

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTH BRENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Brent

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113218

Headteacher: Mrs H Nicholls

Lead inspector: Mrs A Johns

Dates of inspection: 17 - 20 November 2003

Inspection number: 260743

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: 4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 237

School address: Totnes Road
South Brent
Devon
Postcode: TQ10 9JN

Telephone number: 01364 72203
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr G Royle

Date of previous inspection: 12 October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school, which is about the same size as most primary schools, is situated in a rural village on the edge of Dartmoor National Park. The school intake is very varied and pupils attend from a wide range of backgrounds including Traveller children. Most pupils live in the local community but some attend from further afield. Pupils begin school on a part-time basis in the September or January of the year in which they are five. Most have had some pre-school provision and their attainment on entry is wide-ranging, but overall is broadly average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. Most pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average at 14.6 per cent. This includes pupils with speech and communication problems, social, emotional and behavioural problems, physical disability and dyslexia. The percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is in line with the national average. All pupils speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils leaving or joining the school other than at the usual time is about average. The school has received several awards; in 2003 these included the Silver Artsmark award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and the Schools Achievement Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18579	Mrs A Johns	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage
9756	Mr K Parsons	Lay inspector	
23917	Mr T Clarke	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs Design and technology Art and design
22191	Mr S Lake	Team inspector	Science Religious education
31822	Mrs A Newman	Team inspector	English History Geography Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with some very good features. The very effective headteacher and deputy headteacher and the committed team of staff and governors work together very well. They ensure that pupils achieve well and that all pupils are included in the broad and interesting curriculum. The good quality of teaching ensures that pupils make good progress and by Year 6 many achieve above average standards. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. Standards are above expectations in information and communication technology (ICT) and history throughout the school and above expectations in music by Year 6.
- The very effective leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is underpinned by a very good governing body, a strong, supportive staff team and successful management.
- The school has a very positive ethos where all individuals feel valued and included. This leads to very good development of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, positive relationships and very good attitudes to learning.
- The use of learning support assistants is excellent and is a key factor in the school's success.
- Children have a very good start to school life in the reception class.
- The standard of pupils' spelling is inconsistent.
- Pupils in Year 2 are not always given enough challenge in lessons.

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards in Year 6 have improved and are now above average in English, mathematics and science. All the previous issues have been tackled very well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Most pupils achieve well because of the effective teaching. In Year 6 the trend of improvement over five years in the national tests is above the national trend in all subjects. More able pupils do very well; for example, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was above average in each subject. In the 2003 national tests in Year 2 standards were below average in English, mathematics and science, based on average points. In science the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level was very high but no pupils achieved the higher level. This cohort included a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Over the last three years standards have gone up. Although standards on entry to the school are broadly average, there is a very wide spread of ability. Children currently in reception are making good progress with their learning. They achieve well and many are in line to achieve standards above the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average in writing, mathematics and science; they are above average in reading. Achievement is satisfactory. Currently in Year 6 standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and above expectations in music. Throughout the school they are above expectations in ICT and history. Pupils achieve well and make good progress with their learning because of the effective teaching. The pupils lack sufficient understanding of different techniques to help them spell correctly and with more independence.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of the very effective support.

The pupils' personal development is good. It is fostered very well by the very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour in and around school is good. The school has developed successful strategies for dealing with any difficult behaviour. Attendance is above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides pupils with a good education. The teaching is mainly good with a significant amount of very good teaching and some excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6.

Consequently, most pupils learn well and their achievement is good. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching is mainly satisfactory with some very good teaching in Year 1. Some lessons for Year 2 pupils do not have enough challenge and pace, which hampers their progress and achievement. Children in reception are very well provided for and have very good, well-planned opportunities to develop their skills including purposeful play both indoors and outdoors. The very good provision for special educational needs enables pupils to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The range of learning opportunities provided is very good and is very well enhanced by many exciting clubs and activities. The pupils' education is enhanced by the very good support from parents and strong community links. The excellent use of the skilled learning support staff has a major impact on pupils' achievement. Very good liaison between staff fosters a very positive ethos for learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide a very strong team well supported by senior managers and other staff. There is a very clear focus on improvement. Curriculum leaders have developed their role well. Management procedures are very good with effective procedures for checking and evaluating the work of the school. The work of the governing body is very good. The governors have a very thorough understanding of how well the school is doing and what else it needs to do to improve.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents strongly support the school. They value the stimulating curriculum, the quality of the leadership and teaching, in addition to the care provided for their children. Many parents took the time to write to the inspection team and the vast majority of comments were extremely positive about the school. Concerns were mainly related to the class sizes and homework. The inspection team found that although some classes were large, the teachers and support staff managed the pupils very well, so this did not have a negative impact. Homework is similar to that provided in most primary schools. Pupils enjoy school and value the range of activities on offer.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to improve standards, teaching and achievement in Year 2.
- Improve the standard of spelling throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall achievement is good. In reception children achieve well. Achievement is satisfactory in Year 2 but by Year 6 many pupils achieve above average standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average in Year 6. They are above average in reading in Year 2. They are above expectations in ICT, music and history by Year 6.
- In reception, children achieve well because of the very good teaching. Many children are in line to achieve beyond the goals expected by the end of the reception year.
- The quality of pupils' spelling varies and there is insufficient accuracy.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- There is some excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6 with very high expectations, very effective planning and classroom organisation, which ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential in these lessons.
- Pupils in Year 2 do not always achieve as well as they can because they are not always sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.1 (16.3)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.9 (14.7)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.6 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 22 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 2003¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (29.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.8 (28.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.8 (29.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Attainment on entry to the school is wide-ranging and differs with the cohort for each year. Overall, it is broadly in line for the age group. Attainment at the end of the reception year exceeds the expected goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.
2. There is variation in the standards achieved by each cohort. In 2002 the Year 2 cohort included 30 per cent of pupils who were entitled to free school meals and there was a high percentage of

¹ All levels of the national curriculum are awarded a points score. The average score for all pupils taking the test is used to grade schools in each year. The expected average points score at age seven is 15.5. Tables are adjusted to reflect the national average score before grading. The grades are shown in the summary.

pupils with special educational needs. In comparison with similar schools nationally and based on average points, standards were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was below average. However, over the past three years the trend of improvement in performance exceeded the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In science all pupils achieved the expected level, which was well above average, but no pupils achieved the higher level.

3. In comparison with similar schools in relation to pupils' prior attainment at seven, Year 6 results in the national tests in English and science were well above average and in mathematics they were above average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was above average. In science over 50 per cent of pupils achieved the higher level. Over time there is an upward trend in improvement in Year 6, which is above the national trend of improvement in English, mathematics and science.
4. The data indicates that girls do not achieve as well as the boys in mathematics. During the inspection there was no evidence to indicate that there was any difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls in any subject.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The high level of support they receive ensures that the standard of work they produce is commensurate with their abilities. Traveller pupils are fully included in the curriculum and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
6. Standards in music are above expectation throughout the school. Music is a lively, vibrant part of the school curriculum. Standards in history are also above expectation; there are strong links across different subjects which promote the pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

The following tables compare attainment now with that at the time of the previous inspection and include comments on the reason for any change in addition to comments on achievement.

