

INSPECTION REPORT

MARPOOL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Exmouth

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113096

Headteacher: Eric Howard

Lead inspector: Raymond Jardine

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 March 2004

Inspection number: 256857

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	330
School address:	Moorfield Road Exmouth Devon
Postcode:	EX8 3QW
Telephone number:	01395 263961
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Barry Stanley
Date of previous inspection:	23 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is larger than the average primary school and includes a nursery. Most pupils come from the immediate surrounding district of Withycombe Raleigh in Exmouth. Their social backgrounds vary widely; the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average and has been rising a little in recent years compared to the national trend. Overall, the pupils' social and economic circumstances are below average. Almost all are of white UK heritage but a very small number are of mixed ethnic origins; none has English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving other than at the usual times is about average overall. However, more tend to join than leave; some enter in later Years 5 and 6 to make a fresh start when they have had difficulties in other schools. There are 68 pupils (20.6%) on the register of special educational need; about average. Of these, 23 receive additional support from outside agencies, including four who have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Their needs vary considerably. They include moderate and severe learning and social and emotional difficulties. Five pupils have speech and communication difficulties and a small number have hearing or visual impairment or other physical disabilities. In addition, one pupil has autistic tendencies and two are diabetic. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is wide in range but overall, it is below average, especially in relation to personal, language and number skills which are well below. The school gained Investor in People Award and a school Achievement Award in 2002. In addition, it gained an Eco-School Silver Award in the same year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7428	Ray Jardine	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology
9446	Helen Griffiths	Lay inspector	
17693	Esther Digby	Team inspector	English Geography History English as an additional language
28071	Andrew Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education Special educational needs
32218	Andrew Mumford	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art Design technology Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Marpool is an effective school that provides very good value for money. Pupils achieve well in most subjects and the school is very inclusive. The teaching is good; some is very good. Pupils enjoy school because its climate is very encouraging and the curriculum very broad and interesting. Management is very good under the strong leadership of the headteacher.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well, especially in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), but their writing is under-developed and ICT not applied enough in subjects
- Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to school and achieve well; the induction arrangements and partnership with parents are particularly effective
- Lessons are stimulating, very well planned and appropriately challenging for the range of pupils' abilities; as a result, pupils are enthusiastic learners
- Pupils are very well cared for and monitored by teachers, well-trained support assistants and adult helpers. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs
- The curriculum is broad, innovative and much enriched through extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. Gifted and talented pupils in particular gain much from these experiences
- The headteacher and assistant heads provide very good vision and direction, based on thorough monitoring and reviews. Staff work closely as a team and are reflective about their work

Reasonable progress has been made since the last inspection. Almost all the issues raised then have been addressed fully, especially the use of assessment and provision for pupils with special educational needs. However, not enough progress has been made in handwriting and spelling. Teaching quality has improved considerably, as have standards in science, mathematics and ICT.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 eligible for free school meals*

Overall achievement is good. In 2003, Year 6 pupils' standards in English were below those nationally but both mathematics and science were in line. In relation to similar schools, standards in English were average; in mathematics and science they were well above. The school met its target for mathematics but fell short of it in English. Year 2 standards were in line with similar schools in reading but below in mathematics and well below in writing. Standards seen during the inspection show Year 6 pupils are about the national average in mathematics and science and pupils are achieving well in both. In English, they are below average; overall achievement is satisfactory but it is good in reading. Year 2 pupils achieve broadly average standards in reading but are well below average in their writing. In mathematics they are a little below average. In view of their attainment on entry they achieve well in both reading and mathematics; achievement in writing is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Most are likely to achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception in their personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. However, most are likely to be below them in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.

Pupils acquire good ICT skills in a broad range of contexts, although they do not apply them enough in subjects. They also achieve well in history and physical education. Music is a strength.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. They have positive attitudes, behave well and there have been no exclusions for several years. Attendance is about average and punctuality, good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching quality is good, especially in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 where some is very good or excellent. Most lessons are very well planned, are stimulating and capture pupils' interest so that they learn well. Occasionally, where discussions are too long or there is too little challenge, behaviour deteriorates and the pace of learning slows. Teachers use their assessments very well to match tasks appropriately to pupils' abilities; learning support assistants and adult helpers are carefully briefed so that those with special educational needs are supported well. Teachers' very good questioning skills encourage pupils to think and explain. Resources are used well but the lack of sufficient ICT resources in classrooms constrains teachers and pupils.

The curriculum is very broad and enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and events. The accommodation is fully utilised but is insufficient for the school's needs and the library is inadequate. Pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported and are much involved in school life. The school's partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good.

The headteacher's vision for the school as a learning community for all is very evident in its work and he provides very good leadership. Staff are delegated much responsibility and work closely. Management is very good, particularly the school's systems for monitoring and comparing its performance and its financial management. Governors carry out their statutory duties well and are effective, but they need to be more fully involved in monitoring the progress of school priorities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are highly satisfied. They strongly support the school and are much involved. They feel well informed and believe that the teaching is good and that their children are expected to work hard. Pupils are also very happy with school; they feel secure and find other children friendly. Most think their lessons are interesting; their teachers listen to their ideas and help them improve.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Take steps to improve pupils' writing skills to enable them to write accurately and at length in a range of contexts
- Provide training and ICT resources to enhance teaching and learning and to enable pupils to apply their ICT skills across subjects to raise their standards

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and are likely to achieve the expected goals for their age in most areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those more able, gifted and talented make good progress. By Year 6, standards are broadly average in most subjects; in music they are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics, science and in information and communication technology (ICT) skills but they do not apply their ICT skills enough in other subjects
- Standards in English are below average; reading is better than writing by Year 6. Pupils could achieve better in their handwriting, spelling and extended writing
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development and well in all the other areas of learning
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their targets and education plans are well founded and support provided for them in lessons is good
- More able, gifted and talented pupils achieve well; most lessons are well planned to meet their needs. There are particular strengths in music and sports

Commentary

1. In 2003, pupils' standards in national tests in Year 6 were below those nationally in English but in line in both mathematics and science. In relation to socio-economically similar schools, standards were about the same in English but well above in both mathematics and science. Those pupils who were in the school throughout Years 2 to Year 6 achieved very well compared to others nationally. There were a significant proportion of pupils who joined the school in Years 5 and 6, sometimes seeking a fresh start and whose achievements were not as high. Good proportions achieved above the expected Level 4 in both mathematics and science but in English the proportion was relatively low. The school exceeded its target for mathematics in 2003 but fell a little short of its target in English. There have been no patterns of difference in the attainment of boys and girls in recent years. Overall the 2003 results showed an improvement over the previous year in all three subjects. In English, writing standards lagged behind reading by some margin; a weakness the school is aware of and which is a current priority for development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.1 (24.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.1 (25.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.0 (26.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Inspection findings confirm that the improved standards of the previous year in Year 6 are being sustained. Standards in English are below average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, but writing is considerably weaker than reading. Handwriting and spelling are not well developed and many pupils do not write at length as well as they should. There are some signs of improvement in pupils' enthusiasm for writing as a result of a more intensive focus on it by the school. Reading standards are better; pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically

about the stories and characters. Standards in both mathematics and science are about average and pupils achieve well in both subjects; in science their understanding of scientific principles and knowledge of facts are particularly good but the more able in Year 6 could do better in their enquiry skills. Pupils also achieve well in their acquisition of ICT skills across a broad range of contexts and applications. Teaching in the subject is good and the ICT suite used very well but there are too few opportunities provided to apply pupils' skills across subjects. Pupils attain the standards expected in the agreed syllabus in religious education by Year 6. In both history and physical education pupils achieve well, especially in gymnastics. The provision for music is very good. Many pupils have additional music tuition or are involved in the very good choir; and, as a result, they achieve well and some, very well. Overall standards in music by Year 6 are good.

