

INSPECTION REPORT

THE BEACON C OF E (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Exmouth

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113430

Headteacher: Mrs Barbara Capper

Lead inspector: Brian McCutcheon

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th November 2003

Inspection number: 258104

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 aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	198
School address:	1 Beacon Place Exmouth Devon
Postcode:	EX8 2SR
Telephone number:	(01395) 264 300
Fax number:	(01395) 223 169
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Curtis
Date of previous inspection:	9 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are 198 pupils on roll aged from four to 11, and they are taught in seven classes. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average, while the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average. There are two pupils with a statement of special educational needs and one pupil whose first language is not English.

The nature of the area served by the school has changed in recent years, with an increase in the number of pupils from families receiving agency support. Overall standards on entry are below average. Pupils' social, emotional and personal development and their communication, language and literacy skills are sometimes well below the level expected.

The headteacher took up her appointment in February 2003 and the deputy headteacher did so in April of this year. Their appointments followed a long period when the school had no substantive headteacher or deputy headteacher. The school has also had a large number of temporary staff in recent years.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2420	Brian McCutcheon	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage, mathematics, information and communication technology, geography
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector	
2414	David Westall	Team inspector	Science, art and design, design and technology, music
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English, history, physical education, personal, social and health education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a sound school where pupils' achievements are satisfactory, overall. Strengths in the school include its good provision for pupils' personal development and for their care, guidance and support. A good partnership has been established with other schools and the community, and this enhances pupils' learning. The good leadership skills and commitment of the headteacher are also key strengths, but there are weaknesses in the leadership and management of most co-ordinators. Teaching is sound overall, including in the Foundation Stage (Reception class), but there is a lack of coherence and consistency in the teaching of English, particularly for younger pupils. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are listed below:

Strengths

- The headteacher has good leadership skills.
- Standards in art and design are above average in Year 6.
- Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and relationships are very good.
- The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority.
- The school's partnership with the community and other schools is good.
- The governors are committed and make a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school.

Weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 underachieve in reading and writing.
- More able pupils underachieve in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below average.
- Assessment procedures need improvement in most subjects.
- Most subject co-ordinators do not monitor and evaluate provision with enough rigour.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their decision-making skills in lessons.

Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in 1998. Since the appointment of the current headteacher, important weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school, identified in the last report, have been addressed. The headteacher and governors are providing the school with the sense of direction it lacked in 1998 and communication has greatly improved. However, the monitoring and evaluation of provision by most subject co-ordinators remains a weakness. Statutory requirements are now fully met and issues relating to pupils' safety and welfare have been resolved. Standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 are similar to those reported in 1998, are better in art and design, but have fallen in ICT.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The table below shows that the results of the standard assessment tests (SATs) in 2003 were above the national average in science, in line with the national average in mathematics and below the standard expected in English. The school's results were above those of similar schools in English and well above in mathematics and science.

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Although current standards are below average in mathematics and science in Year 2, they represent satisfactory achievement, given pupils' low starting points on entry to the school. However, these younger pupils underachieve in reading and writing. Overall, pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with the national average in Year 6. In art and design, the achievement of pupils is sound in Years 1 and 2 and is good overall, in the older classes. However, standards in ICT are below average across the school. Insufficient evidence was available to judge pupils' standards in other subjects. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make sound overall progress. **Pupils' attitudes, values and relationships are positive and their behaviour is good. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** The attendance rate is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory, overall, while that for older pupils provides sound opportunities for them to learn and is enriched by a good range of extra activities. However, provision for the development of pupils' literacy skills is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and, for some pupils, in Year 3. Overall, satisfactory teaching enables pupils to make sound progress throughout the school, whilst pupils in Years 4 and 6 benefit from good teaching. The school provides fairly for all pupils and appropriate arrangements are made for those with special educational needs. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their decision-making skills and their initiative in lessons and more able pupils are insufficiently challenged in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2. Assessment procedures need improvement in most subjects.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher, who took up her post in February 2003, has good leadership skills and provides the school with a clear sense of direction. The deputy headteacher, who assumed the role in April 2003, has made a good start and there are strengths in the leadership provided by the co-ordinators for mathematics and special educational needs. However, the monitoring and evaluation roles of most subject co-ordinators are underdeveloped and unsatisfactory, and this restricts their impact on pupils' achievement. The headteachers' management skills are sound, and she maintains and evaluates the school's achievements carefully. **Overall, the governance is sound, with some good features.** The governors are committed and, with the encouragement of the headteacher, are increasingly involved in shaping the school's work. Statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' and pupils' views are positive overall. Some believe that the school could do more to seek their views and would like more information about how their children are progressing. Inspection findings support the views of parents who feel that there is scope to improve pupils' annual reports.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school needs to do are listed below:

- Raise standards and pupils' achievement in reading and writing, particularly in Years 1, 2 and 3.
- Raise standards and pupils' achievement in ICT across the school.
- Ensure that more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 are sufficiently challenged in mathematics and science.
- Improve assessment procedures in most subjects.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their decision-making skills and initiative.

- Improve the monitoring and evaluation roles of most co-ordinators.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

In Year 6, standards are in line with those expected for pupils of a similar age in English, mathematics and science, and represent satisfactory achievement. Although standards are below average in mathematics and science at the end of the Reception period and in Year 2, pupils' achievements are broadly satisfactory, given their low starting points on entry to the school. In Years 1, 2 and 3, standards in English are too low and represent underachievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Children in the Reception class achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Standards in art and design are above average in Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in Years 4 and 6, and when their learning is supported by teaching assistants.

Weaknesses

- English standards are too low in Years 1, 2 and 3.
- Standards in ICT are below average across the school.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils' enquiry skills in mathematics and science are underdeveloped.
- The most capable pupils underachieve in these subjects.

Commentary

Standards on entry to the school

1. On entry to Reception, children's overall standards are below expectation, particularly in relation to their communication, language and literacy skills. The same judgement was made when the school was last inspected. However, significant changes in the intake now mean that more children start with low attainment.

The school's results in national tests (SATs)

2. Over the last four years, the school's Year 2 results have fluctuated between being well above average in reading and mathematics to well below the level expected nationally. However, the school's results in writing have only once matched the national average in this time and have mainly been well below average. The 2001 results were a high point in reading and mathematics, being well above and above the national average respectively. The school attributes the reduction in 2002 to turbulence in the leadership and management of the school during the spring and summer terms of that year. The 2003 results show an improvement in reading and mathematics but a continuing downward trend in writing. The table below shows the school's recent results in Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.2 (14.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.4 (13.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.6 (15.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the last reporting year.

- Overall, the profile of the school's results in Year 6 is stronger than in Year 2. Results in English peaked in 2001 but have otherwise previously been in line with the national average. The 2003 overall results were a little below average but above the average results of schools with similar outcomes in Year 2. Mathematics results have been consistently in line with those expected for the last three years and in 2003 were well above those of similar schools. The school's results in science demonstrate greater fluctuation and, in general, have been below those in English and mathematics. However, they improved significantly to be above the national average in 2003, having been well below average in 2002. These results were also well above those of similar schools. The table below shows the school's recent results in Year 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.1 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.8 (26.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.6 (27.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards at the time of the last inspection

- When the school was last inspected in 1998, the inspection team also judged that standards were average in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. The report also states that few pupils achieved higher levels.

Inspection findings

The Foundation Stage (Reception class)

- Overall, children's achievement is satisfactory in Reception.** Their personal, social and emotional development is fostered well, and their standards meet expectations in this important element of their learning. They make sound overall progress from their low starting points in all other key areas of learning, although some children do not make enough progress in initial literacy. Standards are broadly as expected in physical and creative development but are otherwise below expectations.

