

INSPECTION REPORT

EXBOURNE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Exbourne, Okehampton

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113410

Headteacher: Mrs Celia West

Lead inspector: Mrs Carole Skinner

Dates of inspection: 11th-12th February 2004

Inspection number: 256086

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:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	63
School address:	Exbourne Okehampton Devon
Postcode:	EX20 3SQ
Telephone number:	01837 851205
Fax number:	01837 851205
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Exbourne Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Christopher Ineson
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Exbourne CE Primary School is smaller than most other schools of the same type. There are 63 pupils on roll, which is 22 more than when the school was last inspected. There are five pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN), which is well below the national average. One pupil has a statement of SEN. The school has more girls than boys on roll and some years have a significant imbalance in the numbers of boys and girls. None of the pupils is from minority ethnic backgrounds. Four pupils speak English as an additional language but all are fairly fluent. The turnover of pupils and teachers is similar to that seen in most schools. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and attainment on entry varies greatly from year to year but is broadly average overall. The school won an Achievement Award in 2002 from the Department for Education and Skills.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23160	Carole Skinner	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology (ICT), art, design and technology (DT), music, English as an additional language.
9691	Jon Vincent	Lay inspector	
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Mathematics, religious education (RE), geography, history, the foundation stage curriculum, SEN.
27644	John Tate	Team inspector	Science, physical education (PE)

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants
Thule
60 Joy Lane
Whitstable
CT5 4LT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection 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).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Exbourne Primary School provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Overall, pupils' achievement is good and they reach above average standards by the time they leave the school. The leadership and management of the school are good and it gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT are above average in Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and meets pupils' needs well.
- The good leadership, management and governance of the school maintain a clear focus on achieving high standards.
- There is a very strong family atmosphere which helps to promote pupils' personal development.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, show great interest in their work and enjoy taking responsibility.
- The school's links with the community and with other local schools contribute very well to pupils' learning.
- The quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation is unsatisfactory in Years 2 to 6.
- Assessment procedures are effective and used well to track pupils' progress but the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent.
- There are insufficient opportunities for children in Reception to select activities and develop independence.

The school has made a good improvement since it was inspected in 1998. Standards have improved in English, mathematics, science and ICT as a result of improvements in teaching, assessment and the curriculum. The leadership of teaching and the curriculum is now good and the strategic role of the governing body has improved significantly. Curricular planning is more effective and takes good account of the different age groups within each class.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	D	B	D
mathematics	A	D	A*	A
science	A*	E	A	B

Key: A - Standards are in the top five per cent of schools in the country; 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.

These statistics should be treated with caution owing to the small number of pupils involved.

Achievement is good. In Year R, achievement is good in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and satisfactory in other areas of learning. Children are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in all areas of learning judged by the inspection, except in communication, language and literacy and mathematics where standards exceed expectations. In Year 2, achievement is satisfactory and standards are average overall in English, mathematics and science, although they are below average in writing. Standards are above average in ICT. In Year 6, achievement is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers. Standards are above average in English, overall, but average in writing. They are above average in mathematics, science and ICT. Standards in English are lower than those in mathematics and science because fewer pupils reach Level 5 (above average).

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, attendance and punctuality are good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils show very good interest in learning and are enthusiastic. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. The attendance rate is above the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is strongest for pupils in Year 1 and Years 4 to 6. Teachers' expectations of the pupils are high and, as a result, pupils work hard and have a good understanding of how to make their work better. However, expectations of handwriting and presentation are too low. Teachers make learning interesting and manage pupils' behaviour well. This ensures that pupils apply themselves to their work and make good progress. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Year R but a few lessons are over directed by adults. Assessment information is used well to plan suitable work for all pupils. The curriculum is well planned and enriched by a wide range of additional activities. The school's links with other schools and the community contribute very well to the pupils' learning. There are shortcomings in some aspects of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage which are partly caused by the school's accommodation.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. Good leadership by the headteacher has created a strong team spirit with a clear focus on raising standards. All staff make effective contributions to curricular leadership and management. The management of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Equality of opportunity and fairness are strong features. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their financial management is prudent and rigorous and they ensure that statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally positive about the school. A significant minority expressed concerns about homework, but inspection findings show that this is used appropriately to support pupils' learning.

Pupils speak highly of their school and respect their teachers. They enjoy learning and readily grasp opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting and set high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work,
- Ensure that teachers' marking is evaluative and shows pupils clearly how to improve their work.
- Provide more opportunities for Reception children to select activities and carry them out independently.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, achievement is good. Achievement is satisfactory in Year R and Year 2; it is good in Year 1 and in Years 3 to 6. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development in Reception.
- High standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT in Year 6 reflect the high expectations that underpin good teaching.
- All groups of pupils achieve equally well by Year 6.
- Throughout the school pupils achieve well in reading.
- Standards in writing are below average in Year 2.
- Handwriting and presentation are good in Year 1 but weak in Years 2 to 6.

Commentary

1. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. This reflects the satisfactory nature of the quality of teaching and learning the children receive. Children's attainment when they start school spans the full range and is average overall. By the end of the Reception year, the children attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, creative development, and physical development. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world. In communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, attainment is above the expected level. The children achieve well in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical development because the quality of teaching is strongest in these areas of learning. Their achievement in other areas of learning is satisfactory. Physical development is constrained to a certain extent by the limitations of the outdoor accommodation and resources.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (17.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.0 (15.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.3 (17.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the end of Year 2 national tests in 2003, standards were in line with the national average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. They were well below the average for similar schools in all three subjects. The 2003 results were significantly lower than those achieved over the previous four years. Small year groups mean that there can be considerable variation in national test results from year to year depending on the range of ability within each year group. An analysis of the work of these pupils, who are now in Year 3, shows that they have made up ground since the previous year and are now achieving average standards in writing, which represents good progress.

3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 2 are average in English, mathematics and science, although they are below average in writing. Standards are above average

in ICT, and average in RE, history and PE which were the only subjects where sufficient evidence was gathered to make valid judgements. Where the evidence allows comparisons to be made, these standards are the same as they were when the school was last inspected, except in writing, where they are lower. This is because no pupils are achieving above average standards. The judgements of the inspection are similar to the school's results in the 2003 national tests. For both of these year groups, pupils' records show that they have made satisfactory progress given their attainment on entry to the school.

4. The effect of small year groups and the often significant variations in attainment between them is further reflected in the high standards being achieved by the pupils now in Year 1. These pupils are achieving above average standards in English, including writing, mathematics and science. This reflects both the composition of the year group and the high expectations of the teacher, who is challenging them to achieve their potential.