- In 2003, standards in national tests for Year 2 pupils were below the national average in reading, but well below in both writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, standards were about average in reading but well below in writing and below in mathematics. In mathematics the proportion achieving the expected Level 2 was in line with that nationally but few pupils exceeded it. Standards by Year 2 have remained below or well below the national average in recent years, although reading improved in 2003.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.9 (13.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.5 (13.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.7 (15.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards seen during the inspection in Year 2 are broadly average in reading and pupils' progress is good as a result of effective guided reading sessions and well-targeted reading support for individuals. In mathematics and science, pupils' standards are a little below average. Taking account of their attainment on entry, pupils achieve well in these subjects. However, writing standards are well below average. Pupils have not been achieving enough but the current school focus on improving writing is having a positive impact.
- Pupils enter the nursery with below average attainment particularly in their language, number and personal and social skills. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and it is well led. As a result, pupils achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development because of the strong emphasis placed on this area of learning in both nursery and reception years. In their communication language and literacy, mathematical, physical and creative development, pupils achieve well. In most areas of learning, pupils are likely to achieve the expected goals for their age, but in their communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, most are likely to be below them by the end of their reception year.
- The school is very inclusive. Pupils are closely monitored; targets are set for them in key areas and boys and girls achieve equally well. Those with special educational needs make good progress because their education plans are specific, well targeted and staff know these pupils very well. Support provided for them by the special educational needs co-ordinator and support staff is very effective. More able, gifted and talented pupils also achieve well, partly because good opportunities are provided for them through enrichment and extra-curricular activities; for example, music tuition and coaching from experts in gymnastics and other sports. Most lessons are also adapted well for the range of abilities in them.
- The good achievements in most areas across the school owe much to the very good leadership of the headteacher, who receives very good support from his assistant headteachers. They have inspired a very good team spirit throughout the staff, focused on

achieving high standards and a breadth of experience for all pupils. A strong feature is the way in which the school evaluates its performance, especially teaching and pupils' achievements, and encourages staff to be innovative and share the best practice. Teaching quality is consequently good and the curriculum carefully planned to ensure pupils in the mixed age classes throughout the school build on their knowledge and skills progressively.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their attendance is satisfactory, punctuality good and they enjoy school. Their moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is good and contributes much to the school's ethos

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show much interest in learning, concentrate well and are enthusiastic.
- Because teachers have high expectations and manage pupils well, pupils' behaviour is good in lessons, assemblies and around the school.
- Relationships between pupils and among pupils and adults are very good. Pupils show good respect for one another's feelings and beliefs and are supportive of one another.
- Pupils are confident and very willing to take responsibility.

Commentary

8. At all stages, pupils enjoy school and all it has to offer. Children in the nursery and reception classes settle quickly into school routines and inter-act very well with older pupils. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. Some are highly articulate and keen to enter into discussion. They listen well to the views of others and co-operate well. For example, in a Year 5/6 science lesson on reproduction in plants, pupils worked through the problem set them by their teacher by discussing it well in pairs. Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour. They are courteous and helpful to visitors.
9. Behaviour is good throughout the school in lessons, assemblies and playtimes. This reflects the views of the parents who responded to the questionnaire. Very occasionally, when the pace of a lesson slackens or pupils are kept seated on the carpet for too long, pupils' attention wanders and they become restive. Although school rules are kept to a minimum, pupils are very well aware of how they should behave and fully understand the difference between right and wrong. The school has very good systems to promote good behaviour through the house system and through the achievement awards and these are appreciated by pupils. At playtimes, because of good and pro-active supervision, pupils play well together; for example, boys and girls play football together, refereed by a lunchtime supervisor. No bullying or harassment was observed during the inspection. The school has very good strategies for handling it and pupils know what to do if it should occur.
10. Pupils are enterprising and respond well to the many very good opportunities for taking responsibility. They are also very keen to take part in the many extra-curricular activities. Relationships between pupils and adults and among the pupils themselves are good; for example, in a Year 5/6 PSHE lesson on emotions, the teacher's very good relationship with her class ensured that pupils felt confident, secure and able to talk about their fears, ensuring that they could make good progress in their understanding of their own and others' feelings.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.2
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. Attendance is in line with national figures and punctuality is good. Staff monitor attendance effectively and are well supported by the Educational Welfare Service. The school also operates a highly effective “Safe to School” programme, run by parent volunteers, to call families on the first morning of unexplained absence. Unauthorised absence is below average. This is despite the high mobility of families locally and a small number of families with attendance problems. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection six years ago.
12. Pupils’ social and moral development is very good. They behave with consideration for others and have a well-developed sense of how their behaviour might affect others. Their sense of community is very well developed through the many opportunities for them to take responsibility and the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The School Forum makes a very good contribution to the life of the school; for example, at the meeting during the inspection, pupils discussed improvements to the school playground. The school is also a member of the Eco-Schools programme. In discussions, pupils felt confident that they could ask for help at any time from any adult in the school and could think of very little that they would like to change. Staff act as good role-models, presenting a calm and thoughtful approach to life and the school and discussing issues with pupils during the school day. The system of peer support, such as playground buddies and the Marpool minders, provides very good support among pupils. Children in the nursery and reception classes make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The school’s personal, social and health education programme makes a very good contribution to pupils’ moral and social development. They are encouraged to think of others and they support several charities, which they choose themselves.
13. Provision for pupils’ spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils have many good opportunities to take part in concerts and music festivals and to reflect on their own beliefs and the beliefs of others through religious education and during collective worship. They show good self-knowledge in discussions. There are also good links with local churches. Pupils have the opportunity to study their own community through the many visits and activities provided for them. They also learn about other cultures through the many overseas visitors associated with the school’s Comenius¹ Project and through residential visits in France and the Netherlands. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity of life in modern multicultural Britain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school; some are very good and excellent. The curriculum is very broad and enriched through a very good range of extra-curricular clubs, activities and visits. Provision for pupils’, health, welfare and safety is also very good. Pupils receive very good guidance and support, are regularly consulted and much involved in school life. The school has a very well developed partnership with parents, the community and with partner schools.

¹ This is a European Union funded project through which the school has established links with schools in five EU member countries to develop understanding and cultural awareness.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good and have improved since the last inspection. There are particular strengths in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 where some teaching and learning are very good or excellent. Assessment is used very well to match work to pupils' capabilities and to monitor their progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of most subjects is good, including English, mathematics, science and ICT
- Most lessons are stimulating and capture pupils' interest, but on the few occasions when there is too little challenge, pupils lose concentration and their behaviour deteriorates
- Lessons are generally planned very well. In most, tasks are planned at several levels to meet the wide range of pupils' needs; technical vocabulary is highlighted and emphasised well
- Teachers use questioning and tasks to very good effect so that pupils are challenged to think and explain their reasoning; more able pupils learn well in most lessons as a result
- Learning support assistants and adult helpers are deployed effectively and provide good support to pupils with special educational needs
- Resources are used well to enhance learning, but the lack of computers, projectors and interactive whiteboards in classrooms limits the quality of presentation and discussion

Commentary

14. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. There are strengths in the Foundation Stage where a substantial proportion is very good and in Years 3 to 6 where some excellent teaching was seen. The teaching of most subjects inspected is good, including those of English, mathematics, science and ICT and there are strengths in physical education and music. There was only one lesson with unsatisfactory teaching. Without exception, those many parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire thought the teaching good; parents think their children are expected to work hard and appreciate the guidance they are given to help their children at home. Pupils enjoy lessons and respond very positively to their teachers because the contexts chosen are often stimulating and challenging and relationships throughout are good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	13 (26%)	28 (56%)	6 (12%)	1 (2%)	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.

15. Teaching quality has substantially improved since the last inspection. There are several underlying reasons for this improvement. Teaching is closely monitored and supported by senior managers and subject leaders; all teachers are in some way involved in observing each other. One benefit has been to disseminate the best practice and establish consistency in teaching methods. Consequently, pupils respond to common approaches; for example, by raising their 'thinking thumb' when they have ideas to share. They also experience consistent approaches to managing their behaviour and attention. The focus of training has also arisen from careful analyses of teaching quality; recent areas of improvement have been on teachers' and support staff's questioning skills and introducing accelerated learning² methods that are proving successful. The school has made some good appointments in recent years and the breadth of expertise that teachers share is impressive.