Years 1 and 2

- Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but there are important weaknesses in their learning, especially in English.** In mathematics and science, the achievement of pupils is broadly satisfactory, although Year 1 pupils generally make better progress than those in Year 2. Pupils' low starting points at the beginning of Year 1 mean that standards are still below national expectations in these subjects in Year 2. Pupils' investigation skills are underdeveloped and more able pupils could do better in both subjects. In English, many pupils are not doing well enough. Speaking skills are below average and standards are well below average in reading and writing. Very few pupils in Year 2 read confidently or widely and there are significant weaknesses in writing. Pupils' achievement in art and design is sound and standards in Year 2 are broadly average. In ICT, technical problems have resulted in pupils having too few opportunities to develop their skills and, consequently, standards are below those expected for pupils of similar ages. Insufficient evidence was available to make judgements about pupils' standards and their achievements in other subjects.

Years 3 to 6

7. **Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.** In Year 3, standards remain low in English because basic weaknesses were not addressed adequately in previous years and there continues to be underachievement in reading and writing. Overall, older pupils do better and achieve well in Years 4 and 6. As a consequence, attainment in English in the current Year 6 class is broadly in line with national expectations. However, pupils' skills of independent research are underdeveloped and some weaknesses in writing persist. In mathematics and science, Year 6 pupils also achieve the standards expected nationally. Their achievement is satisfactory overall and, as with English, they generally do well in Years 4 and 6. However, in science, pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their scientific investigation skills. Standards in art and design are above average in Year 6 and represent good overall achievement in the older classes. Standards in ICT continue to be below average. There is too little evidence to judge standards in other subjects.

The achievement of different groups

8. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall, but good progress in Years 4 and 6. They also make good progress on those occasions when their learning is supported by teaching assistants, for example during literacy and numeracy lessons, or when they are taught individually or in small groups outside mainstream lessons. The achievement of the most capable pupils is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, but these pupils underachieve in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2. There is no significant difference between the standards attained by boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are good.

The school strongly promotes pupils' personal development and fosters very good relationships. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Pupils' relationships with others are very good.
- The school sets high standards for pupils' behaviour and deals very effectively with all forms of harassment.
- Pupils are free from bullying.
- Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Weaknesses

- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their initiative or to make choices and decisions related to their work.

Commentary

Attitudes and behaviour

9. Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. With very rare exceptions, pupils enjoy school and all it has to offer. They like being part of the 'family' community, and they regard all staff as supportive and helpful. They view all other pupils as 'friends' and say there is no bullying. The school strongly promotes good relationships and good behaviour, and minor misdemeanours are dealt with very effectively. There have been no recent exclusions. If pupils could change one thing about the school, it would be the limited space available for games and for playtimes. Nonetheless, they greatly appreciate the arrangements made for them to pursue sporting activities and other clubs after school; and they thoroughly enjoy their use of the facilities at the Exmouth campus of the University of Plymouth.

10. Pupils are willing, listen attentively in lessons and do what is expected of them as best they can. They respond particularly well to the best teaching seen, which gives them real insights into how to improve their performance, and their increased commitment to learning on these occasions is evident in the quality of their work. Pupils of all abilities in Year 6 derive great enjoyment from their personal reading and have their own individual preferences for particular subjects. However, when teachers' expectations of them are too low, their own expectations of themselves are not high enough either. Few pupils turn naturally to classroom resources made available to help them with their work, and they need far greater encouragement from teachers to do so.
11. When required to work co-operatively, in pairs or in small groups, pupils do so without fuss. They support one another in a friendly way and they are particularly warm and helpful in their relationships with those pupils who have special educational needs or those who sometimes need moral support. They establish very good relationships with their peers and with all the adults who work with them.
12. Pupils of all ages willingly take on responsibility for routine duties in their classrooms and the oldest pupils help out in various ways around the school. All pupils value the work of the School Council. The elected members take their responsibilities seriously and take pride in their achievements. In the context of their learning, however, pupils are given too few opportunities to use their initiative, make choices and decisions, and undertake independent research.

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	159	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	34	0	0

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

Attendance

13. Levels of attendance are sound and punctuality is good. The importance of good attendance is promoted regularly in newsletters. The education welfare officer works closely with a small number of families to help them to ensure their children attend regularly.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

14. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It has a strong Christian ethos and there are well-established links with local churches and their clergy. Christian values are also promoted effectively through assemblies and aspects of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Inspection evidence shows that these aspects of the school's life and work have a significant impact not only on pupils' developing awareness

of themselves and of others, but also on their behaviour and on the very good relationships they make. Work on the theme 'Friendship' reveals pupils' ability to identify with the feelings of others and to recognise the values that they uphold themselves. In Year 4, pupils write with feeling about the spirituality of their experience of Indian dance and, in the Year 1/2 class in particular but also in other year groups, photographs and pupils' recorded comments vividly convey the wonder and joy experienced through their close encounters with the natural world.

15. The school is fortunate in being able to build on the strong sense of right and wrong and on the friendly dispositions that almost all pupils bring with them from home. Strong moral and social themes promoted through assemblies, circle times and PSHE, good management of behaviour by staff, and good relationships all build well on pupils' pre-school experience. Pupils are made aware of the difference between right and wrong in relation to their own behaviour and the conduct of others. They are taught to respect and to help others, to work cooperatively and to value others' ideas and beliefs. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from a residential visit during which they have good opportunities to work as teams and to develop self-reliance. Through raising funds for various charities, pupils of all ages are taught a sense of moral responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves, while work in geography and walks around the local area demonstrate the need to value and protect the environment.
16. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school makes every effort to broaden pupils' experiences of sport and the arts. For example, they benefit from after-school clubs catering for sports and other recreational interests and there are further opportunities to develop cultural interests through participation in tournaments, links with Exmouth football and rugby clubs, visits to theatres and museums and contact with a wide range of visitors who lead 'creative' workshops dedicated to dance, music and art. In assemblies and in some classes, pupils are encouraged to listen to music from a variety of cultures. In co-operation with the University of Plymouth (Exmouth campus), links with Europe are fostered through the placement of students from various European countries.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory, overall, while that for older pupils provides sound opportunities for pupils to learn across an appropriate range of subjects and is enriched by a good range of extra learning opportunities. However, provision for the development of pupils' literacy skills is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and, for some pupils, in Year 3. Appropriate provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Overall, satisfactory teaching enables pupils to make sound progress throughout the school and those in Years 4 and 6 benefit from good teaching. However, assessment procedures need improvement in most subjects, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their initiative in lessons and more able pupils are insufficiently challenged in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2.

Teaching and learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- The most effective teaching is in Years 4 and 6, where it enables pupils to progress well in English, mathematics and science.
- In Years 3 to 6, the teaching ensures pupils progress well in art and design.
- Pupils with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, are well supported by learning support assistants.

Weaknesses

- A lack of coherence and consistency in the teaching of English, particularly for younger pupils, has led to underachievement, especially in writing.

- The assessment of pupils' achievements other than in the Foundation Stage, in mathematics, and for pupils with special educational needs, is underdeveloped and unsatisfactory.
- There are some weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics and science.

Commentary

17. The table below indicates the quality of teaching in the lessons observed during the inspection. Those seen were mainly in English, mathematics and science.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4	7	16	1	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.