5. Only five pupils took the Year 6 national tests in 2003, and, for this reason, the table of pupils' average point scores is not published. Standards were in the top five per cent of schools in the country in mathematics, well above the national average in science and above average in English. Compared with those schools whose pupils achieved similarly in Year 2, standards were below average in English, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. Standards were lower in English because fewer pupils reached above average standards (Level 5) in writing. Standards fluctuate significantly from year to year because of the small numbers of pupils involved, but the overall upward trend over five years is greater than that seen in most schools.

6. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics, science and ICT as pupils achieve well due to the high quality of their teaching and learning. This represents an improvement in standards in all four subjects since 1998, as a result of improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Standards are average in RE, history and PE, and achievement is satisfactory. This is a similar picture to that found by the previous inspection.

7. Pupils achieve well in reading because it is taught well from the start and pupils are given many opportunities to use and extend their reading skills, both in literacy lessons and across the curriculum. Although standards in writing are lower than those in reading in Years 2 and 6, in line with the national picture, the school is implementing strategies to address this. These are not currently fully effective in Year 2, where assessments of pupils' capabilities in writing are not sufficiently rigorous to enable the teacher to focus clearly on helping pupils to reach the next level of attainment. This is more effective in Year 6, partly because the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment in writing are more thorough and partly because the teacher has taught the pupils for three years and knows their capabilities very well. There is insufficient emphasis on teaching good handwriting and presentation skills in Years 2 to 6. The use of literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum is good, and the use of numeracy skills is satisfactory. ICT is used well to support the pupils' learning across the curriculum.

8. All pupils in this school achieve well by the time they leave Year 6. Discussions with pupils showed that they felt they were required to work hard at all times and were doing as well as they could. Parents had similar views about their children's progress. Good provision for pupils with SEN ensures that they are given focused and carefully planned work to help overcome their difficulties. Pupils who have SEN make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans, because these are specific to their needs and achievable. The care and support offered by the adults who work with them further this good progress and raise pupils' self esteem.

9. The school's results in the national tests over a three year period indicate that girls do better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. However, the findings of the inspection are that boys and girls achieve equally well in all year groups. The school has become more aware of the need to focus on boys' achievement and has ensured that they are given work that matches their interests and aptitudes. The school caters well for more able pupils by providing suitably challenging work for them. It also identifies gifted and talented pupils and ensures that their needs are met. It has, for example, provided opportunities for gifted mathematicians to work with

pupils from other small schools. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also well supported, both by external specialists and class teachers.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils’ attitudes, behaviour, attendance and punctuality are good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good and cultural development is satisfactory.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils demonstrate high levels of interest in school life and in the range of activities provided.
- Pupils’ willingness to be enterprising and take responsibility is very good.
- Their confidence and self esteem are good.
- The school promotes good relationships between pupils and adults through its ‘family’ atmosphere.
- Attendance is above the national average.
-

Commentary

10. Attendance is good and above the national average, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The school ensures that parents and carers appreciate the importance of the prompt and regular attendance of their children at school. These efforts are very effective and as a result there is no unauthorised absence. An attendance check taken during the inspection confirmed these good levels of attendance. During interviews and discussions with pupils it was very evident that they enjoyed school and their lessons. There have been no exclusions during the past school year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

11. The majority of pupils show very good interest in their lessons and strive hard to achieve or exceed the expectations of their teachers. The family atmosphere promoted by the whole school staff has a positive effect on pupils’ learning. Pupils understand the school rules and do their best to keep them and as a result standards of behaviour have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Adults lead by example and older pupils set good examples for younger ones. The culture promoted by the school is one of a large and happy family where everyone is valued and respected. Both parents and pupils confirm how much they enjoy and benefit from this caring environment.

12. Pupils have many opportunities for taking on additional responsibility and they respond very well to them. With the opening of the new school library, pupils wrote formal letters applying for the position of librarian. The school council has a boy and girl representative from each year group who meet regularly to discuss and debate the various suggestions they receive. The provision of the ‘friendship stop’ and ‘buddy bench’ in the playground was the result of one of their initiatives. Although still in its infancy, the council has greatly assisted the personal development of all the pupils involved. School and classroom duties are arranged on a rota basis so that every pupil has the opportunity to enjoy responsibility for the many routine duties that occur in school.

13. Older pupils are quick to help their younger schoolmates should the need arise. Boy and girl pupils of differing ages interviewed during the inspection displayed mature, confident and responsible attitudes. The school encourages the personal and social development of pupils well.

14. The cultural development of pupils has been maintained at a level similar to the last inspection and remains satisfactory. Visitors to the school promote interest in drama, music and environmental issues. Many opportunities are taken to develop the spiritual awareness of pupils, ensuring they have a good level of understanding. A history project based on life in Victorian times enabled pupils to understand the impact of death caused by intolerable working practices. Year 5 and 6 pupils interviewed during the inspection spoke enthusiastically about a production of *Macbeth* by 'Shakespeare 4 Kidz' they had seen. Opportunities are created for reflection in school assemblies which are often led by visiting religious ministers. The school takes care to ensure that the cultural diversity of British society is represented through books, artefacts and aspects of the curriculum.

15. Pupils understand the differences between right and wrong and demonstrate this by their attitudes and actions in school. They have a good level of respect for the feelings and values of others and this is continually fostered by the family atmosphere of the school. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said there was no bullying in school and none was seen during the inspection. However, there was some discussion about what constituted bullying and pupils agreed that sometimes boisterous playground behaviour could be misconstrued. Older pupils were quick to point out that if they saw this type of behaviour they would act promptly should it be necessary. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. Assessment procedures are thorough and are used well to provide work that meets pupils' needs. Curricular provision is good, overall, but there are some shortcomings in aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The school's ethos is very good. It provides good support and guidance for pupils and works well in partnership with parents. Links with the community and with other local schools are very effective in helping to raise standards.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Reception and in Years 2 and 3, with some good features. They are good in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6. Assessment is good throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of the range of pupils in the class.
- They make lessons interesting, which engages pupils well in their learning.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils, except in handwriting and presentation in Years 2 to 6.
- Pupils apply themselves to learning with enthusiasm and enjoyment.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in quality.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but occasionally it is over-directed.
- Assessment procedures are mostly effective and used well to set targets for individual pupils and track their progress.
- Assessment in writing in Years 1 and 2 lacks precision.

Commentary

16. The table below shows the judgements made of a sample of lessons during the inspection. In addition, inspectors examined teachers' planning and pupils' work and held discussions with pupils and teachers. Taking all of this evidence into account, as well as the standards pupils

achieve, the inspection findings show that the quality of teaching and learning is good and helps pupils to achieve well, particularly in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The satisfactory teaching was seen mostly in other subjects and in the Foundation Stage.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	4	10	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons

17. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. Throughout the school, lessons are planned effectively to take account of the wide range of ages and abilities within each class. In question and answer sessions, teachers aim specific questions at individual pupils, which shows their very good knowledge of different pupils' capabilities and previous attainment. Effective planning is founded on a good understanding of each subject's requirements and on well thought out whole school schemes of work that ensure progression in the teaching of knowledge and skills.

