

INSPECTION REPORT

BAMPTON C of E (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bampton, Tiverton

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113494

Headteacher: Mrs A James

Lead inspector: Mr M S Burghart

Dates of inspection: 17th – 19th May 2004

Inspection number: 265455

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	97
School address:	School Close Bampton Tiverton
Postcode:	Devon EX16 9NW
Telephone number:	01398 331121
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Tuck
Date of previous inspections:	March 2000 and June 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small village primary school which is sited in an old secondary school building in Bampton near Tiverton in Devon. This gives generous space outside and in, but much of the accommodation is not well suited to the needs of this age group and is in poor repair. There are 97 pupils on roll in four classes. Apart from a single age small reception class, all classes contain pupils from more than one age group. Two part time teachers share responsibility for reception whilst Years 3 and 4 are shared by the head and a part time teacher. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs including two with statements as defined by the DfES Code of Practice. Levels of special needs vary from none in Year 3 to 33% in Years 2 and 6. No pupil requires extra help for having English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving at times other than in reception or from Year 6 is above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average and this reflects the above average level of unemployment and social deprivation which is characteristic of the area. Despite good progress mostly in the on site pre-school group the attainment of children on entry to reception is below average and for some well below average. The school was found to be in need of special measures in 2000 and was formally inspected again in 2002 when this category was removed. The school received an achievement award from the DfES in 2003 for progress in moving out of special measures.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20865	Mr M Burghart	Lead inspector	English, Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, Information and communication technology, Art and design, Design and technology, Music, Physical education, Personal, social and health education, Special educational needs.
9487	Dr F Hurd	Lay inspector	
13307	Mr I Hancock	Team inspector	Mathematics, Science, Geography, History.

The inspection contractor was:

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	16
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This effective school continues to improve. It has maintained the impetus reported in the HMI follow up inspection of 2002 where the category of 'special measures' was removed. Currently the school provides pupils with a satisfactory standard of education with strengths in provision for English. Pupils are very well cared for and get on well together. Teaching is often good and the school is very well run, with the head as the driving force. Although much of the building is unsuitable for primary education, and costs per pupil are high, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management of the head are excellent.
- Standards are still below average in English, mathematics and science, but improved provision is helping pupils towards good achievement.
- Provision for special educational needs (SEN) is good.
- Teaching is much improved and is frequently good.
- Although successful in a variety of ways, provision for reception children could still be improved.
- Pupils' personal development is very good and pupils respond and behave well.
- Provision and standards in art are good.
- The old secondary building restricts opportunities for learning and is in poor repair.

The school has made excellent progress since the last full inspection in 2000 and very good improvement since the follow up report of 2002. Major improvements have been in leadership and management to ensure the school's educational direction. Significant progress has been maintained in planning, assessment and special needs support, with positive effects on pupils' achievement. Pupils' health and safety is now ensured with improvements made to the fabric of the building, but the accommodation remains unsuitable for many aspects of the primary curriculum.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

The table appears to show that the school's performance was well below average and in the bottom 5% of all schools nationally in 2003. Average performance in English when compared with similar schools was a redeeming feature. However, with only 14 pupils in the year group test results can be distorted by the above average proportion of those with SEN. For all the potential unreliability of results they did serve to reinforce the school's commitment to improving literacy and numeracy. This is proving successful in helping pupils to achieve, most notably in speaking, listening and reading. Pupils in the current Year 6, although still below average in English, maths and science, are working closer to nationally expected levels which considering well above average SEN levels represents good progress. Pupils in Year 2 did well in 2003. Those now in that year group, where a third have SEN, achieve well in reading and writing and satisfactorily overall in maths. Children in reception generally make satisfactory progress toward the designated early learning goals, but are restricted by gaps in provision. Pupils' personal development is very good, notably in spiritual, moral and social aspects. Pupils show positive attitudes and behave well. Relationships are good throughout. Attendance is below average. Not all other subjects were inspected in depth but clear strengths were