18. All of the very good lessons, and the majority of good lessons, were seen in Years 4 and 6. Most of the teaching observed in the deputy headteacher's class was also good. These most effective lessons are characterised by careful assessments of pupils' learning needs which result in the setting of tasks which stimulate and challenge them. The skilful use of questioning is also evident in these lessons, and teachers are successful in judging when it is most appropriate to intervene with support or advice and when to let pupils work things out for themselves. In the Reception class, the teacher and her learning support assistant have established positive relationships with the children and help them to feel secure and ready to learn. They promote children's personal development well but the lack of a secure school structure for teaching literacy skills means that some children are not making sufficient progress in communication, language and literacy. In all other areas of learning, sound teaching enables children to make satisfactory progress in the Reception class.
19. In English, the quality of teaching in lessons is satisfactory overall and pupils in Years 4 and 6 benefit from good teaching. Weaknesses in pupils' performance in Years 1, 2 and 3 stem more from a lack of coherence and consistency in teaching and provision over time than from the quality of individual lessons. However, there is not always enough direct intervention by teachers to help pupils improve and too little feedback is given when work has weaknesses.
20. In mathematics and science, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. As in English, good teaching is strongly evident in Years 4 and 6 through teachers' secure subject knowledge, good management skills and effective use of time. The teaching in these classes motivates all pupils to do their best. However, in other year groups, there are some key weaknesses in the teaching of these subjects which include:
- a slow pace in lessons resulting in inefficient use of time;
 - a failure to engage all pupils;
 - deficiencies in planning which result in activities not being well matched to pupils' learning needs, especially the most capable pupils in Years 1 and 2; and
 - insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their decision-making skills and their initiative through investigations in science and problem- solving in mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
21. Too few lessons were observed to judge the quality of teaching in other subjects. However, an analysis of pupils' completed work shows that teaching enables them to make sound progress in art and design in Years 1 and 2 and good overall progress in the older classes. The teaching of ICT was good in two of the lessons seen and satisfactory in the other. However, technical problems encountered over the last year have restricted teaching in this subject.
22. In the vast majority of lessons, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and show satisfactory concentration and perseverance when working on the tasks set. They are able to work

together amicably on shared tasks but the teaching provides limited opportunities for them to show initiative or to make decisions in their learning.

23. Overall, inclusion is promoted soundly by teachers and they ensure that pupils with special educational needs have equality of opportunity. These pupils are well supported in literacy and numeracy lessons by teaching assistants who help them to play a full part at every stage of each lesson. While lesson plans do not indicate which targets in each pupil's individual education plan are to be addressed, teaching assistants are effective in helping pupils to cope with the tasks teachers have set and in some cases also make useful assessments of their progress. In lessons other than those in Years 4 and 6, when additional support is not available from teaching assistants, satisfactory teaching enables pupils with special educational needs to make sound progress.

Assessing pupils' progress

24. Overall, assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and have too little impact on teachers' planning and pupils' achievements. There are elements which are sound and these include assessment in the Reception class and in mathematics in Years 1 to 6. In English, teachers do not always assess pupils' next steps in learning with enough accuracy and, as a consequence, assessment in this subject is inconsistent. For example, it is clear that in Years 4 and 6, teachers ensure that pupils think carefully about their targets in the subject and strive to reach these during lessons. This is less apparent in practice in other classes and also contributes to pupils' spasmodic progress in writing. In science, sound assessment procedures have been recently introduced but their implementation is too variable. In all other subjects, assessment procedures are also underdeveloped. Teachers' marking is broadly satisfactory, overall. In the best practice, in Years 4 and 6, pupils benefit from well-judged guidance which helps them to recognise what they have done well and what they need to improve. In other classes, opportunities are sometimes missed to use marking to provide sufficiently focused feedback for pupils.

The curriculum

The curriculum has satisfactory breadth and is enriched by a good range of extra learning opportunities. Overall, the school accommodation is a weakness. Learning resources are satisfactory overall, but not in some areas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- A good range of enrichment opportunities is provided.
- Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education.

Weaknesses

- Provision for the development of pupils' literacy skills is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and, for some pupils, in Year 3.
- Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their initiative in lessons.
- Opportunities are often missed to develop pupils' writing skills in other subjects.
- Problems with the operation of computers have had a negative effect on pupils' achievement in ICT.
- The playground provides cramped space for some games and physical education activities, and the school does not have any grassed areas.
- Book provision in the library is too slim, and Reception children do not have enough outside play resources to promote their physical development.

Commentary

25. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage (Reception class) is satisfactory overall and includes a sound balance between opportunities for children to learn through play activities and through more formal teaching. A strong emphasis is placed on the promotion of pupils' personal, social and emotional development but there is scope to improve the provision for their communication, language and literacy skills. Overall provision in all other areas of learning is sound in Reception. However, opportunities for children's physical development are restricted by a lack of outside play equipment, including wheeled toys and climbing apparatus.
26. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is satisfactory overall, meets statutory requirements and generally promotes sound progression in pupils' learning. Provision for the development of pupils' literacy skills is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and, for some pupils, in Year 3 but is satisfactory overall in the older classes. Provision for the development of pupils' numeracy skills is satisfactory across the school; pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from good provision in art and design. Opportunities for pupils to develop their decision-making skills and their initiative are few in lessons, including through investigations in science, problem-solving in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, and in independent research in other subjects. In addition, pupils' writing skills are not promoted strongly enough in work across the curriculum. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education, and sex and drugs education are covered appropriately.
27. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to after-school activities. The promotion of knowledge of other cultures and the diversity of society is sound. The accommodation, being on several levels, makes access for the disabled difficult and there is no disabled toilet.
28. Overall, the curriculum provides fairly for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language have access to the same curriculum as their peers. Some pupils also benefit from short sessions of good intensive support, usually related to literacy or numeracy, outside mainstream lessons. However, the most capable pupils often need more challenging work in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2.
29. A good range of enrichment opportunities is provided. Pupils benefit from a variety of educational visits, including a residential visit for Year 6 pupils. Visitors, including musicians, artists and authors, enrich pupils' learning experiences, and the whole school recently enjoyed a visit to the theatre. The "Creativity Week", in the last summer term, provided pupils with a rich range of opportunities to use art, music and dance to respond to the stimulus of the sea and visitors have contributed to the school's current focus on health issues. The range of school clubs is less impressive than the opportunities noted above but is satisfactory.
30. The classrooms are of adequate size for the numbers of pupils, although space is limited in one classroom and in the hall. The playground is a difficult shape and provides cramped space for physical education and games activities. In addition, there is no school field. The building is 140 years old and some walls are damp.
31. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. However, the library does not have enough fiction and non-fiction books, additional dictionaries are required and Reception children need more outside play equipment. Resources for geography are very limited. Problems with the operation of computers have had a negative effect on pupils' achievement in ICT, but they are now functioning properly.
32. There are sufficient teachers and, collectively, they have the knowledge and experience to cover the requirements of the curriculum. The school benefits from well-informed, conscientious teaching assistants who make an important contribution to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

The care and welfare of pupils are given a high priority and this is a strength of the school. Pupils are confident in seeking guidance and support when necessary and adults are sensitive to their needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Pupils receive very good pastoral care.
- Child protection issues are well handled.
- Good induction arrangements help pupils settle in quickly.

