

## INSPECTION REPORT

**HIGHWEEK COMMUNITY PRIMARY AND NURSERY  
SCHOOL**

Newton Abbot

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113210

Headteacher: Mr David Glenny

Lead inspector: Mrs Jane Morris

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 260742

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school:              | Primary                                  |
| School category:             | Community                                |
| Age range of pupils:         | 3 – 11 years                             |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                    |
| Number on roll:              | 275                                      |
| School address:              | Coronation Road<br>Newton Abbot<br>Devon |
| Postcode:                    | TQ12 1TX                                 |
| Telephone number:            | 01626 216 300                            |
| Fax number:                  | 01626 216 301                            |
| Appropriate authority:       | Governing body                           |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr Mike Hindle                           |
| Date of previous inspection: | 12 <sup>th</sup> October 1998            |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average sized primary school with 48 part-time children in the nursery and 251 full-time pupils in the main school. All are from white home backgrounds and have English as their mother tongue. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than those expected is average. Older pupils are taught in three parallel classes in Years 3 and 4 and similarly in Years 5 and 6.

The school attracts pupils from diverse backgrounds. The majority of them come from a large housing estate on the edge of Newton Abbot. This estate has grown over the past two years as more housing association homes have been built. Parts of the estate have problems related to significant deprivation. Attainment on entry to school is well below average. Forty per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is well above average. Eight pupils have statements of special educational need, representing three per cent of the school population. This figure is above average. Pupils' special educational needs are physical, emotional and behavioural linked, as well as learning related.

The school has recently been considerably extended and extensively refurbished. It works very closely and productively with the community to maximise the opportunities offered to parents and their children. It has a 'Nursery plus' facility, funded by the local education authority. This gives additional support to children from Newton Abbot and further a field who have experienced delayed speech and language acquisition. The school also provides 'Family Literacy' group work, a 'Breakfast Club' and numerous after school facilities. It received a School Achievement Award in 2002 and has just gained recognition as a 'Healthy School'.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                     |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|
| 18270                          | Mrs Jane Morris     | Lead inspector | Foundation stage, Science, Art and design, Design and technology and Music.                              |
| 9837                           | Mr Roy Walsh        | Lay inspector  |  |
| 31822                          | Ms Anne Newman      | Team inspector | English, Geography, History and Religious education.   |
| 31819                          | Mrs Shirley Duggins | Team inspector | Mathematics, Information and communication technology, Physical education and Special educational needs. |

The inspection contractor was:

Parkman Ltd. in association with *PkR*  
35 Trewartha Park  
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Somerset  
BS23 2RT

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The **effectiveness** of the school is **good** and it offers **good value for money**. Teachers, supported by very effective assistants, ensure pupils achieve well and develop very positive attitudes. Standards are satisfactory. Leadership and management are both very good and promote innovative ideas that develop additional learning opportunities for pupils, their parents and members of the community. The school includes and supports every pupil exceptionally well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- All pupils, especially those with special needs, achieve well.
- Standards in all aspects of English are too low.
- Nursery provision is of the very highest quality.
- The school has a very good ethos, is very safe and caring and has very good links with parents.
- The school's extended services are outstanding.
- Marking does not always show pupils how they can improve.

The school has shown good improvement since the previous inspection. All issues have been addressed. Teaching is better. It is now good throughout the school and there are examples of excellent practice in the nursery. Although standards in English have remained below average, lesson planning has developed well and the school does its utmost to improve literacy skills from the earliest stages. Improved leadership and management have ensured there are much stronger partnerships with parents and the community and these are having a significant impact on pupils' attitudes and their learning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

**All pupils achieve well** for their ability. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were very low in comparison to all schools. However, the school did meet its targets for the year. Standards in relation to similar schools were well below average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. Results reflected the fact that almost half of the pupils taking the tests had special educational needs. Also a significant number of the group joined in Years 5 and 6 and had not spent their earlier years within the school's very supportive atmosphere for learning. Until 2003 results in mathematics and science had shown year on year improvement. Standards in music are well above expectations and in art they are good.

Standards at the end of Year 2 were well below average in reading, in the lowest five per cent nationally for writing and average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools they were below average in reading, in the lowest five percent nationally for writing. In mathematics they were above average.

The vast majority of reception children do not meet the anticipated goals in any of the areas of learning. They do, however, have access to very rich experiences which enable them to learn well,

especially in the nursery where the provision is outstanding. Teachers take account of children's very low attainment on entry to the school particularly in relation to their language acquisition.

**Pupils' personal qualities** are **very good** and their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is **good**. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The **quality of education** provided by the school is **good**. **Teaching** is **good** throughout the school. It is outstanding in the nursery. In music, teachers use their expertise to plan very good lessons and these encourage pupils to achieve very well.

The curriculum offered is good. Very good extra-curricular provision enriches pupils' learning effectively, especially in the arts and sport. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are of a high quality. Partnerships with parents and other schools are very productive and have a significant impact on pupils' achievements, as do the extended services offered by the school. These are outstanding. Links fostered with the community overall, are exceptional.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management** are **very good**.

The headteacher is inspirational. He has the skills, knowledge and determination to continually move the school forward and improve standards. He manages the school very well and introduces innovative ideas very successfully. Governors are very supportive and their role as a challenging body is well-established. They play a very productive and supportive part in the work of the school. Financial matters are managed very well.

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

Parents express extremely positive views. They have every confidence in the headteacher and the school. The additional opportunities they are offered are highly valued. They are kept very well informed and their children's reports are thorough.

Pupils like school and appreciate the many extra opportunities to take part in interesting activities, especially the residential trips. They feel very safe and appreciate the care and the stability that the school gives them.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in all aspects of English and develop further the use of literacy skills across every area of the curriculum.
- Ensure marking informs pupils about what they need to do next to improve their learning.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Throughout the school achievement is good. Standards are satisfactory. Pupils learn effectively, enabling them to make good progress from their very low attainment on entry to the nursery. Pupils also develop very positive attitudes to their work.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because they build on their prior attainment successfully and develop very positive attitudes to learning.
- Standards in all areas of English are well below average throughout the school.
- Pupils start school with very low standards in communication, language and literacy skills.
- At the end of Year 2, standards in reading are showing some improvement.
- There was a clear trend of improving standards in mathematics and science until 2003 when results were influenced by a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs.
- Standards in music are well above national expectations and in art they are good.

#### Commentary

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading       | 14.6 (12.6)    | 15.7 (15.8)      |
| writing       | 10.8 (12.1)    | 14.6 (14.4)      |
| mathematics   | 16.4 (15.8)    | 16.3 (16.5)      |

*There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 23.5 (24.2)    | 26.8 (27.0)      |
| mathematics   | 24.7 (27.5)    | 26.8 (26.7)      |
| science       | 27.0 (29.6)    | 28.6 (28.3)      |

*There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Achievement is good because although the majority of children enter the nursery with very limited experiences and skills, especially in communication, language and literacy, by the end of Year 6, they are reaching standards in line with national expectations in mathematics and science. Their standards are below average in English but good teaching ensures they have been given appropriate opportunities to develop their capability in this area. Most pupils establish very positive attitudes to learning. The high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs progress very well. More able pupils reach appropriate standards. They are challenged effectively and work beyond the anticipated levels. There are no significant differences between the standards reached by boys and girls.
2. Foundation Stage Profiles show that over three quarters of reception children do not meet the expected levels in any area of learning. In 2003 no child reached the expected levels in knowledge and understanding of the world or creative development. Children do make good progress from their very low starting points but still start Year 1 with well below average



attainment. The very poor speaking and listening skills, evident as they start school, have a significant impact on their overall standards. Most of the current group will not meet the expected goals in any area of learning, although they will be closer to the expected level in their personal, social and emotional, mathematical and physical development.