judged in art where standards continue to be above expectations. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are satisfactory at the end of Year 2, but below expectations at the end of Year 6 because resources and facilities are unsuitable. Because provision is good, standards are good in personal, social and health education.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided is satisfactory and much improved. Strengths include provision for literacy, art and personal and social education, and in how the curriculum is very well enhanced by activities, visits and visitors. Whilst successful in some respects, the school is aware that provision for reception children is an area for further development. Teaching is good overall with each teacher having been seen to teach at least one good lesson. Years 1 and 2 teaching was consistently good. A minority of lessons for Years 3 to 6 were very good with one science session in Years 3 and 4 excellent. Teaching has been improved significantly with a positive impact on pupils' learning. Better planning, assessment, and monitoring have all contributed. Teaching and support for pupils with SEN is good, having been unsatisfactory in 2000. Support staff make a good contribution to the quality of teaching.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher's excellent leadership and management of the school are at the heart of the significant improvements that continue to be made. She ensures the educational direction of the school and leads the drive towards higher standards. She is well supported by staff and the governors as a good team. The governance of the school is good. Governors are aware of strengths and weaknesses and are part of the process which manages change effectively. The strategic management of the school is excellent with funds used extremely well to support the curriculum and attempt to overcome barriers created by the building. In this small school staff take joint responsibility for curriculum management. This is effective, but much responsibility falls to the head and senior teacher. Management of the Foundation Stage (reception) curriculum is a key area for development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents have positive views of the school and how it has improved. A minority expressed concerns over communication. Inspectors find links with parents and the community are good. The majority of pupils enjoy school and are particularly pleased with clubs and activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do now is to:

- Improve further provision for reception children by developing planning and structured play opportunities based on the recommended Foundation Stage curriculum.

Since the last inspection was only two years ago the school is still in the process of making improvements in a variety of areas. The school's priorities are judged as appropriate to:

- Continue to raise standards;
- Continue to improve resources, provision for, and the use of, ICT;
- Continue to develop library facilities;
- Continue to work with the diocese and the local education authority in seeking to provide more appropriate accommodation.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are still below average in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged seven and eleven. However, there continues to be an underlying trend of improvement in standards where the school is setting sensible priorities to improve achievement, which is at least satisfactory and often good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is successfully targeting key areas for improvement in English, mathematics and science.
- Good teaching in Years 1 to 6 is having a positive impact on raising achievement.
- Good assessment and target setting procedures are beginning to raise standards.

Commentary

1. Children start school with attainment which is overall below average. This varies year on year: for example in the current reception class and Year 3 attainment on entry was higher but the current Year 2 and Year 6, which contain a high proportion of pupils with SEN, attainment was well below average. There is so much fluctuation between year groups and numbers admitted each year that any comparison is unreliable. Standards as measured by national tests at seven and eleven in 2003 showed the school's results to be well above average in reading, writing and mathematics at seven, but well below average in English, mathematics and science at eleven.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.2 (14.4)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	18.2 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.6 (14.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 5 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.6 (25.9)	26.8 (27)
Mathematics	22.3 (23.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	24.4 (25.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Careful analysis of performance based on good assessment procedures identifies and prioritises key areas for improvement. This ensures that the school continues to add value to pupils' achievement. For example, a new, well structured reading programme with regular opportunities to read in school and at home is raising attainment in reading throughout the school. There is a clear focus on teaching writing during literacy lessons. In mathematics and science more opportunities are provided for investigations and problem solving activities, which are beginning to raise standards of achievement.

3. The achievement of children in reception is satisfactory overall. They entered school with below average attainment and when provision is good they make good progress as in communication, language, literacy and personal and social development. Many are on line to achieve the expected standards in most areas of learning by the end of the year, while some higher attainers will exceed these.

