

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DUNSTONE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Plymstock, Plymouth

LEA area: Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113312

Headteacher: Mrs Julie Jane

Lead inspector: Mr Peter Sandall

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2004

Inspection number: 256008

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	229
School address:	Shortwood Crescent Plymstock Plymouth
Postcode:	PL9 8TQ
Telephone number:	01752 401293
Fax number:	01752 481086
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Greg Unwin
Date of previous inspection:	9 <sup>th</sup> March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Dunstone is a primary school of average size serving the residential area of Plymstock on the outskirts of Plymouth. Most pupils live fairly close to the school. There is a mix of local authority and private housing, while approximately 16 per cent of pupils come from naval housing quarters. This contributes to the relatively high mobility in and out of the school, with one in five pupils completing only part of their primary education in the school. Both parents and governors regard the school as being important to the local community. There is a balance of boys and girls in its 229 pupils, nearly all of whom are of white British descent. There are no pupils for whom English is a second language. While there is a wide range, pupils generally come from average socio-economic backgrounds, although the proportion entitled to a free school meal is below average. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average, as is the percentage with a statement of special educational needs. The school achieved 'Investors in People' status in 2001 and was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25771	Mr Peter Sandall	Lead inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education
19693	Mrs Sally Hall	Lay inspector	
27369	Mrs Carolyn Sandall	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education The Foundation Stage curriculum
20846	Mr Alan Wilson	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Personal, social and health education Special educational needs English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

*Criterion School Inspections*

*Juniper House  
23 Abbots View  
Abbotswood  
Cinderford  
Gloucestershire  
GL14 3EG*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## REPORT CONTENTS

Page

### **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

6-7

### **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

#### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

8-11

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses  
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

#### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

11-16

Teaching and learning  
The curriculum  
Care, guidance and support  
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

#### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

16-17

### **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

18-30

#### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

#### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

31

# PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

## OVERALL EVALUATION

**Dunstone Community Primary School provides a good education for its pupils** and gives good value for money. The school has a positive collective ethos and works hard to ensure all are valued. Teaching and learning are good overall. The headteacher's good leadership is well supported by a hard-working and committed team of staff. Governors, too, are very supportive and play their part in shaping the school's direction, although they have not ensured that the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> curriculum is fully implemented. Pupils' current achievement is good in Years 3 to 6 and they attain above average standards.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses<sup>2</sup> are:

- The school is led and managed well.
- Pupils achieve well by Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good overall, being stronger for older pupils.
- Governors have not ensured that curriculum planning for children in the Foundation Stage reflects all the stages leading to the early learning goals.
- Assessment is not used effectively to inform planning in the short term, although there are good tracking systems to assess pupils' progress over time.
- Very good links with other schools contribute strongly to pupils' education.
- Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well.
- Many opportunities are offered which add to pupils' personal and educational development.
- There are good links with parents and the community.

The school has successfully addressed the key issues from the previous report, particularly by improving the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2<sup>3</sup> and the challenge for more able pupils. Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved, given fluctuations in the ability of the different groups each year. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, curriculum enrichment, and links with other schools are all better than before. The school has made good improvement overall.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	A	A	A
Mathematics	C	B	B	B
Science	D	C	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils' achievement is good.** Children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily, with most attaining the expected levels by the end of the reception year, although not in their knowledge and understanding of the world or creative development. This progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2, and standards are similar to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2; in the past three years they have attained standards that are above the national average. The pupils currently in Year 6 attain above the national average in English and mathematics and are average in science, indicating good overall achievement in Key Stage 2. The school's tracking of pupils shows that most make good progress over time, with progress accelerating in Years 5 and 6.

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

<sup>2</sup> The strengths and weaknesses are listed in order of significance.

<sup>3</sup> Key Stage 2, sometimes referred to as the juniors, caters for pupils aged between 7 and 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

**Pupils display good personal qualities, and their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is also good.** Pupils have good attitudes to school, enjoy good relationships with adults and other pupils and behave well, contributing to a positive ethos and a successful learning environment. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good standard of education and teaching is good overall.** Teaching is sound for children in the reception year, but the emphasis on basic skills means there is too little independent and creative learning. Teaching is also sound in Years 1 and 2, and is good in Years 3 to 6, with some good and very good teaching in English, mathematics and science throughout the school, but particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6. As a result, the rate of progress accelerates for older pupils. In the Year 5/6 classes, the teaching of pupils in ability groups for mathematics works well. All teachers have positive attitudes and offer pupils a good level of encouragement, and pupils are usually engaged well in their learning. The good use and high number of teaching assistants supports this, as does the ability of most pupils to work both cooperatively and independently. However, pupils are not always made aware of what they need to do to improve, and day-to-day assessment is not sharp enough to ensure that work is matched consistently to pupils' needs.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and satisfactory overall, although it does not include all the required aspects for children in the Foundation Stage. The school enriches the curriculum very successfully, through a programme of visits and visitors, offering pupils a range of opportunities outside the school day, especially to participate in sport. Provision for health and safety is good, and good relationships mean that pupils have ready access to support and guidance. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. Partnership with parents and the local community is good, and there are very good links with other schools. All these aspects have a positive effect on pupils' achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and effective systems ensure that everyone has a voice, shares a common purpose and is able to contribute to the school's goals. Strategic planning, while thorough, is not always sufficiently focused on how improvement can be implemented and measured. Subject leadership is well established and effective in almost all cases, although not in the Foundation Stage, and professional development is linked well to school improvement. The governing body is supportive, involved and contributes fully to development planning, but has not ensured that the school meets statutory requirements for the Foundation Stage; this is unsatisfactory, although in other respects governance is satisfactory with some good features. Financial management is sound and supports the school's priorities.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents at the well-attended parents' meeting, and pupils spoken to during the inspection, were very positive about all aspects of the school. In the response to the pre-inspection parents' questionnaires, which had a 25 per cent return rate, a significant number expressed unease about both the school's leadership and its response to parental concerns, focusing on the proposed class organisation for the next school year. The inspection found no evidence in either current or proposed arrangements to justify these anxieties.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- improve the quality of day-to-day assessment to match work better to pupils' needs;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- establish and implement all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Achievement is good overall by the end of Year 6. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily, as do pupils in Years 1 and 2; achievement is good in Years 3 to 6.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science, and pupils in Year 6 attained standards that were well above average in the 2003 national tests.
- Achievement in the Foundation Stage is limited by an inappropriate curriculum.
- Speaking and listening skills are good throughout the school.
- Pupils' work indicates good standards are being attained in art and design.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the Foundation Stage enter school with attainment which is broadly average, although there is a significant proportion of the current group who are of above average ability. Most children make sound progress and achieve most of the expected goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, and more able children often achieve well because they work with pupils in Year 1. However, the achievement of independent learning skills is compromised by a lack of opportunity in the planned curriculum. This has a knock-on effect on the progress that the children are able to make in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, where many do not reach the expected goals by the end of the reception year.
2. Standards in tests at Year 2 have generally been above or well above the national average over the past four years. However, trends of improvement over time are below those found nationally. This is because the school had exceptionally good results in the first year, from which overall trends are measured. However, standards in 2003 tests, as well as those of pupils currently in Year 2, indicate that attainment in reading and writing is broadly similar to the national average. Standards in mathematics, an area identified for improvement by the school, are better, being above average in last year's tests. The more able pupils in Year 2 are challenged effectively and, as a result, are achieving well. This is borne out by the results of the national tests in 2004, where the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 improved in reading, writing and particularly in mathematics. Standards in science are broadly similar to the national average, but the way the curriculum was previously planned and taught has left pupils in Year 2 with gaps in their knowledge and understanding of some aspects.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores<sup>4</sup> in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.6 (16.8)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.8 (15.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.9 (17.2)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

<sup>4</sup> **Average Point Scores.** The average point scores table compares the school's performance with the national results. The calculations are arrived at by using the total of all test scores gained by pupils, and dividing the total by the number of pupils with a test result. This calculation is carried out for each subject tested.