3. At the end of Year 2, results in 2003 were well below the national average in reading, in the lowest five per cent nationally in writing and average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools results were below average in reading, in the lowest five per cent for writing but above average in mathematics. Results have shown improvement in mathematics over time. The school focused on improving reading during the previous year and results show that this has begun to have an impact. Results were considerably better than in the previous year. Currently standards are average in mathematics but below average in reading and writing.
4. Test results for 2003 at the end of Year 6 were well below average in English, mathematics and science, in comparison with all schools. In relation to similar schools, results were average in science but below average in mathematics and well-below average in English. Standards seen during the inspection were average in mathematics and science but below average in English.
5. Until 2003 the school had secured an overall trend of improvement in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, year on year. In English, results had not shown similar improvement. In 2002 the school received a government achievement award for its improved results. Standards at that time, in comparison with similar schools, were well-above average in mathematics and science but were well-below average in English.
6. Some year groups have a very large number of pupils with special educational needs. This was very apparent in the Year 6 cohort in 2003 when over 40 per cent of pupils had very significant problems, both with learning and in relation to their emotional needs. The school managed to meet its targets, although data shows that a number of pupils had joined Highweek in Years 5 and 6, after the completion of the large building project to provide additional local authority housing adjacent to the school. Several of these pupils had considerable issues to deal with in their lives.
7. The school is well aware of the need to investigate and discover ways in which it can improve pupils' speaking and listening skills as this is at the root of pupils' very low attainment in English. It has sought help from many sources and works closely with the authorities to secure speech therapy sessions within school. It also invests money in counselling sessions to ensure pupils are given opportunities to express themselves and discuss their anxieties. A major feature of the school's work has been to establish a 'Nursery plus' facility. The school was one of the first to take advantage of a local education authority initiative to support children with language delay. It not only provides very productive support for children who attend the school but also those from the surrounding areas and beyond. Outreach workers, based at the school, support children and staff in other settings.
8. The headteacher's very good leadership and management are ensuring that teachers are continually monitoring individual pupils' progress to make certain that all that can be done to support them is being done. This work is particularly important in this school where each year group of pupils has different characteristics and presents different challenges in terms of behaviour and attitudes.
9. All pupils achieve well because teaching not only takes account of their academic ability but also recognises the need to inspire them to learn. This is a very significant feature of the school's work. Some pupils present very challenging behaviour but they are managed very well and in a consistent manner by all who work at the school. Pupils identified as having special needs, whether these be through a physical disability, learning related or linked to an emotional problem, progress very well.
10. In information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE) standards are satisfactory. The school places a high priority on ensuring pupils have the opportunity to

succeed whenever possible and therefore places great emphasis on subjects such as art and music. Standards of art work seen around the school are good. In music lessons with the older pupils, standards observed were very good. Other subjects were sampled and insufficient evidence was collected to form conclusive judgements about standards.

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good. Pupils' personal development is also very good. The school has maintained its strong provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development, and has improved its provision for pupils' multi-cultural development since the last inspection. Attendance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attitudes are very good because of the quality of teaching and the positive climate for learning created by the school.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- Pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities, which improves their confidence.
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils lead to improvements in pupils' personal development.

### **Commentary**

11. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy being at school and strive hard to achieve the targets set them. Virtually all pupils approach their lessons with enthusiasm, concentrate well on their learning and behave very well. Playtimes and lunchtimes are positive social occasions where friendships and confidence are developed. Lunch-time supervisory assistants involve themselves whole-heartedly in developing pupils' activities and play. For example, they had great fun with the pupils as they explored the effects of moving a parachute around the playground. They have an important role within the school as their work also helps to promote co-operative attitudes. The school sets high expectations for pupils' behaviour and works hard to promote very good relationships, both of which create a very positive atmosphere for learning. Pupils' behaviour is usually very good in lessons and the staff use well-thought-out strategies to reward good work and behaviour. There are a small number of pupils who exhibit very challenging behaviour, but this is managed very effectively by teachers and assistants, ensuring that all pupils are able to take full part in lessons and other activities.
12. Pupils' personal development is managed very well. Although children in the Foundation Stage do not reach the anticipated goals in their personal social and emotional development, they are closer to them than in most of the other areas of learning. This is because teachers place great emphasis on ensuring they develop positive attitudes and work together well. The very good relationships cultivated throughout the school have enabled pupils to share any worries or concerns with staff. Pupils are eager to show initiative and take on extra duties and responsibilities. They talk proudly of their roles as class monitors or members of the school council. Teaching assistants give invaluable help to pupils, often in small groups, and staff work hard to re-integrate pupils back into classes when they have had a focused small group activity. Individual education plans are provided for pupils with specific needs. Pupils with particular difficulties are provided with extra help by the school counselling service, which has been developed to deal competently with any emotional barriers to learning. All pupils are fully included in every aspect of the school's work.
13. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Its strength lies in the very caring atmosphere generated throughout the school and the way adults celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils treat each other with respect and are given very good opportunities to develop their self-knowledge through reflection in religious education, circle time and assemblies. The issuing of certificates and praise in front of the whole school does much to raise pupils' self-esteem.

14. All staff promote a strong moral code and pupils appreciate the time teachers take to discuss what is right and wrong and the impact of their actions on others. They also like the opportunities provided during circle time and personal, social and health education sessions to discuss problems or gain understanding of views and feelings. The school engenders a strong community spirit and many opportunities are provided to work in pairs or small groups sharing resources and help. This approach is fostered in the early stages of the nursery, and pupils throughout the school collaborate in a very natural way and show patience and tolerance towards each other. The many extra-curricular activities and the annual, separate, residential trips for Years 3 to 6 pupils help to develop social skills in a less formal setting.
15. Pupils have a good appreciation of cultural diversity. The school celebrates major religious festivals and is sensitive to pupils' own religious observances. Visits to local museums, theatres and places of interest are built into the planned curriculum. Pupils' multi-cultural understanding has improved since the last inspection. Recent activities have included work in geography on a village in the Gambia, two days with visiting African musicians (culminating in a performance by the pupils), and the secondment to the school of a Japanese assistant.

### Attendance

The general level of attendance has been improving over the last two years. Staff have worked hard to encourage better attendance. It is now satisfactory overall. The major cause of any unauthorised absence is because parents withdraw their children for holidays during term time when they take advantage of available offers that mean the difference between having a family holiday and not. There have been no exclusions over the past year. The school has been very determined to manage pupils with behavioural problems by keeping them in school and in this have been very successful in ensuring pupils' continuity of learning.

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 6.0 | 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.*

#### *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                             | 272                  | 0                                 | 0                              |
| White – any other White background          | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                    | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are of a good quality and promote very positive attitudes. The school provides a rich curriculum greatly enhanced by additional opportunities which are made available to all pupils. A very good ethos is shaped by the very caring atmosphere. Links with parents are very strong and the extended services the school offers are outstanding.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of both teaching and learning is good. Teaching has some very strong features especially in the nursery where it is of an exceptionally high standard. Assessment is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers foster good learning because they take account of and meet the academic and emotional needs of all pupils. They treat all pupils equally and fairly.
- Teaching is outstanding in the nursery.
- Teachers take account of pupils' poor communication, language and literacy skills as they start school and do their utmost to develop this aspect of pupils' learning whenever possible.
- Teaching assistants are very effective and help teachers to promote pupils' very positive attitudes to learning.
- Marking is not always used to inform pupils about what they need to do to improve.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 2 (5%)    | 11 (24%)  | 19 (42%) | 13 (29%)     | 0              | 0    | 0         |