Attainment at the end of the reception year

	Attainment in the 1998 inspection	Current inspection judgements	Children's achievement in relation to prior attainment	Comments
Personal, social and emotional	In line with expectations.	Above expectations by the end of reception.	Achievement is good.	There is a strong promotion of independence.
Communication, language and literacy	In line with expectations.	Standards are above expectations by the end of reception.	Achievement is good.	The strong emphasis on language development by all staff helps children to communicate effectively.
Mathematical development	In line with expectations.	Skills are above expectations at the end of reception year.	Children achieve well in relation to children of a similar age.	There are very good practical opportunities to develop mathematical skills.
Knowledge and understanding of the world	In line with expectations.	Children develop a range of knowledge through the interesting activities. Above the goals expected.	Children achieve well in relation to others of a similar age.	Good use is made of the outdoors to support the learning.
Creative development	Exceeded expectations.	Above the goals expected by the end of the reception year.	Children achieve well.	Careful planning ensures all opportunities to develop the children's skills are used to the full.
Physical development	In line with expectations.	Standards exceed those expected by the end of reception.	Pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities.	Good teaching promotes effective learning.

Attainment at age seven

	Attainment in the 1998 inspection	Current inspection judgements	Children's achievement in relation to prior attainment	Comments
Reading	Average	Above average.	Pupils achieve well.	Pupils enjoy reading because there is a very good range of books and activities.
Writing	Average.	Average. The standard of spelling is weaker.	Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.	The school has identified spelling as an area for improvement and is introducing strategies to support this.
Mathematics	Average.	Standards are average.	All pupils achieve satisfactorily.	Lessons do not always have enough pace and challenge for the pupils.
Science	Average.	Average.	All pupils achieve satisfactorily.	There is a balanced curriculum ensuring that all aspects are covered.
ICT	Good.	Above average.	Pupils achieve well because of the wide range of opportunities to develop their ICT skills.	Pupils use ICT confidently to support learning in different subjects.
Religious education	In line with expectations.	No judgement on standards. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2.	From the range of work seen and discussion with pupils achievement is satisfactory.	There are good links with other subjects across the curriculum.

Attainment at age eleven

	Attainment in the 1998 inspection	Current inspection judgements	Children's achievement in relation to prior attainment	Comments
English	In line with expectations.	Standards in writing, reading and speaking and listening are above average. The standard of spelling is weaker.	Pupils' achievement is good.	The wide and interesting range of activities helps pupils to develop an enjoyment of English.
Mathematics	In line with expectations, except in the use and application of mathematics which was below average.	Standards are above expectations.	Pupils enjoy mathematics and achieve well.	The thorough planning supports the learning well.
Science	Average.	Standards are above expectations.	Pupils achieve well because they have a good range of hands-on experiences.	Pupils' investigation skills are developed well.
ICT	Good.	Pupils achieve standards which are above those expected by Year 6.	Pupils achieve well because there are frequent well-planned opportunities to develop their skills.	The good resources support the learning very well.
Religious education	In line.	Standards are above those expected.	A range of activities supports good achievement.	Pupils are interested in different religions and recognise common elements.

7. The quality of teaching has a significant impact on pupils' achievement. Where the teaching is very good and excellent pupils achieve very well. In some lessons in Year 2 where the teaching is less successful and pupils are not always given enough challenge, achievement is mainly satisfactory. Most marking supports pupils' learning well with useful comments to inform pupils about how they can improve. Literacy, mathematical and ICT skills are developed well across the curriculum through a range of well-planned activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. The school has a positive ethos in which all its members are valued and supported. Staff have high expectations for behaviour and are effective in helping pupils to meet them. Pupils have a positive attitude to their school and are proud to be members of it.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils have a positive attitude and are proud of their school.
- The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Staff promote a sense of community and good relationships within the school.
- Attendance by pupils is above the national average for a school of this type.
- The pupils have a very good insight into social, moral, spiritual and cultural values.

Commentary

8. One of the school's aims is for pupils to "co-operate and care for each other". Under the committed leadership of the headteacher, this aim is put into practice very well. The school provides a community atmosphere within which the vast majority of pupils are happy and ready to learn. Parents are very pleased with the children's behaviour and attitudes, whilst the pupils like their school and are proud to belong to it. The staff are effective at establishing clear values in the way children are expected to behave and helping them to develop good relationships with adults and each other. There is a good emphasis on making each child responsible for their own actions, emphasising that they have choices with consequences, and hence developing their independence. In reception, children are on target to achieve above the standards expected in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the reception year.
9. The teachers and learning support assistants provide very good role models. Particularly when teaching is good and lessons engage their attention, pupils are keen to learn. In a dance lesson, for example, dynamic teaching ensured that even the least athletic pupils joined in with enthusiasm. Nearly all, including those with special educational needs, want to succeed. They are often enthusiastic about the work and co-operate well with one another. Pupils participate well in school clubs and activities; for example, the girls' football team played enthusiastically in the gloom of a dreary wet November evening. Pupils take responsibilities seriously and carry them out well.
10. Behaviour is good overall. At breaks and lunchtime it is generally very good and pupils are considerate to others. Most pupils behave well in class. There has been good improvement in behaviour since the last inspection, when the behaviour of some older pupils was judged as unacceptable. The playground and dining hall are well supervised and are unthreatening places. Incidents of bullying or harassment are rare but are dealt with well by staff when they do occur. Most pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils say that the teachers usually listen to them and take their views seriously; they are clear about what to do and who to speak to if they do have problems. The school's behaviour and discipline policy emphasises the development in pupils of a sense of self-discipline and an acceptance of responsibility for their own actions. The school is successful in achieving this ambitious aim, providing its pupils with values that will see them in good stead in secondary school and throughout their lives.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.5	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

11. Attendance by pupils is higher than the national average for a school of this type. This has a positive impact on standards. The figures would be even better but for the number of parents taking their children out of school for holidays in term time. There are good procedures, including good liaison with the educational welfare officer. Pupils usually arrive at school punctually in the morning ready to start work on time.

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	211	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

12. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. In the previous inspection this was judged to be good with satisfactory provision for cultural development. The school has made good improvement in this area. There is very good provision for spiritual development and cultural development. The pupils respect each other and in class and in assemblies they are encouraged to develop an appreciation of the mystery and beauty of life. They respect different values and explore the way these influence people's lives. The pupils have a good grasp of their own cultures and an understanding of the diverse cultures in the country. This is supported well by visitors to the school and a range of work across the curriculum, which help to foster good levels of respect.
13. Moral development is very good. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the impact that their actions have on others. Social development is very good. The pupils work together very well in lessons and mix well together in clubs and at playtimes. They enjoy accepting responsibilities. The School Council works well; pupils have a clear understanding of their role. Meetings are a useful experience in the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good with a broad and interesting curriculum. The care, support and guidance of pupils are very good. The links with parents, the community and other schools are very good.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. This ensures that all pupils make good progress through the school. In reception the teaching is very good and children learn effectively through an interesting range of practical activities. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching is mainly satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are taught and supported very well so that they make at least good progress. The assessment of work is good, overall, and information used to plan work at a suitable level for each individual. Equality of opportunity is very good because the school strives to ensure that all individuals are included and fully valued.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good and excellent teaching results in high levels of achievement in lessons in Years 5 and 6.
- There is clear planning and effective class management and organisation, which mean that most pupils work hard and achieve well.
- There is excellent use of learning support staff who provide high quality support for pupils.
- There is a strong team of teachers and support staff who are confident, enthusiastic and constantly seeking to provide the best quality of education for their pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught and supported very well so that they make at least good progress.