Commentary

33. There is a clear understanding that pupils cannot learn effectively if they have problems or concerns, and all adults play their part by providing sensitive support. The school benefits from having an education welfare officer who makes home visits when necessary and the headteacher makes time to talk issues through with parents so that strategies for support can be agreed. The headteacher and class teachers are present on the playground before and after school and this enables parents to talk informally about any concerns. Similarly, pupils find it easy to approach the headteacher, who is usually around at lunchtimes, to share their joys and worries. Support staff are well briefed about pupils' needs and every effort is made to ensure that any physical or emotional problem does not prevent pupils from taking full advantage of the opportunities offered. This comprehensive approach to pastoral care helps build up pupils' self-esteem and creates the right foundation for learning.
34. Particular care is taken to ensure that all adults in the school, including senior pupils on work experience, are aware of procedures relating to child protection. The school works closely with other responsible agencies when children's welfare needs to be secured, and education plans are appropriately formulated for children who are in public care. Pupils themselves have regular reminders about keeping safe and have opportunities to talk about their feelings within classes.
35. The school site, which is on several different levels, provides a challenging environment at playtimes, but pupils know which hazards need to be approached with care and they respond sensibly to the guidelines given about safety. Appropriate risk assessments are in place to cover the regular walks and visits made in the local area, including the beach, and pupils have practical experience of the importance of road safety when walking to other establishments for games or physical education.
36. The arrangements for induction are well planned. Children are visited at their pre-school setting or at home so that teachers can get to know them before they start school. The school-based sessions that are offered for 'familiarisation' help them feel secure and confident when they begin school formally. Parents value the good range of pertinent information about what is expected of them and their children, and the opportunities to meet the staff and raise any queries. The welcome planned for children who join from other schools helps them settle quickly into their new environment.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with the community and other schools are good and a sound partnership with parents is being further developed. The links with other primary schools, the Exmouth Community College and the University of Plymouth (Exmouth campus) strengthen curriculum provision well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- The local area and support from the community are used effectively to enrich pupils' experiences.
- Pupils benefit from using the resources and expertise of Exmouth College and of the University of Plymouth.
- Transfer arrangements for pupils are thorough and ensure continuity of learning and support.

Weaknesses

- Annual written reports provide little detail about pupils' strengths and weaknesses in particular subjects.

Commentary

37. Following recent changes to the leadership and management of the school, links with parents have been strengthened. Parents are provided with clear and informative documentation about the school and its activities. They are encouraged to support their children's learning by being sent termly summaries of what is to be taught, and are welcomed to assemblies and workshops where they can find out more about particular aspects of the curriculum. Homework expectations are clear and diaries to record tasks set are soundly used. Parents find the headteacher and staff easy to talk to, which ensures that concerns are shared and problems resolved quickly. Parents are supportive of the school and a good number help in classes or participate in activities coordinated by the parents' association, such as improving the school environment or organising fundraising events. Consultation meetings are arranged each term when pupils' targets for improvement are discussed with parents and their children. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved at every stage of the code of practice. They are all invited to reviews of their children's progress. Most parents attend, though a few do not, and the school makes all reasonable efforts to ensure that they are fully involved in setting pupils' targets for improvement.
38. The views of parents are sought informally and most feel comfortable about making suggestions for improvements. However, a minority believe that the school could do more to seek their views, while others would like more information about how their children are progressing. Inspection findings support the comments of a significant number of parents who feel that there is scope to improve the information provided in pupils' annual reports. Most of these give little detail about pupils' strengths and weaknesses in particular subjects.
39. Good use is made of the local area as a learning resource. The youngest pupils have a weekly walk when an aspect of the curriculum such as mathematics or science is the focus. Older pupils use the town centre as part of studies in history and geography, and the beach as a source of inspiration for art and English. There are strong links with the church, including a band of volunteers who hear pupils read. The church grounds are used for picnics and other summer events to help compensate for the school's lack of any green space. Visitors from local agencies, such as the police, the school nurse and the lifeboat service, make significant contributions to the personal development of pupils and the promotion of healthy living. Business links are satisfactory.
40. The school benefits from close links with the local community college, for example making use of their facilities for design and information technology. There are also good arrangements for

transition, with careful planning to ensure continuity in the curriculum and special needs support. The local academic council organises training for staff and helpful sessions where subject leaders can share their knowledge and practice. Students from the Exmouth campus of the University of Plymouth provide specialist teaching of physical education on their site; and teachers from Europe who visit the campus are invited to the school to observe teaching and to extend pupils' knowledge of other countries.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has good leadership skills and provides the school with a clear sense of direction. However, the leadership contribution made by other key staff is underdeveloped and is currently unsatisfactory. Most co-ordinators do not lead and manage their subjects well enough. **Governance is sound** and the governors are increasingly involved in shaping the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- The headteacher's leadership skills are good.
- The co-ordinators for mathematics and special educational needs fulfil their roles well.
- The recently-appointed deputy headteacher is conscientious and provides good support for the headteacher.

Weaknesses

- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory in most subjects.
- Until very recently, the role of the senior management team has been underdeveloped.

Commentary

Leadership

41. **The headteacher provides good leadership.** The last inspection, in 1998, found the school did not have a sufficiently clear sense of direction which was shared by the headteacher, staff and governors. All available evidence suggests this was still the case when the current headteacher took up her post in 2003. From the outset, the headteacher has used her good interpersonal skills to communicate her vision for the school to all parties. She has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and knows what needs to be done to make it more effective. Communication and teamwork have been strengthened and staff are encouraged to be more involved in the promotion and monitoring of school improvement. The headteacher leads by example and provides a very positive role model through her own efforts to move the school forward. She has successfully completed the National Primary Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and is well informed about leadership and management strategies.
42. The headteacher has worked effectively with governors and staff to create a school improvement plan which reflects and promotes the school's ambitions and goals. Staff are aware of the school's current priorities in the plan and know that they have a part to play in achieving the targets which have been set. The headteacher's motivational skills are good and she promotes a positive school ethos through a well-judged balance between support and challenge. Parents feel that the headteacher is accessible and approachable and that the school is well led, while governors consider her leadership to be a key strength of the school.
43. Overall, the leadership provided by other key staff is underdeveloped and, as a consequence, is currently unsatisfactory. Following a time of considerable disruption in the leadership and management of the school, the headteacher was appointed in February 2003 and the deputy headteacher in April 2003. The senior management team, which also includes a senior

teacher, has therefore had very little time to gel or to make a significant impact on provision. The deputy headteacher has already forged a constructive and effective partnership with the headteacher and both she and the senior teacher have attended appropriate local authority training, for example, on planning for school improvement. There are strengths in the leadership provided by the co-ordinators for mathematics and special educational needs (SEN). The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has established good links with appropriate agencies and individual specialists to ensure that pupils' needs are assessed accurately. She also liaises effectively with parents and with the well informed governor with responsibility for SEN. Those teachers leading art and design and physical education are well-informed and have provided sound support for staff. However, there are weaknesses in the leadership of most subjects and a clear sense of direction is not yet established.

Management

44. **Overall, the management of the school is satisfactory.** The headteacher's management skills are sound and she carefully monitors and evaluates the school's achievements. She recognises the value of thoroughly analysing the results of statutory and non-statutory testing and has significant experience in undertaking this process. She is appropriately encouraging the involvement of staff in this analysis in order to raise their awareness of strengths and where improvements need to be made. The headteacher has a sound overview of the quality of teachers' planning and regularly scrutinises pupils' work. In the short time she has been in post, she has also observed lessons across the school as part of performance management arrangements, and plans to extend this valuable work in the future. Her work is clearly having a beneficial effect but there is still much to be done, especially to address weaknesses in the provision for English, ICT, assessment and the roles of co-ordinators. The headteacher has recently introduced non-contact time for staff to improve the monitoring arrangements for English, mathematics and science but this is still at an early stage of development.
45. The monitoring and evaluation work by the co-ordinators for special educational needs and mathematics is well organised and good. However, the quality of provision is not evaluated with sufficient precision in most other subjects and they are not managed well enough. The last report states that the headteacher at that time did not provide effective support for curriculum monitoring and the evaluation of classroom practice and that job descriptions for co-ordinators did not include monitoring procedures. All available evidence suggests that little was done to rectify this until the appointment of the current headteacher. Until very recently, therefore, co-ordinators have had insufficient guidance and support in managing their subjects.
46. The school's policy for the performance management of staff is being soundly implemented. In addition, whole-school training needs are now being identified and addressed, which was not the case at the time of the last inspection. Procedures for the induction of newly-appointed staff are sound and reflect the caring and supportive ethos of the school.
47. **Financial planning is sound.** This is an improvement since the last inspection when the educational developments in the school were not sufficiently well supported by detailed planning. The school improvement plan is carefully costed, and the headteacher and governors ensure that the principles of best value are soundly applied when funding is allocated. The most recent local authority audit report (February 2003) indicates that the school's systems for budget management and monitoring are generally sound. The report also states that the school administrator and administrative assistant have a good understanding of the financial administration of the school, and inspection findings fully support this judgement.

