

# INSPECTION REPORT

**GREAT TORRINGTON BLUECOAT CE INFANT AND  
NURSERY SCHOOL**

Great Torrington

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113377

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Pearson

Lead inspector: Mr Chris Kessell

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2004

Inspection number: 256264

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	226
School address:	Whites Lane Great Torrington Devon
Postcode:	EX38 8DS
Telephone number:	01805 622333
Fax number:	01805 624699
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Rod Garner
Date of previous inspection:	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Great Torrington Bluecoat Church of England Infant and Nursery School is about average in size compared with similar infant schools. Great Torrington is a mixed community of private and rented accommodation. The majority of pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds. The school has not received any travellers, refugees or asylum seekers. One child uses English as an additional language. The number of pupils who either join or leave the school during the academic year is about average. The proportion of pupils who claim free school meals is about average, but the percentage entitled to free school meals is higher. The school was designated an Early Excellence Centre (EEC) in 2002 which has led a development of services for families in the area with children aged up to four years old. The school's Nursery offers 52 part-time places (26 full-time equivalent) Children start full-time education with attainment that is lower than that expected for their age. Many of the children enter school with speech, language and communication difficulties. About 15 per cent of the full-time pupils are assessed as having special educational needs. This is about average. Three children attending part-time and three pupils have a statement of special educational needs. These are for learning, social and physical difficulties. In 1998, the school was presented with a 'School Achievement' award. In 2002, the school received an 'Effective Partnership with Parents' award and a 'Travelwise' award and, in 2004, the school received an 'Artsmark' award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20695	Mr Chris Kessell	Lead inspector	Mathematics Religious education
19664	Mr John Bayliss	Lay inspector	
29424	Mrs Vivienne Stone	Team inspector	English Geography History Personal, social and health education
18709	Ms Nina Bee	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology The Foundation Stage curriculum Special educational needs
10611	Mr Martin James	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

*Criterion School Inspections*

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

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils** and gives satisfactory value for money. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Year 2 are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school was designated an Early Excellence Centre in January 2002, but it is too early to judge the impact of its services and initiatives in terms of raising standards. A large number of education and care services are currently being promoted and developed across the local and wider community. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked hard to develop this facility. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The pupils' personal development is promoted well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are not high enough.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve need to be higher if pupils are to make better progress.
- The school's induction procedures for children joining the Nursery and Reception classes are very good.
- The school's links with the community are very good.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted well and supports the good relationships, behaviour and attitudes to learning found in the school.
- The development of the Early Excellence Centre has limited the school's management team's ability to rigorously monitor standards and the quality of education.

Improvement since the school's previous inspection in June 1998 has been satisfactory. Children now start school with levels of attainment that are lower than at the time of the last inspection, and consequently, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have not improved at the rate seen nationally. However, some teachers could have still greater expectations for higher-attaining pupils, which was an issue at the previous inspection. This still has not been addressed fully. The school has now been designated as an Early Excellence Centre and some aspects, such as the school's partnership with parents and the Nursery provision, have remained as strengths.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	E	E	E	D
Writing	E	E	D	C
Mathematics	C	E	E	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils for free school meals.*

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.** The data shown above indicate that, when compared to all schools, results in the 2003 national tests for reading and mathematics were well below average. Standards were below average in writing. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. Standards in religious education are similar to the expected levels. Standards in science and information and communication technology are lower than expected. Other subjects were not part of the inspection focus. Children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment, but many are unlikely to achieve the expected standard by the time they start Year 1, particularly in

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

communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Children make good progress in the Nursery.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory overall.** Pupils' moral and social development is the stronger element and contributes to their good attitudes to learning and standards of behaviour. Levels of attendance are below average. Punctuality is satisfactory. Although the school is doing its best to promote good attendance a minority of parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.**

**Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.** Although a number of lessons in school are good, particularly in the Nursery, there is insufficient good teaching to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils could achieve. This would allow some pupils to be more productive. Relationships in classes are always good and the majority of pupils work well together. Teachers' marking is not always sufficiently informative and helpful to pupils. Non-teaching staff contribute well to the pupils' learning, particularly in the Nursery. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection.

The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. The school's partnership with parents is good. Links with the community are very good. There are appropriate procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** The headteacher has a very clear vision for the development of the Early Excellence Centre and has worked hard to bring about its opening in November 2003. The management team now need to re-focus their attention to look at the standards being achieved throughout the school. The work of the governors is good. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school fulfils its statutory requirements.

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

The majority of parents are happy with the school, although a few have concerns about approaching the school with a question or problem; whether they receive sufficient information about the progress made by their children, and whether the school works closely enough with them. The inspection team does not support these views. Some parents raised concerns that the development of the Early Excellence Centre was at the expense of other aspects of the main school. The inspection team would share these concerns.

The pupils are happy with their school. They feel safe and well looked after and are happy going to their teachers when they need help or are worried about something.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Raise teachers' expectations to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged.
- Redirect the energies of the management team to focus on improving standards and the quality of education.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards in English and mathematics are well below average. Standards in science are below average. Boys and girls and other groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs, make similar rates of progress.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well below average.
- Children achieve well in the Nursery.
- Standards are lower than expected in science and information and communication technology.
- The school's trend of improvement is below that found nationally and standards are not as high as those found in similar schools.

#### Commentary

1. Evidence from a questionnaire sent out by the school to all of its parents and from the pre-inspection meeting, indicated that most parents are happy with the progress that their children make at the school. The majority of pupils believe that they have to work hard. Although the inspection team would not dispute that the pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school, the current rate of progress is not rapid enough to raise standards. Much of this is due to the quality of teaching and learning, which is only satisfactory overall.
2. The characteristics of the school have changed since it was last inspected and this provides one reason for why it has been more challenging to raise standards significantly over the last few years. Whereas, attainment on entry was broadly average at the time of the last inspection, the majority of children now start the Reception year with below average attainment, at best, and with quite significant difficulties in the skills of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Children who attend the Nursery get a good start and achieve well, but a significant proportion of the children start Reception without attending the Nursery and with varied and limited pre-school experiences. Achievement in the Reception classes is satisfactory, in relation to the children's prior attainment, but many of the children will not achieve the expected levels in the areas identified above, nor in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.3 (14.4)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.7 (13.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.5 (14.2)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 81 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. The national test results in 2003 for pupils in Year 2 indicated that, when compared to all schools, standards were well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. There was some improvement in the average point scores<sup>2</sup> in writing and mathematics but insufficient to make any impact on the school's trend of improvement, which, based on the five years from 1999 to 2003, was below the trend found nationally.

<sup>2</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 area of learning tested.