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

16. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. Nursery children benefit from outstanding teaching because all the adults who work with the children are thoroughly prepared and engage the children in stimulating activities that take account of all their needs. These enable the children to learn and progress very well even though their attainment on entry is low. There is a tangible 'buzz' of activity as soon as the door is opened to the nursery and both indoors and out all children are very purposefully occupied. Adults support language development constantly and raise children's interest in all the exciting activities available to them. In reception, teaching is good. Teachers and other adults know the children well. There is good planning for these children and this ensures they experience quality lessons with activities that are varied and challenging. Reception children also share many of the learning experiences that the nursery children have, but there are times when the pace of the lessons slows. Assessment procedures are very thorough and the outcomes are recorded systematically. This means that children's progress is tracked successfully and usefully supports planning for the next steps in learning.
17. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good with some very strong features. Teachers' planning is secure and almost always ensures there are well-matched opportunities for developing learning, so all pupils make good progress. The successful deployment of very effective teaching assistants makes certain that pupils with additional needs are supported and they achieve very well. Together teachers and their assistants foster very positive attitudes to learning even though many pupils have significant problems to deal with in their lives.
18. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond very well. This means they are usually very focused on their learning and almost always do their best. A small minority of pupils present very challenging behaviour, but teachers are well aware of each individual's needs. They have very effective strategies to deal with any exceptionally demanding pupils. Teaching assistants also play a very valuable role in ensuring there is a consistent and positive approach to discipline and the system of rewards and sanctions and behaviour management is very well established and is successful.
19. In a small number of lessons, although teaching is satisfactory, there is some lack of pace and teachers are inclined to talk too long before getting pupils started on their tasks. This slows

learning at the beginning of lessons. However, once pupils start their activities, there is a feeling of purpose and intent and pupils make good progress.

20. English and mathematics are taught well. Teachers are committed to the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Although standards in English are low, the school is always considering how it can develop pupils' learning in this area more productively. The low standards of speaking and listening skills that are apparent as pupils join the school have a detrimental impact on every aspect of pupils' learning. Teachers know this and seek ways to promote drama and discussion at every opportunity as well as looking at how to develop lessons further so they take more account of the different ways in which pupils learn.
21. Religious education is taught satisfactorily. Teachers are keen to develop information and communication technology in all their lessons and their plans highlight specific opportunities to integrate its use into other areas of the curriculum. Music is taught very effectively to older pupils because teachers who lead these lessons have very good subject knowledge. Other subjects were sampled and no judgements were made about teaching. Existing links between subjects are fostered effectively and help pupils view their learning in a cohesive way. Teachers are keen to develop this aspect of their work further.
22. Assessment strategies are satisfactory overall and are currently a major feature of the school's development. Marking does not always promote pupils' understanding of what they need to do next to improve. Pupils expressed a good understanding of the effective target setting procedures that teachers use to help them learn more.
23. The school's attention to monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on learning through lesson observations has paid dividends. This is reflected in the higher proportion of good and very good lessons seen during this inspection and ensures all teaching is at least satisfactory.

## **The curriculum**

The overall quality of the curriculum is good and the range and quality of learning opportunities provided in nursery are outstanding. The quality and range of accommodation and learning resources are very good; they are excellent in the nursery and reception classes.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The organisation of literacy and numeracy lessons is effective.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school pays very good attention to ensuring that all pupils have rich learning experiences. These support their personal development very well.
- Provision for learning in the nursery is exemplary.
- All pupils are fully included in everything undertaken by the school.
- Initiatives to develop the curriculum and learning for children in the Foundation Stage are very effective.
- Pupils have very good support for their learning outside of the school day.

## **Commentary**

24. Teachers' organisation of sessions for literacy and numeracy is good and their planning, especially in English, has improved since the last inspection. It ensures that areas of difficulty, which require further reinforcement are identified and systematically addressed. Teachers' planning is focused well upon ensuring that skills are progressively developed in all areas of the curriculum, and schemes of work provide good guidance to teachers across the school.
25. A fully inclusive curriculum ensures that all pupils have equality of access. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with very good levels of support, which help each individual to

tackle their difficulties. They are very well supported by teaching assistants who work closely and effectively with class teachers.

26. The school has a well embedded personal, social and health education curriculum which places great emphasis upon pupils' personal development through the day-to-day life of the school, through the school council and through opportunities to share ideas and concerns during 'Circle Time'. A very good number of visits, including residential visits in the junior classes, are arranged to extend and enrich pupils' personal experiences and to encourage them to develop their speaking and listening skills. In the nursery, every opportunity is taken to take children on visits to broaden their experiences and see the world beyond home and school.
27. A number of visitors, such as theatre groups and dance workshops, provide pupils with stimulating opportunities to reflect upon the values of cultures other than their own. Extra-curricular clubs, including an after-school study club, are well supported and valued by pupils; they provide them and their families with important additional support in their learning outside of the school day. Pupils benefit from the opportunities afforded by the school to participate in a wide range of sporting, artistic and musical events and these are greatly valued by the local community. The curriculum organised for children in the Foundation Stage is of excellent quality and provides children with a very wide range of rich learning experiences. The introduction of the 'Nursery plus' initiative is an example of very good practice and strengthens links with families and the local community.
28. The basic skills of information and communications technology are developed discretely and are appropriately used in other areas of the curriculum, such as science. The school has recognised that even stronger cross-curricular planning would consolidate and reinforce pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
29. The accommodation and learning resources throughout the school are very good. The new school building is well designed and provides a stimulating learning environment. The library is a good resource but requires more reference books to encourage independent research skills. The spacious school grounds are well maintained and are used for a range of different purposes to enhance the curriculum.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

##### **Nursery provision is outstanding because it compensates very well for children's lack of real-life experiences and their underdeveloped communication, language and literacy skills.**

In the nursery there is an overwhelming sense of purpose and excitement. Highly-skilled teachers and other adults ensure there is a wealth of learning opportunities to provide these young and, in some cases, very disadvantaged children with exceptionally stimulating activities to talk about. The extra-large sand pit and gardening area (wellies provided!) enable children to explore and find out about the world around them. Climbing apparatus, bikes and ride-on toys enclosed in a very safe area, provide opportunities for them to develop physically. Additional facilities such as the 'Nursery plus' group gives children with delayed language acquisition extra support and promotes very effective learning in every area. An amazing assortment of visits to various locations (sometimes made possible by the generosity of the local secondary schools who lend their mini-buses) make certain that the children who do not usually have access to activities such as: visiting the library, exploring gardens, having barbecues and going strawberry picking to make jam, are able to gain knowledge from first-hand experiences and have these to talk about.

#### **Care, guidance and support**

Provision for pupils' care is very good and the guidance and support that the school gives its pupils are very good. Staff are caring towards all pupils and very supportive of pupils with specific difficulties.

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

- The school provides a friendly and secure environment where all pupils feel equally valued.
- Induction arrangements for pupils entering the nursery are excellent.

- Very good support and guidance are provided for pupils.
- The school is very good at taking account of pupils' views.

### **Commentary**

30. The staff have worked hard to provide pupils with a calm environment in which they are able to enjoy and concentrate on lessons. Good staff role models are available for both boys and girls to emulate their attitudes and behaviour, and this has a significant effect on pupils' achievement and learning. Teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors know the children and their families well and provide good support to individual pupils. The school's child protection procedures are fully in place. The headteacher has overall responsibility for this aspect, although in practice, work is shared with two other experienced senior members of staff. All staff are aware of the importance of child protection, and update training has recently been completed.
31. Pupils with special educational needs or those experiencing emotional difficulties are particularly well monitored and cared for. A range of additional services is available, including a school counsellor, an after-school homework club and a breakfast club. The school has been very successful in attracting additional funding from other agencies such as the Pyramid Trust and the Learning Skills Council to support these activities. Early in 2004, the school is commencing another series of sessions to enable parents and pre-school children to enjoy time together as they take part in craft activities. 'Toddler Groups' to encourage very young children to spend time with their parents in school are also on schedule to commence in the New Year.
32. There are very good induction arrangements for children who are just starting school, including family activity courses for parents and nursery children to attend school together, and home visits by the nursery staff. These ensure that the youngest children settle quickly to routines in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils who join the school at other times are quickly integrated into school activities.
33. All pupils and particularly class representatives hold the work of the school council in high regard. Pupils are democratically elected each year by their peers, and the school takes the views it expresses seriously. Recently the council devised a system for better management of the entry and exit of upper school pupils at break times. It has also been instrumental in ensuring that purposeful games are available both in the playground and during wet playtimes. Pupils are also responsible for ensuring that food waste is recycled into compost for their environmental area. It was notable that, almost without exception, the survey of pupils' views indicated that they liked being at school.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school provides very effective extended services to its parents and the links with the community are of the highest quality. The school's links with its parents and partner institutions are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents hold the school in very high regard and many help with school activities.
- The quality of the extended support and services the school provides to its parents and the community is excellent.
- The school has developed strong relationships with partner institutions.