3. By the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average in English and mathematics and average in science. The school's trend of improvement over the last five years is similar to that found nationally, and standards in English and mathematics have been above average during three of the last four years, bearing out the findings of the inspection. Standards in science have been broadly average over time, although they were well above average in the 2003 national tests. Improvements in science reflect a better organised curriculum and better teaching, particularly towards the top of the key stage, and achievement here is good. In mathematics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit, because the grouping of pupils by ability is stretching the more able as well as ensuring that all pupils are appropriately challenged.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7 (29.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.8 (27.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.1 (29.1)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The school has good systems for tracking pupils' progress over time, and teachers recognise where pupils have made insufficient progress in relation to their earlier attainment. Causes are identified, where possible, and pupils are given programmes of work to raise their achievement. However, the ongoing, day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress is less well established, and, as a result, tasks in lessons are not always matched well to pupils' abilities. Pupils themselves are not always clear about what they are trying to achieve, or how well they have done. While the school knows how well pupils are doing, it is less effective in ensuring that their next step builds clearly on what they already know and understand. This is made more difficult by the relatively high mobility of pupils in and out of the school, but is still an area for improvement.
5. The school has an average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those who have a statement of special educational needs. They are well supported, and this assistance often benefits other less able pupils as well, and, as a result, they make the same progress as their classmates. More able pupils, including those identified by the school as gifted and talented, achieve well. The school met its targets for the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 in English and mathematics in 2003, and exceeded the target for Level 5 in English, although not quite meeting this target in mathematics. The 2004 targets for Level 5's have been exceeded in both subjects.
6. Where sufficient evidence allowed a judgement to be made, standards in other subjects are similar to those in other schools, including standards in religious education and information and communication technology, and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Although it was not possible to see any lessons in art and design, the quality of work around the school, as well as the good use of sketch books, indicates that standards here are above average, indicating good achievement over time.

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils have good attitudes and they behave well. Overall, the opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are usually enthusiastic about their work and other activities.
- The school's provision for social development is good and pupils grow in confidence and maturity.
- The school's strong moral code helps pupils to behave well.

- Pupils feel part of the school community. Relationships are good and there are good opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility.
- Staff encourage pupils to show respect for others and for the environment.

## Commentary

7. In lessons, most pupils are enthusiastic learners and this has a positive impact on their achievement. The vast majority of pupils listen carefully, are keen to answer questions and work with sustained concentration. A few pupils, particularly in Year 2, are easily distracted and take a long time to settle to their work. Pupils with special educational needs appreciate the support they receive, particularly from teaching assistants, with whom they form very good relationships.
8. Most teachers are skilled at developing the pupils' self esteem. They create an atmosphere where the pupils are willing to contribute their ideas without fear or ridicule and this makes a positive contribution to their achievements, both in lessons and in out-of-school activities. Through assemblies, staff encourage pupils to share their successes. School productions enable all pupils to experience the thrill of performing in front of their classmates and families, and activities such as the 'Ten Tors Challenge' and residential visits develop pupils' teamwork skills.
9. The school's strong moral code works well because of the consistent and high expectations of good behaviour by adults working in the school. Nearly all pupils respond well to the system of rewards, and understand the consequences of their actions if they misbehave. Pupils say that rare incidents of bullying are dealt with and they appreciate the work of the pupil mediators who sort out minor disputes and help pupils who have no one to play with. The fixed term exclusions last year were due to isolated outbursts of unruly behaviour.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
222
3
2
2

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
2	

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

10. The school has developed a sense of community amongst staff, parents, governors and pupils and relationships are good. Boys and girls work well together in pairs and groups and they play well together in the playground. There are some good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and team captains, prefects and mediators take their duties very seriously.
11. The school helps pupils to value and respect others successfully. In lessons, pupils gain beneficial insights into other cultures, for example through studying Peru, learning Spanish, painting in an aboriginal style, and exploring world faiths. Pupils' knowledge of their own cultures is successfully developed through the curriculum. For example pupils visited Morwellham Quay to deepen their understanding of Victorian life. The thought provoking school production helped pupils to appreciate the importance of protecting the environment, and involved all pupils in Year 3 to 6 in developing ideas as well as the performance itself.

### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence	
School data	5.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

12. The provision for pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. Pupils have maintained their good attitudes and behaviour. Attendance has dipped since the last inspection when it was judged to be good; it is now satisfactory.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education for its pupils. In some subjects, the school does not yet involve pupils sufficiently in knowing how to improve their own learning. A good variety of activities enriches pupils' experiences. Pupils receive good support and care, which contributes to a positive learning environment.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment procedures are satisfactory except in the Foundation Stage.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The scrutiny of work indicates good teaching over time.
- Teaching during the inspection was good in the core subjects of English and mathematics.
- Assessment in the Foundation Stage is insufficiently focused on small steps in children's learning.
- Day-to-day assessment through the school is not sufficiently specific to consistently match work to pupils' needs.
- Grouping by ability in the Years 5/6 classes for mathematics contributes positively to learning.
- Teaching assistants are fully involved and their input helps the achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
- Individual learning targets are not yet effective in helping pupils to know what they need to do to get better.
- Good tracking systems give the school a clear view of the progress of both individuals and groups of pupils and are used effectively to set challenging targets for attainment.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	4 (12%)	11 (32%)	18 (53%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

13. The full evidence, including the scrutiny of a year's work in pupils' books, as well as lessons seen during the inspection, demonstrates that teaching is good and is at its best in English and mathematics. The quality of pupils' work in art is also indicative of good teaching.
14. The school places a strong emphasis on creating an ethos in which learning is encouraged and seen as important by pupils. Most lessons are well-ordered and purposeful, so teachers are able to focus on pupils' learning, rather than managing behaviour. Teachers expect high standards and in most cases the pupils respond positively. Occasionally, staff have to work hard to maintain the concentration of a minority of younger pupils.
15. There is an appropriate focus on the skills of literacy and numeracy, particularly in the lessons devoted specifically to these subjects. The development of literacy skills through teaching in subjects across the curriculum is good, and mathematical skills are developed soundly in the same way. Speaking and listening skills are often used effectively in partner and group work

and most pupils are confident communicators. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory overall, although there is little evidence of it being used to support scientific investigation or the recording of results.

16. Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, where there is a good emphasis on ensuring that children are taught basic skills and there is plenty of encouragement. However, the lack of focus on independence, and the limited opportunities for children to explore and apply these skills in their own way, restricts learning and means progress is not always as good as it could be. Day-to-day assessment is not sharp enough to ensure that children are taught the necessary next step to build on their knowledge and understanding systematically.
17. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good overall, with the good and very good teaching seen during the inspection most often benefiting the three classes with pupils in Years 5 and 6, although very good teaching was also seen in Years 1 and 2. All teachers work hard to encourage pupils and engage them in learning, and are usually successful. Teaching assistants are both good at what they do and are used effectively, and a good and productive partnership is encouraged by the school's leadership. This not only benefits pupils with special educational needs, but also makes a positive contribution to the learning of other lower attaining pupils, who often receive individual attention.
18. Teaching is less effective when the purpose of the lesson lacks clarity or is inappropriate, or where tasks for pupils do not reinforce understanding or encourage new learning. On-going assessment is not used consistently to relate future learning to pupils' needs, and marking rarely refers to whether the lesson's intentions have been achieved, or to pupils' own targets. As a result, pupils are not always aware of exactly what they need to do to get better. An exception to this is the use of individual discussions about writing, which is very effective in setting targets for improvement which are agreed with individual pupils. 'Progress books' give a good picture of pupils' attainment in writing over time.
19. The grouping of pupils by ability for mathematics in the two Years 5 and 6 classes has a good effect on the learning of pupils of all abilities. It is evident that pupils of all abilities are gaining from this organisation. The investigations undertaken by more able pupils challenge both their skills and their understanding at a very high level and are responded to enthusiastically. Lower-attaining pupils are also given work which is challenging but achievable and, as a result, have positive attitudes and an increasing belief in their own ability.
20. While there is evidence of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the only direct reference to improving the quality of teaching in the school improvement plan relates to the teaching of numeracy, particularly challenging more able pupils and it is in this area that standards have improved most. Most actions are concerned with developments in the curriculum and the improvement of standards. While these are important, there is no clear focus on improving the specific aspects of teaching and learning which are fundamental to their success.
21. The school has good systems to track pupils' progress through the school in English, mathematics and science, and has plans in place to improve them further, using an information and communication technology program, and apply them to all subjects. Teachers use these systems effectively to check how well pupils are doing in their class and to review future learning needs as a result. This is good practice.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum to meet the academic and personal needs of its pupils. However, it does not offer all the appropriate learning experiences for children in the Foundation Stage, and the curriculum fails to meet their needs. There is a very good range of enrichment and after-school activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is not fully implemented.
- There are very good opportunities outside the school day for pupils to practise a wide range of sports.
- The school works very well to enrich the curriculum through a range of activities and experiences.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and enables them to achieve as well as their classmates.
- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education, through very good links with the high schools to which pupils transfer.

## Commentary

22. The school has maintained the quality of the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 reported at the previous inspection. It has also worked hard and very successfully to add further dimensions which have a positive impact on their all round achievement and personal development. A good example is the planning of annual multi-cultural weeks with an emphasis on environmental issues, the most recent of which was focused on the disappearing rainforests and which reflected a collective sense of concern by all pupils for the world around them. This initiative was well supported by the establishment of links with Peru, the addition of Spanish to the timetable for pupils in Years 4 to 6 and areas of the curriculum such as drama, art and creative writing featured strongly. A satisfactory scheme of work for personal, social and health education is also in place to enable pupils to explore other moral and social issues. The school meets statutory requirements for religious education, sex education and informing pupils about the dangers of drug misuse.
23. The Foundation Stage curriculum currently provided is unsatisfactory and lacks cohesion. Not enough attention is given to creative and imaginative aspects, and there are too few opportunities for children to learn independently. Planning pays too little attention to the 'stepping stones'<sup>5</sup> which lead to children attaining the Early Learning Goals<sup>6</sup> in the different areas of learning. The way the curriculum is organised gives too great a weight to the Year 1 pupils in the reception class.
24. A well established and committed team of suitably qualified and experienced teachers is in place, many of whom give their own time generously to organise regular clubs and out of school activities. The very strong links with local colleges provide a further rich and varied range of sporting activities, which are very well attended and enable pupils to play competitive team games against other schools if they choose to. One of the colleges also provides expertise and support in areas such as mathematics and information and communication technology. These positive relationships allow regular interaction between the primary and secondary phases of education and are particularly beneficial to pupils in Year 6 during this transitional stage. Subject coordinators organise enrichment activities such as trips to places of interest and visitors to school who make a positive additional contribution to learning. The school provides professional tuition on a range of musical instruments and many pupils take advantage of the opportunity.
25. The governors, headteacher, teachers and non-teaching staff are committed to providing equal access for all pupils to the curriculum and achieve this aim successfully. This is clearly reflected in the day-to-day work of adults and in particular through the increased numbers of teaching assistants the school has provided in recent years. There is a capable team of support staff whose hard work is appreciated by teaching colleagues and whose efforts benefit all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.

---

<sup>5</sup> 'Stepping stones' are the carefully graduated steps within the Foundation Stage curriculum, which enable teachers to track children's progress in each area of learning.

<sup>6</sup> The early learning goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

26. The previous report described the accommodation as good. In the intervening years, sections of the premises, such as the staffroom, have deteriorated and are now in urgent need of repair or replacement. The accommodation and resources are now satisfactory, overall. Some classrooms are somewhat cramped for classes of up to 35 pupils, making it difficult to carry out activities such as practical science. There are also some deficiencies in the accommodation and resources for the computer suite. The coordinator for information and communication technology has worked very hard, and with some success, to improve these facilities since her recent appointment, to the extent that far more pupils than previously can have access to computers at any one time. On the other hand, the layout of the room makes it difficult for pupils to work comfortably and for adults to support them effectively. Also, in spite of the very positive links with a local technical college, computer resources are not always reliable and as a result occasionally lessons cannot go ahead. However, the school caretaker, well supported by his cleaner colleague, manages and maintains the school very well and the school, with good parental support, has successfully developed its attractive and spacious grounds, which make a very positive contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school life.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Care, welfare, health and safety are good. Support and guidance for pupils are good. Pupils' involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff know and support the pupils well.
- Induction procedures for pupils joining the school are good.
- The school pays good attention to health and safety.
- Pupils do not always receive enough guidance on how to improve their work.

### **Commentary**

27. Members of the school community show good levels of care and concern for each other and the school has maintained the good provision for care found at the time of the last inspection. Parents value the way staff settle the new children into school routines. Teachers visit children in their pre-school groups and, through visits and part-time attendance, the children quickly become familiar with school routines. Systems to support pupils who join the school part way through their education, particularly those from service families, are effective and appreciated by both parents and pupils. The results of the pupils' questionnaire show that most pupils feel that they can turn to adults who work in school if they are worried. Teachers know the pupils well. They track the progress of pupils' personal development, celebrate their achievements and make valuable comments in the pupils' annual reports. Although teachers encourage pupils in their lessons, they do not generally give pupils enough day-to-day advice on what they need to do specifically to improve their work.
28. The support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants make sure they are familiar with the individual education plans for the pupils in their care and make good use of time and equipment in helping pupils to reach the targets that have been set for them.
29. Staff and governors endeavour to ensure that the pupils work in a healthy and secure environment. The caretaker is particularly vigilant for any potential hazards and quickly addresses any problems. Two senior members of staff co-ordinate child protection and carry out their duties effectively. The arrangements for first aid are good. Qualified first aiders treat pupils and parents are kept well informed when pupils are injured. Although the school has begun to develop a specific area for children in the Foundation Stage to access the outdoor curriculum, this is not at present suitable for all activities.
30. Teachers listen to pupils and value their comments, and pupils contribute to their annual report by writing about what they would like to do in the future. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to think about their personal academic goals and decide if they have achieved them.

