

INSPECTION REPORT

SWIMBRIDGE C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Swimbridge, Barnstaple

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113455

Headteacher: Mr G Reed

Lead inspector: Ms A Coyle

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th November 2003

Inspection number: 258075

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	78
School address:	Swimbridge Barnstaple Devon
Postcode:	EX32 0PJ
Telephone number:	(01271) 830 437
Fax number:	(01271) 830 437
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Hayes
Date of previous inspection:	21 st June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Swimbridge Church of England Primary School is situated in a small village and serves the local rural community. It is much smaller than most other primary schools and there are 78 girls and boys on roll, including seven children in the reception class. Very few are from ethnic minority families and none learn English as an additional language. Fourteen per cent of pupils, fewer than in most other schools, have been identified as having special educational needs, which include specific learning needs, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and autism. Two pupils have statements for their special educational needs.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20603	Ms A Coyle	Lead inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, music, Foundation Stage
9769	Mrs M Morrissey	Lay inspector	
20614	Mr D Kimber	Team inspector	Science, mathematics, information and communication technology, geography, history, physical education, special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Swimbridge CE Primary school provides a **sound education** for its pupils. It is led and managed efficiently by the senior managers and governors, and gives **satisfactory value for money**. The teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and most groups of pupils achieve suitable standards in relation to their capabilities. Pupils with special educational needs do particularly well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are good in mathematics and swimming.
- Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. They are respectful, polite and confident, due to the school's good focus on moral and social development.
- About a third of the teaching is good or better in the infants and junior classes.
- Strong links with parents and the community are used well to support pupils' learning.
- Children in the reception year do not achieve as much as they might because the curriculum is not sufficiently matched to their needs and there are weaknesses in teaching.
- Not enough opportunities are given to junior pupils to increase their independence.

The school has improved steadily since it was last inspected in 1999. It has rectified the key issue of a need for better teaching in the junior class, which is now good overall. Standards have risen noticeably in mathematics and are beginning to climb at the end of Year 2. However, the provision for reception-aged children is not yet good enough to push up standards even more and this remains a key issue for the school to focus on. Nevertheless, the leadership and management of the school have improved suitably, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is now much better than it was in 1999.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 6.*

Achievement is satisfactory overall. The above table shows that standards have been consistently well above the national average and the results of similar schools over the last three years by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. The results for science have varied but were well above average in 2003. The picture is not as good at the end of Year 2, however, and the results show some inconsistencies. For example, the standards achieved in the latest round of tests were better than in previous years, being average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading. However, although they were on a par with those in similar schools in reading, they were well below average in writing and mathematics. **However, the results of both the infant and junior tests must be viewed with caution due to very small numbers of pupils involved.** The inspection findings do not wholly agree with the standardised test results because, although the school places a lot of emphasis on preparing pupils for the national tests, the results are not consistent with the standards attained in lessons and do not accurately reflect pupils' achievement. Nevertheless, the inspection evidence is clear that standards currently match the national expectations in the core subjects and most pupils achieve enough. However, it is most noticeable that pupils with special educational needs make more progress than others because the provision

for them is so good, enhanced by the good learning support and teachers' careful deployment of additional staff.¹

From an average starting point on entry, children in the reception year do not make enough progress because it is too sporadic and does not guarantee that they will reach all of the expected goals² by the end of the Foundation Stage.³ This is because the lack of staff training has led to weaknesses in the provision. Consequently, although children attain the expected standards in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development, they do not attain them in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. The school has identified this stage of learning as an area to develop and this need is endorsed by the findings of the inspection.

The majority of pupils show good attitudes to learning and behave well. **Satisfactory attendance** and **good social and moral development** lead to clear gains in pupils' personal qualities.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education for pupils, and the **sound** curriculum is extended by a range of interesting activities and **strong links** with parents and the local community. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall, with the best teaching at the top end of the school, in Years 5 and 6. However, there are weaknesses in the teaching and learning in the reception year. Nevertheless, all pupils are cared for and supported well in a Christian environment.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall, with good features in the strong team spirit amongst staff and the caring ethos promoted. The headteacher and governing body have steered the school suitably into the twenty-first century and made sure that standards have risen in mathematics especially.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the quality of education the school provides. Pupils also speak well of their teachers and are proud of their school, which has a good reputation within the community.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop the provision, management and teaching for children in the reception class.
- Extend the opportunities for pupils in the junior classes to increase their independence.

1 ON LEVELS

By the end of Year 6, pupils are expected to attain Level 4 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 5 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected levels. By the end of Year 2, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected levels.