### **Commentary**

34. Parents have great confidence in the ability of the school to meet the needs of their children. The pre-inspection meeting and parental questionnaire indicated that, almost without exception, parents felt that teaching in the school was good, and that their children liked being at school and were making good progress. Inspection findings support these views. The school provides

very good quality information on pupils' learning through annual progress reports. This detailed information, including future targets for their children to work towards, is much appreciated by parents. Parents find the weekly newsletter very informative and valuable, although some parents feel that the school should provide longer notice of events involving their children, to allow them more time to make appropriate arrangements.

35. The school has a very active parent teacher association that arranges fund raising and social events, both for the school and the local community. A number of parents are generous in offering help with supervision on out-of-school visits, helping in the nursery and running after-school clubs. The breakfast club and the after-school homework clubs provide very good extended support at the beginning and the end of the school day and contribute well to the achievement the pupils make. The school has participated for several years with the Learning Skills Council and 'Parents Learning, Children Learning' to provide 'Learning Together' courses. These courses are aimed at the parents of young children, to improve the parents' literacy and numeracy skills as well as those of their children. These courses, combined with the 'Nursery plus' scheme (which helps children with specific speech and language difficulties) are having a considerable impact on the language skills of the younger pupils. These activities aim to improve achievement as children progress through the school.
36. The school's new building programme has dramatically improved the provision of services to the local community. Already a full letting programme is in operation for the hall and community room. On Sundays the school hall is transformed into a place of worship. This is enabling the school to develop its facilities as a focus for the local community and create even stronger links, all of which benefit pupils' learning.
37. The school has developed very good links with the local secondary school, with shared visits and also with teaching and sporting activities. In summer terms, Year 7 pupils from the secondary school return to provide Year 6 transferring pupils with an account of their first year at Coombeshead. This allows Year 6 pupils to feel confident and excited at the prospect that new opportunities present on their transfer to secondary education.

### **What is the effectiveness of community links and extended support activities?**

The school's links with the local community are exceptional and the recently completed building programme is ensuring that the school becomes a real focus for the community. The extended school support programme is enabling the school to improve the attainment of children from their entry into nursery until their transfer to secondary education.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides community areas with excellent facilities.
- The nursery accommodation has outstanding resources that provide for the 'Nursery plus' work both within the school and through outreach work.
- Very good relationships developed between the school and other inter-agency staff have a very significant impact on pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

38. The school has been developing its community links for several years but this has recently increased dramatically with the opening of the new building. The new hall and the community room are providing local groups with meeting places. It is expected that these activities will increase even further in the near future with the establishment of 'Toddler Groups'. These activities are making the school a real focus for the local community. Community participation is encouraged. The 'Parent and Teacher Association' organised activities, such as the Christmas fair and bingo nights welcome all. The pupils make Christmas cards for local elderly residents and sing carols in local residential care homes.



39. This school is a central focus for the whole community, and is helping to raise the self-esteem and achievement both of parents and children. The 'Learning Together' initiative offers parents and their children opportunities to develop their skills side by side in literacy and numeracy. The courses are led by an early years' teacher and an adult education tutor. The impact of these courses has been noticeable in raising parental involvement in the school and providing parents with the ability to provide valuable support to their children with homework. One parent remarked during the inspection that she thought the course was 'brilliant'.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

**As part of the 'Learning Together' project, parents and children concentrate on improving their communication and language skills with the support of an adult education tutor and a nursery teacher.**

The final session of a twelve week course saw nine parents helping their children to take part in activities on the theme of 'Cinderella', before going to a local production of the pantomime the next day. Enthusiasm was obvious as children dressed up in costumes, acting out the characters in the story and as they made hats and magic wands to take with them. These high quality activities generated much excitement for all, and at the same time allowed parents to develop many social and communication skills with their children in an imaginative role-play setting.

During the afternoon session children were cared for in the school crèche whilst their parents attended a literacy session on improving story telling. The activities were aimed at making reading aloud to children more stimulating and parents worked hard on a short play script to increase their understanding of dramatic effect. A number of parents stated that they now felt really confident about helping their children with schoolwork.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are very good. Governors show a very thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher provides very strong and supportive leadership. Key staff provide good leadership. The effectiveness of management is very good overall.

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

- The very good and caring leadership of the headteacher creates a very positive ethos and inspires a very committed team.
- The governing body shapes the vision and direction of the school through very effective strategic planning.
- The school has a very strong commitment to inclusion.
- At present nobody has overall responsibility for the Foundation Stage.
- Finances are very well managed and help the school to achieve its educational priorities.

#### **Commentary**

40. The headteacher and governing body are committed to supporting all pupils and their parents. Alongside the dedicated team of teachers and very hardworking support staff, they strive to improve standards and help all pupils to achieve well. They all work together to create a very positive ethos and develop very strong relationships. The headteacher demonstrates truly inspirational leadership in his approach to the achievement of pupils based upon his knowledge of their needs. He has a well-documented, clear vision for school improvement. The headteacher is well supported by his deputy and senior teacher to ensure that the school is doing its best to fulfil each pupil's needs both academically and socially. The thorough knowledge of each pupil in terms of the support they need to get the best levels they are capable of is effective in promoting 'high achievement for all' and ensures the very good capacity for the school to improve. This area of the school's work has improved since the previous inspection.

41. The governing body fully supports the school. Governors are very committed to the principles of inclusion and raising achievement, key elements of the vision of the headteacher. They have a very secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have a

significant, strategic influence on leading the school's development with a clear focus on raising standards and effective support for all. This is seen in the development of the 'Nursery plus' facility, which is having a very positive impact on supporting very young children. The regular governors' and co-ordinators' meetings are a successful way of providing information on the development of each subject and the achievements of pupils.

42. The headteacher encourages and supports his staff well so they give of their best. Established co-ordinators have opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and have well developed systems to review and record pupils' progress in their subjects. Newly appointed co-ordinators are developing their roles and have already clear overviews of their subjects and how to take teaching and learning forward. There is no co-ordinator in place to assume overall leadership of the Foundation Stage and the school has recognised this as an area to develop.
43. Co-ordination of special educational needs is very good. The headteacher and the co-ordinator have a clear overview of all aspects of provision and have detailed knowledge and understanding of the pupils and their needs. Provision for these pupils is given an appropriate high priority on the school's improvement plan. The school sets realistic targets in order to raise standards. Very good self-evaluation procedures and clear analyses of available data enable the school to focus on its strengths and weaknesses. Courses to support teaching and learning are identified and attended to meet the objectives of the school improvement plan and the professional development of individual teachers.
44. The school improvement plan is the result of careful discussions between the headteacher, staff and governing body; priorities for spending are well related to targets set in this plan and all major decisions are discussed by the governing body which monitors progress and evaluates cost-effectiveness very closely. All additional funds and grants are spent wisely and for the good of all. Since the last inspection, governors and senior staff have: effectively managed an extensive building programme, equipped a computer suite, provided teaching assistants in each class and established the 'Nursery plus' initiative. These projects have very positive effects on the local community, teaching, pupils' attitudes to school and their good achievement and ensure the principles of best value are applied very well. The majority of pupils' come from disadvantaged backgrounds and their poor communication skills are major barriers to raising achievement. The school's overall good provision takes this into account and makes sure that all that can be done is done. All pupils, whether less able or more able, are supported and learn effectively.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

| Income and expenditure (£) |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income               | 725,870 |
| Total expenditure          | 716,051 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 2,317   |

| Balances (£)                        |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year          | 19,160 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 21,960 |

