

INSPECTION REPORT

ST THOMAS FIRST SCHOOL

Exeter

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113085

Headteacher: Mr D Pugh

Lead inspector: Mrs C A Nuttall

Dates of inspection: 24th – 26th November 2003

Inspection number: 257976

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 - 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	158
School address:	Union Street Exeter
Postcode:	EX2 9BB
Telephone number:	(01392) 276 854
Fax number:	(01392) 430 176
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss P Parkin
Date of previous inspection:	17 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is slightly smaller than most primary schools with 158 pupils on roll. There is approximately the same number of boys as girls. Pupils come from a wide range of social, economic and academic backgrounds. About seven per cent are from minor ethnic families. Just over one per cent speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is broadly the same as other schools. When children start school their skills, knowledge and understanding are wide ranging, but in most years are below average for their age. Almost eight per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is below average. Four of these pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is in line with most schools. The majority of pupils with special educational needs experience a range of learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time is higher than average. In 2001 and 2002 the school received an achievement award in recognition of improving standards.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
31046	Christine Nuttall	Lead inspector	Mathematics and information communication technology
8937	Howard Allen	Lay inspector	
31233	Liz Slater	Team inspector	English, geography, history, music, religious education and special educational needs
12394	Carole May	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, art and design, design and technology, physical education and English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a good school with several strengths. Clear leadership by the headteacher helps staff to work together well in the best interests of the pupils. Teaching is good, with some very good features; consequently pupils achieve well. Standards are rising and are now consistently at the expected levels by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2. **The school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are rising and pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Pupils are happy at school, behave well and get on very well with each other and the staff.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and management, well supported by the highly effective governing body.
- The effective staff team have a shared purpose and vision that centres around supporting the personal development of every pupil.
- Careful planning for pupils with special educational needs, as well as very effective support, ensures that these pupils make good progress.
- Activities for the higher attaining pupils and pupils in mixed age classes are not always matched to their capabilities and stage of learning.
- Information that staff have about pupils' attainment and progress, is used very well to plan future work.
- Information and communication technology (ICT), including classroom computers, is underused to consolidate and extend learning in all subjects.
- The school's evaluation and analysis of its strengths and areas for development provide a very clear agenda for improvement.

The school has moved forward well since its last inspection in 1998, when it was found to be a satisfactory school. Standards have risen in Year 2 national tests, because staff are expecting more of pupils. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and the school has maintained and developed its overall provision for pupils' education. Three of the points for improvement have been tackled very successfully and standards in writing, science and speaking and listening have risen as a consequence of very good attention to these areas. The use of assessment procedures has also improved considerably. Satisfactory improvement has been made in developing suitable challenges for higher attaining pupils and the amount of information parents receive on their children's progress.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

All pupils achieve well throughout the school. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and most reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in personal and social education, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. In recent years some children have not done as well in areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. This is related to their particular needs.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	D	D	D	E
writing	D	E	C	D
mathematics	C	D	D	D

*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.*

This table indicates that standards fluctuate from one year to the next. Standards in writing have improved to the highest ever recorded when compared to all schools nationally. The percentage of families claiming free school meals at the school has dropped this year despite more families being eligible to claim and this significantly affects comparisons with similar schools and the table does not therefore accurately reflect the progress the pupils have made. The table does not show that most pupils in Year 2 last year achieved the expected Level 2 in all three subjects. However, fewer pupils attained the higher Level 3 and this affected the school's final grade. Currently pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 3, standards are above average in music, art and design and religious education and broadly average in all other subjects. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, make good progress because of the very good support they are given. Their success reflects the school's attention to inclusion of all pupils. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils' personal development is very good. Their social, moral and spiritual qualities are particularly well developed, with cultural understanding good. Pupils are positive about school and behave well. Attendance is broadly average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education for all pupils. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is at least good in all subjects with some very good and excellent features. Consequently pupils achieve well in all year groups. This has resulted in standards rising by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils learn effectively because relationships between them and their teachers are very good, teaching assistants support them very effectively and work is interesting. Pupils' learning is supported well by good planning in all subjects and very good personal and academic guidance. Parents support the school well and there are good links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Both the leadership and management of the school are good.

The headteacher has a clear educational vision for the direction and work of the school and provides good guidance for pupils, staff and governors. There are good procedures underpinning the work of the school. Subject co-ordinators are effective in monitoring the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and improving standards. The school is governed very well, with particularly effective leadership by the chair of governors. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are positive about the school.

Parents are happy with most areas of the school's work, with about a tenth raising concerns about information about their children's progress. The inspection found that despite the huge amount of detail on annual written reports, there was little to indicate the progress children had made. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about feeling uncomfortable when approaching the school. The inspection found no evidence to support these parents' views. Staff are always available and very approachable. All staff encourage parents to meet with them and share their concerns so that problems can be addressed quickly. All pupils enjoy school and are very positive about the support they are given from staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- ensure that activities for the higher attaining pupils and pupils in mixed age classes, are matched to their capability and stage of learning; and
- increase the use of ICT, including classroom computers, to consolidate and extend learning in all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage. They achieve well in Years 1 to 3. Standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science in all year groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and pupils achieved particularly well in writing in Year 2 national tests this year.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve well.
- Standards in music, art and design and religious education are above average.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

Starting school

When children start school in the Reception class assessment data shows that their knowledge, skills and understanding are wide ranging. For the last few years the overall profile has been below average, with several children having particular difficulties in the areas of communication, language and literacy and social and emotional development. At present there are only nine children in the Reception Year. These children have settled well and are making satisfactory progress. Most are set to reach the levels expected for their age by the end of the year in all areas of learning except communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.

School's results in national tests

Overall standards have risen in Year 2 national tests since the last inspection, with significant improvement this year in writing. Standards are rising because:

- teachers are expecting more of pupils;
- extra support is provided in both literacy and numeracy; and
- the quality of teaching is consistently good.

The table below shows that in 2003 standards in Year 2 were slightly below average in reading and mathematics and broadly average in writing. Standards in writing have risen significantly this year. What the table does not show is that there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language achieved the same as their peers.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (15.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.5 (13.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.7 (16.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Inspection findings

The Foundation Stage

1. At the time of the inspection only nine children were attending full time and they had been at school for just eight weeks. Other children, due to attend full time in January 2004, spend one afternoon in school each week this term and were not present during the inspection. The nine children have settled happily into school and achieve satisfactorily. There is every indication that most will reach the goals expected for their age by the end of their Reception Year in most areas of learning. A few children have difficulties in communicating clearly and are unlikely to meet the expected goals in communication, language and literacy. Equally, some children entered the school with particularly low mathematical development and these children are unlikely to achieve the expected goals in this area by the end of their Reception Year.

Years 1 and 2

2. Pupils achieve well because of the good provision made for their development. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, who are especially well supported by both teachers and teaching assistants. Higher attaining pupils also achieve well although could do even better with greater challenge. Standards this year are currently average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards were broadly average in all other subjects and above average in music, art and design and religious education in lessons seen.

Year 3

3. Pupils achieve well in Year 3 because of good teaching. All pupils are suitably supported including pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups. Standards are average in all subjects and above average in music, art and design and religious education.