- The slower pace and lack of challenge in some lessons for Year 2 hampers the progress which the pupils make.
- The teaching of spelling is less secure.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4)	8 (17)	24 (51)	12 (26)	1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)

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

- Overall, teaching has improved since the last inspection, with more very good teaching. In Years 3 to 6 it is now good with some very good and excellent teaching. In the most successful lessons pupils achieve very well because of the high expectations which teachers have. The pace is brisk and lessons are lively and challenging. The leadership in the school ensures that there is regular monitoring of teaching and learning, with informative feedback.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, with a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Lessons sometimes lack pace and pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Pupils sometimes spend too long sitting on the carpet and are not given enough opportunity to develop their own independence. This hampers their progress and they do not always achieve as well as they can. There was some good and very good teaching in Year 1 when pupils were very clear about their task and achieved good standards in their work.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. All teachers are aware of the pupils' targets and all make reference in planning to providing suitable activities to promote learning. Pupils are given excellent, skilled help and encouragement from the many experienced and committed learning support assistants, who help ensure that all pupils are fully included in activities.
- Lesson planning is generally thorough and well organised. Teachers ensure that the pupils are clear about what they are learning and most lessons have a useful plenary session to reinforce the learning. Most teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and also of their behaviour. Time and resources are used to good effect. The use of learning support assistants is excellent. They are fully aware of what the pupils need to do and are involved in teaching, planning and assessment. This high level of support has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers and learning support staff work together very well. There is very close liaison and communication, which ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.
- There is a strong and enthusiastic staff team. Pupils recognise this and feel valued and secure. Parents also appreciate the quality of teaching and the positive impact that this has on their children's achievement. Most lessons are lively and capture the pupils' interest well so that they want to learn and to succeed. All these aspects have a positive impact on pupils' learning. In the excellent lessons there is a very high level of pupils' involvement and interest and consequently they achieve very well.
- The skills of individual teachers are used to the full across different age groups, for example, in teaching science. This works in a smooth and effective way. In reception purposeful play is used very well to support the learning, for example, in the toyshop. Teachers are less confident in the teaching of spelling but this has been identified as an area for improvement by the school.
- The assessment of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection and is good. Teachers keep a close track on what pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve. There are clear recording systems and these are used well to help guarantee progression of skills across

the school. Targets are set for each pupil in English and mathematics, which help them to improve their work. Assessment for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Assessment and record keeping in reception are very good and help staff to keep a very thorough track on what the children can do.

21. Teachers know the pupils very well and the way in which all pupils are included in the teaching is very good. Planning is clear and most lessons and activities are pitched accurately at the range of pupils. More able pupils in Years 3 to 6 are challenged well and they achieve above average standards. Parents are used very well to support the teaching and learning. Teachers ensure that they understand what is happening and are fully involved.
22. Some parents had concerns about the amount of homework, but the inspection team found this to be similar in amount to that in most schools for children of this age.

The Curriculum

The school's curriculum is very good and provides very good opportunities for extra-curricular and out-of-school activities. The curriculum is broad and very well balanced.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good cross-curricular planning ensures that the curriculum is flexible, broad and relevant and supports the learning in literacy and numeracy.
- The match of the learning support staff to meet needs of pupils of all abilities is excellent.
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and pupils are very well supported to overcome their learning difficulties.
- The school ensures that all pupils have access to the curriculum at a level which matches their needs. Teachers' planning is well focused upon providing tasks and approaches to match the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- The school makes very good arrangements to deliver the personal, social and health education curriculum.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school makes good efforts to promote pupils' participation in sport, art and music.

Commentary

23. The curriculum fulfils all statutory requirements for children in reception and for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and meets the needs of all pupils. The allocation of curriculum time ensures that literacy and numeracy are well covered and the school's imaginative cross-curricular approaches ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced in subjects across the curriculum. A very well organised system of curriculum planning and monitoring ensures that assessment information is well used to inform future planning and address areas requiring reinforcement. The school makes good provision for religious education, which meets the needs of the locally agreed syllabus. All subjects and areas of learning have appropriate policies and schemes of work which provide very good guidance to teachers in all parts of the school. This is a very good improvement from the previous inspection. Teachers' planning ensures that skills are developed progressively in all areas of the curriculum and the school has well focused plans to challenge and extend the learning of above average ability pupils.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs including those pupils with statements is very good. Reference to the targets in the detailed individual education plans, school tracking records and discussions with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), class teachers, and teaching assistants indicate that most pupils are making at least good progress towards meeting their individual learning targets. Provision is made very well for those pupils who have specific learning difficulties in English and mathematics through particular support programmes. The provision for those pupils who have behavioural and physical difficulties is

equally comprehensive and detailed, and they make the same good progress towards targets set for them.

25. An unusual and highly commendable initiative is the school 'nurture' room. The room has been thoughtfully designed and furnished with a range of hangings and soft toys to create a wonderfully secure and stimulating space. The provision is particularly for those pupils whose emotional, behavioural and learning needs cannot be fully met within the mainstream classes. Observations during the inspection and reference to records show that those pupils identified as needing this kind of support are making excellent progress emotionally and socially as a result of informed, patient and skilful teaching.
26. Very good emphasis is placed upon developing pupils' investigative and research skills to encourage them to become independent learners, especially in Years 3 to 6. The basic skills of ICT are appropriately used in many areas of the curriculum. The personal, social and health education curriculum is well embedded and pupils have very good opportunities to discuss their feelings and problems with teachers and others; this promotes the very good social relationships found across the school. The school organises a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, which appeal to the interests of a significant number of pupils. They have good opportunities to participate in sporting, artistic and musical activities. Field trips, visits and the contribution of visitors to the school all enhance the very good provision of the school in this area. Creative planning of the curriculum enables the school to devote time to a special themed week each year, which develop the learning in an exciting and interesting way. Pupils and parents speak very enthusiastically about these weeks.
27. The match of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum is very good. There is an excellent match of learning support staff to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities; the expertise and close co-operation shown by these members of staff is one of the strengths of the school. The school's accommodation is good; the building and its grounds are well maintained and classrooms are attractively presented to form an interesting and stimulating learning environment. Displays are well used to support learning and good use is made of internal and external space. The grounds have been developed in a creative and exciting way and are used well. The school is well resourced; the library and classrooms are provided with a wide variety of colourful books and other learning resources. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

Example of outstanding practice

The school and pupils benefit from the excellent support given by the high number of learning support assistants.