2 ON EARLY LEARNING GOALS - In September 2000 QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) introduced a set of 'Early Learning Goals for children's learning'. These goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of the reception year in the areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development.

3 FOUNDATION STAGE - This stage of learning refers to children aged between three and six years. In this school, it refers to children in the reception class.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall and pupils attain the expected standards in lessons by Years 2 and 6. Given the average attainment on entry, the progress made by pupils is steady, although it falters in the reception year but picks up again in the infant stage of learning and accelerates noticeably in Year 6 in time for the national tests that take place annually during the summer term. Standards are particularly good throughout the school in mathematics and swimming.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain good standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6.
- Standards are good in lessons in mathematics and swimming throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they receive good help.
- Children in the reception year do not make enough progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	92 (79)	84 (84)
writing	77 (71)	81 (86)
mathematics	100 (86)	90 (90)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	100 (86)	73 (53)
mathematics	100 (86)	100 (60)
science	100 (86)	100 (53)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Commentary

1. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in **English** lessons, and standards in the national tests have been consistently in line with or above the national average and the results of similar schools over the last three years. The results of the 2003 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 show noticeable improvement because they were well above the national average in English, with 100 per cent at Level 4 and 55 per cent at the higher Level 5. The results were much higher than those of pupils in similar schools. By Year 2, standards were above average in reading, with 92 per cent at Level 2 and 23 per cent at the higher Level 3. In writing, the results were average, with 77 per cent at Level 2 and 15 per cent at the higher Level 3. **However, the results of both the infant and junior tests must be viewed with caution, due to the very small numbers of pupils involved.** The inspection evidence shows that the overall picture in the school is a similar one to that seen at the time of the last inspection, when standards were satisfactory. Most pupils have made sound progress since joining the school, accelerating in Year 6 prior to the national tests, due to school's strong focus on preparing pupils well, and basic literacy skills are taught systematically across the curriculum.

2. Achievement in **mathematics** is good in lessons and in the national tests. In the 2003 test results, standards were well above the national average and those of similar schools at the end of Year 6, with 100 per cent of pupils at Level 4, and a staggering 91 per cent at the higher Level 5. Pupils in Year 2 did not do quite as well because, although 100 per cent achieved Level 2, only eight per cent achieved the higher Level 3. However, the small numbers involved in the tests mean that these results should be viewed cautiously as each pupil represents a significant percentage of the total figure. Nevertheless, pupils work hard in lessons and do well, especially at the upper end of the juniors in Years 5 and 6.
3. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in **science**. The national test results for 2003 show that all pupils in Year 6 attained Level 4 and a tremendous 73 per cent reached the higher Level 5, which was much higher than the national figures. In the teacher assessments for Year 2, 100 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 2, which was high. The evidence gathered during the inspection does not wholly concur with the above results but nevertheless shows that standards currently match the expected levels by Year 6 in lessons. Pupils generally make sound progress, and literacy and numeracy skills are used well to help them increase their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts.
4. Standards are good in **swimming** because the school puts a very strong focus on this aspect of the curriculum as they feel that the local rural environment and its waterways necessitate teaching pupils useful life skills. As a result, all pupils in the school go to the local pool and receive qualified tuition from specialist coaches and teaching staff. The standards attained in **information and communication technology** are satisfactory and computers are used well to support other subjects of the curriculum. In contrast, children in the reception classes do not make enough progress to help them reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Thus, standards are below those expected in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. This is mainly due to the lack of curricular development and staff training. Nevertheless, most children are likely to attain the expected goals in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.
5. Achievement amongst pupils with special educational needs is good and most achieve well because they are supported closely by teachers and assistants who provide good guidance for them. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when the provision was weak, because the deputy headteacher has worked hard to oversee and improve the procedures, teaching and learning. As a result, all of the support staff now work very closely together and provide good quality help to pupils to help them strive for success.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and social development are **good**. Attendance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils relate well to each other, are keen to learn and behaviour is good.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for the junior pupils to be independent.

Commentary

6. Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good and these have a positive effect on achievement because pupils are polite and courteous, and respond well to the caring ethos of the school. They appreciate and enjoy the range of activities provided for them and are keen to learn. By Year 6, pupils show pride in helping others and are effective members of the school community. Parents are very supportive of the school and are happy with the values it promotes. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. This is an

improvement since the last inspection. Moral development is good; pupils understand the school rules and absorb the values transmitted to them by teachers. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection and no pupils have been excluded from the school.