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	520,862
Total expenditure	504,508
Expenditure per pupil	2,368

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	10,651
Balance carried forward to the next	16,354

Aids and barriers to raising achievement

48. The leadership skills and determination of the headteacher, together with her developing partnership with the new deputy headteacher, are key forces for improvement in the school. The most significant barriers are weaknesses in the teaching of English.

Governance

49. **Overall, the governance of the school is sound**, with some good features. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when there was poor communication, lack of consultation and no agreed strategic view which provided clear direction. Most governors have been appointed since that time and they now make a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. The chair of governors is very conscientious and visits regularly to discuss provision with the headteacher. An appropriate range of committees is established and all fulfil their roles well. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is well informed and takes a keen interest in provision. The use of quantitative data, such as SATs results, has improved since the last inspection, as has the discussion and interpretation of other important management information. This is helping to guide the school's work through strategic planning which focuses on key areas for improvement. The recently-introduced 'governor of the month' scheme is helping to ensure that all governors visit classrooms to observe teaching and learning and are acquiring the knowledge to enable them to further develop their roles as critical friend to the school.
50. Statutory requirements are fully met. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there were omissions in the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents. The governing body has agreed a written policy on race equality and is making arrangements to monitor its implementation and assess its impact.

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

FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall, provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter the Reception class in September or January before they are five. At the time of the inspection, those starting in January were beginning a series of well-organised induction sessions to familiarise them with the classroom and staff. Although the majority of children in Reception are four, there are also a few of the youngest Year 1 pupils in the class. The majority of children have attended some form of pre-school provision and the Reception teacher, who is the Foundation Stage co-ordinator, appropriately visits them in these settings before they start school. She has also formulated a good welcome booklet which is completed, before admission, by parents and children to inform staff of children's likes, worries and pre-school achievements.

Children make satisfactory progress in all areas except in their personal, social and emotional development where their progress is good. However, some children could make better progress in initial literacy. Overall, the quality of teaching is sound and a range of relevant activities is provided for them. The reception teacher and her well-qualified learning support assistant work effectively together, manage the children well and carefully monitor their progress. There is a good ratio of adults to children, ensuring that the needs of all are met. The accommodation is satisfactory but outside facilities and equipment are limited by the lack of space and storage problems.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- The supportive relationships which are established enable children to feel secure, happy and confident.

Commentary

51. The personal, social and emotional development of each intake varies but the social skills of a significant proportion of pupils are underdeveloped on entry to the school. Staff appropriately set clear boundaries and ensure that children know what is expected of them from a very early stage. As a consequence, children quickly learn routines, settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss, and their behaviour is good.
52. The teamwork of the adults working in the Reception class provides the children with a good model for co-operation and collaboration and a calm approach to work. Most children show an interest in what they are doing and concentrate even when not directly supervised. They are encouraged to share and take turns amicably and begin to learn how to appreciate the needs of others within the group. Children are expected to clear up after themselves, which most do without much prompting. Very supportive relationships ensure that children feel secure and confident in seeking help when required. The gains in learning are as a result of the continual reinforcement of rules by the adults, and treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to succeed. By the time they enter Year 1, most pupils have reached the standard expected in their personal, social and emotional development.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for children's communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory but there are some weaknesses**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Weaknesses

- Some children do not make enough progress in initial literacy.

Commentary

53. On entry to the school, the communication, language and literacy skills of most children are below average, and those of a significant minority are well below average. Most children make broadly satisfactory progress but few are in line to reach the expected standards by the end of their Reception year.
54. A small number of children attain standards which are above average for their age in speaking and listening. They respond to what is said to them, express their own thoughts clearly and in some detail, choose their words carefully, and engage in sustained conversation with adults when required to do so. The majority, however, respond with very brief answers when asked questions and a few interact appropriately with others but speak little, in spite of their teacher's best efforts. Most children can identify some letters by their sounds and can match initial letters to pictures of objects. They enjoy looking at books and talk in very simple terms about the content. Children are becoming familiar with the ideas that print carries meaning, is read from left to right and that books are read from front to back. The higher-attaining children can write and read their own names.
55. Both the class teacher and the classroom assistant have established good relationships with all the children, and activities take place in a supportive and warm environment. The staff know the children well and they work hard to plan suitable activities to engage the children's interest and to develop their language skills. However, in a lesson seen, lower-attaining children spent too much time on colouring activities while the most able children were insufficiently challenged by their tasks. Although it is early in the school year for these very young children, evidence suggests that some could make better progress in reading and writing. A whole school approach to the teaching of phonics (a key skill in children's development both as readers and writers) and of other key literacy skills has yet to be fully established in order to inform teaching and secure progression over time.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- There is an appropriate range of mathematical activities to support children's learning.

Commentary

56. The mathematical knowledge and understanding of most children are below that expected when they enter the school. The Reception teacher plans a range of appropriate activities to promote children's mathematical understanding based on Foundation Stage guidance and elements of the National Numeracy Strategy. At this early stage in the year, written recording is understandably limited and emphasis is given to activities such as sorting, matching and counting. In a lesson observed during the inspection, the children enjoyed sitting in a circle and

ordering numbers up to ten and then, with adult support, as far as 60. A few higher-attaining older children were then able to lead the others in counting together in tens to 100. In the activities which followed, children consolidated their knowledge and understanding of numbers to ten through a variety of practical activities. Although sand and water were not available in this lesson, evidence indicates that these are used to support children's mathematical development, as are songs and rhymes. Role-play, for example based on the class 'Post Office' and 'Fire Station, as well as regular opportunities to use mathematical computer programs, also support the development of children's knowledge and understanding. These practical activities prepare the way for future learning and are very appropriate for this stage of development. Overall, children make sound progress in their mathematical development but few achieve the level expected as they transfer to Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Weaknesses

- Pupils need more opportunities to make simple constructions from card, paper and recycled materials.

Commentary

57. Children are encouraged to notice the changing seasons, including through examining the varied colours of autumn leaves and seeing how the appearance of trees alters in winter. Regular walks in the town also enable them to learn about the locality in which they live and people who work in the community such as post office staff, shopkeepers, doctors and firefighters. Children are encouraged to develop their early awareness of time, including through opportunities to talk about the different needs of babies and themselves. They make sound progress when naming the main parts of their bodies. In a lesson observed during the inspection, sound teaching enabled children to notice the effect of water on marks made with felt-tipped pens on blotting paper, and to talk about what they saw. However, their observational skills and capabilities in describing the changes were below expectations. They make satisfactory progress when using construction kits but would benefit from more opportunities to experiment with joining recycled materials to make models. For example, whilst children have learned about the fire service and were engaged in role-play as firefighters during the inspection, there was no evidence of children's own interpretations of fire engines, made from boxes and card and embellished with vibrant colours. Overall, satisfactory provision is made for the provision of children's knowledge and understanding of the world. However, pupils' standards in this element of their learning remain below average, including on entry to Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Good use is made of the school hall for structured sessions designed to enhance children's physical development.