² These are teaching methods based on research into how children learn.

16. Lesson objectives are almost always shared with pupils and used well to help them focus their work and consolidate what they have learned in good plenary sessions. Most lessons are very carefully planned. In the better teaching, activities and tasks are carefully graded to match the wide range of pupils' abilities within the mixed age classes so that all learn effectively. This was a key feature of an excellent mathematics lesson where Year 3 and 4 pupils solved word problems and learned strategies for dividing two digit numbers; for example, by 'chunking' them into manageable bits. Technical vocabulary is always highlighted in plans and emphasised in a variety of ways to ensure pupils quickly assimilate and apply new terms.
17. A variety of strategies is employed to ensure pupils' needs are met. Those with more severe learning difficulties tend to be concentrated into one of the three parallel age classes throughout the school to make the most efficient use of the learning support assistants and adult helpers available. These assistants are well briefed by teachers; they show a good balance of questioning and guidance when supporting individuals and groups. Well-taught booster lessons for targeted pupils in literacy and mathematics and a good reading recovery programme are also provided. As a result, the learning of pupils with special educational needs is good. Another feature is the very good questioning skills teachers and assistants show that encourages pupils to think and explain their reasoning, especially in mathematics and science lessons. More able pupils in particular respond well to the open questions teachers regularly use in the early part of lessons and the more challenging activities they are provided with. Overall, very good use is made of assessment to guide the pitch of the work, to group pupils and monitor progress towards their targets.
18. The pace of most lessons is maintained well because little time is lost in managing challenging behaviour or pupils off task. In the great majority of lessons, class management strategies are very good and praise in particular is used effectively. Teachers expect pupils to work independently and the level of co-operation between pupils on shared tasks is often good; for example, when working at computers in the ICT suite. Occasionally, however, class discussions extend for too long a period, some pupils become restless and teachers need to focus their attention again. In the one unsatisfactory lesson observed, pupils were not engaged or challenged sufficiently; they consequently lost interest and were not managed well so that their learning was too slow.
19. Resources are used well and in some lessons very effectively to enhance pupils' learning. For example, a range of resources such as number lines and squares helps pupils solve problems in mathematics and they often use whiteboards to show their responses to teachers in literacy lessons. A computer projector and inter-active whiteboard in the ICT suite is used very well to enhance the quality of discussions and to illustrate new skills but the lack of such resources in classrooms is frustrating to teachers who have the skills to explore their potential. There is only one computer in each classroom which limits their use in day-to-day work. Plans are in place to provide more of these resources this year to improve teaching quality further.
20. Homework is set regularly and generally extends the learning in lessons well. Marking is good; the best provides much feedback to pupils so that they are well informed of how they can improve and it is often supplemented with verbal feedback in subsequent lessons.

The curriculum

The school provides a very good curriculum, which is broad and balanced. The high quality and range of learning opportunities are enhanced by the very good extra-curricular activities. The school makes best use of the limited accommodation available and uses resources well to support pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of stimulating activities is well matched to pupils' needs and increases their confidence and self-esteem.
- Planning is very good and linked to priorities for improvement.
- Innovative approaches to curriculum development are well supported by rigorous monitoring and evaluation.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Provision for extending learning through out-of-hours clubs and activities is very good.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory for the needs of the school.

Commentary

21. The innovative approach to curriculum development, which is informed by rigorous analysis, monitoring and review, is a key factor in the improvement in standards and good achievement of pupils. The headteacher, with the senior management team, provides outstanding curriculum leadership. This seeks to maximise the learning opportunities for all pupils through a curriculum that includes a range of strategies and teaching styles to promote pupils' confidence and enjoyment of learning.
22. Planning is very detailed and relates very clearly to the school's priorities for improvement. Staff in the parallel classes plan well together and are very successful in adapting national guidelines for lessons in mixed age classes. Good use is made of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy that have been adapted for the school's needs. In addition, teachers make good links between subjects, where appropriate, and ensure that pupils are motivated to learn as a result of relevant and interesting activities.
23. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is inclusive, takes good account of their needs and is well planned. The skilled learning support assistants are deployed well. Most support takes place in the classroom, but there is also targeted support for individual younger pupils in their reading and older pupils in literacy and numeracy. The school now manages well situations when pupils are withdrawn for additional support by ensuring they do not miss the same parts of lessons. Individual education plans are detailed and reviewed regularly with teachers, pupils and parents in accordance with the special educational needs code of practice. The school also makes good use of specialist expertise from outside agencies when assessing pupils' needs.
24. The school provides an exceptionally good range of after-school clubs, which cover many different aspects of music, sport and life skills and which are very well attended. The curriculum is also greatly enhanced by visits, imaginative use of the local environment as well as residential trips to other countries. The school's very positive approach to equality of opportunity ensures that all who want to go on specific visits are enabled. It has developed strong links with a number of schools in Europe through the Comenius Project. These are used effectively to enhance subject based teaching and learning, and to widen pupils' horizons by increase their understanding of other cultures. A good range of visitors provides additional interest and context to lessons and there are a number of parents and other local people who help in school. The very good links with the local secondary school and university also result in a wide range of visitors and helpers who extend pupils' subject knowledge and their understanding of the wider world. For example, a science project with other schools focussed on the use of ICT and scientific enquiry and was funded by a multi-national company. As a result, pupils are well prepared to move to the next stage of their education.
25. The school buildings are currently inadequate for its needs. Although senior managers plan effectively to make the best use of the available space, this shortfall has an impact on provision – as, for example, in the library, which has to be used as a classroom for part of the day. The school has developed its grounds to provide a valuable learning and recreational resource in a most imaginative way. Besides the play areas, there are a number of different habitats with trails running through each providing very good opportunities for study and relaxation. The staff resources are used well. Teachers, support staff and other adults who help in school are well

trained and all make a good contribution to the ethos of the school and the culture of high expectations of work and behaviour.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is also very good. Pupils are very much involved in the school; they are consulted and their views listened to and acted on.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction arrangements for pupils in nursery and reception are very good and much valued by parents.
- There are very effective procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid.
- All adults know pupils very well and provide very good levels of care.
- There are good systems for monitoring pupils' academic standards and progress.
- Arrangements for monitoring pupils' personal development are very effective.

Commentary

26. There are very good arrangements for children when they start at the school. The arrangements include preliminary visits to the school by both children and parents and home visits by two members of the nursery and reception staff. These visits enable teachers to gather information about the children and, as a result, children settle in very quickly and make good progress. Pupils who join the school at other times, especially the Fresh Start pupils, are given buddies as peer support. Parents of these pupils at the meeting commented on how well their children had settled into school. Procedures for the transfer of pupils to the next stage of their education are very thorough.
27. The school has very good health and safety procedures. Child protection procedures are very effective. The special educational needs co-ordinator (an assistant headteacher) is the designated person for child protection and for pupils in public care. She has been recently trained and the headteacher and the other assistant headteacher are to be trained later this term. Staff are very aware of child protection issues and maintain good logs of concerns. There are very good guidelines and training for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Links with local social services are good. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for monitoring pupils' medical conditions are very good. Very good numbers of staff have been trained in first aid and the rest are to be trained later this year. Emergency procedures are very thorough. Governors and the conscientious caretaker carry out risk assessments regularly and a health and safety audit is also taken by the local education authority. School security is very good.
28. There is a strong bond of trust between pupils and all adults who work in the school. All pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt there was at least one adult to whom they could turn for advice. Adults know the pupils very well and monitor their personal development very effectively through class files, the monitoring of celebration assembly awards, Records of Achievement and annual reports. Academic monitoring is used very well to inform pupils' reports. These include details of pupils' activities and achievements both outside and in school. When asked what they felt about the opportunities offered by the school, one pupil said, "It's really exciting". Well-developed tracking systems are used to check on pupils' progress in the key areas of literacy and numeracy and pupils really understand what they have to do to improve. Pupils' views are sought consistently through

circle time, the School Forum, assemblies and within their personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils in their questionnaire felt confident that their views are listened to and acted upon.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are very well developed. Links with the community and with other schools are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- The school provides parents with very good information.
- The school has very good links with parents through homework books, parent helpers and parent forums.
- Very good links with other local schools provide many benefits for the pupils.
- The school has very good links with the local and wider community.