18. Teachers employ a wide range of strategies and methods to make lessons interesting for pupils and engage them in learning. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their lessons, showing high levels of interest in all that they do. One Year 6 pupil summed up the views of many: "The work we do is challenging but we also do fun things". There is a strong emphasis on learning through investigation across the curriculum, which involves pupils productively and helps them to think independently. Consequently, pupils apply themselves to their work with enthusiasm and derive great enjoyment from learning.

19. The pupils' results in national tests over recent years and the standards they reach in their daily work reflect the teachers' high expectations of their achievement. Pupils say that teachers expect them to do their best and that they enjoy trying to do even better and aiming for higher goals. More able pupils are given suitably challenging work that enables them to reach above average standards. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and given encouragement that helps them to overcome difficulties. However, most teachers' expectations of the standards of handwriting and presentation in pupils' work are not high enough. The exception to this is in the Year R/1 class, where the teacher sets very high standards. These are not maintained as pupils move through the school and too little attention is given to teaching handwriting and presentation skills from Year 2 onwards.

20. There is a strong emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy skills effectively and providing opportunities for pupils to use them in other subjects, especially reading and writing skills. The school has focused effectively on improving standards in writing in recent years and has implemented a number of strategies to address weaknesses. These have included very constructive partnerships with other local schools to share expertise and resources.

21. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking. Some is helpful and constructive and shows pupils the next step they need to take in order to improve their work. Some, on the other hand, gives too much praise for work that could be better and does not show pupils how it could be improved.

22. The quality of teaching and learning in Reception is satisfactory overall. However, occasionally, there is too much direction by the teacher or assistant and there are insufficient opportunities for children to develop fully their independence in selecting and pursuing an activity for themselves. Although the school has greatly improved the accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage, the outdoor provision does place some restrictions on aspects of the children's social and physical development. There is no designated outdoor play area and the slope of the adjacent school playground restricts the riding of large wheeled toys. Consequently, it is difficult to

provide a broad range of situations in which the children can use and extend their learning outside. Children do however, have access to the large climbing equipment in the playground, during break times. Physical education lessons are provided for the children in the school hall.

23. At the time of the last inspection, there were weaknesses in the school's assessment procedures and in the use of assessment information to inform planning and teaching. The school has made very good progress in addressing these issues. Assessment procedures are now thorough and constructive and help teachers to set meaningful targets for pupils and plan work for them which will help them to move on to the next level of attainment. A good initiative is the twice termly assessment of pupils' unaided writing, which clearly shows their progress through the levels of the National Curriculum. This is more effective in Years 4, 5 and 6 because it is measured against agreed criteria and used to set specific targets for the next half term for each pupil. In Years 1 and 2, the process is still developing and does not give a clear enough idea of what level each pupil has reached or what they need to do in order to reach the next one. Assessment procedures in other subjects are also good and clearly linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment.

24. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEN is good. They are given work that is appropriate for their needs and the support they receive from teachers and assistants is effective. In addition, a part-time special needs teacher teaches individuals and small groups of pupils for short sessions. Teachers and learning support assistants work together in effective teams to support and assess learning. Learning support assistants have a clear idea of their role and of what pupils are expected to learn in each lesson. They contribute much to the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum is good. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The school supports the pupils' learning outside of the school day and develops the range of their interests well. The accommodation and resources support the implementation of the curriculum satisfactorily. The outdoor accommodation and resources for the Reception children are unsatisfactory because of the limitations of the site.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is planned well to ensure progression in learning for pupils in mixed age classes.
- All pupils are valued and respected equally and receive good equality of opportunity.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs supports good achievement.
- The pupils' learning is enriched successfully through the range of extracurricular activities, visitors and educational visits provided by the school.
- There are shortcomings in the outdoor accommodation and associated resources for the Reception children, which constrain some aspects of their physical development.

Commentary

25. The school has worked hard to evaluate and change its curricular planning and delivery to meet the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes. This was a key issue in the school's last inspection. Termly plans are carefully devised to ensure that all the National Curriculum requirements are met and also to ensure that pupils in the mixed age classes do not miss out on any parts of learning. For example, the curriculum has been re-organised to support teachers in their planning and delivery to accommodate the recent expansion from two to three classes in the school.

26. The school is a caring, supportive community, which appreciates the full range of pupils' achievements highly and treats them as individuals. All of the pupils are well known to the teachers and their academic and personal needs are well catered for. As a result, pupils achieve well in all aspects of their development and take a full part in all aspects of the school's work. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. They are given work that is pitched at appropriate levels for their

development and they receive good support from teachers and assistants. The school has worked hard to address the issue of girls outperforming boys in the national tests, particularly in reading. Pupils are fully and successfully included in all aspects of school life.

27. Although the curriculum for children in Reception is varied and interesting, at times it is too closely related to the programme for Year 1 pupils. In particular, there are limited opportunities for children to develop fully their independence in selecting and pursuing an activity for themselves. The school has greatly improved the indoor accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage and they are now based in the recently refurbished school house. However, due to the limitations of the site, there is no designated outdoor play area or a suitable range of large wheeled toys for children to use, which places restrictions on the provision for physical activities.

28. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities, both during the school day and in after school clubs. There are many opportunities for pupils to visit places of interest that enhance their learning, including a synagogue in Exeter, a museum in Plymouth, Cotehele House and Coldharbour Mill. Visitors have recently included a professional storyteller, a Dartmoor Ranger, representatives from Devon museums and a drama workshop led by 'Shakespeare 4 Kidz', followed by a visit to a performance of Macbeth. Older pupils also benefit from a residential visit to the Isle of Wight. Regular visits from the Community Officer, who talks to pupils about looking after themselves and a visit by older pupils to Okehampton army camp, where they participate in 'Junior Life Skills', provides very good support for pupils' personal, social and health education.

29. The school has a good range of extracurricular activities for its size, including a study club, ICT, country dancing and sports. Pupils have participated in football tournaments, athletics competitions and swimming galas, and the school sent a team to the High 5 netball tournament in Okehampton, as well as the small schools' cross country event at Boasley Cross. This judgement supports the parents' view that the school provides a good range of activities. Conversations with pupils showed that they valued and enjoyed these activities.

30. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. The recent expansion of the premises and improved facilities with extended building and new spaces created, such as a library and staffroom, have made a vast improvement to the school. However, the difficulties identified in the last report, such as the small school hall, the sloped playground and the use of a playing field, which pupils have to cross a main road to reach, make it difficult for the teaching of physical education. Access to the upstairs classrooms remains a problem for pupils with physical disabilities, although there are none in the school at present. The school has a satisfactory number of teachers and teaching assistants with an appropriate range of experience between them to teach and support pupils' learning adequately. As a result, all pupils receive good equality of opportunity, including the more able pupils. The analysis of their work showed that these pupils are receiving work, which is sufficiently demanding for their needs. The school has a satisfactory number of well-chosen resources to support pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring of pupils' achievement is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good.
- Relationships with adults in school are good.
- Induction arrangements are good.
- Careful monitoring of pupils' progress enables teachers to provide well targeted advice and guidance.

Commentary

31. The school now has good health and safety procedures in place with both formal and informal risk assessments carried out regularly. At the time of the last inspection the health and safety policy was not fully in place. All staff have appropriate first aid qualifications. Child protection procedures are good and known to all staff. The very good family ethos that permeates the school has been maintained since the last inspection and ensures pupils' well being. This, coupled with the fact that the staff know their pupils very well, ensures a caring environment which encourages learning. In addition, most pupils know and care for one another; regardless of age or gender.

32. All adults who work in the school form close and trusting relationships with the pupils. They know them well and provide good role models for behaviour. Discussions with pupils show that they feel very safe and secure and would be happy to turn to any adult in school should they need help, comfort or advice. The views of pupils about different aspects of school life are welcomed and valued both on an informal basis and through the school council.

33. The school's systems to monitor and track pupils' standards and progress are good. These systems are consolidated by twice yearly parent interviews with very informative detailed written notes on each pupil. These show academic and personal development targets and guidance for parental help. Overall support and guidance on personal and social matters is good.

34. Induction arrangements for children starting school are good. The playgroup next door to the school visits regularly and home visits to prospective pupils are arranged. The school makes every effort to ensure that children starting school feel confident and comfortable in their new surroundings. Parents appreciate these good arrangements.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very good information for parents about their children's standards and progress.
- Parental involvement with learning at school and at home is good.
- There is a very active Friends Association.
- Procedures for dealing with complaints and concerns are good.
- Very good links with the community and other schools have a positive effect on achievement.
- The school's 'open door' policy makes for constructive relationships with parents.

Commentary

35. Parents and carers have very positive views of the school and the school works well with parents, encouraging them to support the school through the Friends' Association and to help their children with their learning. Parental help for pupils' learning is good in school, where they provide practical support in lessons. They also help supervise pupils on school trips. Parents also contribute well to their children's learning at home. The Friends' Association is very active and organises many fund raising events. The association works closely with the school to realise a variety of pre-agreed projects.

36. The school provides a very good range of information for parents in various ways. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with events and they are given an outline of the curriculum that their children will follow at the beginning of the school year. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when some parents felt they received insufficient curricular information. Parents can take advantage of two interview opportunities a year with class teachers when their children's targets

and progress are discussed. In addition, provision is made for parents to talk about their children's annual reports should they wish. Procedures for dealing with complaints and ensuring satisfaction are good. Communication with parents is constant, and enables them to give the correct help to their children with learning at home. The standard of information to parents has improved significantly since the last inspection

37. The school operates a genuine open door policy and as a result parents have no qualms about approaching any member of the school staff. Teachers make themselves available at the end of the school day and parents take advantage of this to meet staff informally.

38. There are very good links with a local pre-school group and parents say their children settle in school well. There is similarly good liaison with the secondary school the school feeds and the school makes every effort to ensure a smooth transition to secondary education. Links with other schools and colleges are very good. The very close liaison with neighbouring primary schools is exemplified by the shared social, creative and joint training activities they undertake. Year 10 pupils from the secondary school enjoy work experience in school and local college students and Danish student teachers visit for teaching practice. The school is very actively involved with the local schools Academic Council.

39. The school has very good links with the local community. The efforts of the governing body together with members of the wider community resulted in the successful acquisition of an adjoining property adding valuable teaching accommodation and play space. Pupils enjoy outside visits in conjunction with their project work which enhances their learning. The school has a close connection with the local church and members of the local community are invited to school events. Pupils also make visits outside their local environment. Together with a neighbouring school they spent a week at a residential centre on the Isle of Wight. A joint residential visit, to different venues is planned annually. All these links have a positive effect on the quality of education the pupils receive

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory; other leadership roles are fulfilled well. The school's governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership by the headteacher ensures a clear focus on achieving high standards.
- There is a very strong team spirit in the school.
- Governors play an important role in shaping the direction of the school.
- There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Self-evaluation procedures are effective in bringing about improvement.
- Financial management is rigorous and firmly linked to strategic planning.
- The management of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

Commentary

40. The headteacher's leadership has grown in effectiveness since the last inspection, when she was fairly new to the school. She has identified clear priorities for development and created a strong team spirit amongst staff, who share her aspirations for the school. All know the pupils very well and are committed to meeting their individual needs and to ensuring equality of opportunity. The head leads by example in the classroom and provides a good role model for teachers and teaching assistants. She ensures that teachers have the opportunity to observe each other and share expertise, and has capitalised on links with other small schools to support development in many areas. Priorities for the development of the school are communicated clearly in the school

improvement plan. As the school is small, all members of the teaching staff have significant leadership responsibilities which are carried out effectively in most cases. The only drawback is that, as all have significant teaching commitments, each teacher has a much greater insight into provision for their own age group than for the rest of the school. The pupils respect the headteacher, who has also gained the admiration of parents for the way she has led the school over the past few years.

41. There has been a good improvement in the role of the governing body since the last inspection. Governors form an important part of the school team and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Relationships between governors and staff are good, and governors provide effective support for the school as well as asking challenging questions when the need arises. They contribute well to producing and reviewing the school improvement plan, and have been instrumental in bringing about the very good improvements to the premises since the last inspection. The purchase of the school house has enabled the school to expand into three classes, which has, in turn, had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning, staff morale and standards. Governors are effective critical friends who have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

42. The good management of the school is reflected in rigorous and realistic self evaluation. The detailed analysis of assessment information provides teachers and governors with a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving. All teachers have the opportunity to observe each other, and also to work with teachers from other small schools to compare standards and share expertise. Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Performance management fully reflects the school's strong commitment to staff development. For example, all staff have received training in the teaching and assessment of writing in order to address a perceived relative weakness in this area. The school makes a good contribution to the initial training of teachers. It regularly has students on teaching practice and provides a good experience for them. The school's finances are managed very carefully and effectively. The school improvement plan takes a long term view of development in the context of the projected roll and income, and governors are constantly alert to the challenges that face very small schools and have contingency plans in place. The higher than average surplus in the school budget is planned to support the continuation of three classes in the current school year.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	211,913	Balance from previous year	9981
Total expenditure	195,251	Balance carried forward to the next	16,662
Expenditure per pupil	3425		