7. Pupils' spiritual and social development is good overall. When given opportunities to work in small groups, pupils work sensibly and are able to share ideas, and value and listen to others' opinions whilst concentrating on tasks. However, the good practice in Year 2 of providing opportunities for pupils to work independently and tackle new tasks on their own is not yet extended across the school and this is a weakness, especially for the junior pupils who are capable of doing more for themselves. Nevertheless, pupils' relationships with adults and others are good, and have a positive impact on learning. Parents confirm pupils' views that they enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn.
8. Cultural development is satisfactory; pupils are provided with a curriculum that promotes an understanding of western culture in subjects such as history and geography. Evidence in the school display shows that there are useful multi-cultural links through dance and music.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

9. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average, and there is no unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive punctually for school; on the rare occasions that they are late traffic, congestion is almost always the contributing factor. Parents ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive punctually. The majority of absences are through sickness or medical visits; a minority of parents do withdraw children for term time holidays, but the school positively opposes this practice.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Asian or Asian British – Indian
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
71	0	0
1	0	0
6	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **sound** quality of education for its pupils. Its broad curriculum is extended well by the **good** provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and **good** focus on special educational needs. Overall, pupils are prepared appropriately for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and areas for development

- Teaching is occasionally very good in mathematics and design and technology.
- Teachers encourage and praise pupils well.
- Teaching assistants are deployed carefully to help and guide pupils.
- Provision for children in the reception year has too many weaknesses, although the school has identified some of them for improvement.

Commentary

10. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in the infant and junior classes. It is good in just over a third of lessons. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, especially in Class 4, and this good teaching makes a strong contribution to pupils' positive attitudes to their work. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught systematically and pupils use their knowledge well in other subjects, which enables them to make steady progress in the learning of basic skills. Lessons are managed well and teaching assistants provide good additional guidance for pupils with special educational needs.
11. However, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in the reception year because there are several weaknesses that inhibit the provision. For example, the staff have not had enough training to update their knowledge and this has led to shortcomings in the curriculum. In addition, assessment information is not used rigorously enough to guide teachers' planning or help children achieve as much as they possibly can. Nevertheless, the kindly, positive and caring ethos provided by adults ensures that children work within a gentle, supportive environment in which they are all valued equally. This is a strength in the teaching upon which to build for the future.

Summary of teaching observed in 28 lessons during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3	8	15	2	0	0

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

12. The quality of teaching and learning **in English** is sound throughout the school and sometimes good. All teachers have secure subject knowledge, and the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well since the last inspection. Basic skills are taught well to ensure that pupils make sound progress in learning, and the good links with other subjects include the study of poetry in the junior classes and discussions about stories in the infant class. The teachers are skilful at identifying ways to interest and motivate pupils, particularly by including pupils with special educational needs in question-and-answer sessions and by praising their responses. Pupils undertake work that makes increasing demands on them and, as a result, they learn steadily so that standards are sound by Year 6.
13. Basic numeracy skills are taught well **in mathematics**. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and levels of attention. They treat them with great respect and use praise well to enhance their self-esteem and confidence. They evaluate their work daily to assess progress and plan for the next stage of learning. Lessons are made interesting because the staff use learning resources well to help pupils understand new ideas. The use of computers has been improved since the last inspection to support learning across the curriculum.

14. Teaching and learning are sound in **science**, and in **information and communication technology**. It is good in swimming especially when skilful teaching points and good use of praise lead to a significant increase in pupils' skills. Good links are made between subjects such as English, art and design, and history through stories about famous people and practical work on computers. The work produced by pupils is displayed well throughout the school and helps to provide a stimulating environment for them and for staff, visitors and parents. Generally, good learning is a result of the teachers' strong subject knowledge and an emphasis on key concepts.
15. Assessment procedures are sound in the infant and junior year groups and the quality of teachers' daily planning is satisfactory because it identifies learning intentions clearly. Teachers assess pupils' work carefully and use the information to provide additional support for them where necessary. The good marking in Years 3 and 4 means that pupils are helped by teachers' useful comments, often highlighted in red or green pen, and this good practice is due to be extended to other classes. Most pupils have homework regularly and this helps them to increase their skills at home with parents. A particular strength is the good deployment of teaching assistants, particularly in English and mathematics, and all staff work in good partnership with each other as a strong team.
16. The management of pupils is good throughout the school. This helps to ensure that time is used well in lessons. Teachers promote a classroom atmosphere that encourages hard work and a sense of enjoyment. In the best lessons, the teachers motivate the pupils so well that learning is fun. For example, good praise celebrates pupils' success and inspires them to achieve well. Most pupils listen very attentively to the advice given, so that constructive criticism leads to better attitudes.
17. Teachers and assistants know pupils with special educational needs well and give good personal and academic support during lessons, assisting them to achieve the targets set out in their individual education plans. Teachers make good use of the skilled support teachers and assistants when they are time tabled to be with the classes, which helps pupils to achieve well.