The learning support assistants are very experienced, very well qualified and highly committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as they are able. One week of thorough induction takes place before support staff begin to work in class. This thoroughness is rewarded by having dedicated staff with a very clear understanding of their role. The majority of their time is spent in teaching groups or individuals and this is done in a lively and effective way. Very thorough joint planning with teachers ensures that learning support assistants are fully involved. In one lesson when the teacher was called away in an emergency the learning support assistant carried on with the lesson in a seamless and very effective way. Weekly joint planning meetings with class teachers ensures that challenging learning tasks are presented to the pupils. Detailed observations of progress are recorded and used as a base for discussing future work with the class teachers. This very good attention to assessing and sharing what pupils have learned ensures that pupils' achievement is at least good.

Care, guidance and support

The care, guidance and support provided for the pupils are very good. The school cares for its pupils very well and provides good guidance to help them learn effectively in a safe environment. The staff provide pupils with very good support and listen to what they have to say.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good child protection and health and safety procedures in place.
- Staff work hard to develop supportive relationships with their pupils and provide them with help when they need it.
- There are effective arrangements to help new pupils settle into the school.

Commentary

28. The school has very good formal procedures for health and safety and child protection and these are well-implemented. The governors and staff ensure that the school buildings provide a safe environment. Staff are active in ensuring that working practices are safe. Comprehensive risk assessments carried out before school trips are undertaken. Pupils themselves are taught how to keep themselves safe through the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) provision. Both teachers and learning support assistants are vigilant in carrying out their child protection responsibilities and there are regular opportunities for them to discuss individual pupils and to express concerns. The school works well with other relevant agencies to ensure that pupils get additional help when required.
29. Most parents are delighted with the care and support their children receive whilst in the school. They believe that the staff are successful in encouraging pupils to become mature and independent individuals. Teachers and learning support assistants know their pupils well and help them develop as individuals. A very positive ethos permeates the school. Class teachers genuinely care about their pupils and there is effective support from senior management. The adults in the school work well together as a team to share information and responsibility. They respond appropriately if a pupil is having problems. Pupils themselves appreciate this support and the emotional security the school provides and which helps them to flourish; most feel that there is an adult they could approach if they have problems. Their personal development is monitored by class teachers and appropriate records are kept as necessary. Pupils' views are sought effectively through the school council, who think that their views are valued and, where practical, acted upon.
30. Induction arrangements for new pupils are effective. The school works very well with local pre-school groups to ensure that children make the transition to formal education without stress. Children and parents have a number of sessions in school before they join and teachers visit pupils both in their playgroup setting and also carry out home visits. There is particularly good support for Traveller children, with good liaison with the Traveller support officer. The headteacher and staff make considerable efforts to re-assure parents and to help their children settle well.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with the parents, with the local community and with the other schools is very good. Parents are very supportive of the school. The school works very well with parents and other education providers to the benefit of the pupils' education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents think very highly of the school and support it very well.
- The school is an integral part of the local community.
- Information to parents about their child's progress and about the life of the school is very good.
- The school works very well with other schools.
- The school listens to the views of parents and pupils and responds appropriately.

Commentary

31. Parents are supportive of the school and are appreciative of the efforts the headteacher and staff make for the benefit of the children. The school has the confidence of its parents and it lives up to their expectations. It is active in seeking parents' views and takes the results seriously. There are a few parents who would like more information or consultation, but generally the school liaises as much as can realistically be expected. The school communicates well with parents on a regular basis and is effective in making information easy to understand. A prime example of this is the format of the annual reports to parents on their child's progress. These give the children themselves the opportunity to say how they feel about their year's work, whilst the teachers provide useful information on the work covered, effort and attainment in relation to national expectations.
32. The school prospectus is well-produced and provides a good flavour of the school. New parents receive a very good introduction pack about the school, whilst there are regular opportunities to meet teachers either formally or informally. Meetings for parents on issues such as drug awareness and the development of emotional intelligence are very well attended. There are regular newsletters to keep parents informed about the life of the school. Staff make themselves available to parents, whilst the headteacher is at the entrance each morning to greet parents and children as they arrive, which is an important personal touch. The support from most parents is an important aspect in encouraging pupils to feel part of a wider school community.
33. There is an active school association which organises social and fund-raising events. No less than £30,000 was raised to create the adventure playground, a magnificent achievement in a school of this size. Support from parents in school is valuable; for example, a significant number of parents help to hear children read. Many parents support the school with homework by helping their children with spellings or reading.
34. The school has effective links with local pre-school groups to help children get to know the school before they join it and thus avoid too much stress as they start their formal education. Similarly, there are very good arrangements with the main three local secondary schools to help Year 6 pupils transfer into secondary education. South Brent is part of a local group academic council, which encourages all the schools in the Totnes area to work in partnership. The headteacher has a key role in this group. The school is an important part of the community it serves and is actively involved in local activities. Local people help support the curriculum, for example, children visit local shops, the medical centre and the parish church. A particularly vibrant link has been the abbot of a nearby abbey, who wrote a cantata for the school choir, resulting in a televised performance and a variety of exciting spin-offs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are very good. Leadership, overall, is very good with very good leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher and good support from the senior management team. Very effective management systems are in place and management is very good. The governance of the school is very effective; governors are very well informed and play an important role in guiding the school. These are all significant aspects in raising achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has ensured very good improvement since the last inspection and is dedicated to ensuring high standards in all aspects of the school's work.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to including all individuals in the life of the school.
- There is a clear, informative system of self-evaluation, which has a positive impact on improving standards.
- There is careful monitoring of the school budget to ensure best value.

- The governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are fully involved in supporting and challenging the school.
- There are very good systems for staff induction.
- The management of special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

35. The very effective leadership of the school by the headteacher has been maintained. This ensures that the school provides a good quality education for all its pupils and is a key factor in the very good improvement since the last inspection. This success is reflected in the way the headteacher regularly supports and advises colleagues in other schools in Devon. There is a very clear vision for the school, which is shared by all. The senior management team has improved since the last inspection and now has a clear role in the leadership of the school. Staff are clear about their roles and provide good support for other staff. The results of any monitoring or evaluation are used well to improve practice. Subject leaders have strengthened their role; they are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. There is effective delegation of responsibilities.
36. All staff have a thorough induction; for example, learning support assistants have a full week of induction before they go into the classroom. This thoroughness pays off because it results in excellent support. The induction of the deputy headteacher was also extremely thorough resulting in very effective leadership.
37. The staff and governors ensure that there is very good inclusion for all pupils who thrive in the positive and supportive environment.
38. Management is very good. There is very effective organisation supported by very effective procedures. There are effective procedures for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring their achievement. This has a significant impact on the quality of education because information from this is used well to support the learning. School development planning is informative in helping to maintain improvement. An aid to raising achievement is the dedication of the supportive staff team and governing body. This has had a very positive impact on the improvement made.
39. One of the key strengths of the school is the management of special education. The SENCO is experienced, enthusiastic and most diligent in her management role. She ensures that all pupils have access to any necessary support and that their needs are met in lessons and in withdrawal sessions. The coordinator liaises well with fellow teachers and support staff in the joint production of suitable learning targets and is in regular contact with concerned external agencies. Early contact is made with all parents as soon as concerns are noted about their children, and there is evidence of parental involvement in all stages of the Code of Practice. Parents' comments are very supportive.
40. The governing body is fully involved in the formulation of policies and also questions and challenges the school. Various committees are in place, which all play a strong part in shaping the direction of the school. Governors are fully aware of how the school is doing. Performance management is effectively managed. Parents and pupils have high regard and full confidence in the leadership and management in the school.
41. The school day runs smoothly and efficiently because of the effective finance and office staff. Financial procedures are thorough and the principles of best value are central to the school's management and use of resources. Budgets are appropriately set with careful allocation of funds linked to the school development plan. They are monitored regularly. Taking into account the cost per pupils, the standards, achievement and quality of teaching, the school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	648,658
Total expenditure	610,107
Expenditure per pupil	2,574