43. The management of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The teacher responsible is employed part-time in the class, where the Reception children are based with Year 1 pupils. Consequently she has a clear overview of the provision. She also has several key responsibilities that she carries out diligently. There is a strong sense of teamwork in the class, with the teacher and teaching assistant working together effectively to meet the needs of the children's welfare. The overall provision is not quite as good as it was at the time of the last inspection because the children have too few opportunities to engage in activities that support their independent learning skills.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Reception children achieve well in the areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
- Children do not have enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Relationships between adults and children are good.
- Induction procedures for children starting school are good.
- There are weaknesses in the outdoor accommodation for the Reception children, which constrain some aspects of their learning.
- Resources for promoting the children's physical development are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

44. Children are admitted to school full-time in the September and January of the year in which they become five. The Reception children are taught in a class with Year 1 pupils. There are currently nine children in the Reception year. The school works closely with parents and the local playgroup to ensure that the Reception children have a smooth start to their education. In Year R, achievement is good in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and satisfactory in other areas of learning. Children are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in personal, social and emotional development, creative development, and physical development. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgment about achievement in knowledge and understanding of the world. In communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, attainment is above the expected level. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The overall provision is not quite as good as it was at the time of the last inspection because the children have too few opportunities to engage in activities that support their independent learning skills.

45. In the area of **personal, social and emotional development**, the children achieve satisfactorily and teaching is satisfactory. The children show good levels of confidence when they tackle new learning and when sharing their successes with the rest of the class. They make effective relationships with adults and most have formed good relationships with other children. Most children work well together as a group, and have a good understanding of the need to listen to the contributions of others, to take turns, and to share resources. However, there are a few children who find it difficult to adapt their behaviour to different situations. Although the teaching of relationships is of good quality, the provision for children to make choices about what they can do and the opportunity to initiate their own ideas is insufficient in terms of both scope and frequency. As a result, their independent learning skills and their ability to make decisions about their work are limited. Overall, the children are happy and enjoy participating in the range of experiences that are provided.

46. The children achieve well in **communication, language and literacy**, and the teaching is good. There is a good combination of activities that are led and directed by an adult, such as the daily word-building sessions and writing activities. Speaking and listening skills are well developed, and staff are effective in the way in which they pick up incidental opportunities for extending the children's vocabulary. By the end of the Reception year, the children have a good appreciation of books, and understand that writing conveys meaning. They join in well with well-known stories, such as 'The Enormous Turnip', and, during the inspection, showed developing levels of confidence as they re-enacted the story under the guidance of the teaching assistant. However, at times these activities are over-directed and as a result the children do not have the opportunity to use their own

imagination. Reception children have their own reading books, which they take home regularly. Frequent opportunities for them to practise in class, and good support from home, ensure that the children achieve well in this aspect of their learning. The promotion of early writing skills is good, and children are encouraged well to write for a variety of purposes.

47. In terms of their **mathematical development**, the children achieve well and the quality of teaching and learning is good. By the end of the Reception year, most children have a good understanding and knowledge of number and are able to count and recognise numbers up to ten with good levels of confidence and accuracy. Their use and understanding of language such as 'more than' and 'less than' are well developed and many children are able to carry out simple calculations by adding on and taking away one from a given number up to ten. The children's previous work shows that they have been provided with a suitable range of activities, which help them to understand the language of comparison, such as longer than, shorter than, heavier and lighter. Good ongoing development of the children's vocabulary is helping them to explain their mathematical ideas accurately and clearly.

48. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of standards in the wide area of learning that relates to children's **knowledge and understanding of the world**, but the evidence of pupils' work indicates that their learning is secure. Children are given a suitable range of first-hand experiences. For example, during the inspection, a visit by a zookeeper with live examples of animal groups provided children with the opportunity to observe and learn more about the animals. In science, however, some of the work seen was more relevant for pupils in Year 1, as when children constructed and drew electrical circuits, and, in general, the provision does not cover all aspects as recommended for the Foundation Stage, notably the opportunity for children to explore and learn by doing on a day-to-day basis. The children are developing a satisfactory awareness of the past, through the opportunity to look at toys that their parents and grandparents had played with. During the inspection, the class teacher used the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' to introduce children to the language of time, such as before, after, yesterday and to-morrow. This also supported the children's awareness of the life cycle of a butterfly. Good use is made of walks around the village to introduce children to the different features and to carry out traffic and parking surveys. Children's awareness of religious and cultural traditions is suitably enhanced through stories and play activities. A strong sense of their own religious customs is well promoted. The children's ICT skills are suitably developed and previous work shows they have created some colourful paintings using a computer program. The children are enthusiastic learners who show good levels of interest in all activities.

49. In terms of their **physical development** it was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision, teaching or learning. However, the children's attainment and achievement are hampered by the lack of a suitable outdoor play area and limited outdoor play equipment, such as wheeled toys. Although the teaching of physical education occurs in the school hall, this was not observed during the inspection. Fine motor skills are often taught well, and the children quickly learn how to use scissors and cutting tools. They show good control of brushes and pencils, and most manipulate small objects, such as building bricks well.

50. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of the quality of teaching in the **creative** area of learning. On the evidence of work on display, the children are provided with an appropriate range of art and craft activities and they achieve satisfactorily. They explore a suitable range of materials, paint pictures of characters in well-known stories and learn how to use charcoal and chalks to draw natural objects. Although the children have regular access to painting activities, these activities are not always freely available throughout the day. In terms of their creative role-play, the activities on offer do allow children to use their imagination at set times during the day, but this aspect is not fully exploited and little attention is given to interacting with the children while they are engaged in role-play. Children do have the opportunity to re-enact well-known stories, led by an adult, but in general this is quite directed, rather than encouraging the children to incorporate their own ideas.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Good teaching in Year 1 builds effectively on the good foundations laid in Reception.
- Good teaching of speaking, listening and reading skills throughout the school enables pupils to achieve well.
- Improvements in the teaching of writing are helping to raise standards.
- Insufficient attention is given to handwriting and presentation in Years 2 to 6.
- Very effective links with other schools are having a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The subject is well resourced and enhanced by a very good range of visits and visitors.

Commentary

51. A clear focus on raising standards in English has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average in Year 2 and Year 6. Until 2003, standards in the Year 2 national tests had been consistently above average in both reading and writing. The dip that occurred in 2003, when standards were average in reading and below average in writing, reflects the capabilities of the year group rather than any changes in the quality of teaching. Standards in the Year 6 national tests have fluctuated from year to year but the overall upward trend since the last inspection has been greater than that seen nationally. The good improvement has come about because of clear, well focused leadership that has identified appropriate priorities for development and taken decisive action to implement a range of strategies. Standards in Year 6 are above average in speaking, listening and reading and average in writing.