The curriculum

Provision is **satisfactory** for pupils in the infants and juniors and enough opportunities are given for after-school activities, but the curriculum for children in the reception class is **unsatisfactory**. The staffing, accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Personal, social and health education is promoted well.
- The number and contribution of support staff are good.
- Computers are used well to support learning in other subjects.
- Provision for children in reception class is not good enough.
- Not enough opportunities are given to junior pupils for independent enquiry in subjects such as mathematics and science.

Commentary

18. The broad curriculum meets statutory requirements for infant and junior pupils, and pupils are well prepared for moving to secondary school. The unsatisfactory curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage often draws too strongly upon the National Curriculum approaches for older pupils rather than the nationally recognised, and more appropriate, Early Learning Goals.
19. The shortcomings noted at the time of the last inspection have been dealt with, except the provision for children in the reception year, because there is still not enough focus on planning

to the Early Learning Goals. There are now policies for all subjects, and for sex and relationships education, and racial equality. National guidelines, provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, are used as a basis for planning in most subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

20. The school is now more successful in providing equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. A strong improvement is the good provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements. Parents spoke highly of the good support for these pupils. In lessons, they were consistently well supported and fully involved. The provision of personal, social and health education is also good.
21. Extra-curricular activities include computer, mathematics, French and music clubs. The mathematics club provides opportunities for investigational activities, for which there are insufficient opportunities during normal lessons. In several subjects, such as science, there is insufficient encouragement of independent learning and investigation. Teacher-directed activities often have too strong a reliance upon worksheets.
22. The match of teachers to the curriculum is satisfactory. The role of teaching assistants in supporting pupils' progress is good. Resources in most areas of the curriculum are satisfactory, but some library stock is dated. The quality and range of computer provision have greatly improved over the last two years.
23. Shortcomings were noted in relation to the school's accommodation in the last report. There have been some improvements, such as the more secure outdoor play area for younger children. However, although there is no school hall, the school is succeeding in providing a more appropriate balance in the physical education curriculum as floor gymnastics can now be catered for in the village hall.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- First aid provision is good.
- Arrangements for the induction and transfer of pupils are good.

Commentary

24. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils are satisfactory. First aid provision is good and staff are well qualified to deal with any issues. They are vigilant and ensure pupils' personal safety when using equipment. The headteacher and governors have worked hard to make significant improvements to the school building, and external advice has been secured to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to minimise any risk. However, there are still some issues to be resolved related to removing the remaining rubble from the recent building works. Through their everyday learning and the personal, social and health education programme they are learning to care for themselves.
25. Child protection procedures meet requirements and are satisfactory. The school has an agreed policy, practice is well known to the staff and there are good working relationships with external support agencies.
26. Induction into school is good; one new parent spoke of the welcoming and friendly approach she and her children had had from the school. Parents with children who have recently moved to secondary school feel they have been well equipped and are coping well. Pupils are very confident about seeking help and advice from teachers in both their academic work and their personal life. Parents say teachers are excellent and always have time to listen and help.

27. Pupils are involved in formal assessment with their teachers and parents when they set personal learning targets; they discuss what they have learnt and set simple targets for improvement; and targets for literacy and numeracy are also agreed with pupils. The school successfully seeks pupils' views through family groups, which enable every child to give a point of view and be listened to. Parents are pleased with this system; they say pupils respond well to the opportunities and are keen to discuss the issues they have covered at home.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents and the community is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are pleased with the information they receive.
- Good relationships with parents and the community contribute positively to pupils' learning.