4. Standards currently in reading, writing and mathematics are still well below average. However, assessment information provided by the school indicates that the pupils currently in Year 2 have made satisfactory progress. The gap between the performance of boys and girls is similar to that found nationally, and other groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs, or those who use English as an additional language, achieve as well as their classmates. Some pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets on their individual education plans. This good achievement is directly related to the quality of teaching and the specific support these pupils receive from teaching assistants. Achievement is more limited when too little attention is paid to pupils' individual targets, both in lessons, and in the marking of pupils' work.
5. In Year 2, standards in science and information and communication technology are below the levels expected nationally. The pupils' knowledge and understanding in religious education are similar to that expected for pupils of their age. Other subjects of the curriculum were not part of the inspection focus and there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards or pupils' achievement in these areas.

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

Throughout the school pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Behaviour is good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Attendance is unsatisfactory, but punctuality is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy school, demonstrate interest and try to do their best.
- There are good relationships; pupils work and play well together and care for each other.
- Pupils respond well to the standards of behaviour expected.
- Despite having good procedures for promoting attendance that of a significant number of pupils is well below expected levels.

### **Commentary**

6. The great majority of pupils have positive attitudes to their learning across all areas of the curriculum as they did when the school was last inspected. Boys and girls are equally enthusiastic about school activities, enjoying coming to school and willingly getting involved in everything that is provided for them. A pupil in Year 2 commented that, 'Work is quite hard sometimes, but usually it's fun'. Most pupils respect teachers and other adults and are attentive, following instructions and showing keenness to be involved with whatever they are asked to do. The majority generally contribute well in question and answer sessions. However, a significant number have underdeveloped speaking and listening skills, so that their participation in question and answer sessions is frequently hesitant. These pupils also tend to find it difficult to take part productively in their own planned activities.
7. In the Nursery and the Reception classes the children come to school happily and settle into the routines of school quickly because induction procedures are very good. Adults generally promote personal and social skills satisfactorily, which results in most children getting on well with other. However, in the Nursery, personal and social skills are reinforced and well promoted in everything the children do. This results in the children developing good independent skills and very positive attitudes to learning. The many opportunities all children have to select activities and to work with adults enable them to begin to learn how to successfully work with others. Behaviour is good and the children quickly develop good relationships with the adults who work with them. By the end of the Reception year, the majority of children will achieve the expected levels in their personal, social and emotional development.
8. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are good. Pupils readily help each other when given the opportunity. All pupils whatever their age, gender or personal circumstances get on very well and nothing was seen to suggest that when the very occasional

incident of inappropriate behaviour occurs it is oppressive. There is no evidence of vindictive bullying or sexism in the school. The pupils are courteous and relate well with visitors, as when happily entering into conversation with inspectors to discuss their views of the school and the work they do. They co-operate well in pairs or small groups, often supporting each other and learning together. Even when the tasks given to them, particularly when involved in free play activities, do not extend them, they try to concentrate, showing an appropriate degree of self-discipline for their age. The way in which the large majority of pupils approach their work in lessons, and elsewhere, makes a positive contribution to the standards they achieve as they move through their school life.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.2	School data	0.5
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.*

- The school tries hard to encourage good attendance, regularly reminding parents of its importance and maintaining close liaison with its Educational Welfare Officer. However, although most pupils enjoy school and attend happily when they are able, the school's published attendance rates in recent years have usually been below those found nationally. In the most recent year for which comparisons are possible, attendance was well below the national average. A number of parents organise holidays during term time against the advice of the school and others display a relaxed attitude to the need to ensure their children attend regularly, keeping their children at home for trivial reasons or with no explanation. However, there is no evidence of truancy and punctuality in the mornings is satisfactory. Records of attendance are properly maintained and monitored and comply with statutory requirements. Registration is efficient with no time wasting. Absence is a concern to the school, because it has an adverse effect on pupils' progress, as they miss areas of learning and, consequently, have gaps in knowledge and understanding in subjects.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	135		1
White – any other White background	2		
Any other ethnic group	3		

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

- In class, at breaktimes, and around school pupils' behaviour is rarely less than good. The school provides a calm, learning environment for all pupils, much appreciated by parents. Parents have very few concerns about behaviour or the incidence of bullying. Pupils are clear about the code of behaviour and the rewards and sanctions used. They respond to the school's expectations of what constitutes acceptable behaviour well. No evidence was seen of any significant number of boys lacking self-discipline, identified as a problem when the school was inspected in 1998. Teachers and support staff provide good role models helping pupils to distinguish right from wrong and dealing with the occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour consistently well.
- Learning support assistants and mid-day supervisory staff relate well to the pupils. They provide good support in classrooms, and during lunchtimes; this has a positive effect on learning, behaviour and safety. Anti-bullying strategies work well. The school's policies are well

organised, with a sensitivity to pupils' personal circumstances, but, at the same time, recognising the right of the majority to work without distraction. As a result, it was necessary, as a last resort, having properly exhausted all other options, to exclude a pupil during the past year because of his unacceptably challenging behaviour and the consequent risk to other pupils and staff.

12. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to show initiative and display personal responsibility are as they should be for the age of the pupils. When opportunities arise, such as undertaking routine monitor duties, they are undertaken conscientiously.
13. The school's provision for the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils, though satisfactory, is not as good as when the school was inspected previously. Through assemblies and class discussions, for example in personal, social and health education lessons, the pupils are taught to reflect on their own and others' actions, show consideration for others, listen to others and learn to respect their views.
14. Pupils, most of whom have limited experience of ethnic diversity, gain a satisfactory insight into their own and other cultural traditions through work in religious education lessons, art and design, music, history and geography lessons. However, too few opportunities are provided for first hand experiences of cultures, other than their own, to properly prepare them for life in a multi-cultural society.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The pupils are offered a sound curriculum.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although the school's assessment procedures are satisfactory, better use could be made of this information to support the needs of individual pupils.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Nursery is good. As a result, children learn well.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils could achieve, particularly the higher attainers.
- The teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is good. Classroom relationships are strong.
- Assessment information could be used more effectively to support the needs of individual pupils.

### Commentary

15. The majority of parents are happy with the quality of teaching at the school. Staff are seen as friendly and approachable. Inspection evidence indicates that, in most lessons, the majority of pupils learn satisfactorily and make sound progress. The pupils are enthusiastic learners and find their lessons interesting. They are able to talk about their work confidently and are able to articulate whether they find it interesting or sufficiently challenging. Pupils enjoy responsibility and are able to work successfully either independently, or in small groups. Classroom relationships are strong and contribute well to the good levels of behaviour.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (18%)	33 (82%)	0 (0%)	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.*