The development of the school council is at an early stage and staff and pupils work together to discuss improvements to school life.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's links with parents are good. The school's links with the community are good. The school's links with other schools are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has developed very effective links with other schools.
- The parents feel welcome in school and support its work.
- The parents receive good information from the school.
- The good range of visits and visitors enriches the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

31. The school has maintained the good provision found at the time of the last inspection. Through close links with local pre-school groups, particularly the playgroup that meets in the school, staff ensure that the induction of new children is as smooth as possible. The school is an active member of a very strong academic council comprising the local primary schools, and staff benefit from meeting with colleagues to share good practice in areas such as teaching and learning. The school has taken full advantage of the expertise offered by two local secondary schools with specialist status. For example the specialist link physical education teacher provides beneficial training for staff, takes lessons, organises outdoor activity events and has improved the transfer of documentation between the schools. The older pupils and secondary school staff get to know each other well and communication between schools is very good. There is good information at the point of transfer and pupils quickly settle into their new surroundings. The academic council also organises beneficial support for pupils with special educational needs, which provides intensive help for pupils and their parents. Parents are kept fully informed about the progress of pupils with special educational needs and attendance by parents at progress review meetings is good.
32. The school works hard to reach out to parents and to welcome them into school. The headteacher is in the playground at the start of the day and this gives parents good opportunities to talk with her informally, as well as make appointments. Staff welcome parents into the classroom before lessons begin to look at their children's work and teachers are available to talk with parents at the end of the day. The school consults parents well, through questionnaires, and acts upon their suggestions; for example, changes were made to the format of the school's newsletter.
33. Parents are very supportive of the school. Nearly all parents attend the consultation evenings and school productions play to a capacity audience. The active parents' and teachers' association works hard to raise funds and organise social events. Despite her best efforts, the head teacher has not gained the confidence of all the parents over the future arrangements for mixed aged classes. A small group of parents are not happy about the school's responses to their concerns and this is reflected in the response to the pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspection team are unable to comment about the success of events in the future but found no evidence that the present arrangements for mixed-aged classes are having a negative impact on the pupils' achievements.
34. Parents receive good information about how their children are getting on. The pupils' annual reports are good and contain useful information about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. Twice-yearly consultations offer parents appropriate opportunities to discuss their children's progress with staff. Attractive newsletters give parents timely and relevant information as well as celebrating the school's successes. Parents also receive helpful information each term about the topics their children will be studying.



35. The school has established a good partnership with the community and these links enrich the curriculum. The school welcomes a variety of visitors such as a Hindu priest and a grandfather who talked about his role as World War Two dispatch rider. Pupils improve their understanding of the world of work through visits to the local quarry and local businesses provide sponsorship. The school has involved the local prison in making furniture for a memorial garden and pupils benefit from specialist coaching from local sports clubs.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is good, as is the quality of management in the school. The governance of the school is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is focused on improvement.
- Governance is unsatisfactory, because provision for the Foundation Stage fails to meet statutory requirements, however, governors are very supportive of the school and fully involved in strategic planning.
- Strategic planning is thorough but not always sufficiently specific, although performance data is closely monitored by the management team and action is taken as a result.
- Curriculum leadership is good, apart from planning for the Foundation Stage.
- Management is smooth and effective, both day-to-day and in the longer term.
- Leaders are good role models for other staff and pupils and create a purposeful ethos for learning.

### **Commentary**

36. The headteacher, governors and all staff identify strongly with the school, work hard and are committed to its success. The result is a robust shared ethos in which both parents and pupils are valued partners. There is a determination to provide good academic standards, together with a strong focus on the broader aspects of education which enrich pupils' time in school. This wider curriculum includes a range of sports, environmental awareness, learning Spanish, links with other countries and visits and visitors, as well as performances involving all the pupils in a key stage, and contributes well to both confidence and the development of fully rounded individuals.
37. The headteacher provides good leadership, which motivates both staff and pupils, creating a school where all individuals matter. The senior management team is fully involved in both raising concerns and implementing decisions, and the inclusion of a different member of the teaching staff each term ensures the involvement of all. Performance management has been implemented well, and involves all staff. There is a good link between setting targets to move the school forward and the personal development of individual staff.
38. Development planning is thorough and comprehensive, with a long-term view for the next three years, supported by detailed maintenance and development priorities, including individual action plans written by each subject and aspect co-ordinator. All staff and governors are involved in creating these plans and in determining the school's vision for the future, which is good practice. However, some of this development planning is insufficiently specific about the outcomes of actions and success is often measured in rather general terms.
39. While there is an action plan for the 'Early Years', it does not focus on the key aspects which are currently making the curriculum for the Foundation Stage unsatisfactory. The school is aware of the issues surrounding opportunities for independent learning, and has called on advice from the local education authority. However, there has been insufficient guidance to ensure that children in the Foundation Stage are consistently offered an appropriate curriculum, and both the leadership and management in this key stage are unsatisfactory.
40. The school is managed well. It runs smoothly and efficiently. Everyone has a clearly defined role and there is a strong sense of commitment, with all contributions being equally valued.

Responsibilities are delegated effectively and carried out enthusiastically, with plenty of discussion and positive debate. There is a real sense of teamwork running through the school, which contributes to pupils' positive attitudes.

41. The governing body is closely involved with the school. Through committee structures and links with individual subjects and teachers, they are developing both knowledge and understanding of what the school does and how well it does it. New governors are encouraged to take part in training opportunities offered by the local education authority. At present, much of their attention is centred on the future of the school, following local decisions on primary education in the area, and they have been active in seeking information and putting forward suggestions. However, their statutory requirement to ensure an appropriate curriculum for Foundation Stage children is not met. As this has an impact on the children's achievement, governance is unsatisfactory overall.
42. The coordinator for special educational needs provides good leadership. She has formed good relationships with teaching assistants with whom she has regular meetings and who clearly appreciate that she is readily available whenever they have questions or concerns. As a result there is a good level of support and an effective working partnership. She has established strong links with a local support group which ensures that the school benefits from up-to-date advice and opportunities for continuing professional development.
43. The 25 per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire were not very positive about the quality of leadership and management, with almost a quarter responding negatively. However, this was in contrast to the well-attended parents' meeting, where parents were very positive about the way the school was run and the approachability of the headteacher. It is evident that some parents have been unsettled by the organisation of classes for the next academic year, but decisions are thought through carefully and made with the best interests of all pupils in mind.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	581,979
Total expenditure	577,879
Expenditure per pupil	2,388

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	40,825
Balance carried forward to the next	44,925

44. Financial management procedures are clear and are used to support the school's intentions. Governors are well aware of the budget position and the needs of the pupils. Over half the balance carried forward is to support future staffing costs. Contingency funds are relatively low, enabling the budget to be spent for the benefit of pupils currently in the school. There is an appropriate focus on buildings and grounds, given the school's problems, but the governors have not let their necessary concerns in this area distract them from their primary responsibility for supporting the pupils' education through carefully targeted expenditure. The spending on teaching assistants is an example of above average expenditure having a clear benefit on pupils' education. The school gives good value for money.

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **unsatisfactory**.

45. The children enter the Foundation Stage with levels that are similar to others of their age. Currently no children are identified as having a special educational need. The reception-age children in the mixed age reception year/Year 1 class make sound progress and, by the end of the year, almost all reach the standards expected for their age, with some reaching the early levels of the National Curriculum, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Children transfer from a range of pre-school settings in the local area and arrangements for children's transfer to school are good. An on-site, full-time playgroup has recently been established and good links are being made. Parents are made welcome and meetings are arranged to ensure a smooth transfer for their children into school.
46. The Foundation Stage curriculum currently provided is unsatisfactory and lacks cohesion. The planning for the programme of work for each area of learning is the responsibility of each subject co-ordinator and is part of the whole school 'rolling programme'. While an awareness of the curriculum by subject leaders is good, the lack of cohesion is not. Arrangements for planning the programme of work are fragmented, and there has been insufficient guidance for the teacher in charge of the class.
47. The creative and imaginative aspects of the curriculum receive insufficient attention, as does the opportunity for children to be independent in their learning. The termly focus for some areas of learning is planned too formally, 'working down' from the National Curriculum, resulting in a watered down version for children of reception age. Planning for these children does not focus on their individual needs and then 'work up'. It does not pay sufficient attention to the small steps known as the 'stepping stones' leading to the Early Learning Goals in each area of learning. The organisation of the teaching sessions is too structured and limits the learning opportunities in all areas. There is no outdoor curriculum which provides an equality of opportunity both indoors and out.
48. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The children are given good encouragement and are expected to behave. Support staff play an effective role and contribute to the sound teaching. There is an emphasis on the teaching of the basic skills, but opportunities to practise these in an informal way are not provided for adequately. There are too few opportunities for children to work independently, to be involved in their own learning or to use their initiative. 'Choice activities' are frequently used as a reward for completing a written task. The 'activity wall' although encouraging independence, through providing a range of play opportunities for the children to choose from, is not structured or specifically planned to children's current needs. Consequently, if 'work' takes most of the session then there is no time left to 'play'.
49. The assessment of children is unsatisfactory. Although the required assessment procedures are used at the beginning and end of the year, the ongoing assessment of the children's progress does not ensure that all are taught according to their individual needs.
50. The leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is insufficient expertise throughout this important key stage and insufficient guidance and curriculum support has been given by key staff in order to inform and support the teaching of the reception children in the mixed age class. Neither the leadership of the Foundation Stage nor the planned curriculum is the responsibility of the class teacher.
51. In terms of improvement, it is not possible to report how quality and standards have changed since the previous inspection. A new curriculum and key stage has been implemented for these children and the curriculum is now a statutory requirement.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's social interaction and relationships are good.
- Opportunities for children to plan, make choices in their learning and think for themselves are too few.
- Children's behaviour is mostly good, but their attention drifts when sessions are too long.