Whole school matters

4. The school is focusing on improving writing and standards have risen because of its efforts in this area. Overall pupils apply their literacy skills well in other subjects. Sometimes the presentation of their work is not as good as it could be. Pupils also use their numeracy skills to help them with work in science, although opportunities to use mathematics across the curriculum are sometimes lost. The school is working hard to improve standards in ICT and achieving good success. Pupils' skills in ICT are now sufficiently developed to enable them to use these in other subjects although teachers do not regularly plan sufficient opportunities for this.
5. The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special education need, achieve well because of the very good provision made for them. They receive very good support in class and a few pupils are given extra support in small, withdrawn groups, which are clearly focused on their assessed needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and their personal qualities are **good**. In lessons pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning. Pupils generally behave well both in class and in the playground. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school's vision centres on personal, social and health education and the school translates the vision into reality. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of good systems in place for promoting harmonious relationships, self-confidence and good behaviour, pupils' attitudes to learning have improved since the last inspection.
- Spiritual, moral and social development is promoted very well in the daily act of collective worship, through the work of the school council and at after school clubs.
- Whilst cultural development is good overall, more could be done to promote knowledge and understanding of other cultures in some areas of the curriculum.
- Whilst attendance levels are similar to most schools nationally, more could be done by both the school and parents to ensure the good attendance of all pupils.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	148	3	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

Commentary

6. The headteacher and staff work hard to promote the school's aims and values in everything they do and, as a result, the school is a happy and harmonious place that pupils enjoy attending. They express positive views about the school and parents are pleased by the way that the school encourages their children to become mature and responsible. Parents and pupils are satisfied that the rare incidents of bullying and oppressive behaviour are taken seriously and dealt with promptly and effectively. In discussion with pupils, it was clear that they know what to do if they have a problem.
7. Pupils with language, literacy and behaviour difficulties are fully included with other pupils; they feel equally at home in the classroom or in the small groups where they receive good attention to their learning needs. The school has a clear focus on promoting good behaviour and supporting those individuals who find difficulties in this area. Provision for the early development of personal skills in the Reception class is good and most children meet the national goals set for them by the time they enter Year 1.
8. Very good relationships, moral and social development are promoted very well throughout the school. The very good quality of the daily acts of worship encourages pupils to distinguish right from wrong, develop their own views and beliefs and value and respect each other. These qualities are further developed in lessons such as personal, social and health and religious education. Cultural education is promoted well in art and design, music, history and geography, but opportunities to develop understanding of other cultures are sometimes missed.
9. Pupils are encouraged to undertake roles of responsibility, with older pupils acting as 'buddies' to younger pupils, helping the midday dinner supervisors or running the school council. Extra-curricular activities in the 'Whizzo' club help to further cultural education and to raise pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. This consists of blocks of different types of cultural activities each running for five weeks. During the inspection the focus was on listening to classical

music and interpreting and expressing the way it made them feel through art and dance. Eleven children from Year 3 attended. All spoke about the experience very enthusiastically.

10. Teachers promote a good working environment and this contributes to the pupils' achievement. The day starts calmly and efficiently when the register is called promptly and completed accurately so that staff know how many pupils are in school.
11. The school has good systems in place to eliminate lateness. However, although attendance levels are average, insufficient effort has been made to increase the levels of attendance either by the school or by parents.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education, with some strong features. Teaching is good overall and ensures that all pupils move forward well. The curriculum is interesting and enriched by good after school activities. Very good assessment procedures have been introduced since the last inspection.

Teaching and learning

Good teaching throughout the school helps pupils to achieve well. This marks a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is slightly stronger in Years 1 to 3 than it is in the Foundation Stage although this difference is not significant. Assessment procedures have also improved and are now very effective in identifying the individual needs and progress of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils engage well in learning.
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils underpin learning.
- Very good support from teaching assistants helps all pupils achieve well, but especially those with special educational needs.
- Teachers make very good use of assessment when planning for the needs of pupils.
- Good teamwork, especially in planning lessons.
- ICT, to consolidate and extend learning is underused in most lessons.
- Teachers use questioning very well to help pupils think carefully and learn.
- Activities planned for higher attaining pupils and those in mixed age classes are not always matched to their capability and stage of learning.

Commentary

12. The table below indicates the quality of teaching seen in lessons and marks good improvement since the last inspection, when there was a higher proportion of satisfactory teaching and a significant number of unsatisfactory lessons. There are now many more lessons of good or better quality because teachers are more aware of individual needs as a result of very good assessment procedures.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	7 (22%)	17 (53%)	7 (22%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

Common strengths

- There are some common strengths that underpin all of the teaching. These include very good relationships between staff and pupils, which provide a very firm foundation for effective learning. Teaching assistants also make a very valuable contribution to the work in all classrooms. They provide particularly good support for pupils with special educational needs, who benefit from patient and focused encouragement. These pupils work on tasks modified to meet their particular needs and benefit from the school's inclusive approach. Good teamwork, especially in relation to planning lessons, means that pupils of the same age in parallel classes learn the same skills. Teachers use questioning very well to include pupils of all capabilities and to encourage them to think carefully and learn. As a result, all pupils enjoy their learning and concentrate well.
- Teaching is very well planned for pupils with special educational needs, focusing on specific targets in individual education plans. Learning support assistants work very well with pupils. These pupils' developing knowledge, skills and understanding are monitored very well. The regular assessment of their progress informs their individual action plans and targets. Pupils learning English as an additional language are supported well by their teachers and support assistants. Teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is consistently good and results in all pupils making good progress.

Features of the better lessons

- In the very good and excellent lessons, several additional factors contributed to successful teaching and learning. The range of activities and the very good pace resulted in pupils making good strides in their learning and being particularly well motivated. An awareness of the special needs of individual pupils was also a characteristic in these sessions. Activities to prepare pupils for learning are a significantly strong feature for pupils with special educational needs. All pupils are fully included in lessons.

Example of outstanding practice

In order to prepare pupils with significant special educational needs for learning, the headteacher organises an excellent movement group for the first session of the morning.

As the seven pupils arrived in the hall with their physical education kits, it was clear from their bright, smiling faces that something was going to happen that they clearly looked forward to and enjoyed. The headteacher, support assistants and pupils enthusiastically moved through a series of exercises to 'wake up' their feet and hands. Picking up their socks with their toes produced squeals of delight as all successfully achieved the task. Excellent modelling of moves and encouraging comments helped all the group to improve their posture, roll a ball, use arms to propel their bodies forward and guide a 'frog' along a set path. Self-esteem was very high and gross motor control and balance improved significantly. During the cool down, the headteacher sensitively praised each individual and it was evident that he had an excellent relationship with these pupils. As a result of this stimulating start to the day, each of these pupils with significant special needs was fully prepared for their learning in lessons.