Commentary

28. The positive views of parents reflect a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision. There are good links with parents; they are happy to approach the school and have confidence in the management and respect for the staff. They are pleased with teachers' expectations of pupils and feel that the school helps children to become mature and independent. Parents are very satisfied with the progress their children make and are pleased with the information provided through weekly newsletters, reports, termly curriculum information, and consultations. Inspectors judged the newsletters and general information provided for parents as good; they provide parents with clear guidance on their children's progress and tell them about daily events in the school and community.
29. The school has good arrangements for surveying parents' views through consultation evenings, parent-teacher association meetings, and responses to any questionnaire issued. A small number of parents returning the questionnaire felt that their views were not fully sought; this was not supported by the majority of parents or by the inspection findings.
30. Good links with the community and a range of visits and visitors provide enrichment for the curriculum and support pupils' personal and social development, as well as widening their knowledge of the life-styles and needs of others. Links with other schools are good and play an active part in the life of the school, with joint visits, shared educational days and shared after-school clubs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance, leadership and management of the school are **sound** overall. The headteacher, deputy, staff and governors work together to manage the school efficiently.

Main strengths and areas for development

- The caring leadership of the headteacher is supporting and motivating teachers.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well.
- Management of the provision for the youngest children in the reception class is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

31. Leadership is satisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection, when there were shortcomings. The headteacher, who was in post at the time of the last inspection, has worked well with the governing body and staff to rectify the weaknesses identified in 1999 and now gives clear direction to the school. As a result, there is a secure focus on promoting pupils' achievement, especially of the most capable in mathematics and notably in preparing Year 6 pupils for the national standardised tests. He also promotes a caring, supportive and orderly environment in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to contribute to the life of the school. Daily administrative routines are well established by the office staff and adhered to, which provides stability within the school. Staff turnover has been low and this has meant that the school has had continuity of personnel over time that has contributed to its positive ethos.
32. Management is satisfactory overall. The headteacher, deputy and teaching staff work hard to oversee and manage all the subjects of the curriculum. They link up well as a strong team and make sure that all aspects are covered. The co-ordinators are positive and hard working, and their sound systems for monitoring pupils' performance and teachers' planning have helped them to keep a check on standards. However, the management of the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory because this aspect has not had enough focus in recent years. The school has now appointed a co-ordinator, who is keen to develop the provision further, and has already sought out funding for suitable training purposes.
33. The co-ordinator for special educational needs, who is also the deputy, has worked particularly hard and successfully with colleagues to improve provision and the quality of individual education plans. These now have clear targets and there are clear procedures for maintaining assessment and ongoing records to show how pupils are progressing. These developments have successfully addressed the criticisms made in the last inspection report.
34. Management planning has improved since the last inspection. The school improvement plan is now a satisfactory working document that is linked clearly to the financial planning. It details suitable priorities for 2003-4, and each area of the curriculum has priorities that are clearly set out and have specific targets. There are now appropriate systems in place for the appraisal and performance management of teachers, and staff are supportive of each other.
35. Governors have improved their roles since the last inspection, when there were weaknesses. They are now supportive and carry out their duties appropriately to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They are well organised and have appointed an efficient clerk to minute their meetings carefully, which is a notable improvement since 1999. Governors are willing to challenge and debate with staff at the school. They therefore have a sound grasp of its strengths and weaknesses, and a satisfactory strategic influence on the school's development, with a clear focus on maintaining the quality of provision. Since the last inspection, they have managed grants effectively to provide new computers and extend the outdoor play provision. Budgets are set in accordance with statutory requirements and suitable procedures are in place to check the finances and make sure that the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	255,420.17
Total expenditure	242,850.52
Expenditure per pupil	3,113.46

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	15,254.00
Balance carried forward to the next	12,589.65

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. The overall provision in the Foundation Stage is **unsatisfactory**. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the term in which they reach their fifth birthday and there are good induction processes that help them to settle happily and feel secure in their new environment. Parents feel welcome and the teachers and support staff work well together. There are some deficiencies in the provision for outdoor play for reception class children with, for example, no large climbing equipment available.
37. The management of the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory because the co-ordinator has only just taken on the role and has not had training yet. Teaching is unsatisfactory because the curriculum is not planned suitably to take into account the recommendations for the Foundation Stage. Although regular assessment plays an important part in the school day, it is not used formally to adapt teaching and learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and areas for development

- Children are polite and well behaved because adults are good role models for them.
- Not enough opportunities are given for developing independence.

Commentary

38. Children attain the expected standards in the reception year in this area of learning. The new entrants into the reception class are helped to work and play together, and encouraged to share and take turns. They attain the expected goals by the end of the reception year, concentrating well in teacher-directed sessions and spending sustained periods on the tasks they are given. Adults provide good role models for children and treat them with courtesy and respect, and this elicits good attitudes and behaviour from the children, who are just settling into their new environments at this early time in a new school year. However, they are not given enough free choice activities to help them become independent and this is an area to improve.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and areas for development

- Adults interact well with children.
- Plenty of opportunities are provided for children to develop speaking skills.
- The lack of staff training has inhibited curriculum development.
- Not enough focus on planning to the Early Learning Goals has impeded children's progress.