16. As teachers introduce lessons, their explanations to the pupils are clear and they try to make subjects and different areas of learning, interesting and exciting. The start of most lessons has pace; time is used appropriately, and question and answer sessions are used well to invoke class discussion that involves as many pupils as possible. However, the good start observed in many lessons is not sustained and, as the pupils move to different activities, the pace of learning drops. As a result, not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable, or learn well. Often, those pupils who work specifically with a class teacher or a teaching assistant continue to learn effectively, but pupils who are working in other groups, do not always learn as well. During the inspection, some pupils commented that the tasks they were doing were 'easy' whilst other pupils did not make as much effort as they could. Although attention is paid to the different ability groups that are found in classes, not all work is matched as accurately as it could be, so that all pupils are sufficiently challenged. This was also the case in the analysis of pupils' previous work by inspectors. Little use is made of extension activities to challenge the higher-attaining pupils, and pupils do not always have a clear understanding about the exact amount of work that is expected of them. Much of this is related to teachers' expectations, which, for some, are not high enough. Too often, excuses are made regarding pupils' maturity or 'readiness' for a task. This undermines the progress of some pupils and raises concerns about the effectiveness of some teaching methods. More good teaching and more consistency in Years 1 and 2 are required if the school is to raise standards.
17. The quality of teaching and learning varies between the Nursery and the Reception classes. Teaching is consistently good in the Nursery. Whether the children work with adults or in smaller groups or alone, the adults interact effectively. All activities are well matched to the needs of the children. Adults use resources well to promote learning in all areas. In addition, they have high expectations regarding speaking, listening, behaviour and completing the activities that are offered. As a result, learning is good. The Nursery teacher has a satisfactory system that shows how well all children are progressing. In the Reception classes, teaching is satisfactory. Planning is satisfactory and activities address all areas of learning but, at times, children's basic speaking, listening and writing skills are not effectively promoted. At other times, the children are expected to sit on the carpet for too long and lessons run over time. Often, too little time is available at the end of the lesson to show the children how well they have done. Learning is satisfactory in the Reception classes. The teachers use national guidance to assess how well each child is progressing.
18. Teaching is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs. Work is generally appropriately matched to their needs but, sometimes, pupils are given tasks that are too difficult. When this happens, learning within the lesson is not as good as it might be. The support pupils with special educational needs receive varies in quality. It is satisfactory overall.
19. The school has a satisfactory range of assessment procedures that enables staff to predict how well pupils should perform in end of key stage national tests and to successfully track pupils' progress. There are also transition meetings between teachers in the Foundation Stage and those in Key Stage 1<sup>3</sup> at the end of the academic year. This is good practice. However, analysis of pupils' work indicates that the allocation of work to different ability groups is not always as accurate or rigorous as it should be, and that there are variations between classes. Assessment information is not always used effectively. There are also inconsistencies between classes in the marking of pupils' work. Although it is perfectly acceptable for teachers to discuss work with individual pupils, older and higher attainers also benefit from the information provided by good marking, on how to improve their work or move on to the next stage of learning.

## The curriculum

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<sup>3</sup> Key Stage 1, sometimes referred to as the infants, caters for pupils aged between 5 and 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities, which are enhanced by a sound range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is supported satisfactorily by the accommodation and resources.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision for personal and social education is good.
- Very good links with the community widen pupils' experiences.

## **Commentary**

20. As part of its strategy to make learning more relevant for the pupils, the school has placed considerable emphasis on providing a curriculum that is based on play activities. These activities are not consistently planned and structured throughout the school to ensure that all pupils always learn as well as they might. For example, when pupils in Years 1 and 2 spend time in literacy lessons playing in the sand or creating models, their progress in acquiring literacy skills is reduced.
21. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory in general. However, there are a few older children whose difficulties in acquiring basic writing skills have not been appropriately identified as special needs. Some pupils have individual education plans containing targets that are not specific enough and at times unclear. When this happens, pupils' rates of progress are difficult to measure accurately. Documentation is kept on all pupils, but this varies in quality. Not all teachers keep their documentation on individual pupils up to date. Reviews are completed satisfactorily and parents are regularly informed.
22. The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Learning resources are satisfactory and activities are planned according to the national guidance. The secure outdoor area, which the Nursery uses to support all areas, is used particularly well, with all areas of learning being well resourced. The Reception classes have a small outdoor area that is satisfactorily used.
23. The curriculum provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils use the skills they learn in lessons to work and play together co-operatively and to develop good relationships with each other. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities are provided for the pupils.
24. The local community is used very effectively to enrich the pupils' learning. Visitors frequently come into school to share their interests and experiences with the pupils and pupils regularly go into the local town and area to support their studies in different subjects. This contributes to making the pupils' learning relevant and helps to develop their understanding of being a member of a wider community.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The way in which the school provides for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is satisfactory. It provides them with appropriate support, advice and guidance based on teachers' knowledge of individual need. There is satisfactory involvement of pupils in the work of the school.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very well organised induction arrangements.
- Most pupils are happy at school, feeling safe and well looked after.
- Excellent health and safety provision in the Early Excellence Centre.
- Unsupervised outdoor play for children in the Reception classes is unacceptable.
- Good child protection arrangements.
- Parents are very happy with how the school looks after their children.

## Commentary

25. Children starting their school life, and those who join later, enjoy very good arrangements for ensuring that they settle into school routines quickly and happily. Very effective liaison with parents through a number of initiatives, including the work of the Early Excellence Centre, links with pre-school groups, an invitation to an 'Induction to School' course and home/school visits, ensure that the process is made enjoyable for those new to the school, with very good attention being paid to their needs.
26. Despite the challenges presented by the age and condition of the main school, staff and governors properly undertake their responsibility for ensuring that a healthy and safe environment is provided for the school community. Parents appreciate the way in which the school's 'caring environment' has been maintained since the school was inspected in 1998. The facilities in the Early Excellence Centre are excellent. Regular risk assessments ensure that statutory requirements are met and the physical well-being of all is protected so that the pupils can work in surroundings that contribute to their well-being and the quality of learning provided. However, during the inspection there were a number of instances when unsupervised outdoor play activities were organised, particularly in the reception classes, which is contrary to recommended practice.
27. The pupils' learning is helped by the way in which their welfare needs are met, whatever their age, sex, background or special needs. The very large majority of the pupils are happy at school and confidently turn to adults when they want help or advice, knowing that they will be treated fairly and listened to sympathetically. Comments, such as 'Teachers are very friendly' and 'They are fair and listen' are typical. Pupils' views, as communicated through lessons when thoughts and feelings are discussed, are respected and notice is taken of them. The involvement of the pupils in the school's work and development is satisfactory.
28. Legal requirements regarding child protection are met. The headteacher undertakes the statutory responsibility for ensuring the effective delivery of the school's child protection policy. She is suitably trained, has relevant experience and maintains close links with support agencies. She works closely with staff to ensure that everyone is fully aware of their role and responsibilities. These are undertaken conscientiously with a good understanding of the procedures to be followed should a pupil be at risk.
29. The school's arrangements for the monitoring and support of pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Monitoring of non-academic development is effective, although informal arrangements, that reflect the good knowledge that teachers have of pupils as individuals, are stronger than formal ones. Information is exchanged regularly between staff so that they all are able to respond to the individual welfare needs of the pupils sensitively.
30. The arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational or other identified needs are satisfactory. Outside agencies are used when necessary to support pupils.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with its parents are good. Those with the local, and wider, community are very good and those with other schools and colleges are satisfactory. There is good provision of extended services for parents.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with the community are very good.
- Lots of opportunities are provided for the development of parenting skills and for parental self-development.
- The quality of information provided by the school is good.
- Parents are supportive of what the school is doing and they think it is a good one.
- There are effective consultation arrangements.
- There is an effective Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association.