Assessing pupils' progress

- Assessment procedures have significantly improved since the last inspection. There are now very good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress in all subjects. Teachers in the Foundation Stage assess children in activities well and highlight any area of difficulty. They produce very comprehensive records of achievement and make good use of their

assessments to plan work for children of all capabilities. In the rest of the school pupils are regularly assessed in all subjects. These results, and those of statutory tests, are thoroughly analysed and recorded. The school has a very clear view of how well pupils are doing and identifies areas of weakness. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked, allowing the school to compare the performance of individuals, cohorts and specific groups. Ongoing day-to-day assessments in all subjects are carefully recorded by teachers and used very well by them and by subject co-ordinators in planning lessons and future support. All pupils are set appropriate targets for English and mathematics and, through feedback and marking, they know how to improve.

Areas needing further input

17. There are some areas in the overall good teaching that need further improvement. Higher attaining pupils are regularly set differentiated work to recognise that their capability is above some of their peers. However, these activities are not always sufficiently matched to their capability and often lack the challenge to move them forward. In the same way, pupils in the mixed age classes in the Reception Year and Year 1 are not always provided with activities that reflect their stage of learning. This is especially so for reception children.
18. The teaching of ICT skills has improved considerably recently with the establishing of a computer suite. However, ICT skills are currently underused to consolidate and extend learning across the curriculum. Classroom computers are rarely switched on or used during lessons. This is something the school is aware of and plans to improve.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** broad and balanced curriculum that is enriched by a good variety of visits, visitors, clubs and carefully planned whole-school subject focus weeks. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Curriculum development is now supported by a very good, comprehensive monitoring, review and evaluation process, which involves all the school staff, teaching and non-teaching and the governing body. Teachers and teaching assistants are deployed well so that there is effective support for all pupils. Accommodation is now **good**, with concerns from the last inspection being addressed. Resources overall are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good, broad and balanced curriculum enabled by:
 - a very good monitoring and evaluation programme linked with subject focus weeks;
 - ongoing review and development of curricular planning;
 - consistency in good planning, good classroom organisation and very good assessment, recording and target-setting;
 - a high percentage of good teaching; and
 - well-organised, easily accessible resources.
- The school plans good opportunities for enriching the curriculum.
- Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good processes for the identification of gifted and talented pupils across the curriculum and the school has begun to provide a programme for these pupils.
- The school works hard to ensure equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum for all groups and individuals.
- The governing body monitors and reviews the curriculum very well.
- Current provision for handwriting and spelling does not always impact on the presentation across the curriculum and so does not support some pupils' learning in other subjects.
- The use of ICT needs further development in order to support learning in other subjects.
- Accommodation is well-used and concerns from the last inspection have been addressed well.

Commentary

Planning for work in the Foundation Stage

19. National guidelines are used soundly to provide children in the Foundation Stage with an appropriate range of learning activities that prepare them for the next stage of learning. The creation of a secure outdoor area has widened the range of opportunities available and addressed a concern of the last inspection.

Planning for work in Years 1 to 3

20. The curriculum is securely based on the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Time for different subjects is now allocated satisfactorily across the curriculum, an improvement since the last inspection. The way in which the curriculum is kept under review is a particularly good example of a whole school approach to monitoring and evaluation and its impact on the provision offered by the school; it is also an improvement since the last inspection.

Example of outstanding practice

The introduction of a whole school approach to monitoring and evaluation has had a major impact on provision.

Curricular planning is underpinned very well by co-ordinators' annual reviews as part of an ongoing monitoring and evaluation cycle. The subject co-ordinators work with their subject link governors and report to the governing body. This annual review feeds into the school improvement plan. At regular intervals, approximately every two years, each co-ordinator also leads an in-depth review of their subject, which includes a focus on monitoring of teaching, an audit of resources and professional development for staff. This is followed by a whole school subject focus week, where teachers put into practice their skills and knowledge acquired during the professional development and also develop opportunities for creativity and cross-curricular links. Pupils are enthusiastic about these termly weeks and develop a range of skills, knowledge and understanding in a stimulating context. Both the annual and the in-depth reviews have an impact on quality and consistency in planning, assessment, teaching and classroom organisation. The process manages change and development very effectively, as well as ensuring that the whole curriculum is provided for effectively.

21. Since the last inspection the National Primary Strategy has been introduced as the basis for planning in literacy and numeracy. Overall, pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills securely in other subjects, except for handwriting and spelling. However, planning for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects is not yet clearly developed, except in focus weeks.
22. The school has developed a consistent approach for pupils to record their work. This enables progress to be easily identified. Display, using a range of media, is of a high quality throughout the school and features all areas of the curriculum, sometimes linked. This adds significantly to the ethos of the school and enhances pupils' learning.

Opportunities for curriculum enrichment

23. The daily curriculum is enriched through a good range of opportunities for pupils of this age to extend their skills and interest. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 have the opportunity to learn to play the flute and guitar with the Devon Music Services. Year 3 pupils who are gifted in ICT use digital photography to record the school as it is now before the building programme begins in 2004. The focus weeks enable all pupils to develop particular strengths and interests. Local visits are arranged to a synagogue and churches in Exeter. Pupils take part in the annual Exeter Festival. The school has developed a creative approach to after-school clubs that ensures focus, quality and variety in a range of curriculum areas in turn as a weekly after-school session, for example, country dancing, French, football and music.

An inclusive school

24. The good emphasis on English and mathematics, the use of additional numeracy and literacy programmes, including Reading Recovery, grouping on prior attainment in English and mathematics lessons and a robust assessment process, support pupils' learning well.
25. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers are very effectively supported in identifying pupils with special educational needs and develop good individual education plans with the special educational needs classroom assistant (SENCA) to help pupils make good progress across the whole curriculum, especially in literacy and mathematics. They have opportunities to work in mixed ability groups in other subjects as well as in separate groups with focused support. Appropriate tasks and support are carefully allocated. A register of gifted and talented children is identified for every subject through the rigorous assessment process and the school is beginning to develop activities appropriate for these pupils. The school has a strong commitment to ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils. Pupils of all capabilities and backgrounds have access to extra-curricular activity. The breadth of the curriculum ensures that pupils with different strengths and subject preferences are given opportunities to learn in areas that motivate and interest them. All pupils' work is valued and contributes to display and class books. During the inspection week the school council demonstrated its inclusive approach by requesting that pupils be aware of anyone who might be lonely at playtime.

Development of accommodation

26. The school makes good use of its available space. The grounds are attractively planted and there are specialist play areas and a pond. These will undergo significant change when the new building programme begins. As well as a library, there is now a specialist teaching suite for ICT and a base for the teaching assistant with responsibility for administering and teaching pupils with special educational needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The hall provides a pleasant environment for lunches and physical education and is large enough to accommodate the whole school for assemblies and other events.

Staffing

27. The school's dedicated teachers are deployed well to make best use of their relevant areas of expertise and teach the planned curriculum. The well-trained teaching assistants are also managed well so that their substantial skills and experience are put to good use to support pupils' learning effectively.