### Commentary

52. By the end of the reception year the children achieve standards similar to other children of their age in their confidence and self esteem, and in their understanding of right and wrong. However, in their independence, children achieve standards that are below those expected for their age. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are many missed opportunities to develop children's independence in this area of learning. There are insufficient opportunities for children to take part in planning or to make choices in their learning. There is a good emphasis on the children learning to share and co-operate together. They stop and listen to their teacher when asked, and some help to tidy up their activities at the end of a session. Behaviour is generally good, although there are occasions when some children squabble over selecting an activity.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- More able children achieve well, and speaking and listening skills are above the standards usually seen at this age.
- Opportunities for children to practise and develop their speaking and listening and reading and writing skills independently are insufficiently provided for within the daily organisation.
- There is an over-emphasis placed on the teaching of 'basic skills' particularly in writing, and imaginative and creative aspects receive insufficient attention.
- Children enjoy stories in a large group, although time spent sitting and listening in lessons is frequently too long.
- The assessment of children is not specific enough to plan accurately for the next step.

### Commentary

53. By the end of the reception year, most children achieve and some exceed the expected levels. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The children's speaking and listening skills are above the standards usually seen at this age, and their achievement is satisfactory. However, opportunities to extend and develop these skills are constrained by organisation that is too directed by adults and overly based on the development of basic skills. Insufficient planned opportunities are provided for children to engage in role-play, for example, over an extended period of time.

54. In writing, the more able children work in the same class with pupils Year 1 in directed activities. Children use their knowledge of sounds well when writing, making good attempts at complex words. They write their own names and some begin to form simple sentences. However, the creative and fun aspects of developing writing through structured play are submerged by extensive activities that are mainly skills based and opportunities to write independently are too few. Children enjoy stories in large groups seated on the carpet, but this period of time is too long and they begin to fidget. The children sit and wait while older pupils are told what they have to do and valuable time is wasted.

55. The assessment of children's progress is unsatisfactory because it is insufficiently specific. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is a diluted version of the planning for Year 1.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The more able children achieve well.
- Daily assessment procedures do not provide sufficient specific information in order to plan for the needs of individual children.
- Too few opportunities are provided for children to solve practical problems or to be independent in their learning.
- Children mostly behave well and are enthusiastic.

### **Commentary**

56. By the end of the reception year, children achieve most of the expected goals in their mathematical development and some exceed them. The more able children work at the same level as pupils in Year 1 in the same class.
57. Whole-class activities, which include reception-age children and pupils in Year 1, involve counting in ones and twos to 20. Most children contribute, some tentatively checking their answers on a number square before answering. Teaching is satisfactory overall although, on occasions, some activities do not extend the children's learning sufficiently and are not planned using specific assessments based on the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, the children are developing a sound grasp of number concepts and more able children in particular use numbers confidently.
58. The activities planned for these children involve too few experiences in which they can develop mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. This is because of the lack of independence planned within the daily organisation. Children's learning is too focused upon the 'basic skills' with insufficient planned opportunities for children to think for themselves. There are missed opportunities to use and extend the children's understanding by encouraging them to use their knowledge in different contexts. Although some sessions are over long, most children behave well and are consistently enthusiastic and keen to learn.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Planning lacks coherence, being the responsibility of individual subject leaders.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for children to investigate and explore in their learning.
- Most children are interested and concentrate well for short periods of time.

### **Commentary**

59. The children have not achieved the goals in many aspects of this area of learning by the end of the reception year. Areas including investigation, exploration and observation are insufficiently planned for and standards are below the expected levels by the time they start Year 1.
60. Teaching is satisfactory overall, engaging the children and extending their knowledge and understanding in the lessons taught. However, the unsatisfactory curriculum provides insufficient direction in terms of what to teach and when, because it is too diverse, being the responsibility of too many people. This results in a curriculum which provides inappropriately in

terms of breadth and balance. Children mostly concentrate well, but they are expected to sit and listen for too long. A programme of work in religious education is taught satisfactorily as part of the locally agreed syllabus.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make insufficient progress in this area of learning.
- Opportunities for children to use their imagination and be creative are not sufficiently planned for throughout the curriculum.
- Too much emphasis is placed on the teaching of basic skills.
- Opportunities for children to make choices and be creative are too few.

### **Commentary**

61. The children are not on target to achieve all the expected goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. Achievement is unsatisfactory because the curriculum provided does not meet the needs of the children in the Foundation Stage.
62. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall, because it fails to meet the needs of children of this age. A rich and creative curriculum is restricted by the over emphasis placed on the teaching of skills. While this is important in terms of understanding aspects such as colour mixing, planned opportunities to experiment and be creative are insufficient. Activities such as the role play area or construction resources, for example, are used as a reward and not as part of the whole planned curriculum provision.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

63. Little teaching and learning was seen in this area of learning during the inspection and, therefore, no overall judgement in made in respect of provision. Children have access to the hall and use the outdoor area with staff. There is a small covered area where children work outdoors and use a range of resources including sand and water. Children ride bikes but opportunities to practise climbing and balancing are confined to the hall. Indoors, children use both large and small apparatus and move confidently and with safety. They handle tools and construction apparatus with good control. There is no planned outdoor curriculum. However, discussions are taking place concerning a secure, shared outdoor area to serve both the Foundation Stage and the pre-school children.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE (SPANISH)**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in Year 6 and pupils achieve well by the time they leave school.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject.
- Standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school.
- Insufficient use is made of target setting and day-to-day marking to help pupils to improve their writing.
- Literacy is promoted well through teaching in other subjects.
- The teaching of Spanish makes a positive contribution to pupils' breadth of learning.