## Commentary

31. The school's good links with its parents, and the very good ones with the community, are a very positive feature of its work. They have been maintained at the high level reported when the school was last inspected. They contribute positively to pupils' learning and overall development. The school is welcoming and open to visitors. It is committed to the strong partnerships within the community that is a feature of much of its work and takes a pro-active approach to maintaining and developing them. The work being done by the Early Excellence Centre, especially for young parents and for children up to four years of age, though still at the developmental stage, is beginning to make a worthwhile contribution through a number of initiatives. The Family Project offers a range of extended day care, the Family Learning Programme, amongst a range of activities, helps with parenting skills, and there are close links with the local Social Services Department. In this way, the school is making an effective contribution to the Torrington Family Project that aims to offer support to families in need of guidance and support. Although, as yet, at an early stage, these initiatives are already contributing to raising parents' awareness of the importance of helping their children to enjoy their school life, enabling them to participate fully with the school in a partnership of mutual benefit. Parents' feelings that the school is 'at the centre of the community' are supported by much of what it does.
32. Parents feel that the school is a good one that works closely with them. A few would like more information about the progress made by their children and about the school's homework policy; a few feel that the school does not work closely enough with them, and do not feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or a problem. Others have concerns that the focus on the establishment of the Early Excellence Centre in recent years has been at the expense of their children in the mainstream school. Inspection evidence suggests that there is little reason for these concerns, providing that parents take advantage of the opportunities presented to them. However, the school accepts that worries about the attention given to the Early Excellence Centre involving the headteacher, governors and the long term secondment of the deputy headteacher have some validity.
33. The school recognises the importance of its relationship with its parents, to work together to the benefit of their children, and it works hard to promote its partnership with them. The school gained an 'Effective Partnership with Parents' award in 2003. Parents are encouraged to be involved in school activities their views being valued and acted upon. The Parents' Council works well, offering parents the opportunity to be involved in the school's policy planning. There is an 'open door' policy that encourages parents to communicate with the school. The headteacher and teachers are always ready to meet with parents to discuss matters of interest or concern. Many parents take advantage of the opportunity to meet with teachers at the start of the school day, though the school recognises that there is still work to be done to fully engage with all its parents, especially the small number that feel uncomfortable about approaching the school. Overall, however, parents are happy that the school listens to them when they seek advice or help, responding quickly and fairly whenever necessary.
34. The way in which parents support the work of the school, both in school and by helping their children at home, is satisfactory overall. Support at home is limited for many parents but direct support in school is better, with a good number of parents helping in school. There is a supportive Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association that fosters relationships between home and school. Its activities provide opportunities for parents, staff and pupils to socialise and cement links between school and home as well as to raise funds that provide much welcomed additional financial support to the school.
35. Parents are provided with much good information about what is happening in school, and how their children are getting on, through regular newsletters, questionnaires and meetings when parents can view their child's work and discuss progress. They also have an annual written report on their child's progress and targets for improvement are discussed with them. The quality of these reports is good with parents, not only being told about what their children know and can do, but also given clear guidance about how attainment matches that expected.

Targets for improvement are discussed and agreed with parents. The governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus are informative documents that provide parents with lots of information presented in a user-friendly way that makes the information readily accessible to them.

36. Links with other educational establishments, including those to which the pupils transfer, are as they should be. Pupils in Year 2 talk of looking forward to moving on but say, 'We will be sad to leave the school'. There are a number of links with other educational establishments, such as The University of Plymouth, that contribute appropriately to the work of the school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the headteacher and other senior staff are satisfactory overall. Governance of the school is good. Statutory requirements are fulfilled.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher's vision for the Early Excellence Centre and her management of its development have been good.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Time spent on the Early Excellence Centre by the leadership team has limited action to raise standards and to improve the quality of education.
- Too many senior staff are deployed in the Foundation Stage.
- The monitoring of the provision of special educational needs is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

37. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents indicated that they were happy with the way the school is run. They believe that it is a reflective school that is always looking forward and wanting to improve. The development of the Early Excellence Centre is part of this process and since being given this designation in January 2002, the leadership and management responsibilities for the headteacher and her senior staff have increased substantially. At present, it is too early to judge the impact that the Early Excellence Centre's activities and initiatives will have on raising educational standards, but there have already been significant developments in links with the local community and parents. However, it is the inspection team's view, that the demands of the Early Excellence Centre have reduced the effectiveness of the headteacher and deputy headteacher in leading the curriculum and teaching and taking action to improve the school's performance. For example, the school has not regularly monitored the outcome of the curriculum changes and class organisation to assess their effects on pupils' learning and standards. The situation has not been helped by the deployment of other senior staff solely in the Foundation Stage. This has limited their influence in the wider school.
38. The headteacher has a clear vision of how the school will develop under the Early Excellence Centre banner. She is very knowledgeable about Early Years practice and current developments in this area. The deputy headteacher is also a very knowledgeable practitioner, but her influence on classroom practice over the last two years has been more limited than one would normally expect, because she has been developing out-reach services for the Early Excellence Centre, as part of a secondment. The management team is not complacent; this can be seen through the school's effective current improvement plan. Their self-evaluation of the current level of pupils' achievements and quality of teaching and learning is similar to that of the inspection team. However, they must now use this self-evaluation and the monitoring of performance data to make a greater impact on raising standards and the quality of education provided by the school. The school will be moving to the same site as the Early Excellence Centre in September 2005 and the leadership team should not let this divert their attention away from raising standards. The split-site has not helped the headteacher's management of the whole complex, but its effect has been minimal in terms of the school's provision for its pupils and will be resolved in the near future.