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-34,000
Balance carried forward to the next	38,551

The carry forward at almost six per cent is high. This is because the school has earmarked these funds in order to maintain the current staffing level.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. Children enter reception on a part-time basis at the start of the autumn or spring term in the academic year in which they are five. Attainment on entry is wide-ranging but, overall, average. The children make good progress in their learning and overall, exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. The school has improved the standards identified at the time of the last inspection. Good induction procedures ensure a confident and happy entry into school life. The teaching is very good and includes that by the learning support assistant who plays a very effective part in sharing this role.
43. Very thorough planning ensures that each area of the curriculum is fully covered in a way that captures the interest of the children. Planning is cross-referenced across all the areas of learning, which helps to ensure all the required curriculum is covered. There is a good mix of teacher-directed and independent learning situations and good quality resources, which stimulate children's learning.
44. The children learn in an extremely friendly, caring and supportive environment. They feel secure and respond quickly to classroom routines and instructions. They persevere at different activities, trying hard to do as well as possible, and enjoy what they are doing.
45. Thorough assessment procedures are in place. These allow the teacher to track how well individual children are achieving and what needs to be done to take them onto the next step in their learning. The co-ordinator has a very thorough understanding of the needs of young children. This results in very good leadership and management, which promote good achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good. Children make very good progress in gaining confidence, behave very well and enjoy school. Overall, children achieve beyond the goals expected by the end of the reception year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- There are high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to work.
- There is a strong promotion of independence.

Commentary

46. The children are happy and settled and, through a very good combination of teacher-directed and child-selected activities, they become confident and learn to concentrate well. The classroom is well organised and resourced which encourages the children to be independent. The children follow instructions well and quickly respond to the staff. They are careful with equipment and help to tidy this away. The children behave well in assembly, and indoors and outdoors. They learn to share well and to respect and care about the feelings of others. They take turns well, for example, on the computer. Most can undress and dress themselves.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The provision for communication, language and literacy is very good. Many children exceed the goals expected for their age by the end of the reception year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in this area of learning.
- Very strong emphasis on language development by all staff helps children to communicate effectively.
- Children are encouraged to listen carefully to what they are told by adults in the classroom and to the contributions of other children.
- There is good promotion of basic skills of writing, reading and enjoyment of books.

Commentary

47. Very good teaching ensures that a wide range of stimulating activities encourages children to develop their speaking skills. The staff work very effectively to encourage children to use these skills both in the classroom and the outside area. Children listen well to their teacher, the learning support assistant and to other children. They speak clearly and provide sensible answers to questions. They enjoy listening to stories and remember what they have heard. Children develop their own independent writing and also are taught to form their letters correctly and to understand the sounds that these make. They develop their early language and writing skills well in the class 'Toy shop'. Many children are already forming recognisable letters and some use simple words in their written work. They talk about books they enjoy, hold these the correct way up and turn the pages carefully.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for mathematical development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- There are interesting activities where number, shape and measuring are introduced in an enjoyable way.
- Practical activities support the learning well.
- Thorough planning ensures all children are fully challenged.

Commentary

48. There are very good opportunities for children to achieve well in all aspects of mathematical development. They do this through reciting number rhymes and singing number songs, by counting and sorting and using well-planned play opportunities such as in the shop to extend their learning. Children have a good mathematical vocabulary for their age, including 'smaller than' and 'more than'. They develop their number skills in the outside area and by playing in the sandpit they learn about capacity. Very good support from the learning support assistant when making models helps to develop a good understanding of two-and-three-dimensional shapes. The children have a good understanding of number and are likely to achieve beyond the average expectations for their age by the end of reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is very good. Teaching is very good and children achieve well in relation to others of a similar age.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision in all aspects of this area of learning.
- There is very good teaching and learning.
- Good use is made of the outside areas and places further afield to encourage children to learn from direct observation and experiences.

Commentary

49. Most children enter reception with a satisfactory level of general knowledge. They build on this successfully because of the interesting activities provided, and achieve standards beyond the goals expected by the end of reception. Children competently use the computer mouse and make attractive repeating patterns. They join together construction pieces to make recognisable objects. They make models from their careful observational drawings of vehicles. Visits in the local environment, for example, to the local church, a farm, or for an autumn walk, enrich this area of the curriculum. They make simple maps to show their journey to school. They record the changes that take place in seeds which they have planted and enjoy finding out more about the world in which they live. They extend this understanding by comparing their lives with that of a child in Kenya.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is good and pupils achieve well in relation to their different capabilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good teaching and learning both indoors and outside.
- There are very good opportunities for children to develop the skill of using equipment such as scissors and pencils.

Commentary

50. Good teaching promotes good physical skills and most pupils achieve beyond the goals expected at the end of reception. Pupils develop these skills during lessons in the hall and also outside. Pupils move with good control and can stop and start quickly when asked and move in different directions. The use of the outdoors is well planned and enhances the learning that takes place indoors. Many classroom activities improve pupils' skills at using simple equipment. During one lesson a group of children confidently made careful models of cars or robots using cardboard rolls, boxes, glue, scissors and tape.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision for creative development is good. Children achieve above the goals expected by the end of the reception year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning indicates good opportunities for creative development across the areas of learning.
- There is good promotion of role-play.

Commentary

51. Children make very careful observational drawings before they begin to build their models. They paint with great care and hold the paintbrush correctly. When painting toys they observe very carefully producing good quality work. A group of children worked very enthusiastically to produce an exciting firework picture. They know how to mix basic colours. Role-play is well planned and children readily and confidently take on different roles. Planning is very good and ensures that all opportunities are used well to promote development in this area. When listening to music by Schubert, the children close their eyes, listen and then thoughtfully draw what they have imagined.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain standards that are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills show good progress, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards of reading are above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and 6.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in their extended writing skills; they write in appropriate styles for a variety of purposes in subjects across the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and pupils receive very good levels of support.
- A significant number of pupils have difficulties with spelling.
- Average and below average ability pupils in Year 2 make limited progress in their extended writing.