Resources

28. Overall, the resources meet the requirements of the curriculum well. Resources are well-organised, reviewed regularly and easily accessible for staff. English, geography and religious education resources are good. Those for music are particularly good and the development of the computer suite means that ICT resources are now good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Class book-corners with their collections of fiction and non-fiction are satisfactory overall. The library is adequate overall, but a few geography books about some countries are out of date.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are well cared for and they feel secure at school. They have trusting relationships with their teachers. The school maintains a safe environment for pupils and staff. Arrangements for admitting pupils to Reception are very good. Arrangements for pupils joining the school at other times are less effective but still good. The school seeks and acts on pupils' views particularly through the school council.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationships between pupils and staff – pupils trust the adults at the school and are confident they can approach them if they are hurt or worried.
- There is a member of staff known to pupils who they can approach when seeking counsel.
- The high quality of induction arrangements for pupils entering Reception and their parents ensures these pupils settle well to school.

Commentary

Care and safety

29. This is a school with a strong caring ethos. Pupils feel secure and they have trusting relationships with their teachers and other adults who help them in class and at lunchtimes. Pupils report that they are confident they can talk to their teacher if they have any problems. They also are able to speak to a school counsellor who visits the school every week.
30. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and is fully trained. Staff are aware of what they should do if they have concerns about a child. The school does need to ensure that all staff have appropriate awareness training to support the procedures in place.

Personal and academic guidance

31. Comprehensive pupil tracking files, which include assessment information, help to inform reporting to parents. Class teachers effectively monitor the academic achievement of pupils so they are aware of pupils' achievement in all subjects. This information helps ensure teachers have background information that helps in supporting pupils as soon as they move through the school. The monitoring and support of pupils' personal development is very well done and reflects the level of understanding teachers have for the pupils in their care.

Induction

32. The induction procedures for pupils and parents new to the school are good. However, the high quality procedures that are enjoyed by Reception children and their parents are not yet fully matched for children who join school at a later time.

Involvement of pupils in the school's work

33. Pupils' views form a part of the development planning of the school. There is a school council where pupils have the opportunity to represent their peers. The pupils who form the school council take their duties seriously and wear their school council badges with pride. Pupils consider the school does take account of their views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good relationships with the parents of its pupils. The school treats any concerns parents may have very seriously and consults with them to try and identify what the school could do better. The school has good links with the middle schools where Year 3 pupils transfer. The school finds difficulty in maintaining meaningful relationships with the many feeder nurseries reception children come from.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive regular updates of school events.
- Home/school books enable parents to maintain regular contact with class teachers.
- Parents do not receive sufficient information about the progress their children are making.

Commentary

Parents' involvement in the school

34. Parents appreciate the openness of the school. The availability and approachability of the headteacher and teachers, particularly at the end of the school day, enable parents to speedily resolve any concerns they may have about their children.
35. Parents are well informed about what is going on in school. There is a weekly newsletter for all parents as well as notices of class events. However, some parents feel that the amount of information they receive can be overwhelming and it is difficult to take everything in.
36. Parents receive a class newsletter each term which informs them of the routines and activities their children will be involved in. The quality of the information parents receive is generally good but the format varies by year group and not all parents receive sufficient information about how they can support their children's learning.
37. The home/school books provide parents and teachers with a regular opportunity to exchange information on children's progress. The benefit of this two way exchange does vary from class to class reflecting the variable quality of input from both teachers and parents.
38. At the end of the year parents receive a very detailed school report about their child. Parents are advised of the attainment levels their children are working at in most subjects as well as a detailed description of what their children are able to do. Some parents consider these annual reports contain too much detail of what children have covered in a particular subject and what children did well. The reports do not provide parents with sufficient information about the progress their children have made.
39. The school works hard to provide parents with sufficient information and training to enable them to better support their children's learning. However, to date the school has had little success in encouraging parents to come to school and take part in information evenings. Parents point to the time such meetings are held that makes it difficult for them to attend. This is an issue the school has yet to resolve.
40. Partnerships with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good. Parents meet their children's teachers, the special educational needs classroom assistant and the special educational needs co-ordinator to review progress and adjust targets. Partnership is also an integral part of the Reading Recovery programme. Parents are carefully advised about the nature of the support that they can offer at home.

Links with the local community

41. The school is involved in many activities within the local community. For example pupils have the opportunity to visit the local library and places of worship as well as attending such events as the Exeter festival and carol singing at a local nursing home.

Links with early years providers and other schools

42. The school's links with other schools in the area are underdeveloped. There are good links with a local middle school that help Year 3 pupils' transition to their next school. However, there are few activities such as sporting competitions or staff sharing best practice with neighbouring first schools. The large number of potential nursery feeder schools does make meaningful relationships with such schools very difficult.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The effective leadership and management of the school provide a good foundation for work in classrooms. Leadership by the headteacher and senior staff is good and the school is managed well. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a clear lead.
- All staff work very well together.
- Financial planning and management are good.
- There is very good use of the monitoring of teaching and learning to drive the school forwards.
- Subject co-ordinators are very effective.
- The leadership and management of the work with pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- Strategic plans for school improvement are regularly monitored and evaluated.
- The governing body is a highly supportive and effective team.

Commentary

43. It is very clear that the strengths listed above have been key in raising pupils' achievement.

Leadership

44. Part of the school's aims is *'to create a positive atmosphere where everyone feels proud to contribute and work together in making our school a happy and safe place'*. The headteacher is the key to achieving this aim and he provides a clear lead for staff and governors. There is a constant focus on raising standards, which goes hand in hand with providing a broad and balanced education that enables pupils to develop as well rounded people. Above all, he ensures that all pupils are valued and feel secure in school. He has a clear educational vision and strives to achieve this in his day-to-day leadership.
45. This year the headteacher has to cope with several difficulties. Lack of funding, as a result of a falling roll, meant that the departing deputy could not be replaced this year. Major responsibilities like the co-ordination of special educational needs have been unavoidably added to the headteacher's workload. The school is soon to undergo major reorganisation, alongside other schools in Exeter, as it moves from a two form entry first school to a one form entry primary school. Major building works will commence in the new year and there is a great deal of uncertainty among parents as to how this will affect their children's education. The headteacher is leading staff and governors through these difficulties with tremendous enthusiasm for the future. He maintains his determination that the quality of education provided at the school will continue to grow and, as a result, he provides inspiration for others.

46. All teaching staff have responsibility for leading at least one subject area. These roles are very well developed, especially in relation to monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in their particular subjects. Strategic planning both for the school as a whole and in individual subjects is good because action plans clearly identify what needs to be done to push standards higher. The careful monitoring of teaching and learning coupled with analysis of data ensures that the school is continually moving forward.

Good teamwork

47. One teacher has recently taken on the role of senior teacher to support the headteacher and she is already demonstrating a determination to succeed. Teachers work very well together and teaching assistants make a particularly good contribution and are involved well in the staff team. The effective staff team have a shared sense of purpose based on addressing the needs of all pupils.

Management

48. The school is managed effectively. There are clear procedures in place for all aspects of the school's work and this helps the school to run very smoothly. The headteacher, particularly, is well organised. He is able to lay his hands on necessary information quickly and this ensures that his time is well used to manage the school rather than being tied down by paperwork.
49. The management of special educational needs by the headteacher is very good. Learning support assistants are well trained and liaise closely with their classroom teachers. Progress is very carefully monitored across the whole curriculum and targets adjusted as needed. Pupils also have targets related to behavioural aspects where appropriate. Regular formal and informal meetings between parents, teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) inform the target setting. The SENCO liaises with a wide range of specialist educational and health support agencies, who are also involved in annual reviews as appropriate.

