible is true, which bits are true?' 'If God made the world why do we have wars?'*
120. Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well structured and planned sufficiently well to build on pupils' previous learning. However, teaching methods are rather dry and prevent the subject from making as strong a contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as it should. While opportunities for lively and far-ranging debate are often missed so the subject does not contribute as it could to pupils' speaking and listening skills, a scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrates that the subject makes a reasonable contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Learning support assistants provide very high quality support to those pupils with statements of special educational need, enabling them to take a full part in lessons and to achieve in a satisfactory way.
121. The subject co-ordinator is relatively new to the school and the development of religious education has not been a focus for the school, so there has been little formal management of

the subject of late. Within these constraints, the co-ordinator is providing secure leadership. She is enthusiastic and has sensibly taken time to develop a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within teaching and learning in the subject. She recognises that the subject makes too little use of ICT. She is now clear as to how the subject needs to develop and so is well placed to ensure that it does so.