Commentary

52. Significant improvements have been made in standards in literacy in Years 3 to 6 since the last inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactory and often good standards in developing their speaking and listening skills. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in speaking and listening. Most pupils listen carefully to each other and to their teachers, taking turns to contribute to class discussions and questioning. The Victorian Day event, held during the inspection, provided good evidence of the increasingly mature approach of pupils in developing role-play characters, based upon secure levels of background knowledge.
53. The majority of pupils make good progress in their reading; above average and average attaining pupils reach standards which are above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Confident readers at the end of Year 2 read fluently and begin to inject appropriate expression into their reading. They use a range of reading strategies to help them tackle unfamiliar words and have begun to practise good reading habits, developing a decided taste for particular authors and genres of literature.
54. In Year 2, pupils' library and retrieval skills are generally secure. Pupils in Year 3 to 6 make good progress in their reading. Fluent readers develop good reading habits and skim and scan information texts effectively. Many continue to extend their preferences for authors and styles of literature and a number have developed a taste for classical authors of children's literature and for writers such as Dickens. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 explain the purposes of the index, the contents page and the glossary, but are less certain of how to retrieve information from a library.
55. The school has placed a strong focus upon improving pupils' writing skills and raising standards in extended writing. This has had a positive impact, especially in Years 3 to 6 where pupils make good use of colourful and imaginative language and imagery. They structure their stories and other written work carefully and effectively. In Years 1 and 2, pupils write in a number of styles for different purposes; however, the depth and quality of their written responses vary widely across the ability range. They sequence their stories appropriately and the more able pupils attempt to write in extended prose. However, a significant number of pupils produce very short written responses to tasks set and there are some examples of unfinished work in exercise books. Many pupils do not write in a fluent, joined script by the end of Year 2 and the presentation of work is often insecure. Standards in Years 3 to 6 improve and pupils take pride to ensure that their written work is neat and legible. They organise their work into paragraphs and follow the basic rules of punctuation accurately. Spelling is an area of weakness in both key stages; pupils make limited use of dictionaries to check the accuracy of their spelling and subject-specific terms, for instance in science, are often spelt incorrectly.

56. Progress in reading is good in both key stages. Progress in writing is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. The school has recognised writing as an area that requires improvement and a series of initiatives in this area are having a positive impact. Pupils in Year 2 are not sufficiently challenged to raise their standards in writing at present.
57. Pupils with special educational needs have very good levels of support to help them raise their standards in reading and writing. Suitably adapted tasks, which match their individual needs, and the very good levels of support from teaching assistants help pupils gain confidence and overcome their learning difficulties. The school has well-focused systems to ensure that above-average ability pupils are challenged and extended and that they are encouraged to become independent learners.
58. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good overall. Most lessons are conducted at a brisk and lively pace and pupils sustain their concentration and their involvement in the lesson. Most teachers question pupils to good purpose and use their subject knowledge to reinforce and consolidate learning. Scrutiny of pupils' work reveals some inconsistencies in standards of marking and in teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of the written work which they accept. Good target-setting procedures ensure that pupils and their parents have a clear understanding of what they need to do next in order to raise their standards of achievement.
59. The literacy co-ordinator has produced a good quality policy and scheme of work for literacy. Valuable cross-curricular references in curriculum planning ensure that pupils' literacy skills are well targeted in all subjects. Tracking records are kept to measure each pupil's progress and to identify particular needs; these provide the co-ordinator with accurate information on areas which require further development. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision in literacy are in place and are well used to ensure that the outcomes of assessment and monitoring inform teachers' planning. Portfolios of levelled and annotated work have been compiled and these are useful in ensuring that teachers have a common understanding of expected levels in literacy.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. The procedures to ensure that pupils' literacy skills are targeted in areas other than English are very good. Teachers use a wide range of opportunities in subjects such as science, history, design and technology, music and ICT to develop pupils' literary competence. Curriculum planning for cross-curricular work is very good and reflects the hard work and imaginative planning put in to improve this area since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work are above average in Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Teaching assistants provide excellent support for pupils and teachers.
- Expectations of Year 2 pupils are not high enough and they are not always set suitably challenging work.

Commentary

61. Standards in mathematics are satisfactory in Year 2 and good in Year 6. In the most recent national tests the great majority of pupils in both year groups reached the expected standard.

However, in Year 6, more than a third of pupils achieved higher than levels. Overall the school does well for its pupils. They make good progress, and achieve above expectations before they leave for the next stage of their education.

62. Achievement is promoted well by allocating pupils to ability groups, and using information gathered from lessons to provide appropriate work. In the upper school, pupils are given realistic, challenging targets. With the splendid support given by teachers and teaching assistants, many will attain standards above average by the time they leave the school. Inspection evidence indicates that boys and girls are taught identically and are currently making similar progress.
63. Standards have improved well since the last inspection, especially by the time pupils are 11. The school's very effective delivery of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a very positive impact upon pupils' computation and mental calculation skills. Brisk, challenging mental activities are a feature of all lessons. Pupils enjoy these activities; they respond eagerly and as a result become more confident and proficient at making accurate calculations. Year 6 pupils interact well with the teacher and each other when choosing and using most effectively, a range of different strategies to add and subtract multiples of ten, 100 and 1000.
64. Teachers and teaching assistants give great support and encouragement to pupils with special educational needs. Work presented to them is based clearly on what they have achieved in previous lessons, and this good matching to their abilities results in very good attitudes and good learning. The very good direction of the teaching assistants and their own exceptional knowledge and teaching skills are a great strength of the provision.
65. Overall in the lessons seen teaching was good, with some very good features observed. Strengths include:
 - Well planned lessons focused on the National Numeracy Strategy, which are jointly planned by teaching assistants and teachers.
 - Excellent support from the teaching assistants to pupils of all abilities who achieve well.
 - Good pace and appropriate activities are set.
 - Questions are used well to challenge pupils and extend their understanding of numeracy.
 - Good teacher understanding of numeracy and the use of mathematical vocabulary.
 - The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and as a result pupils are attentive, confident and work well.
 - All adults have high expectations of behaviour and perseverance.
66. Some lessons in Year 2 lack the challenge and pace of others and in these lessons pupils do not achieve as well as they might.
67. There has been some analysis of how well pupils achieve in the different aspects of the national tests, but as yet the findings have not significantly influenced the long-term planning. The school is aware that boys tend to attain slightly higher scores than girls in the national tests and are seeking ways to address the difference. Inspection evidence shows no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in lessons. There is no evidence of different expectations and all pupils are encouraged equally.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is good. There are many examples of pupils using and applying mathematics; for example, when weighing and recording in science; when calculating averages, displaying data and using formulae in ICT; when comparing the heights of current pupils with those of Victorians in history and when measuring accurately in design and technology lessons.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at age 11 are above average and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' investigation skills are developed well.
- The subject is led and managed very well.

Commentary

69. By the age of seven pupils' attainment is average overall. They have a sound understanding of the investigative process and are recording investigations appropriately. In Years 3 to 6 pupils achieve well and by the age of 11 pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support that enables them to achieve well. Boys and girls achieve equally well in the work observed. A key factor in the standards achieved at age 11 is the good quality teaching in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are challenged well in investigations through open questioning and they respond well to this challenge. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to support learning, for example, through the use of spreadsheets and through microscopes connected to computers.
70. Throughout the school teachers focus well upon investigation skills. This focus is developing in pupils a natural enquiry and an understanding of how to conduct an investigation. The process is supported well by a variety of methods and techniques to enable pupils to record their investigations. Teachers encourage pupils to predict and to record in their conclusion how accurate that prediction was. By Year 6 the vast majority have a secure understanding of what makes a test fair. For example, in an investigation into how far elastic bands stretch under tension, a pupil told the inspector that the test would not be fair if they used different bands even if they looked the same. The investigations make a sound contribution to pupils' numeracy skills through the use of measurement in various ways and recording of investigation results using graphs. By Year 6 the recording of investigation makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills.
71. The subject leader has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She monitors learning well, for example by looking at pupils' work and by teaching in other groups on occasion. The co-ordinator has developed good assessment procedures for teachers to use and maintains portfolios of work to guide teachers in assessing standards. Professional development needs of teachers are identified and teachers are supported through in-service training. This makes a good contribution to the standards attained by pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well.
- The teaching of ICT skills is good.
- A good range of activities are taught.
- The subject manager is knowledgeable and enthusiastic.