Self-evaluation

50. The evaluation of how well pupils are doing is a rigorous part of the management of the school. Regular monitoring takes place and the analysis and use of performance data is very effective. It is very well structured and is an integral part of the school's development. It dovetails very well with the school's priorities for improvement.

Financial management

51. The management of the school's finances is good. The school's budget is planned well and monitored regularly. The information in the table below indicates a five per cent carry forward, which is in line with the recommended amount. This is a sensible measure considering the possible staff cut backs as a result of a falling roll brought about by the lack of young families in the catchment area and the insecurity about the future under reorganisation. The headteacher, staff and governors are careful to apply the four principles of best value in their spending decisions. The administrative officer and her assistant provide good support and procedures are good.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	523,730.96	Balance from previous year	23,543.00
Total expenditure	495,787.08	Balance carried forward to the next	27,944
Expenditure per pupil	3,118.16		

Governance

52. The school is governed very effectively. Governors are clear about its strengths and weaknesses and provide both suitable challenge and support for the headteacher and staff. There is a very good range of expertise on the governing body, which the chair channels well in the best interest of the school. The governing body is particularly well managed by the chair, who has a background in education. All governors have a curriculum responsibility and meet regularly with the subject co-ordinators to discuss progress. One governor has taken the lead on marketing the school in the hope of increasing the roll. This initiative is in its early stages but demonstrates the commitment governors have to the school. All statutory requirements are met.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) is **satisfactory**.

Children enter the Reception class with a very wide range of abilities but, overall, their attainment is below average. Evidence from assessments of pupils as they left the Reception class in 2003 shows that, over the last year, children made secure progress and achieved in a satisfactory way, but many did not attain the national goals set at the end of the year in most areas of learning. There has been satisfactory improvement in the provision since the last inspection. For example, a good start has been made in creating a new secure, outdoor play area and this is used regularly throughout the day.

Leadership and management are sound. All areas of learning are planned for and the new national assessment procedures are implemented well. However, as yet the information gained from these is not used to adjust teachers' plans sufficiently to meet children's individual needs. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Although some good and very good direct teaching was seen, the current organisation of the Reception and Year 1 classes means that, when children are engaged in adult directed or self-initiated activities, often no adult is on hand to move their learning forward. On these occasions, children's experiences are not reinforced with appropriate vocabulary and the more able are insufficiently challenged. The accommodation is spacious, however the opportunities the space provides are not fully realised in the present organisation.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children settle into school very quickly and know both class and school routines well.
- Relationships between the staff and children and between the children themselves are good.
- Although children are given opportunities to select their own activities, sometimes there are no adults on hand to ask open-ended questions to support children's thinking and learning.

Commentary

53. Standards in this area of learning are satisfactory and achievement is good. Most children attain the early learning goals by the end of their first year in school. Teaching in this area of learning is good overall. Children settle into school quickly because of the very good induction process. Teachers and their assistants ensure that children quickly learn the correct way to behave. Adults encourage the development of social skills in a variety of ways. Children are constantly encouraged to take turns and share. Children with special educational needs are well integrated and receive good support. All are encouraged to join in, try new things and to persevere with a task when working directly with an adult. They are shown how to work together co-operatively on a task and given opportunities to work independently.
54. Children are routinely given the opportunity to select what they want to do, but sometimes there are no adults on hand to ask open-ended questions to support children's thinking and learning. Also, at the end of these activities, children are seldom given opportunities to tell others what they have done or to reflect upon how well they have achieved.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff place high priority on listening, reading and writing.
- Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop the use of language for thinking and communication through interaction with adults in their play.

Commentary

55. From a below average starting point, children make satisfactory progress but standards of communication, language and literacy were slightly below average at the end of the Reception Year in July 2003. Children are given opportunities to share news and contribute to question and answer sessions when working as a whole class with the teacher. In these sessions, achievement is satisfactory. Children are taught early phonic skills and given opportunities to practise reading and writing in both the whole class lessons and in small groups. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory, but on the occasions when the teachers are working directly with small groups of children it is good and children achieve well. A very good example of small group work was seen where two reception children were working with the teacher in a puppet theatre to retell a favourite story. The children were animated and excited, given plenty of opportunities to speak and the teacher helped them to develop their vocabulary and thinking skills very well. Whilst children make satisfactory progress in all aspects of speaking, listening, reading and writing, the organisation of the classes means that the children do not make the progress they otherwise would in this important area of learning.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- When adults work with small groups the teaching and learning of mathematical skills are good.
- Mathematical language and ideas are not fostered sufficiently well in children's free play.

Commentary

56. Standards are below average on entry to school. Children make satisfactory progress over the year, but standards remain slightly below the expected level on entry to Year 1. Children are better at counting than they are in calculations and using the correct language to describe shape and measurements. Teaching is good when adults work with children in small groups, using well-designed games and activities that help children to learn in a practical way. They question the children whilst they are engaged in a variety of activities and are good at getting them to count and recognise numbers. In these sessions children achieve well. This kind of good teaching was seen when the children were buying 'presents' for a birthday party in the class shop. The teacher was helping the children to act appropriately in the role of shopkeeper and customer and to count out the required sum from real money in real purses. She helped the children to recognise the different coins used and to acquire mathematical language and skills in a realistic way by asking questions such as, have you enough and how much more do you need? Occasionally, however, after a whole class introduction more appropriate for the Year 1 pupils in the class, the reception children are given a free choice of activities with no adult on hand to help them use, apply or develop mathematical ideas in their play.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about this wide-ranging area of learning because too few aspects of it were observed. From the evidence gained both in the Reception classrooms and from the work of the previous Reception class, standards attained in the last year were average. The curriculum plans show that all aspects of this area of learning are addressed and it is likely that the current reception children will attain a similar standard.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have regular lessons in dance, games and gymnastics.
- Lessons are more suited to Year 1 than to the reception children.
- The newly created outdoor play area offers the children further opportunities to develop their physical skills.

Commentary

58. In July 2003, most reception children reached average standards and had achieved in a satisfactory way. Most of the present reception age children are also likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the year. Three regular hall times are provided each week where formal lessons are taught. These cover a wide range of skills, however, for the first time this year, one or two reception age children are taught in Year 1 classes and these lessons are more suited to the older age group. There is, however, a newly created outdoor area that children can use each day to ride tricycles and play more active games. When using wheeled toys, most children show good co-ordination skills and awareness of space. Fine muscle control is being developed well both inside and out, through use of chalks, pencils, crayons, scissors, glue, paint, small toys and construction kits.

Creative development

59. Insufficient evidence was obtained during the inspection to make an overall judgement about this area of learning. Standards were broadly average in July 2003 and, from the work seen, children are taught skills in a wide range of art activities. There are opportunities for pupils to experiment with making models from junk, cutting, sticking and experimenting with a variety of materials and tools. Opportunities to sing and play percussion instruments are provided regularly and the instruments displayed so children can experiment with them. Imagination is developed well during role-play in formal lessons led by the class teacher and there are several areas for imaginative play. From the evidence seen standards are on course for children to attain the early learning goals by the end of the year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** overall. The quality of the teaching and planning in Years 1 and 2 and in Year 3 is at least good overall and pupils achieve well. Standards are currently average in reading and writing in Year 2 and in line with national expectations in Year 3.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing have improved significantly in Year 2.
- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.