Commentary

29. In a high return to the questionnaire, parents and carers expressed very positive views on all aspects of the work of the school. Information provided for parents is very good. Details about the work pupils are to cover are provided each term by class teachers. Home/school books are used very well as a means of dialogue between school and home. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed of events and the headteacher and all teaching staff are always available for informal consultation at the end of the day. This is much appreciated by parents. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report are very clearly written and informative. Written annual reports are very good: they provide diagnostic and thorough information on children's progress, set targets and offer parents and pupils the opportunity to comment. The home/school agreement has been signed by all parents. Parent forums have been held for many years to enable parents to discuss any areas of concern, such as new educational initiatives. Several parents have taken part in a learning skills group: this has proved so successful that it has been extended to include a drop-in group for all parents.
30. The school works very well parents of pupils with special educational needs. They have very good opportunities to meet with class teachers, the headteacher or the special educational needs co-ordinator. Parents are informed early on in if the school has any concerns, which are then closely monitored. On a termly basis, parents are involved with the target-setting process for their child's individual action plan. Parents are always invited to review meetings for pupils with Statements of Special Needs.
31. There are very good links with other schools and the local secondary school, through the local academic council (an association of all local schools) and through the visits of Year 7 teachers and learning support assistants. Booster weekends in the summer also include teachers from the secondary school. Former pupils frequently visit the school. Through the academic council, co-ordinators from local primary schools moderate pupils' work, train together and visit one another's schools. Sponsorship for local education projects in science and dance has also benefited all pupils within the cluster.
32. Parents support the school very well through the School Association, which runs a very good range of social and fund-raising events. It raises very good sums to support trips and visits and buy playground equipment. A considerable number of parents also help in school on a regular basis.

33. The school has very good links with the local and wider community: children take part each year in country dancing festivals, music festivals (including the Devon Schools Prom) and sports events, particularly in gymnastics and swimming. Members of the RSVP group (Retired Senior Volunteer Programme) regularly help in the classroom. One member recently talked to pupils about life as a child in World War II. Local businesses support the school and the Prince's Trust helped construct a garden for the school last year. The school has also developed very strong links with the wider community through local universities. Student teachers from Denmark and Finland and teachers from Egypt have visited the school and there are strong links through the Comenius Project with partner schools across Europe. These associations contribute much to pupils' understanding of other cultures, particularly European.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported very well by the assistant headteachers. The leadership of other key staff is good. Management is very well developed; self-evaluation is embedded in the school's practice. The governance of the school is effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a learning community for all; staff work closely as a team and they are encouraged to take responsibility and to be innovative
- Pupils' progress is monitored and reviewed regularly by senior managers and subject leaders, and action taken to address underachievement
- Performance management arrangements are well developed and involve all teaching and support staff. There is much consistency in teaching methods as a result
- Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and carry out their statutory duties well. However, their monitoring should be more sharply focused on school priorities
- The school's finances are very well managed and resources used very efficiently
- Arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school and for trainee teachers are very good

Commentary

34. The headteacher's vision and high aspirations for the school are much reflected in its work and it has a deservedly good reputation in the community. It strives to be a learning community for all - staff, parents, students and pupils. Staff throughout the school work very closely as a team towards common goals focused on raising standards and providing a rich and broad education for all pupils. Parents are provided with training and guidance to enable them to help their own children and others in school. The school's partnership with those in five European countries, involving visits from teachers and students, broadens the horizons of staff and pupils. Initial teacher training in partnership with two higher education institutions is also very well developed and has benefited the school in many ways, including the recruitment of staff. Above all, there is much delegation of responsibility throughout that has resulted in staff being self-critical and innovative.
35. Monitoring and evaluation are extensive and embedded in the school's practice; for example, pupils' progress is regularly monitored by key subject co-ordinators, class teachers and the senior management team in relation to their targets for writing, mathematics and behaviour in particular. The school's assessment database is analysed for patterns and action taken; for example, to improve the achievement of girls two years ago and to improve reading standards. Booster classes and individual support help targeted individuals to raise their game; some to ensure they achieve the expected standard by Year 6, but also aimed at potential 'Level 5' pupils. All staff are involved in observing teaching on a regular basis in their management roles. As a result, teaching quality has improved substantially since the last inspection because good practice is widely disseminated and there is a lot of consistency in teaching methods and in managing pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is

also very well managed. Senior managers monitor the impact of school policies such as behaviour, and expert advice was sought to guide the school's race equality policy (now fully in place) and its monitoring. Overall, the school is a very inclusive community in which every child matters and their personal and academic progress monitored.

36. Management structures are clear and effective. The assistant headteachers provide very effective support for the headteacher and staff; both are good role-models to others in their teaching. Arrangements for staff's performance management are well developed and include all support and administrative staff as well as teachers. Teachers' objectives are linked to school priorities and to progress targets for their pupils. Staff new to the school, including those newly qualified, are supported and mentored very effectively. Training is also used well to develop the staff's expertise and the good practice within the school has been recognised through its achievement of Investors in People Award. Subject co-ordinators for all subjects are given time to monitor standards and teaching quality in their subjects. All have delegated budgets to manage their subjects; they also produce valuable review reports for governors and the staff and argue the case for the resources they need. The leadership and management of most subjects are consequently good and some, such as ICT, are very effectively led. The school rigorously compares its standards with national benchmarks. The findings of these reviews underpin a very clear and appropriately focused school development plan.
37. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and know the school's strengths and weaknesses. The committee structures are efficient and the leaders of each meet regularly as a strategic planning and policy group. Governors are informed of the school's work through reports and presentations from key staff, headteacher reports and their own visits, often associated with their subject or class links. This enables them, for example, to help direct the school's financial resources to the most appropriate areas for improvement, in collaboration with the headteacher. However, their subsequent monitoring could be more sharply focused on priorities in the school's development plan so that its progress and the impact of their spending on improvements are systematically evaluated. Governors are much involved in shaping the school's direction. For example, they took over the school's catering service two years ago and this is now thriving; staffing levels have been adjusted to meet the school's needs better and to provide more support at senior level for the headteacher. The finance committee receive regular reports and financial controls and management are effective. The latest auditor's report found systems to be appropriate and sound. Carry-forwards from one year to another are well managed and appropriate.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	769504	Balance from previous year	10800
Total expenditure	752942	Balance carried forward to the next	27362
Expenditure per pupil	2182		

38. Governors and staff make very good use of the resources made available to them. Recent plans for extending ICT resources involved tenders from four sources for example. Minor building works have been achieved at low cost through careful planning. The school also makes very efficient use of most resources such as learning support assistants when working with special educational needs pupils by concentrating them into particular classes. The school carefully monitors its provision, especially teaching quality, and compares its standards with others. Overall it is implementing the principles of best value very well. Pupils achieve well and the school provides a good education from limited resources. Spending per pupil is considerably below the average nationally. Overall, the school is providing very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There is good provision in the Foundation Stage, with some very good features. Children have a good start to school. Induction procedures and partnership with parents are particularly effective. Children start in the nursery for three sessions per week. Discussions on an individual basis between parents and teachers about their child's readiness lead to decisions about when this is built up to five sessions per week. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. They start school with attainment that is below expectations overall, particularly in their personal and language skills and knowledge of number. Although they are still below in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development when they move into Year 1, they are broadly in line with expectations in the other areas. This is as a result of good teaching, which is exciting and stimulating. Support staff are very effective and contribute significantly to children's progress.