**Inclusion is the top priority for Highweek School. It promotes high achievement for all.**

All those who work at Highweek share a common goal and a determination to fulfil every pupil's potential. 'High Achievement at Highweek' is the slogan adopted by the school and it underpins every aspect its work. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher drives the school forward and ensures that the very best is done to support each and every pupil's learning. For many pupils, school is a haven of stability. It provides them with high quality care and security, raises their self-esteem and gives them opportunities to succeed sometimes in very challenging circumstances. Pupils who have higher ability are recognised and they reach above average standards because teachers enable them to do as well as they can. Those who have special needs, whether academic or social, are totally integrated and their needs are met by all staff who work with them. The links with the community and the extended services offered by the school are outstanding. They help foster the notion of a learning community for all.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

45. This area of the school's work has improved significantly since the last inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching in the nursery was reported. Teaching is now outstanding in the nursery. This is because not only do teachers understand the needs of these young children, but the nursery nurse, teaching assistants and other adults are very effective in promoting good achievement from a very low starting point. The exciting curriculum and stimulating daily timetable in the nursery ensure teaching is always of the highest calibre in all areas. In reception, teaching is usually good and never less than satisfactory but there are some occasions when the pace of lessons slows as was seen in a physical development session. Accommodation and learning resources have also improved and are of the highest standard.
46. The school, in conjunction with the local education authority, has put a great deal of effort into establishing a 'Nursery plus' facility for 20 children. This supports children, not only from Highweek, but also from the local area. It focuses on those children who are likely to benefit from additional support at a very early stage in their schooling. This helps them to gain more appropriate language acquisition. The provision offered by the nursery as a whole is excellent. The nursery manager is very effective and has promoted a valuable 'Shared Record' system which tracks children's progress from nursery to the end of reception. This ensures a smooth transition for children joining the reception class from the nursery.
47. Currently, there is one reception class that is catering for children who have become, or will be five during the period from September 2003 to February 2004. It also has a number of older pupils who did not reach the expected levels of the 'Early Learning Goals' and therefore have been given additional time in the Foundation Stage. In January, there will be two reception classes as older nursery children progress into the main school. The reception classes and the nursery class share many learning opportunities including the very efficient and talented, additional adults and the superb outside learning area. Teachers in the Foundation Stage work well together as a team, although there is no one who has an overview of the whole key stage.
48. Children's attainment as they start school in the nursery is well below average in all areas, but especially in communication, language and literacy. Children achieve well because teachers recognise every child's needs and the correct emphasis is placed on developing their learning alongside providing the appropriate amount of adult support to enable this to happen. The vast majority do not reach the anticipated 'Early Learning Goals' in any area of learning, but very noticeably in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.

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

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

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

- All adults provide very good role models. They know the children and their parents very well.
- The organisation of the classrooms and daily routines encourage independence and provide ample opportunities for discussion.
- Relaxed 'starts to the day' ensure children feel very secure and they quickly settle to very purposeful activities.
- The majority of children have limited real-life experiences to draw on.

## Commentary

49. Teaching is outstanding in the nursery and good in reception. In the nursery the teacher and all other adults are very clear about what it is children need to learn. They focus on developing children's social skills alongside every aspect of each area of learning. An exciting range of self-initiated and teacher led activities are very well planned and enable children to develop their personal skills really well in spite of very limited experiences prior to starting school. Children learn how to relate to one another and to adults in a very wide range of stimulating situations such as cooking, decorating a Christmas tree and finding out what it is like to walk barefoot through a tray of coloured rice. Most children have to be prompted to find out about the interesting activities that are provided for them, but very gradually they become more eager to explore.
50. In reception, children build successfully on their previous experiences in the nursery. They are given a very secure and calm learning environment but are not keen to participate without continual encouragement. Only a very small minority is likely to reach the expected goals in this area of learning. Children will, however, be closer to the anticipated goals in this area. This is because considerable effort is put into teaching them how to approach a rich assortment of experiences such as using a mobile phone to call Mother Christmas. They can get changed into their physical education kits unaided. They do behave well, but lack initiative and a desire to participate in tasks.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to help every child develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Children's language acquisition is often delayed.
- Role play areas have a very wide variety of high quality equipment to stimulate speaking skills.
- The 'Nursery plus' facility is having a very beneficial impact on this aspect of the school's work.

## Commentary

51. Children achieve well because teaching is very effective in the nursery and good in reception. It takes account of the very low standards of language acquisition that children have as they begin their schooling. Teaching also has to inspire children to want to learn, to listen and to talk. The classrooms provide a wealth of opportunities for children to do this as they discuss with adults and one another. They begin to develop a wish to learn to read and listen to stories and to try out early writing skills. A realistic telephone booth in the nursery encourages children to chat, but some have very limited confidence in this area.
52. In reception some children can make a good attempt to sound out the first letter of their friend's name and to have a go at writing a 'letter' to Father Christmas, but for the majority their skills are very limited and they find this aspect of their learning very difficult. Children are encouraged to learn to read. They are beginning to recognise some key words and their 'Reading Together' books are completed frequently by the teacher, other helpers and on some occasions by adults at home. However, many children are not encouraged to share books or read at home and this hinders their progress.
53. Hand made class books record exciting events that have taken place and children enjoy looking at these. They show how teachers put enormous effort into providing all the children in the Foundation Stage with valuable and varied experiences such as visiting Paignton Zoo; bathing a real baby; going to Torquay United Football ground; strawberry picking and then making jam. All are purposeful activities that are undertaken to stimulate conversation and broaden children's

experiences and they develop very gradually their language skills. However, there is only a very small number of children who will reach the anticipated levels of the early learning goals.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan very stimulating activities that include interesting counting and sorting games.
- There are very good quality resources to support practical activities.
- Small group activities, such as cooking, encourage the development of the language of mathematics.

### **Commentary**

54. Children throughout the Foundation Stage take part in well-structured, practical activities that promote their awareness and understanding of the value of numbers. They achieve well, but the vast majority are unlikely to reach the anticipated standards by the end of the year. However, they will be closer to the goals in this area. Outstanding teaching in the nursery ensures there are detailed plans to make sure that the children are learning successfully and they usually respond well, although sometimes reluctantly, to the tasks they are given. Assessments provide clear guidance for teachers to ensure that lessons extend children's knowledge with a wealth of well-focused tasks. A small number of children are very confident in counting and recognising the numbers 1 to 5 and beyond, as was seen during their 'snack time' when they took turns to choose cards with large numbers on and they had a go at naming them.

55. In the reception class, games focused on buying toys for Christmas caught children's enthusiasm and encouraged them to use language connected to money successfully. The teacher is well aware of the need to motivate and enthuse the children by involving them in the main topic of conversation at this time of the year. They 'play' in Santa's shop and fill his sleigh with different shaped parcels as they learn more about the value of money and the names of shapes.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Stimulating activities are very well planned to support the full range of aspects in this area.
- Quality discussion takes place with the teachers, teaching assistants and other helpers.
- Many children do not have experiences beyond their own immediate environment.
- High quality additional opportunities are provided to support this aspect of learning, including many trips into the local area and beyond.