- Teachers work well together on planning, which is good and regularly evaluated.
- Assessment, record-keeping and target-setting are very good and support planning for future work.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well planned for, well supported and make good progress.
- Leadership and management are very good and include very good monitoring and evaluation procedures which identify areas for improvement very well.
- Aspects of literacy such as sounds, word meanings, sentence structure and technical vocabulary are very well taught and pupils have a high level of understanding of these elements.
- Presentation is inconsistent and there is no clear teaching of handwriting linked to the most frequent spelling patterns.
- Pupils' understanding of writing for an audience and a purpose is underdeveloped.
- Younger pupils are not confident about authors and how information books work.
- Standards in reading are not yet high enough.
- Good links are made between English and other subjects, but the development and application of literacy skills are not explicitly planned for in other subjects.
- ICT is not often planned to support pupils' learning in English.

Commentary

60. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced the National Literacy Strategy and teaching approaches reflect this. Reading has improved overall in the last five years, but currently is well below the attainment of similar schools. Standards in writing are rising in Year 2 because the school has carefully identified particular areas that needed improvement in teaching, learning and resources and worked hard to address these. Improvement is evident in the 2003 national test results for Year 2 in writing. This represents good progress from entry, when children's attainment was generally below that of their peers.
61. All groups of pupils, including boys, girls, pupils from minority ethnic groups, and pupils with special educational needs achieve well in Years 1 to 3. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are very well supported by teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are also well trained to teach additional national literacy programmes and Reading Recovery. Although higher attaining pupils are not consistently given work that offers challenge, pupils who have been identified as gifted and talented receive targeted teaching on a regular basis and overall this is an improvement since the last inspection.
62. Overall standards in speaking and listening are average in Years 1, 2 and 3. Most pupils of all ages explain their work willingly to adults and, when given the opportunity, talk to each other confidently about their work. By Year 3 pupils' confidence is growing and they talk knowledgeably to adults about reading, music and aspects of the school. Some aspects of drama were observed during the inspection week, when Year 1 pupils developed an effective puppet play. Year 3 pupils undertook play reading as part of their literacy reading session and spoke in role effectively, with good expression, achieving well and holding the attention of their audience.
63. Pupils enjoy reading. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 work through published schemes, being taught reading in groups by the teacher or teaching assistant. They also have access to other books for individual reading. Most pupils use a range of strategies to work out how to read words. However, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils know very few authors, although some have favourite books. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction but do not yet use the contents or index to look up information. Year 3 pupils know how to use the guidance in the library on how to find books. They know how to find their way around an information book adequately and many use the public library regularly. Higher attaining Year 3 pupils know some authors, such as J K Rowling, Roald Dahl and Michael Morpurgo. Teachers encourage pupils throughout the

school to read with parents and carers at home and, where this happens, this supports pupils' reading development well.

64. The school has worked hard to raise standards in writing and this has been successful, particularly at Year 2. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Factors that have been instrumental in raising standards are:
- Identification of needs through talking to pupils, monitoring and assessing pupils' work and observing lessons.
 - Thorough teaching about sounds, vocabulary and sentences.
 - Introduction of group and individual writing targets.
 - Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own writing and identify how they can improve, for example, by using writing 'toolkits'.
 - Using the plenary to evaluate what pupils have learnt and using pupils' work as examples.
65. The school is continuing to focus on writing and reading. Pupils have a good understanding of sounds, words and sentences and this has supported their writing development well so far. However, there is less evidence of an awareness of the purpose of writing and who they are writing for. The range of books available is wide and basic reading skills are taught well, contributing to pupils' enjoyment of reading. However, books and authors tend not to be used as models for writing and so the opportunity for pupils' developing awareness of books, to support writing further, is missed. At the moment the approach to the teaching of handwriting and spelling does not support good presentation overall. Writing skills are developed through other subjects, but there is no overall planning for this.
66. In the lessons seen teaching ranged from very good to good and was good overall. The good teaching in the school typically includes the following strengths in addition to those mentioned above:
- What pupils are intended to learn in lessons is clear.
 - Lessons are lively and maintain a good pace.
 - Effective deployment of the teaching assistant who supports the teacher both during the whole class session and the group session.
 - Good preparation and planning.
 - Good questioning techniques which involve all pupils.
 - Clear demonstration and modelling of tasks.
 - Teachers praise pupils on their achievement which raises self-esteem and deal sensitively with wrong answers so that pupils are not discouraged from responding.
67. Within a very strong overall picture the relative weaknesses include limited opportunities for pupils to work together, little difference between the tasks given to individual pupils, unchallenging work and limited opportunities for purposeful writing.
68. Resources for the literacy hour are good, well organised and easily accessible for all staff. The library and classroom non-fiction collections are adequate for most initial non-fiction research. The co-ordinator is currently reviewing the policy and practice for library resources and use.
69. Leadership and management are very good. The newly appointed subject leader has worked closely with the previous co-ordinator to monitor lessons and work. The very good annual monitoring and evaluation with the link governor, together with the periodic in-depth review with the whole staff, informs the subject action plan very well. The co-ordinator has identified very clearly the strengths and areas to develop and she is already working well with staff on many of the aspects identified in this inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

70. Pupils use their language and literacy skills in other subjects, but currently the explicit teaching of literacy skills, for example the use of different writing types, is not often planned using other areas of the curriculum and non-fiction work from other subjects is not routinely used in the literacy hour.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Teachers make effective use of brisk mental and oral starters to each lesson.
- Activities planned are interesting.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning in the subject.
- Teachers make good use of practical resources to aid learning.
- Tasks set for higher attaining pupils are not always matched to their ability and sometimes lack challenge.
- There are well-developed arrangements for assessing pupils' work and monitoring teaching and learning.

Commentary

71. Standards have been steadily rising over the past few years in Year 2 although comparisons with national results in 2003 appear to be below average. The percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 2 in mathematics was actually slightly above the national average. However fewer pupils achieved the higher Level 3 which resulted in an overall result at slightly below average. Most year groups and especially the 2003 cohort, have a significant number of pupils with special educational needs and this can affect the overall standards at the end of Year 2. Although most pupils enter school with below average mathematical ability, the good teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 mean they achieve well and most reach average standards by the end of Year 2. This pattern represents good progress over time. Pupils in Year 3 achieve well and reach average standards overall.
72. The school supports all its pupils well. The targeted use of teaching assistants means pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are suitably supported. They make good progress and achieve well. Boys and girls are currently making similar progress. All pupils achieve well, although higher attaining pupils could achieve more with greater challenge and activities matched to their ability.
73. Overall standards are currently average in Year 2. Standards are also average in Year 3. Teachers make good use of the mental and oral starters to each lesson to increase pupils' understanding of basic number facts. These skills are well developed and reinforced through practical activities when teachers plan interesting tasks and make good use of resources. In a Year 3 class, for example, pupils used individual, adjustable clock faces to reinforce and extend their understanding of time.
74. In the lessons seen teaching ranged from good to very good and was good overall. This is because teachers work hard to plan and develop interesting activities that will motivate their pupils and help them achieve well. Explanations are clear, pace is brisk and recording is minimised, particularly for the youngest pupils. This ensures that pupils gain maximum benefit from the lessons. However, in some lessons higher attaining pupils were insufficiently challenged and the activity planned for them was not well matched to their capability.