## Commentary

64. Standards at the time of the last inspection were above average throughout the school. However, following that inspection, results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 were below the national average. Results in the national tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6 have usually been above average in recent years. The picture changed in 2003, with results falling to the national average for pupils in Year 2 in both reading and writing. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, writing was below and reading well below average. The school has swiftly taken action by placing increased emphasis on reading support and the development of writing skills. This has begun to have a positive impact. Although standards remain average overall, they are starting to rise, with more pupils than last year now on track to achieve better than average results. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily, reflecting the overall quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2.
65. The results for pupils in Year 6 in 2003, on the other hand, rose to well above the national average, both nationally and in comparison with similar schools when compare with their prior attainment. The pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to achieve above-average standards; slightly lower than last year, but this is simply because last year's group was particularly strong. The quality of teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6 and pupils of all abilities are achieving well by the time they leave the school. The good quality of support throughout the school for pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve as well as their classmates. There has been good improvement overall since the last inspection.
66. Standards in speaking and listening are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is because teachers throughout the school make good use of the introductory sessions at the beginning of lessons to ask sharply focused questions and use a range of good strategies, such as asking pupils to prepare clear answers with a talk partner or in groups. Consequently, by the end of Year 2 the capacity of most pupils to listen closely to what others are saying, and to express their own ideas clearly and confidently, meets the expectations for their age. Many more confident speakers answer fluently and at greater length when asked questions, reflecting above average standards for their age. One, for example, describing how to use an information book, explained, "If a word is in bold writing, you turn to the glossary and it tells you what it means." Only a small minority at this stage use single-word answers and need regular support.
67. By the end of Year 6, many more able pupils listen and reflect carefully when questioned because teachers regularly place them in situations where they are asked to consider and respond to issues that affect them. A good example of this was seen in a discussion about the autobiographical style of the author Jacqueline Wilson, where one pupil remarked, "It triggers off a nerve. It makes you think about your own situation." Most other pupils offer less sophisticated, but, nevertheless, confident responses at the expected standard for their age and very few need to be prompted or helped by an adult.
68. Standards in reading are similar to those found in most schools at the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. In Years 1 and 2 secure reading skills are established through structured teaching of the various letter sounds and blends, and by regular guided reading sessions. Most pupils in Year 2 read familiar stories without help and some more capable pupils achieve above average standards because they read with expression and are familiar with the name of more than one author. They also receive regular help with their reading from teaching assistants, members of their family at home, and from parents and other volunteers in school, all of which makes a positive contribution to their progress.
69. Progress is better and attitudes are often very good by the end of Year 6, because a wide range of strategies are used successfully to promote an interest in books. These range from 'book weeks', guided reading, story telling and using the strong links with partner schools to organise visits and workshops by popular authors. Consequently, the more able pupils have an almost competitive thirst for reading and name several titles they have read by a favourite author. The majority have secure library skills and talk in detail about the last piece of fiction or non-fiction they have read, which comfortably meets the expectations for their age.

70. Standards in writing are similar to those seen in most schools by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Many pupils in Year 2 place events in their correct sequence and write them as clear, recognisable sentences with capital letters and full stops. More able pupils attain standards higher than average because, for example, they regularly use speech marks with accuracy. Most pupils at this stage write at length about their own lives, or about the work they have been doing in the various subjects. On the other hand, there is inconsistency in the quality and accuracy of their more lengthy writing with little evidence of focused marking or the setting of specific targets for improvement. Only a small minority at this stage need regular help from teaching assistants or their teachers to space words correctly and build sentences in order to achieve the expected standards for their age.
71. By the end of Year 6, nearly all pupils write independently, planning their work carefully and changing their style to adapt to the intended audience. Pupils of above average ability write consistently above the expected standard for their age; this was clearly illustrated by the work of one pupil who, writing an article about a proposed special crossing for village ducks, says, "The reaction from angry local drivers is worse. They say, 'We're hungry! We'd rather have roast duck for dinner instead of being late for work!'" Work is usually presented with care and pride and the standard of handwriting is good overall.
72. The quality of teaching is good overall and, as a result, pupils generally make good progress in their understanding. There are strengths and areas for development in all areas of the school, with more good or very good teaching in the Years 4 and 5 and the Years 5 and 6 classes. A strength of teaching throughout the school is that teachers use good strategies for developing speaking and listening skills, which accounts for the high standards being achieved. A further strength, which has the potential to rapidly improve standards, is that all teachers encourage pupils to write at length in their own words or using specific vocabulary in whichever subject they are studying. This is a very encouraging practice which is creating a good platform for future improvement. Appropriate use of information and communication technology contributes to improving both vocabulary and grammatical skills.
73. The main area for development, on the other hand, lies in the strategies for improving the consistency of the overall quality of written work. Most teachers mark work regularly and sometimes add encouraging comments. However, marking does not guide individuals or groups of pupils towards clear targets or show them how they can improve. Additionally, achievement is slowed in lessons where teachers follow the practice of setting a 20- to 30-minute writing activity for four groups in the class and providing support exclusively for two of these groups, without intervening to check and improve the quality of work in the non-focus groups. In both cases, missed opportunities to assess and improve pupils' work slow the rate of achievement over time. This is particularly true for pupils in Year 1 and 2, who cannot work independently for as long as their older schoolmates and it accounts for their slower progress over time. In contrast to this, the practice of individual conferences with pupils in Year 6, to discuss their progress in relation to specific targets, is having a positive impact on standards in that year group.
74. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has succeeded in giving a high priority to promoting the development of literacy skills in colleagues' planning for all subjects and there is good potential for improvement. The main area of weakness lies in the quality and use of target-setting. Some helpful target-setting is in place for pupils in Year 6 and group targets are in place elsewhere. However, these are of a general nature and are not often referred to. There are too few sharp, individual targets, closely linked to National Curriculum levels, to provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve the quality of their work.
75. All pupils learn Spanish in Years 4, 5 and 6, adding further breadth to the curriculum and increasing pupils' awareness of other cultures. They are taught by an experienced and well-qualified teacher on the school's staff, whose expertise also benefits other local schools on one day each week.



## Language and literacy across the curriculum

76. The development of literacy skills through teaching in subjects across the curriculum is good. Teachers throughout the school make good use of role-play and discussion and create numerous opportunities for pupils to develop extended writing skills in most areas of the curriculum.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in both Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good, overall, and pupils have a good grasp of relevant skills and knowledge.
- Not enough use is made of mathematical challenges and investigations.
- Grouping by ability in the Years 5 and 6 classes benefits the learning of all the pupils involved.
- Pupils have good attitudes to mathematics, but are not sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve.

### Commentary

77. The previous inspection in 1998 found standards to be average at Year 2, but above average at Year 6, although the latter judgement was not borne out by the national tests following the inspection. Since then, the results of national tests indicate that the school has broadly maintained standards that are above the national average at the end of both key stages. However, while pupils did well overall, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 at Year 2 was below average. Similarly, the proportion attaining the higher Level 5 at Year 6 was similar to the national average, although results for the expected Level 4 were well above the national average. As a result, the school focused on extending more able pupils, and results in the 2004 national tests, as well as the quality of work in pupils' books and lessons, indicate this has been successful. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards by the end of Year 2 were below average in 2003. Judged on pupils' prior attainment, standards by the end of Year 6 were above average in 2003.
78. Teaching and learning in mathematics range from satisfactory to very good, and are good overall at both key stages. However, while all aspects of mathematics are covered, too much time is spent in some classes practising calculations at the expense of other areas, such as shape, space and measure or data handling. There is a fair amount of problem solving in the sense of working out the answer to a question set in words, but less evidence of real investigation, where pupils are challenged to find mathematical patterns or relationships. Where this did happen, with a group of higher attaining Year 5 and 6 pupils, there was a real impetus to the learning and a very high level of mathematical discussion. Nevertheless, pupils usually produce a good quantity of accurate work indicating good understanding.
79. The pupils have a positive attitude to mathematics, stemming at least partly from their confidence with numbers and calculations. Pupils in Year 2 work with a good degree of independence when constructing bar charts, showing good understanding of both methods and interpretation of the results. The more able pupils in Year 6 answer questions with interest, enthusiasm and accuracy, and use existing knowledge to explore unfamiliar ideas. The grouping of pupils by ability in the two Years 5 and 6 classes is very effective. More able pupils are working well; some at Level 6 which is appropriate to secondary school pupils. Pupils in the lower-attaining set grow in confidence, because they are successful at what they do and, as a result, are working at average levels for much of the time.
80. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well through the effective use of good teaching assistants, who also make a contribution to the learning of lower attaining pupils

working on the same task. Assistants are usually well prepared and know what is expected of the pupils. They make good use of questions to make pupils think, encouraging them to find their own solutions wherever possible.