The Foundation Stage is well led and managed, and teamwork, involving teaching and support staff, is a particular strength. Assessment procedures are very good in all areas of learning. This enables teachers to plan challenging activities for the differing needs of the children. As a result, children with special educational needs also achieve well. All areas of learning are thoroughly covered through the very good planning systems, so the children enjoy a well structured, broad and balanced curriculum. Because of this, children's attitudes to their work and to school are good. There is a good range of resources, but the accommodation for the reception classes is unsatisfactory. Because a class goes to the library to work, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons, it is not possible to have the complete range of materials and resources available to children. This constrains their achievement in these areas. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between adults and children create an atmosphere where children learn to be positive about themselves and their work.
- Teachers take many opportunities to develop children's personal and social skills.

Commentary

39. This area of learning receives a high profile in the Foundation Stage, so children make very good progress. By the time they leave the reception class most are likely to reach the early learning goals as a result of very good teaching. The very good induction procedures ensure that children arrive to a secure environment, and this is further developed through the very good relationships between adults and children. This gives the children confidence to try new activities and to persevere with challenging tasks. Their behaviour is good. Children in the nursery separate from their carers confidently, and settle quickly into the well established routines of the class. They are able to take turns and share milk and fruit at snack time. Children are encouraged to be independent whenever possible, but are well supported when they need help. These and other activities are well planned to ensure children have consistent opportunities to develop their personal and social skills.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good opportunities are planned by teachers for children to develop their language skills, especially speaking and listening

Commentary

40. Children enter the nursery with speech and language skills that are significantly below those expected. They make good progress in all aspects of communication, language and literacy but are still below expected levels by the time they enter Year 1, especially in reading and writing. Teaching is good with pace and vitality. Teachers and support staff provide good models for using language, and they plan a good range of activities to develop children's language skills. In the nursery, many opportunities are given to children to listen to adults and other children and to speak in different contexts. Children are encouraged to make marks as they write on whiteboards and homemade books. In reception classes the literacy lessons provide a good structured programme, and children learn to link sounds to letters. Despite this, few children recognise many words from the books they are reading, although they enjoy sharing them with an adult.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned and -taught lessons provide interest and challenge

Commentary

41. Children's achievement in this area is good. They start school significantly below expected levels of attainment, and make good progress. However, most will probably not reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The good teaching is characterised by well-planned lessons that give clear structure to children's learning. Because pace is good and questions well directed, children's interest is maintained. Good assessment means that work matches children's knowledge and understanding well. Opportunities are taken at times other than numeracy lessons, such as registration, to practise estimating and counting, which helps develop children's number skills. However, their use of number and their understanding of mathematical vocabulary, such as 'more than', are less secure. Because they use a variety of recycled materials for modelling, they have opportunities to develop their knowledge of simple shapes, but their spoken language restricts their ability to identify them correctly.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High expectations from teachers lead to children developing good skills, especially in ICT and technology

Commentary

42. Children achieve well in this area and are in line with expectations by the time they enter Year 1. This is because of the good teaching and the wide range of experiences planned for them. They develop good control over the mouse when using the computer. When making a picture they can use a paint program to create a recognisable figure and can click on icons to make choices. Teachers plan good opportunities for them to learn about the world in which they live and how people in other times and places have lived. Role-play is an important feature of this in the nursery particularly, where the children learn through acting out their ideas; for instance, in the Three Bears' cottage. Because skills are systematically taught, children throughout the Foundation Stage know how and when to use simple tools, such as when making their own badges. On her own initiative, one child 'repaired' a plastic knife that was broken, using masking tape.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have well-planned opportunities to play inside and outside in both nursery and reception classes
- Sometimes, the element of challenge is limited in lessons in the hall

Commentary

43. By the time children leave the reception class their attainment is in line with expectations. Since they start school below expectations their achievement is good. This is as a result of good teaching. Many opportunities are planned for children to develop their skills. Outdoor play in nursery involving tricycles and balls develops their co-ordination. In the reception classes, searching for bears in the sand and pouring dry porridge oats develops manipulative skills. In the reception classes, most children hold pencils and crayons correctly and can write in a controlled way but many still find using scissors difficult, so cutting is not accurate or controlled. Use of the hall provides a large space to move around, and children show good control over their bodies. However, in these lessons challenge is sometimes limited for children in the reception classes. As a result, they are working within their current capabilities rather than being extended.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative play is used well by teachers to link in with other areas of learning

Commentary

44. Overall, children's attainment is in line with expectations by the time they enter Year 1. This is good achievement, due to good teaching. Because children sing a lot in the Foundation Stage, most develop a good sense of pitch and timing. They have a sound knowledge of the names of percussion instruments, and how to play them. Children draw and paint pictures that show detail; for instance, in faces where they include all the usual features. Imaginative play is well planned by the teachers to link with other areas of learning. For example, reception children write to and receive messages from Cosy Bear who visits in the night with his friend.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing are below average but the very recent initiative to improve writing is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' work.
- Teaching quality is good and, as a result, pupils learn well in lessons.
- The whole school focus on reading in recent years has resulted in improved standards and pupils becoming enthusiastic readers.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The subject is well led and pupils' progress is carefully monitored.

Commentary

45. Most pupils enter school with literacy skills that are significantly below average. Attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 is below the national average. In the 2003 statutory tests, Year 2 pupils attained standards below the national average in reading and well below in writing, although reading results were in line with similar schools. Year 6 pupils' standards were also below national averages but were in line with similar schools. There has been considerable improvement in reading in the last year and indications from pupils' current work in lessons suggest that writing skills are also beginning to improve. This is as a result of detailed monitoring and analysis of pupils' performance, which has guided innovative whole school strategies for raising standards. These strategies have been introduced and led effectively by the headteacher, assistant heads and subject co-ordinator, reflecting the prominence writing now has within school priorities. Teachers have been trained and supported well and, as a result, the teaching of literacy skills is nearly always good and sometimes very good.
46. Pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are not well developed. Most pupils are not able to write at length appropriately for their age and their work shows poorly formed handwriting with a high number of spelling and grammatical errors. However, as a result of very focused approaches to the teaching of writing, introduced this year, the work seen in lessons is of significantly higher quality than much of the previous work in pupils' books. They are developing strategies to help them spell. Pupils are keen to write and take more care in their work but there is still some way to go in improving their writing standards. Pupils' standards in reading are better and are broadly in line with those expected for the age. They enjoy books and talk enthusiastically about the story, characters and plot. Older pupils keep a reading diary with evaluative comments on the books that they have read.
47. Teachers enthuse their pupils with stimulating activities that encourage writing for a purpose and in different contexts; this promotes pupils' learning well. A good example is the use of the school's links with several European schools to encourage pupils to correspond, writing clearly and accurately for the benefit of those for whom English is a foreign language. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were excited to make a page for a class information book that had better features than the printed 'Big Book' that they were using as a model. A very good lesson was observed, with ten and eleven year olds, in which their teacher talked about "commissioning" her class to carry out work describing products for an advertising agency. Teachers try to make lessons meaningful and enjoyable whilst setting high expectations. For example, teachers of Year 1 and 2 make deliberate mistakes when presenting to the class, which the pupils enjoy correcting them. Many opportunities for writing poetry and play scripts are provided and pupils show imaginative use of vocabulary in their poetry. They are encouraged to develop their speaking skills by offering opinions and giving reasons for their choices. The

positive and well-managed classroom environment provided by teachers gives pupils the confidence to listen and to contribute, so developing their use of vocabulary. Paired discussion and pupil presentations of their work are a frequent feature of lessons.

48. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their reading skills. As well as specific guided reading sessions and targeted support for less able readers, additional help is provided by well trained adult helpers and classroom assistants. As a result, standards in reading have improved and pupils enjoy books. Occasionally some of the younger pupils have school reading books which are too easy, limiting their opportunity for progress. The library is currently used for teaching because of the shortage of school accommodation and this has affected pupils' access to the library. The library is not as well stocked as it should be and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use the library system to access books independently.
49. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection; pupils' reading has improved. The school's management team makes very good use of assessment information to ensure that work is planned effectively to meet pupils' learning requirements. Those with special educational needs are given prompt and focused support which results in their good progress. Challenging writing targets are set for cohorts, groups and individuals, and pupils' progress is tracked very well. Teachers provide very detailed comments when marking work, which clearly show pupils what they are doing well and improvements needed. Review and evaluation procedures are very well established which ensure that the school has a clear understanding of the effectiveness of initiatives for improvement and this has contributed to the recent rise in standards. Overall, leadership and management of the subject are good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. The school has decided to limit the amount of writing in other subjects across the curriculum because of the low level of pupils' writing skills. Teachers therefore focus on a few targeted pieces of extended writing, in subjects such as history, geography and science, but expect work that is well presented and of high quality. The school is concerned not to reinforce poor models of writing by requiring too much recorded work. However, as standards in writing improve, teachers are aware that this approach will need to be reviewed. Pupils are given good opportunities to apply their reading skills in research.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good; some is very good and excellent. Teachers plan lessons very carefully to take account of pupils' abilities and use other adult helpers effectively.
- Questioning is used very effectively to encourage pupils to explain their reasoning and to compare working methods.
- The curriculum is planned well but more emphasis needs to be placed on using and applying mathematics to solve problems in a variety of contexts.
- The subject is well led and managed; standards are analysed and teaching regularly monitored and supported. As a result, teaching methods are consistent and good practice shared.
- There has been good improvement from the time of the last inspection.

Commentary

51. Pupils enter the school with below average mathematical understanding. Pupils' standards in national tests for Year 2 in 2003 were just below the national average but in line with similar schools. In Year 6 they were about the national average but well above those of similar

schools; a good proportion achieved higher levels and the school exceeded its target. Inspection findings confirm that these standards are being maintained; they are currently just below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Pupils throughout the school achieve well, principally because the teaching is good. Lessons are very well planned and interesting. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well because of the good support they receive from their teachers, skilled learning support assistants, and volunteers in the class.

52. By Year 2 most pupils can count in 2's; they know which numbers are odd and even and can name and describe the features of common three-dimensional shapes. Most write number sentences to add and subtract numbers up to twenty and the most able to 100. Many understand that subtraction is the inverse of addition. They understand place value in number up to 100. In a good lesson, pupils in Year 1-2 used correct mathematical language when weighing and used non-standard weights to weigh a range of materials. Pupils of all abilities achieve well because tasks are carefully graded to match their needs and abilities and adult helpers are briefed and deployed very well to support and challenge particular groups.
53. Pupils build on their knowledge and skills well in later years; their mental calculation skills and knowledge of number grow and they learn more formal written methods of calculating. In one excellent lesson, the teacher's very good questioning during a mental warm-up sequence enabled pupils to discuss and compare their working methods for solving word problems. Activities that followed were carefully chosen to challenge all pupils. Pupils were organised into four groups by ability; a strategy that is widely and effectively used across the school. The teacher and adult helper focused attention on two groups who very quickly mastered how to split numbers such as 52 into 'chunks' of 40 and 12 as a strategy for dividing it by 4. By Year 6, most pupils are competent in applying all four operations in different contexts and they use efficient methods of calculation. More able pupils in Year 6 show a good grasp of number when they add three digit numbers together or order and add negative numbers.
54. Teaching and learning are good in all year groups; some teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. Lessons are very well planned and teachers use resources well to help pupils learn, for example when pupils use counting sticks to help solve word problems. Teachers plan their lessons jointly and this ensures that pupils in the same year groups have similar experiences and that the best practice is shared. They also use questioning to very good effect to encourage pupils to explain their reasoning or to think of other possibilities as when pupils in a lesson on weighing thought of the various possibilities there were to the answer. Homework is well planned, set regularly and used well to extend pupils' learning. Teachers set challenging targets for pupils. These are regularly reviewed with them and shared with parents. Marking is regular and most teachers provide very good guidance and feedback on how to improve.
55. The quality of teaching and of resource provision has improved since the time of the last inspection and standards have risen in recent years. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The leaders have ensured a good level of resources, and monitor the quality of teachers' plans and their teaching. Results of national and internal tests are analysed, strengths celebrated and weaknesses addressed. Most aspects of mathematics are taught well but skills in problem solving and applying mathematics should be more systematically taught and have a higher profile than at present.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Pupils apply mathematics appropriately in a range of subjects. In design and technology lessons they use the correct terminology for describing two- and three- dimensional shapes and convert grams into kilograms. Pupils estimate and measure a variety of variables in their science investigations, such as the size of frictional forces. They display data using a variety of graphical styles, sometimes computer-generated. By Year 6, many are competent in suggesting appropriate formulae to use in a spreadsheet when adjusting spending patterns to remain within a budget in their ICT lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, especially in their knowledge and understanding of facts and principles; those with special educational needs receive good support
- Scientific enquiry skills are taught systematically from year to year but the more able pupils in Year 6 could be extended further
- Teaching quality is good and lessons planned very well. Technical vocabulary is introduced and teachers' good questioning encourages pupils to think and explain
- The curriculum is very well planned for the mixed age classes; consequently, pupils acquire new knowledge and skills progressively as they move through the school
- The subject is very well led and managed; resources such as the outside environment are used effectively but sensors and data-loggers could be better used

Commentary

57. In 2003, standards in the Year 6 national tests were in line with those nationally and well above similar schools. A good proportion of pupils also achieved the higher Level 5. The results showed an improvement compared to previous years. Girls achieved better than boys but there has been no pattern of better achievement over time and no difference was observed during the inspection.
58. Inspection findings confirm that the good achievements of last year are being sustained. By Year 6 pupils achieve standards broadly in line with those nationally. Taking account of their prior attainment, pupils of all abilities are achieving well and some very well. Many achieve above average standards in their knowledge and understanding of key facts and principles; for example, in their understanding of both series and parallel circuits involving a range of electrical devices and their good knowledge of the feeding relationships within food chains and webs. The main reason for this is that the curriculum has been planned very well to ensure pupils in the mixed age classes can build on their knowledge and understanding progressively. Teachers are also very knowledgeable and this shows in the clarity of explanations and their sharply focused questioning skills. In one lesson for Years 5 and 6 about plant reproduction, pupils first consolidated their understanding of the principles of photosynthesis through probing questions from their teacher before going on to identify and explain the functions of parts of flowers they had carefully observed, such as the anther and stamen, in pollination.
59. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 acquire a good grounding in scientific knowledge and skills through well-planned activities in which they are encouraged to observe, think and explain. Year 1 and 2 pupils explore magnets and their effects on materials and learn to tabulate their results and deduce patterns. They make simple electrical circuits and learn about the differences between electricity from batteries and from the mains and safety issues associated with the latter. Teachers and their assistants involve pupils fully in stimulating activities and discussions; although pupils' overall standards by Year 2 are a little below average, they achieve well.
60. Scientific enquiry skills form an integral part of the school's curriculum and all staff have received training and support in teaching pupils the skills. Consequently, they generally make good progress as they move from year to year. In a very good lesson, Year 3 and 4 pupils compared the forces needed to drag shoes across different surfaces. As a result of very careful questioning from their teacher, pupils were able to decide on the conditions for fair tests on the range of surfaces, and they drew appropriate conclusions from their evidence. Some Year 4 pupils deduced that friction acts in the opposite direction to the movement and which surfaces had least friction. By Year 6 almost all pupils can plan fair tests but few acquire higher scientific enquiry skills because insufficient emphasis is placed on teaching these skills

to the most able pupils. For example, few pupils explain anomalous results, consider the extent to which their measurements are repeatable or routinely suggest improvements to their working methods.