52. The work in pupils' books and displays in the classroom show that the teaching of literacy skills is a high priority in Year 1. Pupils in the current Year 1 achieved good standards by the end of Reception and are building successfully on these as they learn to read more challenging texts and write longer and more complex sentences and stories. They are achieving above average standards in English and use written and spoken language well to express their ideas. This was illustrated in a history lesson where pupils recounted aspects of the life of Florence Nightingale, speaking confidently and expressing their ideas in a mature and competent manner. Standards in Year 2, where pupils are making sound progress, are average in reading but below average in writing. This is because few pupils are on course to reach above average standards. Overall, achievement in Year 2 is satisfactory.

53. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Throughout the school pupils are given good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills through discussion, answering questions and making presentations. Reading skills are developed well through reading aloud, both in a group and individually, as well as in whole class shared reading sessions. Challenging discussions of texts help older pupils to gain a deeper understanding of the techniques used by an author to create effects. They also help pupils to 'get inside' a character and explore deeper meanings. This was illustrated very well in a lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils, which followed a visit to see a performance of Macbeth by Shakespeare 4 Kidz. Pupils considered the moral dilemma faced by Macbeth and presented arguments for and against murdering Duncan, as if through Macbeth's eyes. Girls and boys alike were fully engrossed in the discussion and responded well to the challenge, showing a good understanding of the play and the characters.

54. The school has focused on improving standards in writing for the past few years, and, generally, is now beginning to see the fruits of its efforts, although this is more evident in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 than in Year 2. A significant factor here is that assessment criteria are used more rigorously in Years 4, 5 and 6 to identify specific levels of attainment and to show pupils exactly what they need to do to reach the next level. Discussions with these pupils show that they know what they have to

do to improve and relish the challenge. When pupils move into Year 2, it is not clear enough what level they have reached or what the teacher needs to do to move them on to the next.

55. Pupils in Year 1 achieve good standards in handwriting and presentation, but these are not sustained throughout the school. In most cases, pupils' written work lacks care and few have developed a neat and consistent style of handwriting. There is insufficient emphasis on these aspects and no consistent approach to improving them, although teachers are aware that improvement is needed.

56. Other factors which have contributed significantly to raising standards in English are the development of effective links with other local schools, the good range of resources for the subject, and the interesting and stimulating activities that are arranged to enrich pupils' learning. A good example was a recent joint initiative to improve the quality of narrative writing. The pupils learned a great deal from a professional storyteller before embarking on writing their own lengthy stories, some of which were of a very high standard. They took part in a 'Story Celebration', in which they shared their work with pupils from other small schools. Pupils talked with enthusiasm and pride about this work, some of which is displayed in the library, and clearly enjoyed the whole experience.

57. The current term's focus on drama for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 included a visit to the theatre to see a performance of Macbeth, which most found interesting and enjoyable. This was reflected in the quality of discussion about the play and the pupils' willingness to suggest ideas and express opinions. Pupils also benefit from watching visiting theatre groups and from participating in school performances at different times of the year. Learning is made more enjoyable for pupils because teachers are able to use a wide range of interesting resources to stimulate their interest and imagination. A significant improvement since the last inspection has been the newly located and extended library, which now provides a good range of fiction and non-fiction books to supplement those in classrooms. Good quality reading books capture pupils' interest, and discussions with some boys during a reading lesson showed that they enjoyed the books that were on offer and were reading them avidly. Careful choices of literature and a well balanced curriculum ensure that girls and boys are catered for equally well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Language and literacy skills are used and developed well in other subjects. Pupils communicate their knowledge and express ideas and opinions in RE. They develop their research skills in history and geography, using both books and ICT. Writing skills are also developed well in history. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote a story set in the Second World War and Year 6 pupils composed a letter from a soldier in the Crimean War. These activities develop pupils' historical understanding and their literacy skills in a meaningful way.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are above average.
- By Year 6, pupils' achievement is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Investigative mathematics is well promoted.
- Pupils have good attitudes to mathematics.
- The pupils' mathematical vocabulary is well developed.
- The use of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory but not fully developed.

Commentary

59. In Year 6, standards are above average, which represents good achievement. It also reflects the generally high standards in the national tests. These standards were evident in lessons, the pupils' work and in conversation with the pupils. Pupils in Year 6 are strong in all areas of mathematics. During the inspection, some particularly demanding work in numbers, shapes and angles was observed. Since the school's last inspection, standards have risen from average, which represents a good improvement in the subject since that time.

60. In Year 2, standards are average which is sound achievement for this group of pupils from the start given in the Foundation Stage and Year 1. This judgment is the same as that of the school's 1998 inspection and is similar to the standards reached in the national tests in 2003. Standards are above average in problem solving in Year 2. Discussions with pupils shows that they really enjoy solving problems in mathematics and find it great fun.

61. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The basic skills of number and numeracy are soundly taught in mathematics lessons, especially for younger pupils. Teachers expect the pupils to reach their potential and give them every help and encouragement to do so.

62. The strengths of the teaching and learning were evident in the lessons observed. In the Year 4/5/6 lesson, the speedy mental session showed the teacher's keen awareness of the needs of individual pupils. Demanding questions suitable to the range of abilities in the class were fired in rapid succession. The pupils responded eagerly and accurately. In the main part of the lesson, pupils were challenged to explain and develop their reasoning when calculating the third angle of a triangle, after being given the other two. They did this with evident enjoyment.

63. In the Year 2/3 lesson, a strong feature was the way work was tailored to the range of ages and abilities in the class. Well prepared tasks at different and challenging levels related to the needs of the pupils were set for the main activity. These involved a logic puzzle problem with varying degrees of difficulty. The challenge was for pupils to identify given facts that related to coloured shapes, look for relationships and use the information to see what effect it has. For example, they had to solve the puzzle, '*if red is a triangle, blue is below green, green is not next to orange*'. Further puzzles were set for pupils to solve with a partner, that became progressively more demanding. The pupils applied themselves well during all parts of the lesson.

64. In both lessons, observed, there was an insistence on the use of the correct mathematical terms, which developed the technical vocabulary of this subject well. Pupils in Years 4/5/6 were encouraged to use the language associated with angle, such as 'acute' and 'obtuse' when explaining their calculations. In Years 2/3, pupils were comfortable when using words like 'multiples' and when explaining the position of coloured shapes.

65. The use of ICT in mathematics is satisfactory. During the inspection, there was evidence that pupils used ICT to extend their numeracy and data handling skills.