81. There is an effective tracking system which expects teachers to assess pupils' progress on a termly basis, set numerical targets for attainment at the end of the year, and comment on those who fail to reach them. This gives the school a good view of how well pupils are doing over a period of time and helps to inform the next teacher. Day-to-day assessment is less effective. Marking in the pupils' books rarely offers comments to help their understanding, nor does it refer to how well the pupil has understood the lesson's intentions. There is some setting of targets, but these tend to be fairly general and are not used to improve the practice of individuals or groups of pupils. There is little evidence of specific targets in learning being shared with pupils so that they know what they have to do to get better, or pupils being encouraged to assess their own progress as a stimulus to learning.
82. Leadership of mathematics is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has been in post for a very short time and is still coming to grips with the subject. There is an action plan which has suitable targets, including guidance sheets for parents to increase their confidence when helping their children at home, but some targets are expressed in very general terms so that it is difficult to measure progress towards them. The co-ordinator is also aware that mathematics would benefit from a higher profile in the school, particularly in terms of interactive displays which pose challenges or puzzles for pupils to solve.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

83. There is satisfactory use of mathematical skills in other subjects, with evidence of mathematics being used in pupils' scientific calculations and the presentation of results. Co-ordinates are used in mapping in geography. However, the use of mathematical skills in realistic contexts is not part of planning in different subjects of the curriculum, and so it tends to be incidental.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good emphasis on practical skills and scientific enquiry throughout the school.
- Some lessons are taught at an inappropriate level because assessments are insufficiently specific and helpful.
- The monitoring and assessment in Key Stage 1 is not sufficiently rigorous and there are some gaps in pupils' scientific knowledge by the end of Year 2.
- There are inconsistencies in the recording and marking of pupils' work, particularly for older pupils.
- Very good links with other schools support pupils' achievement in Year 6.

### **Commentary**

84. Standards in science are similar to the national average by the end of Years 2 and 6, with a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 attaining the higher Level 5 in the national tests. With the exception of a dip in 2001, pupils' test results at the end of Year 6 have improved steadily since 2001, and were well above the national average in 2003, although average when compared to schools with similar prior attainment at Year 2. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, with a boost to progress in Years 5 and 6. In these years, both the optional tests at Year 5 and the national tests at Year 6 are closely monitored by the co-ordinator and any areas of weakness identified. More able pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6 and the good monitoring of test results successfully identifies areas of development for older pupils.

85. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The emphasis placed by most teachers on the importance of scientific enquiry through practical skills is good. Most teachers encourage their pupils well and give good attention to fair testing from Year 1. The planning, however, does not clearly define what pupils are to be taught, and at what level, to ensure progress rather than consolidation in some lessons. Day-to-day assessments are not sufficiently specific and marking in pupils' books does not inform them what they need to do to improve. The good practice of linking the lesson's intentions to the marking, in order to involve pupils in their learning is not evident in pupils' books. Recording of investigations shows insufficient use of information and communication technology, which the school has already identified in its development planning. There is satisfactory use of mathematics in pupils' calculations and recording of results.
86. A programme which ensures that all aspects of the science curriculum are covered at an appropriate level over the course of two years has recently been implemented in Key Stage 1. Previously planning for these pupils was unsatisfactory, being solely within Key Stage 1 and not linking to whole-school planning. Consequently, there are some gaps in pupils' knowledge by the end of Year 2, particularly in scientific investigation and the understanding of life processes and living things. The monitoring and assessment of science in Key Stage 1 has been insufficiently rigorous to identify these inconsistencies. Assessment and how it is used to ensure consistency and continuity at the right level, throughout the school, is in the process of being improved through an effective development plan.
87. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory, overall, now that issues around the curriculum at Key Stage 1 are being resolved, although management has been stronger in all aspects at Key Stage 2. The links with other schools are led and managed very well by the co-ordinator; they are very good, and provide very good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning at Year 6.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

It was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in this subject because insufficient direct teaching of skills was seen during the inspection. However, evidence demonstrates that standards are similar to those found in most schools by the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils are achieving satisfactorily for their age. The school has maintained the standards reported in the previous inspection, representing sound improvement.

88. The recently appointed coordinator is providing good leadership. She has worked hard and successfully to ensure that the improved computer suite is fully timetabled and used regularly. She has also provided appropriate software to enable colleagues to include the use of information and communication technology in their planning for subjects across the curriculum. Consequently, most pupils become confident in using computers to help them with their work from an early age. More able pupils in Key Stage 1 quickly recognise that computers are a much more efficient way of organising information than sorting or writing and create their own graphs electronically, which is above expectations for their age. Less confident classmates are more hesitant when using the mouse and keyboard and need help from a partner or adult, and are still working at levels below those expected for their age.
89. By Year 6, the more able pupils independently navigate their way through tasks set for them, finding their own solutions to problems and showing better ability than is normal for their age. The majority have skills that are similar to others of their age, following instructions and working successfully with a partner to complete typical tasks such as rotating shapes or using software to quickly and accurately calculate the cost of shopping for a party. Pupils' understanding of the uses of control technology, on the other hand, is not developed as well as it should be.
90. The coordinator is aware of the areas for development, has begun to introduce an assessment system to ensure complete coverage of the curriculum and has created a solid platform for further improvement. She has made considerable efforts to improve the quality of the computer suite and its resources, and has been well supported by the headteacher, governors and through strong links with a local college, which provides additional expertise and technical

support. Despite their best efforts, the layout of the suite makes it difficult for pupils to work comfortably and for teachers and adults to support pupils as they work. Additionally, adults and pupils are frustrated by the unreliability of equipment on occasions.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

91. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. The timetable for the use of the computer suite is arranged so that pupils have one lesson devoted to learning skills and another to using the technology for their work in other subjects. As a result pupils are using and developing their skills, although this organisation is too recent to have had a marked impact on overall standards.

## **HUMANITIES**

**History and geography** were not a focus for the inspection; only one lesson was seen in geography and none in history, therefore, no definitive judgements are made about provision in these subjects.

92. The **geography** lesson involved a visitor from Peru, who has visited the school before, talking to pupils in a Years 1 and 2 class, comparing Peru's physical features to those the pupils are more familiar with and answering their questions. This made a good contribution to pupils' cultural as well as geographical knowledge. From looking at displays in geography, and at pupils' work, a sound coverage of skills and knowledge are evident. In Year 2 the pupils compare St. Lucia with England, making comparisons about homes, food and school uniform. A good range of writing skills includes lists and maps with a key.
93. In Year 6, pupils' work includes an interesting report concerning environmental impact on mountains, and effective comparisons are made between Looe and Plymouth. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum, through features, such as 'fair trade' fortnight, which addressed a number of multi-cultural issues, making masks in art and design, and fruit cocktails in design and technology, studying 'carnival' in music, and 'fresco' in information and communication technology. This approach encourages pupils to relate their geographical knowledge and understanding to other aspects of the curriculum effectively. Outdoor educational visits support geography well, and the vegetable and environmental areas in the school extend pupils' learning. The co-ordinator is well informed and leads geography with enthusiasm and with good ideas for the future.
94. In pupils' work in **history** good use is made of visits within the local area. In Year 6, a visit to Morwellham Quay was used to highlight the differences between a family today and in Victorian times and a visit was made to Plymouth as part of a focus on the Second World War. Good writing opportunities are explored in imaginary text concerning 'being an evacuee' and 'a letter sent home'. Pupils use their research and observational skills well through examining rationing books, old photographs and maps. Younger pupils in Year 2 are aware of differences between holidays today and in the past. Through a picture time line they are beginning to understand the passage of time and the changes that take place in beach holidays. This is linked effectively with their geographical work about the sea coast in Peru. Standards in both subjects are in line with expectations; a similar picture to that found during the previous inspection.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6.
- Lessons are used effectively to encourage writing in various forms.
- There are good relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils generally respond enthusiastically and thoughtfully to questions.
- Leadership is good and well organised.