### **Commentary**

56. Teaching in this area is very good. It develops children's confidence well and promotes and broadens their awareness and knowledge of the world around them both in the nursery and reception class. Even so, this area of learning has some of the lowest standards because the majority, but not all, of the children have such limited real life experiences to draw on before they start school. None reached the early learning goals during the previous year. Children do achieve well in relation to their previous knowledge because the tasks that are prepared for them are motivating and the quality of the teachers' and teaching assistants' discussion ensures all are fully involved and they are continually adding to their knowledge. They are challenged to think and to express their thoughts aloud. For instance, they are taken out to explore the woods

and have very well-supervised camp fires so they learn about the natural world around them. Outside the classrooms, the children have access to a garden in which they plant vegetables and flowers, enabling them to experience a range of tasks and find out about how things grow.

57. Children are given ample opportunities to work at the computer both independently and with help. They explore the environment around their classroom, discovering natural and man-made objects. Carefully planned topics help them consider the work of different people from the community and they celebrate events such as harvest time and find out about Christmas around the world, thus exploring Christian beliefs and the faiths of other people. This ensures the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are followed. An understanding of past events and their place within them is encouraged as when they visit old houses to help them begin to understand the passage of time. Construction sets are of a particularly high quality and are used with a real purpose in mind. Children design and make Christmas decorations with some limited skills, and are careful about deciding how to decorate them.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities for climbing and developing hand eye co-ordination are very good.
- Outside facilities and resources to support physical development are of the highest quality.
- Children's skills in balancing are well developed, but skills in manipulating small objects such as paint-brushes and pencils are under developed.
- Children go swimming every week.

### **Commentary**

58. Achievement in this area is good, but standards are well below average overall. The vast majority of children will not reach the early learning goals, but they will be closer to them than in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They are better in terms of children's ability to balance and use their bodies on large apparatus and equipment, but painting activities illustrate that the many of the children cannot hold or manipulate smaller items such as paint-brushes and glue sticks correctly and this hinders them with their work in creative areas and when they try to write.

59. Teaching is outstanding in the nursery and satisfactory in reception. On occasions, there is some lack of pace in lessons for the reception class. Teachers ensure that the outdoor environment is used at every opportunity to promote the development of physical skills. Large climbing apparatus is available in both the hall and outside the classroom. Children can explore, climb and develop their spatial awareness frequently. Bikes, and other ride-on toys are available in the secure outside play area. Children often have access to throwing games that increase their hand-eye co-ordination very effectively. They are taken to the local leisure centre every week to swim.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide variety of creative experiences are offered, including music with a visitor who has expertise.
- Teachers plan well for different role play scenarios and 'small world' play that stimulate children's imagination.
- A range of different and high quality art equipment and resources are introduced to the children.

## Commentary

60. Children are taught well in this area in reception and teaching is of the highest quality in the nursery. They achieve well but the majority have to develop their creativity from a low starting point because they do not have prior experiences to draw on. They begin to develop their skills in using colour and experimenting with different shapes and textures because teachers encourage their independence and give them numerous opportunities to find things out. Their standards, however, will not be in line with those expected at the end of the reception year and last year no child reached the early learning goal in this area. They are given ample opportunities to paint, draw, model, use collage materials and sculpt. Musical opportunities are made available frequently to the children and they are learning how to hold musical instruments correctly. They are given lots of opportunities to dress-up and play imaginatively. They create trains out of large play equipment and use 'small world' equipment to create scenes that they discuss with helpers. The classrooms reflect the attention given to this area of the curriculum. They are colourful and celebrate the many different types of activities that are offered.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain standards which are very low in comparison with national averages.
- Teaching is good across the school.
- The subject is led and managed well by the co-ordinator.
- Good evaluations of standards are helping staff to raise pupils' achievement, especially in reading.
- Pupils' underdeveloped speaking and writing skills inhibit their progress in other areas of the curriculum.

## Commentary

61. Standards are below national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in all aspects of English, speaking and listening, reading and writing, remain the same as they were at the last inspection. The majority of pupils' speaking skills are very underdeveloped. They enter the school with very low levels of communication skills and have little experience of a language-rich environment. Many pupils do not have access to the vocabulary required to provide extended answers in lessons and they lack the confidence and the creative imagination to extend their oral skills during the many opportunities which they are given to develop role play.

62. Pupils' reading skills are below national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school's focus upon improving standards in reading is paying positive dividends in Key Stage 1, but has not yet had time to impact upon reading standards in Key Stage 2. However, above-average-ability and some average-ability pupils achieve satisfactory and sometimes good standards. Library skills are below national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, especially for average and below-average-ability pupils.

63. Writing skills are below national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards of spelling, punctuation, grammar, handwriting and presentation of written work are all areas for further development. Owing to their limited social and cultural experiences and to their difficulties in expressing themselves orally, many pupils have low levels of creative imagination and this is reflected in their narrative and descriptive writing. The growing focus upon cross-curricular links in speaking, reading and writing is a positive feature in raising standards.

64. The large number of pupils with special educational needs achieve very well, especially in Key Stage 2 where good teaching builds on the foundations established in the younger classes. This helps to bring up standards. However, the sizeable number of pupils who experience difficulties in their communication and literacy skills has a significant impact upon the rate at which they learn.
65. Given the low levels of language acquisition which pupils have when they enter the school and the limited opportunities outside school to extend and enhance their language skills, pupils in Years 1 and 2 do well to achieve satisfactorily; in Years 3 to 6, their achievement is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning and the confidence which they gain during their time in school lead many to make good progress. Over one-third of pupils in the older classes have special educational needs; their achievement is good in relation to their prior learning because they have to start from such a low point. The contribution to progress in literacy made by teaching assistants is very good.
66. Teaching is good and sometimes very good throughout the school. Teachers know their pupils' needs very well, and their lesson planning targets areas of individual difficulty. Teachers adopt a wide range of strategies to stimulate and motivate pupils in their literacy work. All teachers recognise the need for constant reinforcement of previous learning; retention of learning is a significant problem for many pupils and, thus, teachers plan their work very carefully to ensure that there is progression in knowledge, understanding and skills.
67. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work and of the standards they reach in literacy is satisfactory. Appropriate use is made of non-statutory tests and reading assessments; however, this information is not sufficiently shared with pupils in child-friendly language to encourage them to raise their standards of achievement. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' written work is inconsistent across the school; pupils are not always made aware of the next step forward in their learning in every class and year group. Comments on written work are not sufficiently informative and targets set are not sufficiently specific.
68. The management of English is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has a clear overview of the areas which require development in both key stages. She regularly monitors the quality of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and is part of the senior management team which monitors the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Scrutiny of documentation shows that the plan for developing literacy and the whole school's improvement plan identify appropriate ways by which the school can address pupils' language difficulties; there is good emphasis upon data analysis to identify specific areas of difficulty which require attention.

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

69. The National Literacy Strategy is used well throughout the school and is suitably adapted to support learning for the large number of pupils with special educational needs. At present, there are insufficient references to cross-curricular links in teachers' planning to focus upon the development of literacy skills and to make speaking and writing skills more secure. There is growing emphasis upon the use of the computer suite for literacy work, especially in order to improve presentation and spelling skills. This is not yet fully developed; research, investigation and writing skills are areas requiring further attention.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good.



- Teaching is usually good and sometimes very good.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Marking lacks sufficient rigour to guide and extend learning.