Weaknesses

- Accommodation difficulties mean that the school cannot house large wheeled toys or climbing equipment suitable for children in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

58. Evidence based on one structured lesson in the hall and on observations of children in the classroom shows that most children are on line to meet the expected goals by the end of the year. Teaching was sound in the lesson seen. Children demonstrated high levels of performance, but some opportunities for them to learn by evaluating others' performance were missed.
59. Already, most children show a good level of awareness of space. They move around the hall carefully, whether walking or jogging, on their own or in groups of four, without colliding into others and with an appropriate degree of control and coordination. All the children are able to throw balls, bean-bags and quoits short distances with reasonable accuracy, and a few have developed the necessary co-ordination to bounce a ball repeatedly and to catch a ball they have thrown in the air. Although there is a small outdoor area set aside for outdoor play, the children do not always have sufficient access to it, weather permitting. The school also lacks facilities to store large wheeled toys and climbing equipment. As a consequence, opportunities for pupils to engage in physical activity are not as varied as they should be or as the school would wish. In the classroom, most children hold pencils correctly when forming letters and when colouring, and some higher-attaining children show good levels of dexterity when using construction equipment to build models.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Pupils are learning a good range of songs and enjoy singing.

Commentary

60. During the inspection, children were making sound progress in their creative development when engaged in role-play in the class 'Fire Station'. They took phone calls, coloured in maps to show where fires were located and wore safety helmets. Children have ample opportunity for creative play using small world toys, such as farmyard models, and can experiment with water play and through painting. However, in all these activities, they would sometimes benefit from more interventions from adults to help move their learning forward.
61. Children have achieved satisfactory standards when painting vibrant pictures of their friends, and when using leaves to create collage pictures. They have regular opportunities to make music and are learning a good range of songs. Overall, satisfactory teaching enables pupils to

make sound progress in their creative development in Reception. Pupils' standards are broadly average in this element of their work on entry to Year 1.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory in Years 4, 5 and 6**. It is **unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and for some pupils in Year 3**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Effective teaching results in good learning in Years 4 and 6.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs.

Weaknesses

- Standards are well below average in reading and writing in Years 1, 2 and 3. Many pupils in these year groups could do better.
- The leadership and management of English are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

62. In the 2002 national tests for pupils aged seven, the school's results in reading and writing were well below the national average and the average results of similar schools. In 2003, more pupils exceeded the expected standard in reading, but none achieved this in writing and a significant number of pupils fell below the expected standard. These results reflect a continuing downward trend in the results for writing. While the more able pupils attain appropriate standards in reading but could do better in writing, pupils at the lower end of the average range do not achieve as well as they should either in reading or in writing. Inspection findings confirm that, overall, attainment is well below average in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2, and also for many pupils in Year 3.
63. The results of 2002 national tests in English for pupils aged eleven were in line with the national average, while those for 2003 were below the national average. Inspection findings show that, overall, pupils' attainment in the current Year 6 class is broadly in line with national expectations, although few attain above average standards. While significant variations in the composition of different classes accounts for some annual variations, evidence shows that pupils in Years 2 and 3 in particular have not made adequate progress in earlier years. Many pupils currently in these year groups are still not doing as well as they should in reading or in writing. In Years 4 and 6, pupils make good progress as a result of effective teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make sound overall progress and do particularly well when given focused support by teaching assistants.
64. Pupils' listening skills are broadly average. Good habits are established at an early stage and most pupils are interested and attentive during lessons. Speaking skills are below average overall in Years 1, 2 and 3, but are broadly average in Years 4, 5 and 6. While most pupils soon learn to engage in everyday conversations and to answer simple questions, they take longer to develop the language needed to describe, to explain and to speculate. The general vocabulary of many pupils entering the school is limited, as is their understanding of figures of speech, and these factors also affect pupils' reading. For example, Year 2 pupils read hesitantly not only because they lack phonic skills, but also because they are often uncertain about the meaning of words or phrases; although they try to 'sound words out', few use other equally important strategies. Very few pupils in Year 2 read confidently or widely, and few can name 'favourite' books by well known authors. In Year 6, most pupils enjoy reading fiction and have definite preferences for particular genres and authors. Some pupils also read non-fiction for

interest, but they do not have enough opportunities to develop the skills of independent research.

65. Writing has significant weaknesses in Years 1, 2 and 3, not least because pupils' knowledge of phonics and of regular spelling patterns in the English language is not strong enough to enable them to build words successfully. In addition, too many pupils find it difficult to express their ideas clearly, are still unsure about what constitutes a sentence, continue to use print rather than joined handwriting, and write too little in response to most tasks they are given. For the majority of pupils in Years 2 and 3, writing remains a laborious activity. Although some of the weaknesses in writing persist in the work of older pupils, the very effective teaching that they receive in Years 4 and 6 enables pupils of all abilities to make up lost ground. As a consequence, the current Year 6 pupils achieve standards which, overall, are in line with those expected of pupils of a similar age.
66. Overall, the quality of teaching seen in lessons is satisfactory, with good teaching in years 4 and 6. All teachers plan lessons satisfactorily and all manage their pupils effectively so that lessons proceed in an orderly and supportive environment. In the best teaching, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are very secure. They are able to set out for pupils the sub-skills they need to develop in order to master tasks, to demonstrate the skills themselves, and to use model texts very effectively in order to reveal the craft of writing for many different purposes. They assess pupils' work skilfully and give relevant feedback, either immediately or through marking, in order to correct misunderstandings or to help pupils improve their work. Most significantly, they have high but realistic expectations for what should be achieved by pupils of differing abilities. In Years 1, 2 and 3, weaknesses in pupils' performance stem more from a lack of coherence and consistency in teaching and provision over time than from the quality of individual lessons. There are no planned progressive approaches to the teaching of phonics, spelling or handwriting, or arrangements to ensure that pupils of the same age but in different classes follow similar programmes of work. Pupils' efforts are rightly praised, but too little feedback is given when work has weaknesses and there is sometimes not enough direct intervention to help pupils improve. As a result, pupils' own expectations of themselves are not as high as they should be, and their own knowledge of the skills to be learned and mastered is inadequate.
67. The leadership and management of provision are unsatisfactory. There has been no opportunity to monitor and evaluate provision by observing teaching and learning directly, and little has been done to establish coherence, continuity and consistency in teaching approaches. Assessment procedures are underdeveloped, and too little use is made of assessment to inform planning and teaching. Resources have been increased since the last inspection but the stock in the school library and classroom provision of dictionaries and thesauri need improvement. The regular use of ICT to support work in English is not established across the school.

Language across the curriculum

68. Teachers help pupils to acquire the vocabulary and technical terms needed to understand work in other subjects and there is an increasing focus on drama and on discussion. However, pupils need more opportunities to read for information, undertake independent research or produce extended writing in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Pupils benefit from good teaching in Years 4 and 6.
- The subject leader is well informed and makes a positive impact on provision.