39. The subject co-ordination of English and mathematics are satisfactory. Both of the co-ordinators are relatively inexperienced and need more time to influence the quality of the curriculum and teaching. The co-ordination of provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Relationships between the adults who work together are good, which benefits all children. Systems, such as those to determine how well the children are progressing, are developing satisfactorily. Induction procedures are very good and as a result, the children receive a good start to school.
40. Despite the co-ordinators being provided with time, on a weekly basis, to monitor provision for special educational needs, and the pupils' progress, there is insufficient focus on how well pupils with special educational needs are doing across the curriculum. In addition, although reviews are held regularly, weaknesses in the quality of the individual education plans and the records kept on these pupils, makes it difficult to make clear judgements on the rate of progress some individuals are making; this is unsatisfactory. At the previous inspection the management of special educational needs was reported as good.
41. Governance of the school is good, with governors having a particularly good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They appreciate that standards in the school have to improve but are also aware and have a realistic understanding of the challenges the school faces. There is a good balance of experience and expertise and recent new members to the governing body have brought additional qualities that will enhance their effectiveness in challenging and supporting the school's management team. The governors are led well by the chair.
42. The governors have been fully involved in the development of the Early Excellence Centre, for which they share responsibility with the local education authority. As well as welcoming the potential benefits that it will bring to the community, they are equally aware of the challenges that it provides, particularly in terms of how it will be funded in the future. Currently, the Centre receives grant funding directly from the government, but this will not always be the case and governors are fully aware of the implications that this brings.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	654,882	Balance from previous year	45,674
Total expenditure	641,565	Balance carried forward to the next	58,991
Expenditure per pupil	2,839		

43. The governors successfully fulfil their statutory requirements to agree and regularly monitor the school budget. The carry-forward from the previous financial year is well above the recommended practice. The school and governors are aware of the potential difficulties and problems of moving to a new site and school building and are sensibly holding funding in reserve to ensure that the new school will have sufficient resources and no shortcomings in the accommodation. The expenditure per pupil in the 2003/04 financial year was below the national average for infant schools. Effort has also been made to develop the Foundation Stage staffing so that fewer temporary teachers have to be employed in the future as a response to the different times of entry into the Reception classes during the academic year. In the future, at least two full-time Reception teachers will be funded, thus limiting the recruitment issues for teaching and non-teaching staff later in the academic year.
44. The school and governors take appropriate notice of best value principles. The need to be competitive when securing services and resources is fully understood and as well as comparing the academic standards of the school with other schools, financial comparisons have also been made. Parents have also been recently consulted about their views of the school. This is good practice. The school's administrative staff, undertake their roles conscientiously and support the day-to-day running of the school community well.



## **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 **satisfactory**.

45. The Foundation Stage consists of three Reception classes and a Nursery class. In the Nursery class, provision is good and this good quality provision has been maintained since the previous inspection. Induction procedures are very good. Parents are happy with the information they receive and, as a result, the children quickly and happily settle into the Nursery and later the Reception classes. Attainment on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes has changed since the previous inspection. Information collected over the last few years clearly indicates variations from year to year. The children currently in the Nursery entered with a significant number having speech and language difficulties. They have been supported well by all adults including the 'Nursery Plus' team. As a result, most children are on course to at least reach the expected levels by the time they start the Reception year; they have achieved well.
46. Children currently in the Reception classes have made satisfactory progress, in relation to their prior attainment, in all areas, apart from creative development, where it has been good. At the beginning of the Reception year, the majority of children were below average in mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world, and well below average for some areas of communication, language and literacy. In creative development, they were below the expected levels but most were about average in personal, social and physical development. The majority of children are unlikely to reach the expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world, by the end of the Reception year. In the other areas, the children are on course to reach the expected levels.
47. The provision for children identified as having special educational needs, and for those who use English as an additional language, is satisfactory. A few children have targets in their individual education plan which are too vague, and, as a result, their progress is difficult to measure. Children with specific special educational needs are supported well. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of activities, which support all areas. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, but in the Nursery it is good. There is a secure outdoor area in the Nursery that is used well to support learning. Resources are satisfactory. They are used well in the Nursery. The Reception classes use a small outdoor area outside their classrooms. The systems to monitor children's progress are satisfactory and show how well the children do in each area of learning.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- In the Nursery, teaching is good and children's personal and social skills are promoted consistently well in all that they do.
- Sometimes opportunities are missed to promote personal and social skills in the Reception classes.
- There are good opportunities for the children in the Nursery to stay to lunch.

#### **Commentary**

48. By the end of the Reception year, most children are on course to reach the expected levels. Teaching is satisfactory. The children are offered many experiences to begin to develop the skills necessary to work independently. Most children take turns and concentrate satisfactorily as they interact with each other. The majority select activities with confidence and know that they are expected to tidy away at the end of each session. Achievement is satisfactory and

children quickly develop positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Personal independence is developed satisfactorily. However, at times, adults miss opportunities to promote personal and social skills effectively. For example, adults do not always have high enough expectations regarding sitting and listening carefully during class discussions. They allow children to shout out instead of waiting for their turn to answer. When opportunities such as these are missed, learning is not as good as it should be.

49. Teaching is consistently good in the Nursery. The children achieve well as they develop personal and social skills because they are well promoted in all they do. They quickly learn to sit and listen properly, and put up their hands to answer questions. This is because adults expect them to do this. They all play well together and select activities confidently. The children respond very positively to the high standards expected of them by the teacher and the other adults who assist her. As a result, these youngest children develop very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well. There are good opportunities for these young children to stay to lunch. This activity is well supervised by adults from the Family Support group which is part of the Early Excellence Centre. A lovely family atmosphere is created which enables the children to eat lunch in a quiet and friendly atmosphere as they develop good relationships with other children and adults who work with them.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All children develop positive attitudes to reading.
- Teaching is good in the Nursery and basic reading and writing skills are promoted well.
- The need to write letters properly and develop spaces and words, when writing, is not always effectively promoted in the Reception classes.

### **Commentary**

50. Most children are unlikely to reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception year. Achievement is satisfactory. Activities are planned satisfactorily and generally promote the skills needed to begin to communicate, read and write. The children generally work hard and concentrate well at the activities they are given. Teaching is satisfactory, but at times, teachers' expectations are not high enough. When questioning children, teachers sometimes accept short answers and so do not promote and develop speaking skills as well as they might. During writing activities, the children in Reception sometimes receive too little help on how to improve, in particular with regard to writing with correct letter formation and the need to leave spaces between words. In the Nursery, teaching is good. All adults have high expectations for these young children and the children respond very positively. Opportunities are not missed to promote all aspects of this area. For example, during one session, after completing pictures on the computer the teacher expected the children to try and write their names using the computers. The children respond very positively to the Nursery teacher's high expectations and, as a result, achievement in the Nursery is good. Reading skills are promoted well in all classes. As a result the children are keen to listen to stories and attempt to read the simple texts they are shown. From an early age in the Nursery, the children are taught to recognise their name as they self register. In all classes the children handle books carefully. As they get older they look at simple texts and recognise familiar words. Higher-attaining children in the Reception classes begin to use their developing knowledge of sounds to read. Lower-attaining children use pictures well to tell a story.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's positive attitudes to learning enable them to work hard as they develop number skills.
- In all classes there are good opportunities to develop number skills through singing songs and rhymes.
- There are few opportunities for children in the Reception classes to use the written form of number.