66. The subject is well managed by the headteacher, who also teaches the Year 4/5/6 class. Assessment procedures are good and the mathematics curriculum is well organised. Additionally, support for more able pupils in mathematics is provided at a larger local school. There has been a good improvement in mathematics since the school was last inspected.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. The use of mathematical skills in other curriculum areas subjects is satisfactory. While dates and timelines are used in history and graphs in science, these subjects use rather than develop and extend further pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills. As a result, the high standards evident in mathematics are not commonly seen in the use of the subject in other aspects of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 6.
- The teaching of science is good.
- The subject is well managed.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' investigative skills throughout the school.
- Good use is made of assessment strategies to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Scientific activities and recording make good use of literacy and numeracy skills.
- The interpretation of assessment criteria in Year 2 reduces the number of pupils identified as achieving above average standards.
- The quality of presentation is inconsistent.

Commentary

68. Standards in science are above average in Year 6. This judgement is an improvement on the findings of the school's last inspection, which found that standards were satisfactory. This improvement represents good achievement from the average standards on entry. By the end of Year 2 in 2003, the national assessments made by teachers judged standards at Level 2 to be satisfactory, but indicated that standards at the higher Level 3 were very low. The findings of this inspection are that this discrepancy in assessments was largely due to the teachers' interpretation of the assessment criteria, rather than any shortcomings with regard to teaching and learning. Standards in the current Year 2 are average. Overall, good achievement is promoted by consistently good quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The improvement is due to the school's effective efforts to raise standards.

69. The evidence shows that pupils are taught all elements of the subject with a strong emphasis on experimental and investigative science. During a good Year 2 lesson on simple circuits, the pupils first of all listened to an imaginative story linked to 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff', before building their own bridges with built-in circuits to alert the troll to the arrival of the goats on his bridge. This was a good teaching strategy which caught pupils' imagination and encouraged them to use previously acquired skills and knowledge to devise their own security measures. Good supportive teaching allowed all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve a good result, which reinforced essential skills and knowledge.

70. The analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that this type of approach is a regular feature of the programme, but that it becomes more formalised in Years 4, 5 and 6, as would be expected. Years 5 and 6 were investigating how different pigments dissolve at different speeds, dependent upon the type and brand of felt tip pen under investigation. Pupils made sensible predictions beforehand, recording their work in the established scientific way. Sound teaching enabled all pupils to complete the task with interesting results, in an atmosphere which captured pupils' desire to learn in this way. The recording made good use of pupils' literacy skills and the analysis of work provided evidence of the use of mathematics in the subject in the form of block and line graphs. The quality of presentation in some pupils' books is unsatisfactory.

71. The subject is well managed. The school's comprehensive curricular planning and good assessment strategies show that all aspects of science are well taught and that pupils' progress is carefully monitored. Discussions with pupils confirmed how much they enjoy the subject. Science teaching is enhanced by the school's participation in an annual Science Week at a local research centre.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Pupils use their ICT skills effectively to enhance learning in other subjects.
- Good leadership in the subject has guided its development since the last inspection.

Commentary

72. Standards have risen since the previous inspection and are now above average in Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 2, pupils type stories they have written and create pictures using a variety of tools, some in the style of artists such as Mondrian and Monet. They search for information using CD-ROMS and create simple graphs to support their work in mathematics. Year 6 pupils know how to select and change the type and colour of font when word processing and use a computer program effectively to design wrapping paper with a repeating pattern. They communicate by e-mail with pupils at another school and log on to Internet websites to search for information. Pupils use control technology to turn lights on and off as part of a computer program and design rooms using a graphics package.

73. The evidence of this inspection indicates that teaching and learning are good and promote good achievement. This judgement is based on the standards reached by the pupils, discussion with them and teachers, analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning. Curricular planning is good and ensures that pupils cover the full range of activities required by the National Curriculum. Assessment procedures are good and help teachers to track and record pupils' progress from year to year. Pupils benefit from both direct teaching of skills in small groups and opportunities to use those skills in the context of their work in other subjects. For example, in a history lesson, pupils in Years 4 to 6 carried out research on different aspects of life in a workhouse

74. The management of the subject is good. An annual action plan has identified key priorities for improvement since the last inspection, and investment in hardware and software has ensured that the school is well equipped to teach all aspects of the subject. Until recently, the headteacher has led the subject, but she has now handed over responsibility to another teacher, who is being well supported. Appropriate training is provided, both in terms of the subject leadership role, and in different aspects of the curriculum. The school makes effective use of external funding to support developments and raise standards. For example, it has run a very successful ICT homework and study club for the past two years which has been very popular with pupils in Years 5 and 6.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. Pupils make good use of ICT to support their learning across the curriculum. Word processing skills are used effectively to produce stories and accounts of events. Pupils' ICT skills make an effective contribution to their work in art and design, and enable them to carry out research in history and geography. Work in mathematics is enhanced by the use of computer-generated graphs and spreadsheets.

HUMANITIES

76. No geography lessons were seen during the inspection and inspectors did not obtain enough evidence to make comments on this subject. Two history lessons were observed and pupils' work was analysed. Discussions were also held with pupils about their work in history. Inspectors were not able to see any RE lessons but analysed a selection of pupils' work and discussed it with them.

77. In **religious education**, samples of work and discussions with pupils indicate that standards are in line with the requirements of the Devon Locally Agreed Syllabus, as was found at the time of the last inspection.

78. The work covered by pupils in Years 4,5 and 6 in RE lessons during the previous term centred on discussion and role-play, led by a visitor from 'Bible Explorers', so there was limited written work to examine. However, analysis of the available work and discussions with pupils indicate that their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity are well established. Good use is made of visits to the local church and Exeter Cathedral to promote pupils' knowledge of Christian buildings and Christian practices. For example, younger pupils learn about the symbolism involved in the baptism of a baby by acting out the events in a baptism ceremony in the church. Older pupils identify the religious symbols that are different and common to churches, chapels and cathedrals.

79. Pupils have positive attitudes to RE and can remember work they have covered. Discussions with pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6, show they have a secure understanding of Judaism and talk with enthusiasm about re-enacting the roles of a Jewish family celebrating the ceremony of the Friday Shabbat meal. A visit to a synagogue in Exeter provided pupils with a sense of awareness of the distinctive features of the way in which the Jewish style of worship is practised.

80. The work covered by pupils in Year 2 shows that they are beginning to link religious teaching with everyday life, such as explaining the meaning behind the story of 'The Good Shepherd'. This indicates that pupils are being given opportunities to discover the meaning behind religions as well as the facts.

81. The curriculum is planned on a two and three year cycle to accommodate the mixed-age classes. Although the co-ordinator has had the opportunity to monitor teaching in the subject, there has been less emphasis on monitoring pupils' learning to enable her to have a clear picture of standards across the school. New assessment procedures for the subject are being introduced, expressed in pupils' terms, to give teachers a clear view of expectations for each level. The school has good interdenominational relationships with the local clergy, who lead an act of worship on a weekly basis. Pupils' social, personal and moral development is well supported through religious education.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Pupils know that history is about past events.
- They have a secure knowledge of the periods of history that they have studied.
- Pupils are very interested in their work.
- A good range of visits and visitors enriches the subject.
- Pupils' ability to interpret historical events for themselves is weaker.