Weaknesses

- Pupils have too few opportunities to make choices and decisions and to generate and solve problems of their own.
- The most capable pupils underachieve in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

69. On entry to Year 1, pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding are generally below the standard expected for their ages. Overall, the achievement of pupils across Years 1 and 2 is broadly satisfactory although Year 1 pupils generally make better progress than those in Year 2. Overall, standards are below average in Year 2 and this judgement reflects the results of the statutory tests in 2002 and 2003. A significant minority of pupils do not achieve average standards and only a few exceed the standard expected for their age. The last inspection found standards to be in line with national expectations in Year 2 but few pupils achieved a higher level.
70. Trends over time show that standards at the end of Year 6 have been in line with the national average since 2001 and this was also the judgement made in the last inspection. In 2003, the results of the statutory tests for Year 6 were almost identical to the national average in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving and exceeding the level expected. Inspection findings show that in Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make mainly sound progress in Years 3 and 5 and good progress in Years 4 and 6. As a consequence, current standards in Year 6 are in line with those expected.
71. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily in relation to their starting points. However, higher-attaining pupils sometimes mark time, particularly in Year 2, and their overall achievement in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory. Test analysis shows that boys sometimes do better than girls in mathematics but there is no evidence that they are treated differently.
72. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but pupils in Years 4 and 6 benefit from particularly effective teaching. In one very good lesson, for example, the subject manager used ongoing assessment effectively to match her teaching to pupils' knowledge and understanding of multiplication. Following a brisk start to the lesson in which pupils practised mental calculation skills such as doubling and halving, she introduced the idea of a 'tool box' for multiplication. Skilful questioning by the teacher then enabled the box to be filled with various strategies suggested by pupils which they then employed to solve a range of calculations. Time was used very productively and focused teaching carefully supported the needs of both lower and higher attainers. As a consequence, pupils made good progress and gained in confidence.
73. There were common weaknesses in less effective lessons which included:
- a slow pace, especially during the introduction to lessons;
 - failure to ensure that all pupils were fully engaged in all parts of the lesson;

- over-dominance by the teacher so that pupils did not have the chance to make suggestions or explain their strategies;
- unclear explanations so that time was lost in repeating instructions during group work; and
- activities that were not well matched to pupils learning needs, especially those of higher-attaining pupils.

74. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory and all teachers set and review targets for mathematics. Pupils' work is regularly marked and most teachers provide helpful and encouraging feedback. However, this is not consistent across the school and there is room for improvement. ICT is used effectively to support pupils' learning in some classes, for example Year 6, but there is considerable scope to increase its contribution to pupils' learning in the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

75. Some pupils use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. For example, they use graphs and tables to record data in science. However, opportunities tend to occur coincidentally rather than as part of systematic planning.
76. The co-ordinator is conscientious and enthusiastic about mathematics. She has good subject knowledge and has worked as a leading mathematics teacher for the local authority. However, teachers at the school have had no opportunities to see her at work. The results of statutory testing are carefully analysed and this has helped to identify and prioritise areas for improvement. The co-ordinator has checked teachers' planning, scrutinised pupils' work and interviewed pupils and there are appropriate plans for her to observe teaching later in the school year.

SCIENCE

The quality of provision in science is **satisfactory overall, but has some important weaknesses**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Pupils benefit from good science teaching in Years 4 and 6.

Weaknesses

- Pupils' scientific enquiry skills need to be improved.
- The most capable pupils underachieve in Years 1 and 2.
- Assessment procedures are not implemented consistently.
- Pupils' progress in science is too spasmodic from year to year.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision are not sufficiently rigorous.

Commentary

77. On entry to Year 1, pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are generally below the standard expected for pupils of similar ages. Overall, the achievement of pupils across Years 1 and 2 is broadly satisfactory although Year 1 pupils generally make better progress than those in Year 2. Most Year 2 pupils demonstrate average standards but a significant minority do not, and few exceed the standard expected for their age. Consequently, overall standards are below average in Year 2. These findings are a little more favourable than the results of the statutory teacher assessments in Year 2 in the last academic year, which were well below the national average and the overall results of similar schools. However, they are less positive than

those of the last inspection, which found that standards were in line with national expectations in Year 2.

78. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement remains inconsistent from year to year but is satisfactory overall. While pupils make adequate progress in Years 3 and 5, they generally do well in Years 4 and 6. Overall, standards in Year 6 are average, and are lower than in the last academic year when the SATs results were above the national average. However, current standards are notably higher than in 2002 when the SATs results in Year 6 were well below the national average.
79. Across the school, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is sound in science. The achievement of higher-attaining pupils is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but is satisfactory, overall, in the older classes. Pupils' mathematical skills are soundly promoted in science, including through measurement and simple graphs. Overall, pupils' oracy skills are soundly promoted, and pupils are introduced to appropriate scientific vocabulary. However, too little is often expected of pupils in their written work in science, and ICT makes insufficient contribution to their learning in the subject.
80. In Year 2, most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of life processes and living things but there is very little evidence of above-average knowledge. Their investigation skills are underdeveloped, a significant minority find it difficult to make sensible predictions and many are not able to use simple scientific vocabulary to explain their ideas. In Year 6, pupils' overall scientific knowledge and understanding are broadly average. However, the lack of attention generally given to the development of pupils' investigation skills across the school has a negative impact. For example, whilst Year 6 pupils are able to conduct simple investigations prescribed by their teacher, many find it difficult to draw pertinent conclusions and there is no evidence of them devising simple experiments to test their own ideas.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but has some important weaknesses. When the school was last inspected, pupils' learning was also satisfactory, although teaching judged to be good. At present, there is a significant variation in the quality of teaching and it ranges from unsatisfactory to good. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress in their scientific learning. In the best lessons, teachers' expectations are high and pupils do well. For example, in a lesson seen in Year 4, the teacher introduced and reinforced scientific vocabulary well, used skilful questions to probe pupils' understanding, and knew just when to intervene and when to stand back to let pupils work things out for themselves. As a result, pupils were working at the edge of their capabilities and were making good progress.
82. A common weakness is the limited opportunity given for pupils to develop their scientific investigation skills. Very little evidence of investigations is recorded in pupils' books and when it is recorded it shows that pupils have few opportunities to make decisions. For example, all Year 5 pupils have conducted identical investigations instead of devising their own simple enquiries to test their ideas. Pupils were given some opportunities to develop their investigation skills during the inspection but their learning was often restricted by teachers who tended to do too much for them, provided limited challenge and needed to allow pupils to experiment and to find things out for themselves. Teachers' expectations for Year 2 pupils often need to be higher, and the most capable pupils need more difficult work. Unsatisfactory teaching is evident in Year 5 when the pupils are not sufficiently engaged in their learning and inefficient use is made of time.
83. Overall, the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Although the co-ordinator has very secure knowledge and good teaching skills in science, she is having too little impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has had no opportunity to observe teaching in science and has not analysed pupils' work from across the school with sufficient rigour. Although she has recently introduced sensible assessment procedures, their implementation has not been checked and is too variable. As a result, assessment is

unsatisfactory overall. Although the co-ordinator has formulated an action plan, it is too generalised and does not target weaknesses with enough precision.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall, provision for information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- There has been recent improvement in resources and staff expertise.

Weaknesses

- Overall standards are below the national expectation in Years 2 and 6 and pupils are underachieving in ICT.
- The leadership and management of the subject and its assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

84. All pupils have access to the school's portable bank of laptop computers as well as to classroom computers but their progress is uneven as they move through the school. The regular use of ICT for word-processing, graphics, data-handling, modelling, measuring and controlling and the Internet is not yet securely established across the school. The use of ICT to support and enhance work in other subjects is also underdeveloped. As a consequence, overall standards in ICT are below the national expectation in Years 2 and 6.
85. As only three lessons were observed during the inspection, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. In the lessons seen, the teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 were good and in Year 3 was sound. In Year 5, pupils accessed the Internet to retrieve information about synagogues as part of their work in religious education, whilst Year 6 pupils confidently used a spreadsheet to enter data from a science lesson in order to graph their results. In Year 3, pupils made sound progress as they combined text and graphics to create a greeting card. A thorough scrutiny of pupils' work, ICT record books and disks shows that those in Years 3 to 6 have some opportunities to make changes to texts, import graphics, use databases and to search for information using CD-roms and the Internet. Evidence suggests that pupils in Years 4 and 6 make more regular use of their ICT skills in other subjects. Very little evidence of pupils' work in ICT was provided for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
86. A detailed development plan for the subject has been formulated and a helpful scheme of work has been introduced to improve progression in pupils' learning. All staff have benefited from training in ICT; however, recent changes in subject leadership have yet to be consolidated and no monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place. Assessment procedures are being developed in collaboration with other schools in the area but are currently unsatisfactory.
87. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. They have been significantly improved in the last year through the purchase of a portable bank of laptop computers which can be used throughout the school. Unfortunately, there have been some initial technical problems which have slowed progress in establishing their regular use. The school has recently invested in additional technical support and this is ensuring that problems are now being resolved. The updating of classroom computers and printers for pupils in Years 1 and 2 has appropriately been identified as a school priority.