Commentary

39. Children do not attain the Early Learning Goals in this area because the lack of specific staff training for the phase of learning and weak planning for lessons has led to underachievement. Nevertheless, all adults involve children successfully in conversations, and this helps them to increase their skills and take an interest in their surroundings. Children talk clearly with each

other and adults, mostly using full sentences, and they are successful when recalling the story they have been told. Writing skills are developing but the limited use of assessment information by staff is holding back standards and therefore children are not achieving as well as they might.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and areas for development

- Teaching and support staff work well together as a team.

Commentary

40. The satisfactory teaching has a positive effect on children's learning, as they extend their knowledge of the numbers one – ten. They achieve suitably when counting up and back to nine, and sometimes beyond. However, there are not enough opportunities throughout the day to help children consolidate their understanding of shapes and sequences. The adults working with them liaise together well and are kindly towards the children, resulting in good relationships and a positive ethos for learning, but weak daily planning limits achievement. Thus, standards are too low by the time children reach the end of the reception year in this area of learning and they have to catch up when they move on to Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

41. No specific sessions were seen in **knowledge and understanding of the world** and the observations of activities related to this area were of brief duration. As a result, a secure judgement on teaching is not possible. Likewise, the activities for **physical and creative development** were integrated within the school day and not a major focus of the inspection. Nevertheless, throughout the day, children have a wide range of opportunities to develop the finer skills of using pencils, crayons or paints. The majority show sound pencil control when drawing or writing by mark-making. Children move freely with pleasure and confidence when using outdoor equipment. There is an opportunity for them to paint and use construction materials, and they regularly enjoy these activities. Adults successfully support children's creative skills, so learning is suitably extended.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and areas for development

- The standards attained in the national tests are good by Year 6.
- Pupils' literacy skills are developed well through subjects other than English.
- Good quality support staff are deployed well to help improve standards amongst pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

42. Pupils attain sound standards in lessons by the time they reach Year 6 and most achieve satisfactorily. They do even better in the standardised tests that take place in the summer term because the school places great emphasis on preparing pupils well beforehand. Throughout

the school, the teaching of reading is well organised and managed. In the infant classes, teachers give attention to teaching the letter sounds and patterns in a stimulating way. By doing this, pupils learn the correct pronunciation and letter forms. Those with special educational needs achieve particularly well during lessons because they are supported closely by good quality teaching assistants. In Year 2, most pupils can locate simple information in non-fiction books using their knowledge of the alphabet. For example, they find books on the human body in the library and use the index to find the correct page for information. By Year 6, the most capable pupils use dictionaries effectively. Most pupils are interested in reading and are fascinated by the way authors use words for effect to create various settings.

43. The sound teaching has meant that there has been suitable development of writing skills in both the infant and the junior classes. From a shaky start when they first enter Year 1, they begin to build up their knowledge and learn to attempt tasks in small steps; for example, when looking at how to write the beginning, middle and end of a story. By the time they get to the end of Year 2, they know how to place a capital letter and full stop accurately. Learning continues at a steady pace so that by Year 6, pupils are writing down their opinions on authors and texts confidently, such as *'The Diary of Anne Frank'*. Teaching assistants are well deployed during lessons and work in close harmony with the teachers. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs achieve well, as seen in Years 3 and 4 when they worked hard on character descriptions, using 'powerful' verbs. The quality of marking is generally satisfactory overall, but notably good in Years 3 and 4 because pupils are given good advice on improving their work written in green and red. This good practice works well and is being trialled by the co-ordinator and due to be extended to other classes.
44. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, works hard and has a clear view of the strengths and needs of the subject. Assessment procedures are used soundly to help assist planning. Successful work has been carried out to extend pupils' skills in the infant and junior classes and handwriting is taught systematically throughout the school, which has helped to raise standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. Throughout the school, staff work hard to ensure that pupils have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. Pupils are given time to share their news and they are given time to develop written work across the different subject areas of the curriculum, such as history and geography. This helps them to produce well presented work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection, especially among older pupils.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, especially in the upper junior class.
- Most pupils evidently enjoy mathematics, which aids their progress.
- A strong focus is placed on developing pupils' numeracy skills.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The use of information and communication technology is under-developed in mathematics.
- The quality of marking and feedback to help pupils know how to improve is variable.
- There is a lack of opportunity for independent enquiry and problem solving.