### Commentary

95. Standards are similar to those in other schools by the end of Years 2 and 6. No teaching was seen in Key Stage 1. Two lessons were seen in Key Stage 2, where the teaching was good. Through looking at planning, talking to teachers and pupils, and analysing pupils' work, it is evident that attainment is better in Key Stage 2. Some aspects of the pupils' knowledge in Year 2 are relatively weak.
96. Teaching in Key Stage 2 creates a good atmosphere for learning because pupils' contributions are valued. There are clear expectations of pupils' responses and relationships are good. Although lessons are somewhat dominated by the teacher, good use is made of pupils' own experiences, and questions and answer sessions extend their knowledge further.
97. There is a good range of writing in the pupils' books. Nearly all of their writing is independent, including opportunities for pupils to express their current knowledge and understanding at the beginning of each new focus, descriptions, note taking, reports and letters of thanks, as well as discussions concerning famous people and their values in Year 6. Religious education plays a significant role in the good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, because it is clearly related to their own experiences. Pupils are encouraged to express their views while being sensitive to other opinions and beliefs.
98. The relationship between staff and pupils was good in the lessons seen. Older pupils are well behaved and consider questions thoughtfully and sensitively, for example, when discussing the importance of a prayer mat to the Muslim religion. Even when question and answer sessions were long, the pupils in Year 4 were keen to answer and share the knowledge gained on their recent visit to a Christian church.
99. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge and understanding of her role and leadership and management are good overall. Although she has a part-time post, she works hard to provide a good range of information and resources to support religious education successfully.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Due to a combination of educational visits and play rehearsals, it was not possible to see many lessons in **physical education, art and design, design technology or music**, particularly in Key Stage 2, and it is, therefore, not possible to make judgements on provision in any of these subjects.

100. While three lessons were seen in **physical education** these were all in Key Stage 1, so it is not possible to make a judgement about overall provision in the subject, or comment on standards by Year 6. Pupils' standards by the end of Year 2 are similar to others of their age. Throwing and catching skills are generally good, but many pupils still have difficulty when returning a ball with a bat. Teachers use warm-ups and cool-downs effectively and pupils know why this is important. There is a good emphasis on activity, with pupils working in pairs or small groups so that they are always occupied; where this was not the case, for instance, in a lesson with both pupils in Year 1 and children in reception, good activity was followed by the teacher giving lengthy instructions, resulting in a slowing of pace and pupils becoming restless.

101. Conversely, in lessons in Years 1 and 2, there was, at times, too little focus on developing skills. Pupils practised, but did so in a competitive game which encouraged them to forget the skill they were learning in the excitement of 'winning', rather than building skills through a co-operative game. There were no targets to aim at, such as the number of successful catches or passes, so that pupils had some way of measuring their own progress. Relationships are good and pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and look forward to them, responding and behaving well. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. As a result, pupils generally make at least satisfactory progress in their learning.
102. No lessons were seen in **art and design**. However, the work seen on display in classrooms and around the school, much of which is above the standards seen in most schools, gives a clear indication that there is a broad and stimulating curriculum in place and that good teaching and learning are taking place. Pupils' sketchbooks, for instance, are used well and reflect the step-by-step development, from year to year, of skills, such as colour mixing, life drawing and shading. The other major strength apparent in the range of work seen is that pupils develop skills in the use of a wide range of two- and three-dimensional media and use these in close connection with the themes they are exploring in other areas of the curriculum. In Year 2, for example, pupils produced large scale models of aquatic predators made from woven willow and tissue paper, as part of the 'Shark Week' whole-school theme.
103. By the end of Year 6, the range of skills extends to work with clay, batik and heavily textured compositions using coloured sand. Work throughout the school is effectively based on studies of famous artists, or in the styles developed by worldwide cultures. These were strongly reflected in pieces produced by individuals or groups of pupils based on indigenous North American and Australian art, some of which was of high quality. However, while some pieces, particularly large scale group work, such as mosaics, are attractively displayed, not enough is done to celebrate individual achievement by clear labelling and mounting of pupils' work. Nevertheless, the good standards of work seen throughout the school reflect good improvement since the last inspection.
104. No lessons were seen in **design and technology**. However, the work on display in classrooms and the examples of work give a clear indication that a scheme of work is securely in place and enables pupils, throughout the school, to develop the 'design and make' skills to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The quality of the work seen was of a similar standard to that seen in most schools and discussions with pupils showed that they had been given opportunities to examine a range of products before starting their own and to change and improve their work as they went along. By the end of Year 2, for example, pupils master the techniques which enable them to make a vehicle with a chassis, stitch their own finger puppets or construct a pop-up card or water well using a simple lever mechanism. By the end of Year 6, pupils use more sophisticated tools such as saws, hand drills and glue guns to assemble their products. Teachers throughout the school successfully plan projects which combine the development of skills with topics being covered in subjects across the curriculum, so that pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, design and build models of fairground rides that were popular in Victorian times. This is a strength of planning and teaching in all year groups.
105. No lessons were seen in **music**, but there were discussions with the subject co-ordinator and pupils. Pupils at both key stages experience all aspects of the music curriculum and have plenty of opportunities to compose and play music as well as appreciate it. There is less focus on recording their compositions so that they can be played by others, and as yet information and communication technology is not used as an aid to composing and recording. Alternate weekly singing practices are held for the two key stages and, in the one seen, pupils sang both tunefully and with lots of evident enjoyment. Even though it was very close to the end of the school year, pupils in Year 6 joined in enthusiastically, and some were visibly moved when singing a song about 'farewell'. These singing sessions make a positive contribution to both spiritual and cultural development.
106. There are good opportunities for pupils to broaden their musical experience, either through the choir, percussion or recorder groups, or by learning to play one of several musical instruments: over a quarter of the pupils in Key Stage 2 take up the latter opportunity. The co-ordinator leads well through both example and enthusiasm. Management is satisfactory, as

there is as yet no assessment of pupils' progress, although this is part of her action plan for this year.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- This area of the curriculum is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and personal development.

### **Commentary**

107. Since taking up the post a year ago, the coordinator has been instrumental in establishing an established scheme of work which is in use throughout the school. The programme of study enables pupils to explore moral and social issues such as friendship, resolving conflict, bullying and drugs awareness and is well supported by regular visits from the Life Education Caravan. The school nurse also comes into school annually to provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their sexual development as they get older. Good enrichment for the scheme is supplied by the school's commitment to exploring world-wide issues such as conservation and pollution through annual multi-cultural weeks, which also contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding in subjects such as religious education and geography. Another positive addition to the curriculum has been established through the school's recent involvement in a pilot scheme for behaviour management. The teaching of citizenship is in the early stages of development. Similarly, the role of the school council is not yet sufficiently established as a means of providing pupils with genuine opportunities for taking responsibility within the school community.
108. Three lessons were observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching overall was satisfactory. The main strength of the lessons was the good relationships that were quickly established so that pupils felt confident enough to confide in each other and their teachers on a range of moral, social or personal issues. Teachers and teaching assistants handled these situations, ranging from neighbourhood vandalism to secondary smoking and cancer, with tact and sensitivity, and this meant that most pupils both contributed to, and gained from, the lesson. Teaching, while satisfactory, was less successful when the discussion became too anecdotal and strayed too far from the focus of the lesson, leading to some loss of concentration. Lessons seen in other subjects confirm that teachers throughout the school work hard to promote pupils' personal development. Good examples of this were the discussions heard on rainforests, in the Years 4 and 5 class, and on extended families in a English lesson in Years 5 and 6, where pupils were encouraged to look at different aspects of an issue, as well as defending their point of view, through offering reasons for their opinions.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*