HUMANITIES

Geography

There was no teaching of geography during this inspection and, because of the timing of the inspection, no pupils' work was available for scrutiny. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching, learning, standards or pupils' achievements in the subject or to identify areas for development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- The school makes good use of fieldwork.

Weaknesses

- There is no monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

88. Evidence suggests that a range of visits plays an important part in making the work interesting and relevant. As well as studying the immediate locality, which includes the town of Exmouth, the beach and river, pupils visit other places such as Exeter and Dartmoor. Opportunities are also provided for pupils to use appropriate resources to study contrasting localities overseas, for example a village in India. The school's own resources are very limited but good use is made of the Devon Museum and Library Services. Assessment procedures for geography are underdeveloped and unsatisfactory and there has been no monitoring of teaching and learning in this subject.

History

89. Due to timetabling arrangements, insufficient evidence was available to make judgements about pupils' standards and achievements or about the quality of teaching and learning in history. Use is made of the good resources available from the Devon Museum and Library Services to promote historical enquiry although, at this early stage of the school year, there was relatively little recorded work available to judge its effectiveness. A literacy lesson observed in Year 6 demonstrated the good use made of history as a focus for the development of pupils' skills in speaking and listening. However, evidence suggests that there is considerable scope for the subject to make a stronger contribution to the development of pupils' key literacy skills and their skills in independent research. Discussions with the co-ordinator, who has very recently taken on the role, show that there are no assessment procedures in the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

The provision for art and design is **satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and is good in Years 3 to 6.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Standards are above average in Year 6 and there is very good work in Year 4.

Weaknesses

- Procedures for assessing pupils' standards and progress need to be more rigorous.

Commentary

90. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average, reflecting the situation when the school was last inspected. In Year 6, standards are above average and represent an improvement on the average standards seen in the last inspection. Current standards show the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is sound in Years 1 and 2 and is good, overall, in the older classes.
91. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' self-portraits demonstrate drawing and painting skills which are satisfactory for their ages. In the mixed Year 1 and 2 class, pupils achieve satisfactory standards when drawing a classmate who is dressed similarly to the child in the Picasso painting which they have discussed. These pupils achieve well when learning to mix their own paint colours. In Year 4, pupils make good progress when learning about the work of famous artists. Their own pictures of sunflowers, drawn and painted from the direct observation of real sunflowers provided by their teacher, are of high quality. Sunflower heads are interpreted vibrantly in pastel and reflect elements of the style of Van Gogh while still retaining the stamp of pupils' originality. Pupils' paintings of whole sunflowers show their well-developed colour-mixing and observational skills, and their drawings which emphasise the visual relationships between two people represent good achievement. In Year 6, pupils have looked carefully at faces, and their portraits demonstrate good drawing skills.
92. Only a brief part of one art and design lesson was seen during the inspection, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, an analysis of pupils' completed work shows the teaching enables pupils to make sound progress in Years 1 and 2 and good overall progress in the older classes. The very good work in Year 4 suggests these pupils benefit from particularly good teaching. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning in art and design.
93. The art and design co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about the subject and has ensured that resources have improved since the last inspection. She provides useful advice for her colleagues when it sought, and has recently led a training session for staff to develop their skills in teaching pupils to mix their own paint colours. In addition, the co-ordinator has made a significant contribution to the success of a whole-school "Creativity Week" in the Summer Term 2003. During this week, when the sea was used as the key stimulus, pupils achieved well. For example, pupils' paintings of lifeboats, created after looking carefully at a real lifeboat, are above average in Year 2 and are well above average in Year 4. Overall, leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. However, more systematic procedures need to be used to monitor pupils' achievements, including through the development of a common system for teachers to assess pupils' standards.

Design and technology

Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement about provision in design and technology. However, a discussion with the headteacher means some judgements can be made.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Weakness

- The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

94. There is no co-ordinator for the subject and there are no effective systems for monitoring and evaluating provision. In addition, procedures are not established to help teachers to assess the standards, achievements and future learning needs of pupils in their classes.
95. No design and technology lessons were taught during the inspection, and examples of pupils' completed work had not been retained by the school. Consequently, it is not possible to judge pupils' standards or the quality of teaching and learning.

Physical education

96. Due to timetabling constraints it was not possible to see any physical education lessons or other sporting activities during the inspection. It is therefore not possible to make overall judgements about standards, pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, discussions with college staff involved with the school through the East Devon School Sports Co-ordinator Partnership show that the work of staff and pupils is highly thought of. The school's physical education co-ordinator is proactive in her role. She has worked hard to ensure that inadequacies in the accommodation on the school site do not restrict pupils' opportunities to participate in a wide variety of physical activities. For example, good arrangements are in place for pupils to use the gymnastics and sports facilities at the Exmouth campus of the University of Plymouth and the rugby field in Exmouth. A number of after-school sports clubs are well supported by pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff, and parents; outdoor and adventurous pursuits are planned for older pupils at a residential centre; and pupils are encouraged to participate in various sporting fixtures and tournaments involving local schools.
97. A useful curriculum overview is in place for gymnastics, games, dance and swimming, and there is detailed written guidance to help staff plan suitable work for games in Years 3 to 6. The co-ordinator regards athletics as a strength of provision. She recognises that she needs to develop her awareness of physical education provision in Years 1 and 2 but as yet has had no opportunities to monitor and evaluate standards, teaching and learning through the direct observation of lessons. There are at present no agreed assessment procedures.

Music

Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement about provision in music. However, singing in assemblies was heard, and it was possible to discuss provision with the co-ordinator. Consequently, some judgements can be made.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Weaknesses

- Assessment systems are not established in the subject.
- There are no systematic procedures to monitor and evaluate provision.

Commentary

98. Evidence from assemblies shows that pupils' singing skills are broadly average. There were few opportunities for pupils to benefit from specialist instrumental tuition when the school was last inspected but this situation has been rectified. In addition, resources have been improved and are now satisfactory. Procedures for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of provision are yet to be established. The co-ordinator has produced a sensible strategy to help teachers to assess the work of pupils in their classes but this will not be trialled by teachers until later in the term.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

99. No lessons were seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made about overall provision.
100. Personal development is seen as an increasingly important aspect of the school's work. Health awareness, including healthy eating, is promoted appropriately and is well supported by visits from outside agencies. Suitable provision is made for drugs education and sex education, and the headteacher has recently begun to introduce lessons on Christian citizenship in three classes. Circle time is planned in every class, and pupils in Year 6 have benefited from a life-skills training day in which they learned how to cope with real-life emergencies from experts in the local police, fire, ambulance and coastguard services. Work on display testifies to the effectiveness of a 'Friendship Week' when pupils considered the true meaning of the word 'friend' and the high value they place on friendship, the 'golden cord' that binds them to others. Pupils of all ages are asked their views about school, and the School Council provides suitable opportunities for them to contribute ideas for school improvement.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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

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	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
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).