## Commentary

70. Currently standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are satisfactory. Achievement is good and very good for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils enter Year 1 below the national average and make good progress to attain the expected standards in Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress as they further develop positive attitudes to their learning and attain the expected standards by Year 6. This is despite the recent years of high disruption due to an extensive building programme and the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, and presents similar findings to those of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, and lower attaining pupils are very well supported, ensuring they achieve very well and attain standards to the best of their individual abilities.
71. In Year 6, all pupils achieve well when applying their knowledge and understanding of mathematics to investigative situations. Despite their weak language skills, most are able to explain the strategy they used. The less able accomplish this with effective support from teaching assistants. In Year 2 most pupils answer quickly and clearly in response to mental calculations of double numbers. They achieve well in calculating answers to addition and subtraction sums, demonstrating a range of strategies they have learnt and demonstrating a developing understanding of the values of numbers.
72. Teaching is good and promotes effective learning. Where teaching is very good, detailed planning takes learning forward in appropriately challenging steps and at a very good pace, resulting in high achievement for all pupils. Questions are carefully targeted and successfully promote pupils' confidence because teachers make sure pupils have the ability to answer correctly. Knowledgeable teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs very well. Activities are well planned and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding through good discussions. Teachers use pupils' mistakes sensitively and constructively to take learning forward. Where teaching is satisfactory, but not of such a high standard, activities are too challenging and not effectively supported by suitable resources. Although all work is marked, comments lack sufficient rigour to effectively take pupils' learning forward.
73. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. There are two co-ordinators, one for each key stage and both are effective. The newly appointed co-ordinator who takes responsibility for leading the subject with the younger classes has established appropriate plans for further developments. Valuable support for staff has resulted in most teachers' attendance on a five day mathematics course given by the local education authority, and support in school with demonstration lessons and encouragement for investigative mathematics. Assessments and test results are carefully analysed to identify areas for development such as those the school is addressing in relation to division and the link between decimals and fractions.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

74. Mathematics is well developed across the curriculum and the school has plans to improve this further. Pupils are familiar with tables and graphs to support their work in science and geography. Pupils use stop-watches accurately in science and use their mathematical skills to calculate correctly the average time taken for a spinner to fall. Pattern and shape are explored in art and design, and emphasis on mathematical language makes a positive contribution to pupils' literacy skills.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching assistants play a vital role. They ensure pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- A high priority is placed on teaching science investigations and this has helped to raise standards.
- Marking does not always provide pupils with constructive comments about how they can improve.

## Commentary

75. Standards at the end of Year 6 were showing year-on-year improvement until 2003. Results had improved from being well below those expected to being above the national average. In 2003 results reflected the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and standards were well below average in relation to all schools. They were, however, average in comparison to similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are currently working at the national expectations in Year 6. It also shows that pupils, both girls and boys, achieve well and pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. Teachers have to pay a lot of attention to promoting positive attitudes and raising pupils' self-esteem. This is managed very well and is very successful throughout the school.
76. Standards at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were well below those expected. Younger pupils' lack of language skills limits their ability to raise questions or explain what they are doing even though teachers give them stimulating activities to promote their learning. Recording observations is also difficult for them as their writing skills are so underdeveloped and they have significant problems expressing themselves. Teachers are well aware of these issues and pay a great deal of attention to providing practical support. Teaching assistants play a very valuable role in the development of this aspect of pupils' science work. This makes certain that by the time that pupils move into the older classes they are in a stronger position to move forward. Currently Year 2 pupils are working below expectations.
77. Teaching is good throughout the school because it places a high priority on providing pupils with practical tasks and investigations that enable them to find out for themselves. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and this enables them to take part in experiments and record their results with an appropriate level of help. Additional help guides their learning but does not deter them from cultivating their independence. More able pupils are confident in expressing their evaluations of why things happen in their investigations. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on air resistance they could explain that their spinners became heavier with more paper clips attached and therefore would be influenced by gravity to a greater extent.
78. Although standards are lower than those reported at the time of the previous inspection because of the 'dip' in 2003, the school is in a strong position to resume the trend of improvement that it had established up until then. The subject leader has a thorough understanding of the subject and its needs. He has observed lessons and this has resulted in greater attention being paid to the teaching of science skills in a progressive way. He has introduced assessment books that successfully track pupils' progress by monitoring the development of knowledge during a specific topic. Teachers ask pupils to complete a question sheet as they start the term's work and then their progress is reviewed at the end of the topic. This helps teachers to ensure they know where pupils have succeeded and where they need to focus next time. These assessment procedures are not supported by consistent, meaningful marking in pupils' books. Too often teachers are over generous in their comments and insufficient attention is paid to showing pupils how they can improve. Presentation of work is of an insufficiently high standard.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching of ICT skills is good.
- Resources for teaching and learning are good.
- ICT is used well across the curriculum.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

### **Commentary**

79. Standards in Year 2 are in line with expectations. Evidence seen during the inspection indicates that in Year 6 standards are satisfactory. Pupils' skills are rapidly improving. There are strong indications that standards are likely to be at least in line with expectations if not better by the end of Year 6. These pupils' progress is assured because now they have focused sessions in the newly established ICT suite and they also use computers in the classrooms at every opportunity. The opening of the ICT suite has enabled them to quickly catch up on their skills development that had been hindered during the extensive building work. The suite is having a positive impact on all pupils' learning.
80. In lessons, good progress is made by all pupils. In Years 3 and Year 4 they do particularly well. Teaching of ICT skills is good. The nationally-funded training led by the co-ordinator on site has successfully increased the competence and confidence of all staff. Plans have clear learning objectives and staff work hard to provide a motivating and relevant context for pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 made good progress in using a graphing tool to present information from a data base. Pupils were able to recognise a bar graph and pie chart with sufficient understanding to make choices as to which was the most suitable to illustrate their findings. Pupils are supported well during lessons and explanations are clear. Effective use is made of the co-ordinator's allocated release time to support other teachers.
81. Teaching assistants have a secure knowledge of ICT. Their support is very valuable. They ensure effective learning both in whole-class teaching sessions and when working with individuals on the computers. The school has invested in an interactive whiteboard, and teaching assistants have received training so they can use it too. This was seen in a particularly successful lesson that helped less able pupils in Years 5 and 6 to develop their understanding of negative numbers. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the use of ICT and this helps them make good progress in developing the appropriate skills. Although pupils have limited literacy skills to support their learning they quickly learn how to use programs that help them with their reading and spelling. The networking of computers throughout the school, together with the use of digital cameras, and Internet access, have ensured that pupils have many opportunities to develop their knowledge of ICT. The school is well placed to move forward.
82. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and committed to ensuring the best of support for both teachers and pupils. A progression of skills has been developed throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Assessment procedures are in place and being developed to include pupil self evaluation.

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

83. Pupils use ICT well to support their learning across the curriculum. Word processing skills are used to support literacy skills and enhance displays of their writing through use of colour, different fonts and borders. A range of numeracy programs successfully reinforces and extends pupils' mathematical skills. Pupils use a range of graphs and spreadsheets to record science experiments. They are competent in using a range of draw and paint tools as well as inserting pictures to enhance their work.

## HUMANITIES

84. Too few lessons were observed to enable a secure judgement to be made about standards in history and geography. From discussion with pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussions with the co-ordinators, it can be said that there is adequate coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place and the co-ordinator has produced a clear two-yearly topic cycle. The school is placing an increasing emphasis upon developing cross-curricular approaches so that they can use the humanities to further develop pupils' literacy skills. Teachers have good subject knowledge in these areas and their planning ensures that a range of subject-specific skills, such as mapping skills are targeted for development. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that their below average literacy skills have a negative impact on the written recording of learning and upon the pace at which they learn. This makes it difficult for pupils to revisit their learning to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Standards of presentation and spelling are weak and basic skills have to be constantly reinforced.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons in RE promote pupils' spiritual awareness and their moral development well.
- Pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' below average literacy skills affect the way they communicate their ideas and understanding in their written work.

### Commentary

85. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards remain the same as they were at the last inspection. The quality of the RE provision, assemblies and the impact of the personal, social and health education curriculum all contribute positively to pupils' standards in religious education. Lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' written work and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that pupils' achievement is good and they can identify and understand the main similarities and differences between Christianity, Judaism and Islam. They know and understand the importance of special books to followers of the three religions and can explain the importance of the concept of pilgrimage in Christianity and Islam. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the story of the Nativity and most can empathise meaningfully from the point of view of the shepherds and the Magi. Although speaking skills are underdeveloped, pupils make a good effort to recapture the feelings that would have been invoked by the appearance of the angel and the star. Subject-specific vocabulary is used accurately and in the correct context. The quality of pupils' written work is generally weak in both key stages and there is sometimes an overuse of worksheets to overcome this.