75. The subject leader has provided good leadership and made very good use of assessment data and the monitoring of teaching and learning to identify areas for development. Since the last inspection the school has developed the subject curriculum well and supported and developed teachers' expertise. The use of ICT to support and extend learning is currently underdeveloped.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. Mathematics is sometimes used in other subjects as pupils record data, make calculations or measure materials. However, opportunities occur incidentally and are not always systematically planned.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain average standards in Year 2 and 3.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to undertake practical work.
- Assessment is very good.
- Leadership is good.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- There are few opportunities, other than data handling, for pupils to use ICT skills in science lessons.

Commentary

77. Standards have improved since the year of the last inspection when they were below average. In the teacher assessments in 2003 most Year 2 pupils attained above the average standard expected, but fewer than average attained the higher levels. However, due to the importance the school now places on practical investigation and scientific thinking, standards are rising. Pupils are actively taught how to plan an investigation, how to work methodically and how to talk and write about their work. The interesting tasks they are given help them to think scientifically and to understand and remember the scientific facts they are taught. Pupils have good knowledge of the required aspects of science and are able to question, investigate and report findings well. Their achievement is generally good.
78. Teaching is consistently good. All the required aspects of science are covered well. Teachers assess the level of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding systematically, are well aware of the level of pupils' scientific understanding and plan interesting practical tasks that meet the needs of most pupils very well. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and try hard. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are supported well by teaching assistants and, because of this, they achieve well. In some lessons, however, there is insufficient challenge for the potentially higher attaining pupils.
79. Pupils have suitable opportunities to apply what they have learned in mathematics and English lessons to their work in science. On occasion, computers are used to support children's learning, but teachers are not yet routinely planning ways in which ICT skills can help pupils, although the school has some appropriate resources for this. Resources for all aspects of science are good.
80. Subject leadership is good and the effects of this are seen in improved standards. The co-ordinator is well qualified and enthusiastic about the subject. She has a clear vision and sound philosophy for the continued improvement in standards. The science focus week held recently has served to raise the awareness of teachers, pupils and parents alike.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management of the subject.
- Teachers are very committed to improving their own expertise and raising standards.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning.
- The use of ICT to consolidate and extend learning in other subjects is underdeveloped.
- Assessment procedures are well developed and information about pupils' attainment and progress is used very well to plan future work.

Commentary

81. Examples of pupils' work seen and the lessons observed show that in Years 2 and 3 standards in ICT are average. Pupils are developing the expected range of skills and learning to use ICT for word processing, handling and presenting data, graphics and control.
82. Since the last inspection the school has developed staff expertise through training. Recently an ICT suite has been created and this allows for whole class development of ICT skills. Classroom computers provide opportunities for the use of ICT skills in other subjects during lessons, yet these machines are often idle and underused. The plans to audit software and enable staff to familiarise themselves with programs will enable the school to extend the use of ICT in other subjects. Conversations with pupils confirm that the classroom computers are rarely used during lessons.
83. Overall the teaching is good. This is an improved position since the last inspection. All teachers have worked hard to increase their own confidence and expertise so that they can improve the standards pupils achieve. Lessons seen in the ICT suite were well planned and prepared. Teachers confidently introduced the tasks and encouraged pupils in the use of the correct subject specific terminology. Pupils receive good support from their teacher and their classmates. This ensures all achieve equally well and make good progress, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups. In the most successful lessons pupils were given opportunities to revisit and reinforce the learning objectives at the end. In one Year 2 class, for example, pupils had the opportunity to recreate the style of Mondrian prints using straight line and flood fill tools. At the end of the lesson they compared their own designs with original prints and discussed how successful they had been. Pupils clearly enjoy ICT lessons, maintaining enthusiasm for lengthy periods.
84. The subject co-ordinator is still relatively new to her role yet has already demonstrated good leadership. Very good assessment procedures are in place and national guidance has been well used as a basis for planning. The co-ordinator makes very good use of assessment information to plan future developments in the subject as a whole and for individual pupils. Overall the school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. The use of ICT to support and extend learning in other subjects is underdeveloped. The school has yet to create an overview of possible links so that teachers can structure this into their planning.

HUMANITIES

86. **History** and **geography** are well led and managed by one co-ordinator who is newly-appointed.

87. In both subjects, pupils achieve well and attain standards that are average in Year 2 and in line with national expectations in Year 3.
88. The teaching of **history** was not observed during the inspection as it alternates with geography. History was covered in the first half term as the in-depth subject for review. It was not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about provision in history. However, evidence from the co-ordinator about her work, from planning with the new schemes of work, from pupils' work earlier this term and from discussions with pupils about what they had learnt indicates that it is **good**. No judgement was possible at the last inspection for the same reason. Resources are adequate at present, with some original artefacts. They are well organised and accessible. When the co-ordinator has updated them after the completion of the in-depth review, they are likely to be good. The co-ordinator is currently engaged in an in-depth review of history, as part of the agreed school cycle of monitoring and evaluation. As well as the annual review, the documentation from the in-depth review is extensive and supports monitoring and evaluation very well. There are reports of lesson observations, assessments from each unit of work that inform planning, records of pupils' discussions, an audit of resources for various units of work and details of professional development for staff.
89. Provision for **geography** is **good**. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when geography did not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Evidence was from pupils' work, from planning and schemes of work, from discussion with the co-ordinator and from observations of two lessons in Year 2 and Year 3, where teaching was respectively, very good and good. Again, resources are well organised and accessible. Classes have globes and atlases for reference. Monitoring and evaluation is very good. Geography has recently undergone an in-depth review similar to that of history.

Links with other subjects

90. In both history and geography, planning is thorough overall and good links are made wherever possible for example, in local studies, or in a focus on the seaside through holidays in the past and 'going to the seaside' today. Good links are also made with literacy and numeracy. For example, Year 3 pupils develop their map-reading skills well using a local tourist map which was not produced for young children. Year 2 pupils wrote in role about the Great Fire of London, recording the sequence of events in a diary. In geography, a children's picture book underpinned a comparison between a remote Scottish island and Exeter. Year 2 pupils imagined they were on the island and wrote a postcard to the headteacher to tell him about how different it was, demonstrating not only their geographical understanding, but also that they could be committed, purposeful writers. The planning does not yet explicitly include the application of literacy and numeracy skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**, as indicated at the time of last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good.
- Standards are above the expected levels.
- Religious education makes a good contribution to spiritual, cultural and moral development.
- Presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- Resources are good.