Commentary

72. Pupils achieve above-average competence in ICT skills throughout the school. A portfolio of work used to demonstrate standards indicates good attainment in a range of activities such as graphics, word processing, data handling and use of the Internet. In those direct teaching

sessions seen, Year 1 pupils made very good gains in learning when using a modelling program to make a sandwich. They show good skills in using the mouse to click and drag and most know how to print out their work. Year 1 and 2 pupils use an art program well to create portraits showing feelings. They show good skills manipulating the tools and flooding their portraits with colour. Year 3 and 4 pupils use the same program but produce much more complex images. They are very competent when using the tool bars and understand well how to save their work in a class file. Year 6 pupils use the Excel program very well to enter statistics and formulae allowing them to compare Victorian children with themselves. In discussion they are very confident, many have computers at home and regularly use the Internet and send electronic messages.

73. The school has adopted the nationally approved scheme of work and has adapted it so that the subject is well integrated into the curriculum as a whole. Discussions with pupils, teachers planning and direct observations indicate that computers are used regularly both in classrooms and in the specialist suite. Pupils were observed practising keyboard skills before school started in the morning.
74. In the lessons seen, teachers' knowledge and understanding were good overall. All staff have received useful training. This knowledge allows for confident instruction and the teachers' use of the digital projector is most effective when modelling tasks and reinforcing techniques. Very good use is made of the skilled learning support assistants. They give informed, patient assistance to those pupils having difficulties and by so doing ensure that all pupils have equal access to all activities.
75. The subject manager provides good support to ensure teachers' knowledge and understanding are appropriate for delivering the planned work for the subject. He has a clear vision for the development of ICT and has been instrumental in establishing an assessment procedure that is systematic. It both informs modifications to the curriculum and identifies the progress made by individuals.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. Evidence from the portfolio of work, displays and discussions with pupils indicates that ICT is used well across the curriculum. There are many examples of word processing and generating and editing texts in English. Spreadsheets and graph plot data handling support mathematics, whilst other programs extend opportunities in art. All subjects benefit from information gained from the Internet and CD ROMS.

HUMANITIES

77. In humanities, work was sampled in geography but there were no opportunities to observe lessons in geography. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in geography. However, there is every indication from discussions, pupils' work, teachers' planning and displays that standards are broadly average and have been maintained since the last inspection. Resources have improved since the last inspection. Standards in history have improved since the last inspection and are above expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

History

Provision for history is **good** throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good levels of knowledge and understanding and their recall skills are secure.
- Pupils make good progress in explaining the operation of change over time.
- Cross-curricular approaches to the study of history enhance pupils' learning.
- Pupils make good progress in their interpretative and investigative skills.

Commentary

78. The very good cross-curricular provision offered by the school has had a positive impact upon standards achieved in history. During the inspection, a Victorian day was held; this provided good evidence of the rigorous challenge presented to pupils to empathise with past living and working conditions and with the motivation of people in the past. They responded very positively to this challenge and their written work throughout the week showed the careful planning, background reading and preparation which they had accomplished.
79. Pupils showed that they had a clear understanding of the differences in the lives of people in different social and economic circumstances during Victoria's reign. They approached their tasks with interest and enthusiasm, showing a good understanding of why some school children would have to choose to leave school and work in a factory – and they knew why they would have had to suffer the hardships caused by the working conditions found there. They made good use of the opportunities provided to record their learning in a variety of styles, such as diary writing. Links to art and design and technology gave pupils good opportunities to produce cross-stitch samplers and mosaic work on a variety of machines developed in the Victorian era, such as locomotives and steam ships; good planning ensured that many local examples were well used. Pupils showed a good recognition of the range of historical skills, such as chronological awareness, targeted in these lessons.
80. The quality of teaching in history was good overall; in one instance it was very good. In the best practice, rigorous and challenging questioning encouraged good extended oral responses, which showed the depth of pupils' historical knowledge and understanding. Effective classroom management and a variety of stimulating and interesting tasks gave pupils good opportunities to show that they could use the evidence to provide satisfying and logical explanations for change. Pupils from the full range of abilities showed that they had good quality speaking and listening skills when well challenged and stimulated; subject vocabulary was well developed and used correctly. Where teaching is less successful, role-play activities are too ambitious and not sufficiently well organised.
81. The subject leader has produced a good quality policy and scheme of work, which is well focused upon the development of the main historical skills. Monitoring and evaluation of provision are appropriate to ensure that there is adequate coverage of topics. The compilation of an annotated portfolio of pupils' work that has been assessed against National Curriculum criteria ensures that teachers have a common understanding of expected levels in National Curriculum history. Good use is made of visits to local sites of historical interest to reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Religious education

The provision for religious education in Years 3 to 6 is **good**. The school's timetable meant that only two lessons in Years 3 to 6 were observed during the time of the inspection. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2. As a result it is not possible to give a secure judgement on provision in Years 1 and 2. However the discussion with the subject leader, examination of planning and displays and discussion with pupils indicates that provision is likely to be satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards In Year 6 are above the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, and pupils achieve well.
 - Good links are made with other subjects across the curriculum.
 - Personal, social and health education is supported well by religious education.
 - There is a good quality portfolio of examples of work.
82. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and by Year 6 the standards attained are above the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils have good

understanding of the common elements of the major religions studied, particularly Christianity. Assemblies are used well to develop and extend pupils' understanding and to make links in pupils learning. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 make good use of this. For example, following an assembly on families and the commitments and promises that one makes in a family a very good lesson was observed that built well upon the assembly. The pupils' understanding was extended by applying the idea of the roles in a family and the commitments that are made by each person into the role of important people in our society. In a school-wide sense this concept of commitment is enhanced by the support of a girl in Kenya. Pupils are made aware that once the school community has made that promise then it must be kept. This is linked well to the understanding of the key concepts of all religions and especially to the Christian gospel values.

83. The co-ordinator has adapted the locally agreed syllabus to match the rest of the school curriculum. Many good links are made and many examples of good practice can be seen. For example, the work done by pupils for a project in Exeter cathedral, 'Moving the Sun' brought together music, art and writing and motivated the pupils well. In geography work on India is linked to pupils' study of Hinduism. In a prayer tree display in Years 1 and 2, pupils' prayers are linked to key elements of personal and social education. This same work also makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development through a consideration of feelings. A good quality portfolio of work is kept to show what pupils can achieve. This is a useful tool in supporting teachers' understanding of what can be achieved.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. Only one lesson was seen in art and design, two in design and technology and three in physical education. These lessons did not represent all elements of the subjects. The subject managers had the opportunity to discuss their subject status and development with inspectors. Subject portfolios were analysed and samples of pupils' work examined.