Commentary

46. Standards in mathematics are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. In the 2003 national tests, very nearly all 11-year-olds achieved levels higher than expected for their age. The school has worked hard to improve standards since the last inspection, when they were below average for pupils in Years 2 and 6. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has contributed well to these improvements, which have been most marked in Key Stage 2.
47. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Those with special educational needs are well supported and often challenged in class, and they achieve well. Many pupils speak readily about their enjoyment of mathematics as a subject. This keen interest is evident in lessons as their enthusiastic and confident responses to the work enhance involvement and learning. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly make sure that all pupils are included.
48. Many pupils in Year 2 are working within the expected range for their age. They are developing a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of place value. Most are able to count and order numbers to 50, and a few can do so to 100. They are also developing their knowledge of simple three-dimensional shapes. Pupils continue to hone their numeracy skills as they move through the school. Year 6 pupils demonstrated their good knowledge of their times tables. Many also have good skills when working with squares and square roots involving numbers such as 15, 20, 19 and 21. Most Year 6 pupils can recognise and name acute, obtuse and reflex angles, and show good skills when using a protractor to measure angles to the nearest degree.
49. The strong emphasis given to numeracy skills certainly boosts pupils' confidence and knowledge. 'Space, shape and measures' is an area of mathematics which now receives more attention than at the time of the last inspection. However, work in pupils' books shows few examples of data handling, although graphs are used in other subjects, such as science. Pupils have insufficient opportunities for independent enquiry and problem solving activities.
50. The quality of teaching has also improved since the last inspection, especially for the older pupils. Teachers generally make good use of approaches popularised nationally, such as sharing clear learning objectives with pupils, and emphasising the precise use of mathematical vocabulary. All pupils are encouraged to 'have a go', and are frequently invited to share with their peers their ways of working out problems. Teaching assistants also play their part well in providing a secure atmosphere for pupils. A fun, light hearted but rigorous approach is especially prominent in the teaching of older pupils. Mathematics teaching also contributes well to pupils' social and spiritual development. They are encouraged to share and work well together, and know that they and their ideas are valued and respected by the teacher.
51. Assessment procedures generally support pupils' progress. However, marking does not always indicate clearly to pupils how well they are learning and how they might improve.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. Pupils often use mathematics well in other subjects. They use graphs and tables in science and geography, and this helps them develop an appreciation of the practical uses of mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The science curriculum is well organised, with good cross-curricular links with other subjects.
- There is a good match of teachers and teaching assistants to the curriculum.
- The teaching approaches successfully include all pupils in the learning.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology to support science.
- There are insufficient opportunities for practical investigations with pupils developing their own lines of enquiry.
- Pupils lack a clear understanding of fair testing.

Commentary

53. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are average. This is the same as the finding of the last report in 1999. From 1999 to 2002 standards among Year 6 pupils in the national tests have generally been below average. However, pupils in those cohorts often made up some ground in science from their performance when they were in Year 2. The performance of Year 6 pupils in science was well below the levels they were attaining in English and mathematics, and the boys performed less well than the girls. In response to this lower attainment in science, the school decided to give a stronger focus to the teaching of the subject. There was a very successful outcome in the 2003 results, with almost three-quarters of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in their tests.
54. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in science, and girls and boys now do equally well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and are well supported, with different methods being observed in different lessons. Pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 worked on the topic of 'electrical appliances'. They were organised to receive good support from their peers, the teacher and the teaching assistants. When trying to measure the distance of paper clips from magnets, Year 4 pupils received appropriate help from the teaching assistant. In order to develop greater independence, a Year 6 pupil was deliberately left by the teaching assistant to work with her partner. This pupil could explain clearly to the inspector the purpose of their investigation into the brightness of bulbs in a two-battery electrical circuit.
55. The school has adapted national guidelines and provides a broad curriculum. Pupils' progress is bolstered by the good cross-curricular links made with other subjects, including mathematics, English, information and communication technology, and design and technology. For example, Year 2 pupils, in a display of their work on forces, had word-processed text using different fonts and styles to accompany the photographs. These links help to foster pupils' understanding and attainment. There are too few opportunities for them to plan their own lines of enquiry, as most investigations are teacher-directed. There is a strong reliance upon the use of worksheets, many of which have a strong emphasis on knowledge.
56. Teachers ensure that all pupils play a full part in lessons. Pupils' progress is helped by their good relationships with one another, as they work well together and share ideas. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, some good teaching was observed in both infant and junior lessons. Features of the good teaching include:
 - the contribution of teaching assistants, who liaise closely with teachers;
 - the identification of objectives for the lessons, which are shared with the pupils at the start;
 - the good organisation and use of resources, maintaining the flow of the lesson; and
 - good classroom management, ensuring good behaviour and a full regard for health and safety.