4. Achievement in Years 1 to 6 is often good in lessons due to consistently good teaching. In the current Years 2 and 6 most pupils are achieving below average standards in English, mathematics and science but this is due to the very high proportion of SEN pupils in these age groups. The school has set realistic targets in English and mathematics, which it hopes to exceed this year. Individual targets have been introduced which are regularly updated and reviewed and make a positive contribution to raising standards in these subjects. Standards have continued to improve in information and communication technology particularly for younger pupils in the school. However, inadequate resources have restricted progress in some aspects of the subject but a new suite is to be installed in the very near future. Standards are above expectations in art and design, some aspects of music, and in personal, social and health education.

5. Pupils with special needs associated with English skills make good progress and often achieve well despite reaching below average standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes towards learning and their behaviour is good overall. Their personal development is very good. Attendance in the last academic year was below national averages, but punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for the spiritual, moral, and social development of pupils is very good, and provision for their cultural development is good: a considerable improvement since the last inspection.
- Procedures to ensure pupils' freedom from bullying or harassment are very good, and the school has high expectations of pupils' conduct.
- The school's procedures to monitor and record attendance are good.
- The efforts of parents and carers to ensure the attendance of children are satisfactory.

Commentary

6. Attendance was below national averages in this year principally because of an unusually high level of sickness, including hospitalisation. However, a significant proportion of parents take children on holiday during term times for personal or financial reasons. The school repeatedly stresses the importance of regular attendance and regularly monitors the attendance patterns of individuals and groups using a computerised data management system. The school has a large catchment area: nevertheless virtually all pupils arrive on time for school. Parents nearly always inform the school of children's absence on the first day it occurs.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.3	School data	0.1
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.

7. Staff, parents and pupils feel that behaviour has improved enormously since the present headteacher arrived. It was consistently well managed during the inspection, and no unsatisfactory behaviour was observed in or out of class. Relationships are very good: older pupils enjoy

involvement with younger ones, and all are concerned when someone is injured. Nevertheless, there is a minority of pupils who find it difficult to manage their emotions. Staff deserve credit for the way in which these pupils are integrated into school life, and are fully aware of what is, and is not, acceptable behaviour.

8. Pupils are proud of their school, and very willing to talk about their work. The best teaching produces high levels of concentration, involvement and intelligent debate. Pupils try their best to do what is asked of them, even when given inappropriate tasks. Lunch and playtimes are happy, well ordered occasions, when the ‘family’ nature of the school is clear: pupils of different ages and sexes play together unselfconsciously. The spacious and beautiful grounds are further enhanced by fixed and portable play equipment, and appropriate levels of adult supervision.

9. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, staff provide pupils with good, and sometimes very good, role models through their teamwork and consideration for others. The school is not only a harmonious community, it is committed to offering a wide variety of experiences to stimulate pupils’ imagination and widen their experience of the world. Assemblies make a satisfactory contribution to pupils’ spiritual development, but such experiences as the Arts Week, seeing a visiting parent’s parrots, or a day spent doing lessons in the snow, will inspire pupils for life. During the inspection the best lessons provided examples of pupils filled with real excitement about what they were learning, like the Year 4 pupil who exclaimed, “I love science!” as he watched an experiment in progress. Art, music and drama contribute much to pupils’ cultural development as well. The school works hard to develop pupils’ self esteem and self confidence, through participation in public speaking events, and for older pupils, the opportunity to undertake the Exmoor Challenge walk. Three teaching assistants received specialist training to run a club for identified pupils to develop confidence and social skills.

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	92	2	1
White – Irish	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided is satisfactory and represents considerable improvement since 2000.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall and this has a positive influence on pupils’ learning. Improvements to teaching have been marked over the last four years and are beginning to have a lasting effect on achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is strong in Years 1 to 6.
- All teachers had good lessons.
- Support staff make a good contribution to the quality of teaching.