### Commentary

51. Teaching is satisfactory in the Reception classes. In all three classes the children have many opportunities to develop mathematical skills. Sometimes activities are not challenging for the higher-attaining children in the class. However, most children respond positively to the activities they are given and work hard. Children are unlikely to reach the expected levels by the end of their time in the Reception classes. Achievement is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. Minor weaknesses in teaching affect learning at times. The children have very few opportunities to complete activities that include the written form of number. At times, there is too little focus at the end of the lesson to show the children what they have learnt. In all classes children have good opportunities to develop their idea of numbers by learning number rhymes and songs. Children in the Nursery, for instance, were seen singing number rhymes confidently, which effectively promoted the sequence of numbers and the names of basic shapes. Teaching was good because no opportunities were missed to promote number sequences and the recognition of two-dimensional shapes. In addition, children's speaking and listening skills were well promoted and developed. All children listened to instructions and concentrated well which resulted in good learning.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are interesting and well resourced in the Nursery.
- Children in the Nursery achieve well because they are well supported by all adults and have very positive attitudes to learning.

### Commentary

52. The children achieve satisfactorily in the Reception classes. Planning is satisfactory and has been recently linked to the story, *'We're going on a Bear Hunt'*. In one lesson seen, some of the children were given opportunities to walk through water and mud, but opportunities were missed to develop language and experiences for all children because they had to move on to another lesson. Learning was satisfactory in relation to developing their sense of sight. Higher-attaining children understood that water 'dries up' as they attempted to identify differences between mud and water. However, most other children are unable to contribute to this. Children develop a satisfactory idea of what maps are for and develop their own three-dimensional maps which show the way to the 'bear's cave'. During another activity, children were seen looking at road maps. Higher-attaining children confidently identified features, such as rivers and towns. The other children were listening with interest but many did not participate. Most children are unlikely to reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception year. Teaching is satisfactory. Photographic evidence indicates that all aspects of this area are planned for. Visits to local places of interest, such as the fire station, enhance learning in this area. In the Nursery, teaching is good. Activities are well thought out and resources are used well to develop learning.

Children were seen enthusiastically experimenting with water and bubbles and developing information and communication technology skills. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when children in the Nursery had no access to a computer. The children began to learn the names of birds they might see in their gardens, as they listened to the songs they sing. With good quality support from a teaching assistant, they identified things they might find in the River Torridge and then made mobiles. Children achieve well in the Nursery because they are well supported in the activities they are given and they all show very positive attitudes to learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good in the Nursery.
- All children respond well to lessons that involve physical development.

### **Commentary**

53. Most children are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception year. All children have satisfactory opportunities for physical exercise in the school hall. The majority of children move confidently with a satisfactory awareness of space and of the other children. In the Nursery, children responded positively to the teacher's high expectations, regarding walking through the school before a lesson in the hall. Learning was good as the children moved confidently, as they 'waddled' like ducks, and successfully used movement to express their feelings. They showed enthusiasm and excitement and behaved very well. Teaching was good in this lesson. The outside areas used by children in the Nursery promote physical development satisfactory. Space is limited for physical development in the outdoor area that the children in the Reception classes use, but there is a small selection of swinging apparatus. There are satisfactory opportunities for all children to use scissors, paintbrushes and pencils. Most children use these sensibly and with satisfactory control. All children play imaginatively and confidently with construction toys and have opportunities to use soft materials, such as coloured dough and clay, to make models.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and the children achieve well in the Reception classes and the Nursery.
- The attitudes of the children are positive.

### **Commentary**

54. Most children are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception year. Children achieve well because teaching is good. Planned activities in the Reception classes have centred on a 'bears' topic. Children were seen making bear masks in a lesson that was planned well and resourced effectively to develop learning. Explanations were clear and so all children knew what they had to do. The teacher and her assistant supported well within the groups, enabling all to succeed. All children, including those with special educational needs, were fully involved with all parts of the lesson. All children have good opportunities to play imaginatively in well-resourced areas that are created in the classrooms or the outdoor areas. Children in the Nursery were seen 'going on a bus trip' in a bus that they had built themselves. They took exciting things with them such as a camera to take photographs and a shopping bag. In a Reception class, children were seen working satisfactorily together as they re-creating the

story of 'The Bear Hunt' using blue material for the water. Children develop a wide repertoire of songs and were observed successfully performing to parents.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards in reading and writing are well below average.
- Good opportunities are provided to promote the skills of speaking and listening.
- Spelling and handwriting are not taught consistently throughout the school.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is not always sufficient to ensure that assessments are secure.
- Interventions are used well to support literacy teaching.

#### **Commentary**

55. Standards in reading and writing remain well below the national average at the end of Year 2, although pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The curriculum changes and adaptations to the National Literacy Strategy made by the school, to make learning more meaningful for pupils, have not yet been successful in raising standards. The school has not rigorously evaluated the effects of the changes on the development of pupils' literacy skills. In some literacy lessons seen during the inspection, there was no whole-class teaching and those pupils who were not in the teacher's focus group received no direct teaching. This reduced the learning of these pupils and is likely to slow progress over time. In other lessons, pupils were involved in tasks that were not literacy based. Whilst teachers work hard to make their pupils' learning interesting and enjoyable, they do not all have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
56. The school has rightly identified the need to improve the speaking and listening skills of the pupils and the strategies it has put in place are effective. As a result, standards in speaking and listening, although below the national expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2, are improving. Drama is used well to encourage pupils to speak with confidence and opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss in small and large groups.
57. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers try to ensure that work is suitable for the wide range of ability in the mixed-age classes. However, the assessments made by teachers are not always secure and this then prevents pupils being set work that is appropriate for their individual needs. In some of the lessons observed, the learning objectives for the pupils were too wide and did not focus on developing specific skills and understanding during the lesson. This reduced the progress that pupils made. Teachers do not support pupils sufficiently in developing spelling and handwriting, so they do not have the tools they need when writing. This is especially true for average- and lower-attaining pupils. The presentation of pupils' work is often untidy but accepted by teachers. Teachers use support staff well in literacy lessons especially to support the lower attaining pupils. Support staff also make a good contribution to helping these pupils through implementing the Early Literacy Strategy, which is having a positive effect in Year 1. Teachers make satisfactory use of information and communication technology to compose and edit writing, but it is less frequently used to provide support for lower-attaining pupils in developing their phonic and spelling skills.
58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is relatively new in post and, as yet, is inexperienced in leading this curriculum area. She is enthusiastic and has a clear understanding of the areas to develop in order to raise standards. However, so far she has had too little opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to work with teachers to improve this.

#### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

59. Teachers plan well throughout the curriculum to provide opportunities to promote the language skills of pupils. This is through the use of drama, through planned opportunities to extend

vocabulary, and by encouraging pupils to talk in groups of different sizes. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their reading and writing skills in other subjects. On the occasions when pupils do record work, for example in history, it is superficial and does not extend the writing skills they already have.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well below average in Year 2.
- The pupils are enthusiastic about the subject.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

### **Commentary**

60. Standards in mathematics are well below average for pupils in Year 2. This is a similar picture to the previous year. Despite the low standards, the majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress, including those pupils with special educational needs. Evidence from an analysis of pupils' previous work, indicates that pupils cover an appropriate curriculum that includes some element of investigative and independent work.
61. Standards are unlikely to improve unless the quality of teaching moves beyond satisfactory. Although many lessons have good features, such as good introductions to lessons, there is insufficient good practice to ensure that pupils make good progress all of the time. On too many occasions, teachers' expectations are too low and work provided for many pupils does not extend or challenge them enough. This was the case for many of the lessons observed during the inspection. Although lessons are planned for the different ability groups found in the mixed-age classes, on occasions this is not accurate or rigorous enough, so some pupils are confused about what they are doing, whilst others find their work too easy. In some instances, pupils finished their work rapidly and moved on to non-mathematical activities when it would have been more appropriate to challenge or extend them further. In general, the pupils cover a reasonable amount of work for the year, but there are variations between classes, as there is in the quality of marking, which, in some cases, is not as developmental or helpful as it could be. These variations indicate that there are differences in the teachers' understanding of the subject.
62. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about the mathematics and are keen to talk about their work. They listen to the views of their classmates sensibly, work together at activities well and participate when appropriate at the beginning and end of lessons. The plenary session<sup>4</sup> was not always used well during the inspection. Often, they were too rushed and did not contribute effectively to the success of lessons. Some pupils do not present their work well and, teachers do not always pick this up. Notation is not well promoted.
63. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is appropriately qualified for the post, but is still a relatively inexperienced teacher, as well as being a new co-ordinator. There is an action plan for mathematics and the co-ordinator has been involved in a number of training and development activities during the last academic year to develop her role. She has also been provided with support by the local education authority and has had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and teachers' planning. At present, it is too early to judge her impact on the development of the subject. However, she is not complacent and understands very well, that standards need to improve.

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<sup>4</sup> A plenary session 'rounds off' the lesson and provides teachers with an opportunity to sort out misconceptions and identify progress. It can also be used to make links with other work, discuss the next steps in learning and set work to do at home.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Mathematics is linked satisfactorily to other areas of the curriculum. The links with other subjects are similar to those found in many other schools and the subject supports other subjects, such as art and science. During the inspection, pupils used information and communication technology to record the outcomes of an investigation with capacity and to support work in addition. Displays in classrooms, to support numeracy and the promotion of words that are specific to mathematics curriculum, could be better.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average at Year 2. However, based on their prior attainment, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
- Standards have improved since last year.
- Teachers are making inadequate use of assessment to provide pupils with work that is suited to their varying needs.
- Practical activities are now a regular feature of many lessons.
- Pupils show good attitudes towards the subject.

### Commentary

65. Pupils in Year 2 show an understanding of the subject that is below that expected, overall. Most pupils successfully name the main features of the human body and, particularly, a flowering plant, and most are able to identify the items needed to sustain life. They recognise and name common materials, and, whilst some find this difficult, many successfully describe their various uses. Fewer pupils are aware of some materials being man-made and others being natural. They understand that pushes and pulls are examples of forces. Most readily explain that light and sound come from a variety of sources, and they can explain how to make an electric circuit. However, throughout the school, whilst many pupils successfully explain their work, using the correct scientific terminology, a significant number find this difficult, and this is hindering the raising of standards further.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are suitably planned, with teachers, throughout the school, providing practical activities. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The teachers are particularly careful to use, and emphasise, the correct scientific terminology, and teachers are fully aware that this is an area of weakness for some pupils. Planning, however, rarely makes appropriate allowance for the provision of work for the needs of different pupils. Pupils are usually presented with the same activities, with the result that, on occasions, some pupils find the work too difficult, whilst others find it undemanding. The teachers have sound subject knowledge, and provide clear instructions and helpful demonstrations of the work that is to be undertaken. Teachers and teaching assistants support all pupils in turn, and this helps them all, including those with special needs, to make satisfactory progress. Suitable use is made of information and communication technology when appropriate, for instance pupils readily find information about different flowers using the Internet.
67. Most pupils show great interest in the subject, displaying good attitudes and enjoying the practical work in particular. Most work hard, concentrate well and are keen to find answers to the problems set. The pupils' behaviour is good overall; they work well with other pupils in carrying out activities, and they are aware of safety procedures. However, they do not always produce their work neatly and carefully in their books. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but few comments of support and advice are provided to help the pupils develop their work further. This is particularly the case in relation to presentation.
68. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues well, when required, and her leadership is satisfactory. She has had some opportunity to observe work in other classes, and she is fully

aware of the issue relating to presentation and marking. She is also aware that, to improve standards further, teachers need to ensure that they provide pupils with work that suits their differing needs.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below those expected by Year 2. However, based on their prior attainment, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
- Suitable use is made of information and communication technology in a number of other subjects of the curriculum.
- Teachers are showing increased confidence in teaching the subject, and the quality of teaching is satisfactory.
- The current resources are unreliable, and this sometimes affects the ability of staff to teach the subject.
- Pupils show good attitudes to the subject.
- The role played by the co-ordinator is good.

### **Commentary**

69. Standards in information and communication technology are below the expected levels for pupils in Year 2, although they make satisfactory progress. Pupils undertake the full range of information and communication technology activities, and all statutory requirements are met. Most pupils are able to produce appropriate text on a variety of topics, with, for example, pupils writing about themselves, and sometimes writing stories and poems. Suitable art work is provided, such as pictures of animals and flowers. Relevant modelling activities are undertaken, and many pupils readily follow instructions in, for example, adventure games. A number of pupils have a secure understanding of control technology, with pupils readily giving instructions to a floor turtle to move appropriate distances, and also to change direction. However, whilst many pupils are able to carry out these activities independently, a significant minority lack confidence in tackling them. They then need help from adults, and sometimes other pupils, to complete their work successfully.
70. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, and they provide a suitable range of activities for their pupils. On occasions, however, the unreliability of some of the current stock of computers makes this task difficult. No specific information and communication technology lessons were observed, but teachers make regular use of computers in lessons, and they give clear advice and guidance to pupils about how to carry out their tasks. Teachers' confidence in using computers has improved since the previous inspection. Good use is also made of teaching assistants, to support and help pupils. The advice provided enables the pupils, including those with special needs, to achieve satisfactorily. Assessment is currently being developed further, and this will enable staff to provide work that is suited to pupils' varying needs.
71. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They listen carefully to their teachers, and they are keen to provide answers to the questions asked. They show good concentration when working with computers, and they work well with their partners, readily taking turns and helping each other. Pupils enjoy the work, behave well, and, once they know what they need to do, they are most keen to accomplish the task set. They are particularly tolerant of the computers, when they refuse to perform as they should.
72. The co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic, and she has contributed well in helping other staff members to improve their information and communication technology skills. She has provided advice, as well as support to her colleagues in lessons. She has also assembled examples of pupils' work, to illustrate the standards being achieved, and she has a clear understanding of how standards can be improved. In particular she realised that the current resources made life

difficult for staff and pupils alike, and a set of wireless lap-top computers is due to arrive shortly. Her leadership and management of the subject are good.