86. Teachers have good subject knowledge in religious education; they approach the subject sensitively and inculcate respect in their pupils for beliefs which are different from their own. Pupils are well challenged to compare and contrast different beliefs, and planning ensures that subject skills are progressively developed.

87. The co-ordinator has ensured that the scheme of work is well adapted to meet the needs of the locally agreed syllabus. This provides teachers with good levels of support and guidance. Visits to local churches and chapels and links with local clergy enhance and extend pupils' experiences of the spiritual dimension of their lives.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

88. Only two lessons were seen in each of the following subjects: art and design, music and physical education. In design and technology no lessons were observed. It is not possible, therefore, to make firm, overall judgements about provision in these areas. Inspectors, in addition to observing lessons, did speak to co-ordinators about their work. They talked to pupils about their learning and examined pupils' current and past work. This evidence shows that the school is providing similar opportunities for learning to those reported at the previous inspection in design and technology and physical education. In art and design, the work seen in Year 5 and 6 indicates good standards and improvements have been made in this area. Music continues to make a significant contribution to the work of the school and standards seen in Years 5 and 6 were well above national expectations.
89. Pupils enjoy **art and design** and benefit from a wide range of interesting activities. These include the opportunities to take part in a residential visit to focus on art and the chance to work with artists in school. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and say they enjoy lessons. Their individual portfolios and displays show that they use different types of paint, oil-pastels, charcoal, fabric, and drawing pencils effectively and because teachers focus on teaching skills systematically pupils reach good standards by Year 6. Pupils have studied Aboriginal art and the work of famous artists such as Picasso, Andy Goldsworthy and William Morris. They have used their developing knowledge of the techniques used by these artists to 'have a go' themselves, with some impressive results. Computer programs have been used to help pupils learn effectively about line and colour. Links with other subject areas are well-established and promote additional art techniques well, such as when pupils used a 'scraper-board' effect to produce the images found on ancient Greek urns. Collage work depicting the school's extensive building work, including the diggers and bull-dozers, is of a high quality. This work enabled pupils to achieve well as they practised incorporating different fabrics and other non-pliable materials together, using sewing skills and other methods.
90. In **design and technology** pupils experience a range of materials and techniques including food technology. Overall, they develop appropriate subject knowledge through designing and making a variety of products. Tasks are appropriate and focused on designing and making for a specific purpose. Work is based upon national guidance supported by a published resource. Useful links are made with other subjects. For example, younger pupils have made very colourful and good quality felt hangings of ladybirds and other mini-beasts. They have also made large banners that hang in the corridor of the new building. Year 2 pupils have usefully compared different types of picnic sets and designed and made colourful cushions that are appropriate to take with them on picnics. Older pupils have worked with a visiting artist to make pottery cylinders to slide over an upright stake to produce 'totem poles'. These now enhance the outside area of the school. Useful opportunities to raise environmental awareness were made when pupils made willow sculptures of fish and insects. This work gave pupils the opportunity to work with talented artists as they designed and produced sculptures on a very large scale. Examples of work seen in classrooms show wheeled vehicles, photo-frames and African masks that match the expected standards.
91. In **music**, two high quality lessons with older pupils were observed and the whole school was heard singing in assemblies and in 'singing together' sessions. Inspectors also watched and listened to recordings of singing. Work is planned around the adaptation of a commercially produced scheme.
92. Standards in Year 6 are well above national expectations this is because the subject leader and the headteacher are talented musicians and together they lead the school's total commitment to the inclusion of every pupil into a wide variety of musical experiences. This was seen in the way that all pupils from Years 5 and 6 performed at a prestigious event in Exeter when they sang at a police concert in front of an audience of two thousand at the request of the organisers. Pupils also attend and sing at the annual local schools' proms event in Torquay. This not only has a very beneficial impact on their performing skills but also raises their self-esteem successfully.

93. The work of famous composers is played as pupils enter the hall and they listen to it thoughtfully. When taking part in singing together sessions they sing gently and in tune. In one lesson seen, Years 5 and 6 pupils were developing their knowledge and understanding of the use of an ostinato and rhythm. This was a very good lesson because, as the teacher has very good subject knowledge, she could demonstrate rhythmic patterns and help pupils to build very successfully on their previous knowledge of musical notation. At the end of the lesson, pupils performed their compositions enthusiastically and were able to maintain their own part as well as listening to, and joining in with others in the group. They showed their very good skills on the key-boards, drums, glockenspiels and other various instruments.
94. Some parents opt to pay for additional teaching experiences for their children but the school does its utmost to make sure all pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the very high quality selection of instruments available in the newly established music room. This ensures they achieve very well.
95. In **physical education** the school works hard to provide pupils with a good range of physical activities. From discussion with teachers and pupils, it is evident that all aspects of the subject are taught regularly. Pupils visit the local baths for swimming lessons. Strong emphasis is placed on dance. Residential visits are planned to include adventurous outdoor activities. In the lessons seen teaching was good in a combined Year 3 and Year 4 class and very good in a dance lesson with a Year 1 class.
96. In the past the school has had to overcome significant limitations caused by the sharing of sports facilities with the secondary school. This it did successfully. Now it is enjoying and making the best possible use of its newly established facilities for sport to build on those successes and provide additional opportunities for pupils to achieve even more. All pupils participate in a daily five-minute run. Pupils develop their games' skills further in the extensive range of clubs, with considerable success in their inter school competitions.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)**

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

97. Very good provision ensures children are well-prepared to cope with the pressures present in their local environment. Mutual trust is the cornerstone of the provision, with pupils enjoying very good relationships with staff. This enables them to talk openly and frankly during class discussions in 'circle time'. In a lesson with Year 6 pupils the emotion of fear was explored through characters in a short play. All pupils showed a good level of understanding and sympathy for the character who was afraid to fight.
98. Pupils from Year 3 onwards have opportunities each year to attend residential visits. These develop pupils' independence and self-esteem as well as enhancing team spirit. Year 6 pupils recently studied the local environment in order to put forward ideas for a community consultation exercise. The priorities they arrived at for improving the Teignbridge environment have generated high levels of interest from both parents and local officials. The school has gained a Healthy Schools Award for its work on the emotional and physical well-being of pupils plus their understanding of citizenship. Questionnaires, discussions and debates in class and the school council access pupils' views and opinions, which are used constructively by the school to develop pupils' notions of this area. For example, local magistrates visited the school and a court scene was re-enacted to gain an awareness of the justice system. The developments and provision in PSHCE are having a significant impact on pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school in general and towards one another in particular.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i>  | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>3</b>     |
| How inclusive the school is  | 1            |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3            |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 3            |
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b>                                    | <b>4</b>     |
| Pupils' achievement  | 3            |
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>        | <b>2</b>     |
| Attendance   | 4            |
| Attitudes  | 2            |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                        | 2            |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development            | 3            |
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>               | <b>3</b>     |
| The quality of teaching  | 3            |
| How well pupils learn  | 3            |
| The quality of assessment  | 4            |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs                          | 3            |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities     | 2            |
| Accommodation and resources  | 2            |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                             | 2            |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                              | 2            |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views                  | 2            |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents                 | 2            |
| The quality of the school's links with the community                 | 1            |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges                   | 2            |
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b>                   | <b>2</b>     |
| The governance of the school   | 2            |
| The leadership of the headteacher                                    | 2            |
| The leadership of other key staff                                    | 3            |
| The effectiveness of management                                      | 2            |

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