Art and design

85. Pupils talk enthusiastically about art and pupils in Year 4 showed a good understanding of the techniques and subject matter employed by Monet. The art portfolio contains examples of a wide range of activities; there is evidence of the Eden project of work linking plants and people. The styles of European artists such as Matisse, Klee and Renoir are considered and used as inspiration. Displays are of good quality. The Millennium ceramic adorning the school entrance is splendid and indicative of considerable application and involvement. The Golden Tapestry celebrating the Queen's golden jubilee is to be completed and shown at the 2004 Commonwealth Games in Montreal. Good cross-cultural links are made when pupils consider Indian and African art. The good provision for the subject has recently been recognised by the school being awarded a silver Artsmark status.

Design and technology

86. Design and technology is a popular subject, particularly with those pupils who find written recording difficult. A portfolio of work used as an exemplar of standards indicates wide coverage of all the areas of design and technology. Good links are made with other subjects as pupils draw designs, measure materials and record their evaluations. Year 1 and 2 pupils discussed improvements to their wheeled models; they showed good construction skills and an awareness of the function and position of axles. In the Victorian day, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used both numerical and sewing skills well when making samplers and mosaics. The Victorian theme continued with Year 5 and 6 pupils planning and making good mock-ups of cam - centred moving toys.

Physical Education

87. In physical education the school covers all the elements outlined in the National Curriculum. Pupils enjoy the subject and many take advantage of the games activities that are offered out of

the normal school day. Residential visits allow pupils to experience a range of outdoor activities. Swimming is considered an important aspect with most pupils achieving the 25-metre standard. In one Year 6 dance lesson observed the teaching was excellent. Creating a dance sequence based on scenes from Macbeth, pupils showed great creativity and application and made excellent progress in their learning.

Music

Provision in music is good in Years 3 to 6. No music lesson was observed in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve good standards in all the attainment targets of the music curriculum.
- Pupils' musical skills are enhanced during school assemblies.
- Planned learning experiences give all pupils good opportunities to succeed in performance.
- Pupils' musical contributions enhance the very good whole-school ethos.

Commentary

88. Only two music lessons were observed during the inspection, both of which were in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Years 3 to 4 have a good command of musical vocabulary and can define a number of musical terms correctly. Their singing is well pitched and tuneful; they keep a simple beat successfully and know that this is related to tempo. Pupils effectively appraise their own and others' performance and clearly enjoy participating in choral activities. In Years 5 and 6 pupils successfully compose a piece of music on glockenspiels, using the pentatonic scale confidently. They practise and perform their composition with care and pride. Pupils are knowledgeable about dynamics and can use the relevant musical symbols and directions accurately. Pupils make good progress in developing their recording skills; they use musical notation on the treble staff to record their composition and they play it back accurately and effectively. They can make good suggestions to change the mood of their composition with the use of crescendo and decrescendo, appraising their performance critically. During the singing session in this lesson, which was linked to their Victorian day, all pupils participated enthusiastically and coped with the change of key very competently.
89. The quality of teaching in music is good and often very good. A sizeable number of pupils are keen members of the school choir and attend weekly practices after school conscientiously. Several teachers have very good subject knowledge and expertise; they encourage pupils to extend their musical experiences and to enjoy performances. This contributes very positively to the quality of the school's ethos and to the contribution which it makes to the life of the local community. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was characterised by thorough planning, subject expertise and high expectations; teachers were challenging and encouraging and their efforts were met with a good and very good level of response.
90. The music co-ordinator has produced very good quality documentation to support her colleagues in their delivery of the music curriculum. Specialist teaching in year groups ensures that high standards are maintained and that music remains at the heart of the school's communal life. The co-ordinator has secure monitoring and evaluation systems in place to ensure that there is consistency in the delivery of the music curriculum across the school. Resources in music are good and are well used to enhance learning; concerts and performances contribute to pupils' musical experiences. The school has raised its standards in music since the last inspection and pupils now achieve standards which are above national expectations by Year 6.

Examples of outstanding practice

Music lesson linked to Victorian topic. An outstanding music lesson for mixed ability Year 5 pupils. It included a song which was part of an adaptation of a Dickens novel in keeping with the lesson's theme.

"What do we mean by dynamics?" The teacher played the cello to give a clue, and then demonstrated the teaching point. Piano / soft, and Forte / loud were repeatedly reinforced for the pupils by referral to a simple and effective display of the new words typed in an illustrative style. Everyone was keen to develop their musical compositions using the pentatonic scale and xylophones. All 28 pupils composed and recorded using notation or letters. The whole class performed successfully together, keeping time to a metronome. Further challenge was introduced by directing from cards with symbols including crescendo and diminuendo. A swift rearrangement of furniture and voice warm ups followed. "How can we change the dynamics and make it sound sinister?" The teacher's high expectations, thorough subject knowledge and excellent relationships were rewarded by the high quality singing and playing. As a finale, 28 hands went up as all pupils enthusiastically volunteered to sing a solo!

Year 6 dance lesson in the school hall. This lesson excelled because a confident and committed teacher wove a daring spell. No pupil – or even a Scottish king - could resist the magic.

A very dynamic teacher led from the front from the very start of the lesson, with a warm up that got the least athletic pupil in the hall "working their socks off" and ready to go. A recap of the dance movements from the previous lesson turned this modern hall into the carnage of Scottish civil war, as two armies slashed their way through their opponents' ranks; the pupils all remembered their pathways across the hall as they clashed in mimed menace, but without physical contact. The teacher then made full use of the video of the first witches' scene in Macbeth to set the pupils' expectations and provide ideas for the next scene, where pupils broke into their groups to plan their movements for "when shall we three meet again, in thunder lightning or in rain". As the teacher circulated, throwing in ideas, they choreographed their interpretation of the three witches, totally involved in the task. In this lesson, the teacher knew exactly what he was trying to achieve and he had the technical training to pull it off. He used resources such as the video with panache to inspire ideas, but then gave pupils clear space and time to develop their own interpretations. He had already created in his class a culture of mutual support; nobody laughed if the performance went wrong or someone forgot to go left rather than right. In the group work, pupils did not waste time arguing; somehow they managed to achieve what eludes so often in this situation, the emergence of a consensus without one strong individual dictating.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for PSHE is very good. Pupils respond very well to the provision and develop a good understanding of the values and responsibilities of citizenship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- PSHE forms an integral part of the caring ethos of the school. The curriculum provides very good opportunities for pupils to explore sensitive issues and to encourage them to share their feelings and concerns with each other.
- Pupils are well provided with sex and relationships education, drugs awareness and other related issues.
- The school has worked effectively to achieve the Healthy School Standard qualification.
- The PSHE curriculum provides very good opportunities for visitors to contribute to pupils' education and to extend their experiences.
- The school places very good emphasis upon developing pupils' self-esteem and enables them to set themselves realistic personal goals.

Commentary

91. Personal, social and health education is a valuable extension to the school's curriculum and enhances pupils' awareness of the school's high expectations for their behaviour and attitudes. It encourages them to develop strategies to overcome problems and achieve success. This provision effectively focuses pupils' attention on the need to reflect and to set themselves personal targets in relation to others by developing the qualities of resilience, concentration, determination and organisation.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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