Commentary

82. Overall, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average in Year 2 and in Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. The analysis of pupils' work shows that most pupils are making satisfactory progress. They are building on previous knowledge and understanding of events and changes in the past as they move through the school and overall, are achieving satisfactorily. Standards are similar to the previous inspection and improvement is satisfactory. During conversations with pupils in Year 4, 5 and 6, they were particularly enthusiastic about

previous experiences, such as the re-enactment of an Egyptian day, a visit by a 'Tudor sailor' and a visit to Coldharbour Mill where they experienced the conditions of life in Victorian times.

83. In the lesson seen in Year 1, the teacher made effective use of a picture timeline to help tell the story of the life of Florence Nightingale. The pupils increased their sense of chronology by sequencing pictures of the events in her life in order on the timeline. However, the effectiveness of the lesson was reduced by the same activity being repeated for too long, which resulted in the pupils becoming restless. Pupils' previous work in Year 2 shows that they can find out about the past by talking with older people, looking in books and visiting places of historical interest. They know about the Great Fire of London in 1666 and the main features in the life of Florence Nightingale. Through the opportunity to talk with a visitor who had lived through the events that took place during World War II, they found out how the war had affected the lives of ordinary people.

84. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are very interested in their history lessons. They talked knowledgeably about the previous periods of history they had studied, such as the Invaders and Settlers, Tudor explorers, Ancient Greece and Ancient Egypt. In the lesson observed, the teacher used her secure subject knowledge to inspire the pupils to learn about the living conditions in a workhouse in Victorian times. She enabled pupils to learn about what it would be like to live in a workhouse, by, for example, providing a bowl of gruel for them to taste. Pupils made good use of secondary evidence such as texts, reference books and the Internet to gain information. The work set was appropriate for pupils of all abilities and with the good support provided by the teaching assistant for pupils with SEN, most pupils achieved well in their knowledge and understanding of different aspects of life in a workhouse during the lesson. However, in discussion with pupils they found it more difficult to interpret the evidence and give reasons for the way in which people were treated differently in Victorian times.

85. Literacy skills are used well in history. There are also good opportunities for pupils to use ICT skills, which enhance the development of their historical enquiry skills. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 used the Internet well to download information about the workhouse during their work about the Victorians. Visitors and visits to places of historical interest, such as Cotehele House and Plymouth Museum, greatly enhance pupils' learning. Their understanding of social and cultural differences is developed well through history.

86. The leadership of the subject is good. The headteacher, as co-ordinator of the subject, has a good overview of its development and keeps a close eye on how effectively the curriculum is taught throughout the school by examining pupils' work and colleagues' planning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

87. One lesson in art and design and one in DT were seen during the inspection, along with a small sample of pupils' work. It was not possible to observe any music lessons. Inspectors did not obtain enough evidence to make judgements about the quality of provision in these subjects.

88. In art and DT, the two lessons seen were satisfactory. The art lesson for younger pupils focused on applying previously learned drawing skills to represent different creatures. This followed on from a visit by a wildlife group who showed pupils a range of different animals. In the DT lesson, older pupils designed Easter biscuits after discussing alternative types, flavouring and decoration. These lessons, teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work show that there is a strong emphasis on teaching skills and applying them in a range of situations. For example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 designed decorative panels based on works of art they had studied. They learned and practised embroidery stitches which they then used to create attractive textured pictures. Those displayed in the hall were of a high standard and showed that pupils had taken great care in their production. Another good feature is the pupils' involvement in the worldwide 'Golden Tapestry' project, which has involved all of them in creating a work of art which will be displayed at the Commonwealth Games. The provision for pupils' creative, aesthetic and practical development is enriched by a number of initiatives, including themed days for art and music, dance and singing workshops and visits to exhibitions, concerts and theatres.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision is made for pupils to participate in a range of activities.
- The school benefits from the input of well trained support staff.
- The school offers a good range of extra-curricular sports activities.
- Good use is made of limited space.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to demonstrate skills.

Commentary

89. Two lessons were observed, one In Years 2 and 3, and one for the older pupils. These observations indicated average standards in ball skills in Year 2 and good standards in Year 6. Teaching and learning in the Year 2 lesson were satisfactory and an external instructor in the Year 6 lesson provided very good coaching. Overall, achievement in PE is satisfactory. The recorded evidence of participation in sport generally confirms the satisfactory judgement of standards. At the last inspection, there was insufficient evidence to come to a judgement.

90. In Year 2, pupils are becoming more agile and skilled throwing and catching balls of different sizes. In a relatively confined space, they co-operated reasonably well, listening to instructions and using the area to best advantage. Good differentiation of activities enabled all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to improve their skills and become more aware of each other in a restricted space. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils received very good support and teaching from the Local Recreation Association specialist. In a lesson with really good pace and expectation, pupils developed their large ball skills, moving round the small playground with speed and agility. Whilst, on the one hand, individual skills were improved, the pupils were also required to work with each other translating their skills into a variety of team games. Time was well used and pupils gained much benefit from the session. In both lessons, however, few opportunities were given to pupils to demonstrate their skills to everyone else.

91. In a small school situation, great efforts have been made to provide a wide range of sporting activities to interest and stimulate the pupils. In addition to the normal team games of football and netball, pupils are able to swim, take part in cross-country runs and learn dance and gymnastics. The Country Dance Club performs at local events. Specialist sports teaching, and good support locally for extra-curricular activities, all encourage pupils to participate in, and enjoy sport.

92. The headteacher is currently responsible for PE and has succeeded in providing a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Space is very limited indeed but this has not hindered the school in terms of the range of activities on offer and the quality of teaching and learning which takes place. Very good links with the community have also contributed to provision in the subject, for example, an arrangement to use the community playing field for games and athletics.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

93. Personal, social and health education is well provided for throughout the school. Adults provide very good role models and give very positive support to the development of pupils' good relationships with each other and their teachers and assistants. No lessons were observed during the inspection. Sex education is sensitively taught within science lessons as are healthy living, drugs and other substance misuse. "Circle" time, when pupils discuss issues that are relevant to them, takes place in all classes and makes a positive contribution to pupils' moral and social

development, as when they discuss how to positively manage their own and others' behaviour. The agreed policy covers all aspects of the personal, social and health education curriculum and further development of a rolling programme for citizenship is planned for in the very near future. In discussions with pupils, they feel confident that they can discuss any problems with any adult in the school, which shows that good relationships are firmly established.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
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).