61. Teaching and learning are consistently good and some, very good. There are particular strengths in the planning of lessons to ensure that tasks and activities within mixed age classes engage and challenge pupils' appropriately. Learning support assistants and helpers are briefed thoroughly and deployed well so that those with special educational needs are fully engaged. The contexts for lessons and teachers' use of resources often engross pupils in learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 learned very effectively about the different ways in which plants scatter seeds as a result of their teachers' varied and carefully chosen examples that pupils explored and the quality of discussion and questioning that followed. Technical vocabulary is introduced well and pupils are strongly encouraged to apply it immediately in lessons. Pupils are also very well managed and relationships are good; consequently, pupils behave well and the pace of work is good. Marking is regular and generally provides good feedback to pupils and homework is used well to encourage further research.
62. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards are improving and teaching is also better. The subject has been very well led and managed. Teaching is monitored and supported; a current focus on improving questioning skills arose out of the co-ordinator's findings. Pupils' work is regularly reviewed and their progress assessed. There are very productive links with other schools, including an innovative project sponsored by a multi-national company that has enriched pupils' scientific enquiry through a science fair and encouraged the use of ICT in science. While the use of sensors and data-loggers feature in science; for example, to monitor the environment, they are not yet being fully utilised to carry out comparative investigations. Staff training is needed to develop this aspect of ICT use further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve good standards in their basic skills across a broad range of contexts and applications but these good skills are not applied enough within other subjects.
- Pupils learn well because teachers are competent in their own skills; consequently, class demonstrations are very effective and individual work at computers productive.
- The curriculum is broad in range and well planned so that pupils build on their skills systematically as they move through the school.
- The ICT suite is used very effectively but resources in classrooms are limited and not used as well.
- The subject is very well led and managed; the co-ordinator has provided much training and guidance that has improved the quality of teaching and raised standards.

Commentary

63. By Year 6, pupils achieve well in a broad range of ICT skills and many reach standards that are above average. Pupils with special educational needs and talented pupils achieve as well as their peers. There are a number of reasons for these good achievements. Most significant is that teachers are all competent in their own ICT skills. This shows in the quality of class discussions that are balanced with good questioning and suggestions from pupils when they are learning new skills and techniques. Teachers and pupils also have the support of a well-trained specialist learning support assistant in most lessons in the ICT suite. As a result, pupils work productively at the computers to practise their skills. The curriculum is also well planned and broadly based so that pupils acquire good skills in a wide range of contexts and applications.

64. Pupils progress well in their skills in Years 1 and 2; almost all can log-on to the network, open and use a variety of applications routinely. They can adjust and edit text for size, colour and position and learn other skills such as to program and control a floor turtle. Basic skills such as these are built on systematically within the well-planned curriculum in later years. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop their programming skills on the computer and by Year 6, many have used control boxes to sequence traffic lights and control devices using information from sensors; for example, the lighting in a model house and Christmas tree lights. Pupils also acquire good skills in researching and communicating information; for example, by using e-mail, both within the school and with pupils in linked schools in France. They regularly use the Internet to research information and present their findings in a variety of ways. By Year 6, many have the skills to combine text, graphics and sound to make striking presentations, including slide shows that demonstrate very good awareness of audience in their preparation. A good example was the slide presentations about hobbies such as horses made by Year 6 for others in their class. Many are very enthusiastic and skilled in their use of computers. The school runs a very well attended ICT club at lunchtimes on most days where the ICT learning support assistant provides valuable help and guidance.
65. Teaching and learning are generally good, some are very good. Most lessons are very well planned and good use is made of time and resources in the large ICT suite. In the best lessons, the tasks are very demanding but appropriately matched to the wide range of abilities within the mixed age classes. In one lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils learned to enter formulae into a spreadsheet to solve problems such as to calculate the costs of planning a party for their class. Year 5 pupils modelled their spending patterns to enable them to keep within a prescribed budget. Those in Year 6 used more complex formulae to cost a series of class educational visits, calculating total and average costs, including transport. The computer projector and inter-active whiteboard in the ICT suite are very effectively used to teach new skills such as these to illustrate discussions and to conduct effective plenary sessions at the end of lessons... Pupils are very well managed in the ICT suite and closely monitored by teachers and the very effective support assistant to ensure that no-one falls behind. Occasionally, in the weaker lessons, the most able are not challenged enough where all the pupils have been given similar tasks.
66. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, especially in broadening the scope of the curriculum and in improving teaching quality. Much of this is due to the very good leadership and management provided by the school's knowledgeable co-ordinator who has provided much training and support for teachers. Teaching is monitored and pupils' work is regularly reviewed; a useful portfolio of their standards demonstrates the skills they acquire. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision for the subject's development, based on a thorough understanding of its weaknesses. The school's ICT governor is also very supportive and involved in shaping the subject's development with the co-ordinator.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. Although pupils acquire good skills across a wide range of contexts, there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to apply these skills to raise standards within subjects. Resources in classrooms are very limited and this constrains teachers from making full use of the good skills pupils have. Even so, such classroom resources are not used as much as they could be. The main focus of work in the ICT suite is on pupils acquiring basic skills. Here, teachers often make use of the contexts for learning such skills to work in subjects where possible; for example, to research information as part of geography and history topic work; to learn about angles in mathematics and to learn to control devices linked to science and design technology. The school realises that there is great potential to raise standards in subjects further using ICT as a tool. To this end, a very good action plan is the focus of major planned spending this year on additional ICT resources and training.

HUMANITIES

Three lessons of religious education and three of history were observed, together with evaluations of samples of pupils' work, examination of teachers' plans and records and discussions with the respective subject co-ordinators and with pupils. Both these subjects are reported fully below. Geography was not inspected.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching that includes some imaginative methods
- There are insufficient resources to teach pupils about some major religions
- Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Commentary

68. By Year 2 and Year 6 most pupils reach standards broadly in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because teaching is good. Teaching quality has improved and pupils' achievement is better since the last inspection.
69. By Year 6, pupils have a developing understanding of the major world faiths and an understanding of the similarities and differences between them. Within the Christian faith, they try to understand the uniqueness of Jesus and think about his physical appearance. They look at photographs; for instance, of the Turin Shroud and paintings from different periods to find out about his physical appearance. They find describing Jesus' personality difficult and know that most references to Him are in the Bible. Pupils in Year 2 learn about features of special places such as a Christian church and a shrine for Hindus. In a good Year 3-4 lesson, the teacher assembled a range of Hindu artefacts and burnt incense to create an atmosphere of reverence and spirituality, to which pupils responded well. These pupils show good knowledge of the Hindu religion and what happens in a Hindu temple. In this way the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and there are good links with literacy and art and design. Assemblies also make a good contribution to teaching and learning in religious education.
70. Teaching is mainly good. Teachers plan lessons well around clear objectives for learning and manage pupils effectively. Questioning is used well to help pupils recall facts and ideas from previous lessons. For example, in a good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 about features of Hinduism, pupils described Hindu rituals and explained them. In the better lessons, imaginative teaching styles are employed to engage pupils in learning; for example, role-play to help pupils understand what happens inside a Hindu Temple. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
71. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There are good links with the parish church. Pupils' work is reviewed and evaluated in comparison with other schools in the local academic council cluster. Teaching is also monitored and supported. However, resources are still not adequate to support fully the teaching of other faiths, a criticism at the time of the last inspection.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective teaching results in pupils developing a good understanding of people and events in the past.
- Pupils' low level of writing skills affects the quality and quantity of recorded work.
- There is a very good range of enrichment activities that enhance the curriculum.