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

73. Teachers are becoming increasingly confident in their use of information and communication technology in the classroom, and they make appropriate use of it in their teaching of a number of subjects, such as English, mathematics, science and geography.

### **HUMANITIES**

**Geography** and **history** were not part of the inspection focus; therefore, no judgement can be made about provision.

74. It is evident from work in pupils' books and from talking to pupils that the planned curriculum for **history** is taught. Pupils compare methods of washing clothes in the past with more modern methods and how bathrooms and kitchens have changed over time. As part of their topic on farms, they look at farming in the past. However, there is very little recorded work and the subject does not contribute to pupils' learning in literacy. There is inconsistency in the work covered in the different parallel classes and no clear development in pupils' historical skills between Year 1 and Year 2.
75. The curriculum for **geography** is planned through two topics over Key Stage 1. Although these cover the national requirements for the subject, the length of time between the units of work is as much as four terms and this reduces the progress that pupils make in developing their geographical skills. In their topic on farming, pupils use their mapping skills to draw a sketch map that includes geographical features and pupils are able to label the fields, woods and local buildings. However, in discussion with pupils in Year 2, they were unable to talk about an area that is different from their own or remember using maps or globes.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

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

- Religious education contributes well to the pupils' personal development.
- Lessons are successfully used to develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Pupils are provided with limited opportunities to write about the subject.

#### **Commentary**

76. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in Year 2 is similar to that expected for pupils of their age. All pupils achieve satisfactorily. They show an expected and appropriate understanding of the Christian religion, which is the main focus for the locally agreed syllabus. The pupils are familiar with a number of Bible stories and understand the reasons behind important Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas. Pupils are able to name other major religions, such as Islam and Sikhism. In all of their discussions about Christianity and other religions, the pupils were respectful and thoughtful about what they said.
77. The lessons observed during the inspection and an analysis of pupils' previous work, indicate that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In a number of lessons observed, pupils' speaking and listening skills were promoted well. In Years 1 and 2, pupils discussed why a church is a special place for Christians and that people can worship in different places. Pupils respected what each other had to say, taking turns to give their points of view. However, very few pupils spoke at length and some had to be encouraged by the class teacher to speak. In another class, pupils successfully identified specific features of a church. The pupils' spiritual development was promoted well, as they all closed their eyes and imagined flying over a church

to see the shape it was from above. Although it is not a specific demand of the school's scheme of work, better use could be made of the subject to develop pupils' writing skills, particularly for the higher attaining pupils.

78. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The curriculum is based on a two-year rolling programme that ensures that pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat work. The current scheme of work is fairly new in the school and has led to the subject being a priority in the school development plan during the next academic year. Although the current assessment procedures are typical of most schools in religious education, these will be improved further as part of the development of the subject.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

**Art and design, design and technology, music** and **physical education** were not a focus of the inspection and there was not enough evidence to report on them fully, therefore no definitive judgements are made about provision.

79. The examples of pupils' previous work in **art and design** and in the one lesson seen in Years 1 and 2, indicates that most pupils reach expected levels by the end of Year 2, with a few pupils exceeding these levels. In the lesson seen, the majority of pupils were working at expected levels for their ages. However, a few pupils exceeded these levels, in particular with regard to the development of observational drawing skills as they sketched vegetables. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, were satisfactorily supported in this lesson and they enthusiastically explained what they were doing. Planning was sound and teaching was judged to be satisfactory. All pupils have many opportunities to develop drawing, sketching and painting skills. Examples of pupils drawing and painting honeysuckle show careful observational skills and the confident use of paint. In addition, pupils had satisfactory opportunities to develop an idea of three-dimensional art as they made farm animals out of recyclable materials. Pupils in Year 2 spoke enthusiastically about visiting a local art gallery to observe and sketch the work of famous artists. However their knowledge of the names of any famous artists was limited.
80. During the **art and design** lesson seen, a group of pupils in Year 2 worked with a teaching assistant developing **design and technology** skills, as they worked on their food technology topic. The teaching assistant questioned the pupils effectively and promoted the importance of healthy eating and food hygiene well. Standards for this group were judged to be as expected for their ages. Teaching was judged to be good in the Year 1 and 2, design and technology lesson, where pupils learnt about stir-frying vegetables. Good questioning from the teacher generated a number of ideas, which led to sound discussion and effective promotion of speaking and listening skills. Pupils' understanding was developed effectively as the teacher then asked more complex questions. As a result, the pupils were then able to begin to draw their own designs. Standards in design and technology in this lesson were judged to be below the expected levels. In addition, many pupils had difficulty with the writing element of the task; writing the title and the date. This clearly showed the low levels of basic writing skills.
81. Pupils in Year 2 spoke enthusiastically about what they had been doing in art and design, in particular with regard to the three-dimensional work they are currently working on. Discussions regarding what they have made in design and technology were somewhat limited and indicated some inconsistencies between classes. Pupils spoke about making vehicles but had no idea of how wheels moved, or what axles were. They said that not everyone made a model. In one class, pupils spoke about making cars with batteries to make them move whilst other pupils said that their vehicles did not move. Other pupils spoke of not finishing their models and no one really understood what the term 'evaluating' their models meant. However, the school development plan highlights the necessity to address this issue. There is little evidence of information and communication technology being used to support either subject although pupils do use an art program to generate pictures and patterns. Visits out of school to the local art gallery satisfactorily enrich the art and design curriculum.
82. During the inspection no lessons were seen in **music**. However, in the acts of worship, pupils sang with enthusiasm and suitable skill, showing appropriate control of rhythm and pitch. The

standard of their singing was similar to that expected from pupils of this age. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were good, and they clearly enjoy 'making music'. A study of teachers' planning shows that appropriate coverage is made for all aspects of the subject during the year.

83. During the inspection no whole lessons were seen in **physical education**. In the brief observations made, however, pupils' games skills appeared to be broadly as expected. Pupils were enjoying themselves, and their attitudes were good. A study of teachers' planning shows that appropriate coverage is made for all aspects of the subject during the year. The 'Bluecoats United' football team is a useful enhancement of the curriculum for some pupils.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Personal and social education makes a positive contribution to the pupils' good relationships and behaviour.

### **Commentary**

84. Lessons in personal, social and health education are well focused. Two lessons were seen during the inspection and the teaching in both of these was good. The school provides pupils with a range of strategies for dealing with relationships and developing a sense of personal responsibility for their actions. Pupils are taught to respect each other and to respect property. This makes a good contribution to developing the pupils' understanding of living in a democracy and is reflected in their good relationships and behaviour. As well as the focused lessons, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work and play together at other times and so reinforce the skills they are learning. The subject contributes well to the development of the pupils' speaking and listening skills.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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