57. Some areas for development remain, however. In lessons, the plenary is not always used to get pupils to be independent and review for themselves how well they have achieved the learning objectives. Encouraging pupils to work independently, as observed in Years 1 and 2, is not effectively sustained in junior groups. As pupils pass through the school, they are not enabled to deepen their understanding of fair testing, build up their knowledge of basic approaches to scientific investigation, or refine the skill of developing their own investigations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are confident and enjoy information and communication technology.
- Computers are used well to support learning in other subjects.
- Accommodation in the computer room is cramped for a whole class in a full lesson.

Commentary

58. In Year 6, pupils' computer skills are average. However, there are some very good elements to some of the work they have produced. It was only possible to observe one whole-class lesson. However, from talking with pupils and staff, and from seeing examples of pupils' previous work and the use made of computers in some other lessons, it is evident that pupils are achieving satisfactorily, and girls and boys are progressing at similar rates. Pupils' standards have actually improved since the last inspection, but because of the increased national levels of expectation, their standards are still only satisfactory. The school has made good use of the national funding for both staff training and investment in new computers, to enhance pupils' skills.
59. Effective use is made of national guidelines to provide a sound basis for curriculum planning. In the class lesson observed, pupils in Years 5 and 6 responded well to the enthusiastic and knowledgeable approach of the teacher and teaching assistants. They worked well in their pairs, showing their own keen interest as well as skills in word processing, graphics and use of the Internet. In previous work, they had used email and a spreadsheet program for data handling. In a small group activity with a teaching assistant, four Year 1 and 2 pupils extended their computer skills, such as changing colour, using 'flood fill' and drawing. This was linked to their work in English, and good questioning also prompted them to think about words to describe colours and fireworks. This was one example, among others, of the good use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum.
60. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. The school is refining and developing them to improve the ways pupils' progress is recorded. It has also identified the need to extend opportunities for pupils to engage in modelling and control technology, including the use of sensors. Their learning is also supported by other activities, such as the computer club and the school's very good website.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. Pupils are frequently encouraged to use computer skills in other subjects. In Year 2, they use word processing skills in presenting science work on 'Forces' and an art package when working on 'Dinosaurs' for English. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 used a Power Point to develop a multi-media presentation of topics such as India and North Devon tourism, for an intended audience of younger pupils. Computer skills are also used well in geography, history, and design and technology.

HUMANITIES

62. Neither geography nor history was a major focus for the inspection. It is not possible therefore to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. The school has adapted national guidelines appropriately as a basis for teaching and learning, and visits to places of historical interest enrich learning. For example, pupils enthusiastically recalled their visit to Cobbaton Combat Museum. Year 5 and 6 pupils enjoyed the visit of a former evacuee who had been a pupil at the school in the Second World War. They put plenty of questions to this 'primary source' as part of their research.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, and music

63. A few lessons were sampled in art and design, design and technology, and music, but there is not enough evidence to make a firm judgement about provision. Nevertheless, teachers' planning shows that all elements of the curriculum are covered satisfactorily and pupils have plenty of opportunities to increase their creative skills through artistic and musical activities.

Physical education

64. Swimming is a strength of the school. All pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 benefit tremendously from the well-taught sessions in South Molton baths. A group of a dozen strong swimmers were seen practising their swimming survival skills, wearing clothes as well as swimming trunks. The physical education co-ordinator provides good subject leadership and is working effectively to enhance the provision for pupils. The teaching of gymnastics has been impeded by the lack of a school hall, but the use of the village hall and the recent acquisition of mats mean that statutory requirements for all floor work in gymnastics can be met. Plans are in place for further training for staff. The school makes very good use of the School Sports Co-ordinator scheme. This increases the opportunities for pupils to meet those from other schools and allows for greater use of outside providers of sports in football and netball.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

65. This area was not a major focus of the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning overall. Nevertheless, it is clear that they achieve well overall because their attitudes and behaviour are good. They are very respectful of others and have a secure understanding of the difference between right and wrong. These strengths are enhanced by the school's high expectations of pupils' conduct, and the promotion of Christian values.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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