Commentary

72. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve well. Overall, provision is similar to the time of the last inspection.
73. Teachers emphasise the development of research skills and historical enquiry through practical 'hands-on' experiences. For example, seven year olds are developing a good understanding of chronology through looking at old toys. A very effective lesson was seen in which a teacher showed her old teddy bear to her class of six and seven year olds. The pupils identified characteristics that showed the age of the toy and were then enthralled by the story of its life, which had resulted in the wear and tear. The way in which this was presented contributed to the pupils developing a real sense of the wonder of history and an understanding of people's lives as history. They were then able to make good comparisons with another bear that was even older.
74. The good teaching of the older pupils enables pupils to use primary and secondary sources of evidence to research different periods of time and gain a good understanding of the features of the period under study. Because of pupils' limited literacy skills, the most effective learning resulted from first-hand evidence, although a number of pupils also use the Internet and information books to research their topic. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed well in lessons, where pupils are encouraged to discuss and to give opinions that they can justify from the evidence. A good lesson was observed in which ten and eleven year olds used pictures and texts to gain an understanding of what it was like to live in post-war Britain. Pupils had carried out research on the period for their homework and were able to present a range of interesting facts gained from talking to older relatives, books and the Internet. The teacher clarified and extended pupils' contributions to ensure that all pupils made good progress in their knowledge and understanding. Most pupils of this age are able to make notes on their findings. However, the school has adopted an approach of limiting the amount of extended writing in history to ensure that, when pupils write at length, expectations are high and pupils take particular time and effort to produce work of high quality.
75. The subject is well led and managed. The very well-organised co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses gained from the monitoring of teaching and teachers' plans.. The school makes good use of the local environment, such as the town history trail and the city museum, to extend pupils' opportunities for first-hand experiences. A good range of visits and visitors brings the subject alive for pupils and results in their enthusiasm and interest for the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons of music and three of physical education were observed. Examples of music tuition and the work of the choir were also seen. Assemblies provided additional opportunities to hear pupils sing. Discussions were held with the respective subject co-ordinators and both subjects are reported fully below. Art was not inspected. One lesson of design technology was observed and samples of pupils' work in the subject reviewed. In the one design technology lesson seen, pupils in Years 5 and 6 investigated different materials as part of their work on shelters. Features of the good teaching included the quality of questioning and planning. Management of the class was very good. The tasks given involved a good level of challenge. Some pupils explored a range of shelters such as tents, examining the features of their construction materials while others investigated and tested

different three-dimensional shapes to see how they added to the strength of a structure. Pupils made good progress during the lesson; they were encouraged to develop their ideas and suggest explanations. They behaved well, worked hard and enjoyed the lesson. The standards seen were in line with expectations.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress through the school, especially in singing, playing instruments and composing, because of good teaching
- Extra-curricular provision is very good and this gives pupils many opportunities, particularly for talented musicians
- Very good leadership and management lead to teachers feeling confident and well supported

Commentary

76. By Year 6, pupils' attainment in music is above expectations overall. Since they enter Year 1 with standards broadly in line with expectations this represents good achievement. Standards are particularly good in singing, playing instruments and composing. This is due to good teaching and the strong encouragement of pupils, both within lessons and in performances. Pupils play tuned and untuned percussion instruments confidently and hold their own part whilst others are playing. They sing songs with as many as four parts and are aware of how they fit together to achieve the overall effect. Whilst pupils compose their own music well, their recording, using conventional notation, is satisfactory.
77. Teaching is good and pupils learn well. It is characterised by good planning and questioning and high expectations of pupils. Classes are well managed and lessons are stimulating and lively; in consequence, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. They enjoy the lessons and work hard. There are many opportunities for developing music out of school time. Around 50 pupils from Years 3 to 6 are involved in them. Tuition from specialist visiting teachers is provided for a variety of instruments at a cost that is subsidised by the school to make lessons more affordable. Pupils who have been learning for approximately a year are invited to join the Exmouth Primary Music Centre orchestra. This contributes well to the school's provision for gifted and talented pupils. Listening to, and learning about, music from other parts of the world also contributes much to pupils' cultural development. Visitors, including the Band of the Royal Marines, contribute to the good range of musical experiences.
78. Music is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator. The high standards in music reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. She has very good subject knowledge and gives very good support to her colleagues. She leads by example and has organised the very good opportunities for pupils to develop their musical abilities. Because she has observed lessons as part of her monitoring programme, she understands the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. To assist the staff, a new scheme has been purchased to be used alongside the school's own scheme of work. Resources are good, with a wide range of instruments available for use.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in PE are above average and pupils achieve well, especially in gymnastics
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and clubs are well attended
- Leadership of the subject is good

Commentary

79. Not all aspects of the subject were seen during the inspection, but evidence shows that standards in Year 2 and in Year 6 are at least average and above average in gymnastics. Pupils achieve well in the subject, including those with special educational needs, because of good lesson planning, good teaching and pupils' good attitudes and enthusiasm for the subject. Standards in gymnastics for talented pupils are very good, partly because of the very good extra provision made for them.
80. Pupils work safely and with due regard for each other; they move into space and take part in warm-up activities at the beginning of lessons. Older pupils flex and exercise their muscles in sequence at the beginning of their gymnastics lesson. In games, pupils in Years 3 and 4 can throw a ball accurately to a partner who can catch it. They bounce a ball and hit it with a racket towards a partner with increasing skill; the more able hit and return the ball in a rally lasting several returns. Gymnastics lessons are a strength. Pupils in an excellent Year 5 and 6 gymnastics lesson demonstrated very good rolling techniques such as forward and backward rolls and then linked three different rolls naturally into a graceful sequence of movements as a result of very good coaching from their teacher. They progressed very well in their skills because their teacher constantly assessed their work, provided individuals with expert advice, and maintained a very brisk and demanding pace throughout. Teaching quality has improved since the last inspection and the pupils' high standards reported then have been maintained. Teachers plan their lessons well and use the good range of resources appropriately. They have good subject knowledge which shows in their teaching of new skills and techniques. Pupils are generally very well managed.
81. Swimming is well organised for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and pupils achieve the standards expected. Those in years 5 and 6 take part in a residential experience which includes wall climbing, canoeing and raft building; this also makes a good contribution to pupils' social development. The school takes part in a wide range of competitive sports such as football, volleyball, swimming and cricket. There are also very good extra-curricular activities provided for all pupils such as two gymnastics clubs. The gymnastics teams successfully compete in a range of competitions and the boys' team is to take part in the national championships. Pupils also benefit from expert coaching; for example in football in collaboration with a professional club.
82. Leadership of the subject is good. The subject leader is very knowledgeable and supports teachers well. The curriculum is well planned and organised and the good resources well managed and used. The school has good facilities for physical education, including hard and grassed surfaces, which it uses well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good; pupils are managed well. Pupils' social skills are developed very well.
- The very well planned curriculum is very broad and includes citizenship and healthy living.
- A very good range of links, both locally and through European ties, broadens pupils' awareness and develops their sense of responsibility.

Commentary

83. The caring and supportive school ethos promotes pupils' personal and social development very well. Circle time is used effectively to enable pupils to share and take turns and to discuss different topics. Class rules and expectations of behaviour are made explicit to pupils and are clearly understood. Pupils are keen to earn points for good work and behaviour and their success is celebrated. Health education is addressed systematically through other subjects such as science, as well as in dedicated PSHE lessons. Pupils are encouraged to think about keeping fit and healthy eating. The wide range of extra-curricular clubs related to keeping fit, which involve many of the pupils, makes a good contribution to pupils' awareness of this aspect of their development.
84. The curriculum is extremely well planned, with links to other subjects clearly identified. Teaching quality in all the three PSHE lessons observed was at least good and some, very good. Pupils are given very good opportunities through all aspects of the work of the school, including lessons, extra-curricular activities and residential visits, to develop confidence and respect for themselves and each other. The well-established School Council also contributes significantly to pupils' independence and sense of responsibility. Specific initiatives, such as the 'Comenius Project' and links with other schools in Europe promote pupils' understanding of the wider community.
85. Much of the day-to-day teaching throughout the school contributes to pupils' very good progress in personal and social skills. Pupils develop confidence and self-esteem and are prepared well for the next stage of education because of the effective behaviour management strategies used, the opportunities to contribute in lessons and the expectations for initiative and responsibility.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
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	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
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	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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