Commentary

91. From the work seen it is evident that standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils study the Christian, Jewish,

Hindu, Islamic and Sikh faiths, which help pupils to develop further understanding of the cultures with which these faiths are associated. In the lessons observed there are recurring opportunities for reflection, which contribute well to spiritual development. Pupils record their work in a separate book, which gives the subject an enhanced status. Presentation is variable.

92. The school makes visits to local Christian churches in Exeter and shortly plans to visit a local synagogue. The good resources for the classroom include many artefacts. They are well organised to support the needs of the curriculum and easily accessible for teachers.
93. The two lessons observed were satisfactory and good. Particular teaching strengths observed were: building on pupils' previous knowledge; a range of planned speaking and listening for different purposes; carefully built in progression in the lesson; a good pace; good links made with similar symbolism in other faiths; well-led whole class activity and discussion. These aspects supported pupils' learning well. A weakness observed was the lack of challenge in some group activities, so that pupils did not develop their thinking further about the concept of preparation and anticipation. Pupils' work is assessed regularly in each unit of work and this also identifies well pupils who are gifted and talented, although as yet, there is no programme developed for them. The subject leader leads and manages the subject well and has attended training for co-ordinators. She monitors and evaluates the subject well through the agreed school process and has identified the few aspects of subject knowledge in which teachers need further professional development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

94. As at the time of the last inspection art and design is given a high profile and contributes well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. No art and design lessons were seen, but work on display and in collections of past work was scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils. It is likely that provision is at least **good**. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their experiences in art. They can name some famous artists and are keen to show visitors their work on display. Pupils have the opportunity to experience a wide range of different types of activity, including the use of art packages on computers. Pupils' skills and knowledge are systematically built up. Standards are above average and progress and achievement is good. Lessons are planned from nationally recommended guidance. Teachers working with pupils of the same age plan together. The co-ordinator monitors the plans to ensure systematic progression of skills. Since the last inspection, the system for assessing pupils' skills has improved and is now good. The Year 3's annual residential arts week, held at Beaford, makes a significant contribution to the art and design and the design and technology curriculums. Here pupils have the opportunity to create large art works to enhance the school environment. The 'Whizzo' club helps pupils to appreciate and understand how art can be used to express feelings and mood and the relationship between art, music and dance.

Design and technology

The overall provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good.
- Assessment is used well to help pupils improve, but not yet to plan different tasks to suit the different capabilities of individuals within lessons.
- The curriculum is well planned.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

Commentary

95. Standards in Years 2 and 3 are average. Pupils enjoy their lessons, make good progress and achieve well because the subject is taught well. Lessons are well planned and good attention is paid to health and safety. Pupils with special needs and those at an early stage of learning English are well supported by classroom assistants and by the teachers' intervention to ensure they understand and can manage the tasks set. The good use of teachers' questioning makes pupils think hard and solve problems they encounter in the tasks set. However, too little attention is paid to modifying designs in light of these problems and teachers sometimes miss opportunities to encourage pupils to use mathematical skills, such as the practical application of calculations and space, shape and measures, in the making and design of products. Assessment is good. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and to consider any changes they would make if they made that product again. They are also encouraged to make constructive criticisms of one another's work. Teachers keep records of the results of formal assessments at the end of each unit of work and know the different capabilities of each pupil well. However, this knowledge is not used to plan different work for pupils of different capabilities.
96. The curriculum is well led and managed. Resources are sufficient and stored where they are easily accessible to staff. Careful long-term planning ensures that the skills needed are taught and progressively built upon across each year group. The co-ordinator monitors lesson plans but has not had recent opportunities to observe colleagues teaching. There has been good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection and the co-ordinator has ideas for further improvements.

Music

The school's provision in music is **very good**.

97. Evidence was gathered from the one Year 3 lesson, from discussion with Year 2 and Year 3 pupils, from singing in assembly, from an after-school club and from the very detailed photographic and written records of the recent in-depth review and subject focus week. This indicates clearly that pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 2 and above national expectations by the end of Year 3. This is similar to the last inspection, but this time, there is much more non-specialist teaching. Very good subject leadership and management together with the very effective whole school process of monitoring, evaluation and in-depth subject focus has led to increased expertise and confidence on the part of non-specialist teachers through focused professional development since the last inspection. As a result the school has maintained its high standards although non-specialists now do more of the teaching.
98. Pupils may choose to have additional lessons in guitar and flute from the Devon Music Service. Pupils in Year 3 who choose to attend the music club enhance their learning about composers and styles effectively through listening and responding through dance. In assembly pupils sing

well, with good diction and obvious enjoyment, accompanied by guitar. In discussion, Year 3 pupils were able to explain very clearly the difference between rhythm and beat. In the Year 3 lesson, the good teaching supported pupils' learning well. Pupils confidently used their previous knowledge of the musical elements of pitch, duration and tempo to explore the composer's use of these musical elements to obtain a particular effect. They then applied well what they had learnt by composing and performing their own atmospheric music for fish in an aquarium and evaluating it. Pupils are assessed regularly at the end of each unit of work and gifted and talented pupils are identified through this process. Resources are very good, with each year group having a collection of untuned percussion and each class a CD player and a tape recorder, as well as access to centrally stored keyboards, larger tuned percussion and a wide selection of CDs. The ICT 'Compose' program has been introduced effectively.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The curriculum is very well planned.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.

Commentary

99. By the time pupils reach Year 2, standards in gymnastics are average. No lessons were observed in Year 3. Only one dance lesson was observed and there was no opportunity to observe games. However both these aspects are taught regularly and the school feels that dance is a strength. This opinion was borne out in the excellent dance lesson for pupils with special educational needs related to movement, muscle control, listening skills and behaviour. In this lesson the pupils were well supported by a high ratio of adults to children. The lesson was carefully structured into small achievable steps that exactly matched pupils' needs and ensured good progress.
100. The quality of teaching throughout the school is now good and has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. The teaching of gymnastics is good overall and pupils achieve well. Health and safety precautions are suitably reinforced at the start of lessons and in the school hall during lessons. Lessons are well planned and teachers use good strategies to coach and demonstrate key skills and use questioning well to extend pupils' learning. Planning and assessment have improved since the last inspection. Teachers regularly assess the attainment and progress and use the information gained to help improve pupils' physical skills.
101. The curriculum is well planned with all aspects taught each week. The range of extra-curricular activities is small but appropriate for the age of the pupils. These have been introduced since the previous inspection.
102. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has tailor-made aspects of the curriculum specifically to meet the needs of the school. As at the time of the last inspection there are plenty of good quality resources and the apparatus is regularly maintained.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

103. Overall provision is **good**. PSHE is well integrated into other subjects, making it relevant to pupils. Although there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching and learning from specific taught sessions, the results of the school's policy, plans and practice are evident in the good attitudes and behaviour of pupils observed throughout the school. No lessons were seen in this area of the school's work.
104. The school sees this area as a very important part of its work. The headteacher is the co-ordinator and has a great influence on the importance of the subject within the curriculum. The programme is comprehensive and includes work on diet, health and relationships. Much is planned and taught through the main curriculum but 'Circle Times' provide good opportunities for pupils to consider and manage their emotions. The very good relationships at all levels and the effective role models of the adults who work in the school enhance this area.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	4
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	2

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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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