- Some aspects of Foundation Stage teaching need improving.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	3	14	9	2	0	0

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

10. Inspectors saw good lessons from all teachers. All teachers were observed unannounced and on a variety of occasions by different inspectors. The best practice is where work is well planned to match pupils' needs and interests and challenges pupils of all abilities. For example in a very good Years 3 and 4 music lesson the teacher managed pupils very well and gave them lots of practical opportunities to work together to create mood and texture. The response was very good and achievement high. Literacy teaching is good throughout and reflects the considerable effort which has gone into devising planning and setting targets to raise standards. A very good Years 5 and 6 drama session very successfully inspired pupils as witches from Macbeth to experiment with language, rhythm and impact. A very good Years 3 and 4 art lesson had a similar effect on pupils of all abilities developing observation and interpretation skills before painting portraits in different textures

11. All but one lesson seen in Years 1 and 2 was good with strengths in the way the mixed age class was handled to challenge pupils and involve all of them in all activities.

12. Strengths of teaching overall, and most evident in reception, are in the quality of care for children and relationships built on trust. Throughout the school teaching and support for pupils with SEN is good. This was seen on a variety of occasions in withdrawal groups where pupils worked particularly well with learning support assistants and made very good progress in developing communication skills.

13. Some aspects of provision and teaching for those children in the Foundation Stage (reception) are good in that children are given a good preparation for literacy work in Year 1. However, there is a tendency for work often to be more formal and based on work planned last year when reception children were grouped with Year 1. Work is often too teacher directed rather than developed through choice, independence, structured play and practical activities (as recommended in the Foundation Stage curriculum).

14. A scrutiny of pupils' work past and present revealed that the school's intention to focus teaching on literacy and numeracy has been appropriate. The best marking and use of homework encourages and guides pupils to improve their basic skills, whilst the least effective leaves pupils short of knowing how to improve. This was more often the case in maths and science books than in English work.

15. Teachers' use of assessment to measure progress and identify areas for further development is much better than it was four years ago and continues the good progress described in 2002. Procedures have now been established in subjects other than English, maths and science with the result that staff are in a much better informed position to report pupils' performance to parents. This is working well in ICT for example where pupils are actively taking part in assessing their own success (or lack of it). The best reports tell parents how pupils are achieving for their ages. The worst simply refer to coverage. Reports on children in reception concentrate on National Curriculum headings and do not sufficiently consider designated areas of learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is greatly enhanced by very good opportunities for enrichment and a wide range of extracurricular activities. Resources are satisfactory overall but accommodation continues to be unsatisfactory for this age range.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a relevant curriculum for all pupils.
- Good progress has been made to improve provision in English, mathematics and science.
- Resources and the outdoor provision for reception children are unsatisfactory.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Pupils' learning is enriched by numerous visits and visitors.
- The school provides a good range of extracurricular activities.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

16. The school provides a relevant curriculum, which is fully inclusive to all its pupils. It is suitably broad with appropriate cross-curricular planning that includes all relevant subjects of the National Curriculum. Since the last inspection provision has improved considerably in English, mathematics and science to raise pupils' achievements. The school has successfully given priority to developing these areas of the curriculum. New strategies have been introduced to improve reading and writing as part of literacy. The school has identified the need for more opportunities in mathematics and science for investigations, and problem solving activities to support pupils' learning and raise standards of attainment. Provision has improved particularly for younger pupils in information and communication technology. Further progress is restricted due to outdated resources, but this issue will soon be addressed with the imminent installation of the new suite.

17. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school takes very good care of its pupils where they are encouraged to work well together in class and play amicably in the playground. New resources have recently been purchased to ensure that sex education and issues of drug misuse are well taught to pupils throughout the school. Circle times offer good opportunities to discuss personal, social and health education including moral issues.

18. The school provides a varied programme of lunchtime and after school activities to support many curriculum areas. These include football, tag rugby, tennis, cricket, netball, computers, gardening, recorders, dance, stamp, animal and theatre clubs. Pupils' learning and achievement is greatly enriched by regular termly visits to places of interest to support topics studied such as Roman Bath, Killington House for a Victorian experience, the seaside at Woolacombe, and the residential trip for older pupils to Dartmoor. Visitors include artists, musicians and dancers who frequently share their expertise and provide good workshop activities to enhance numerous curricular activities.

19. The building is old and in a poor state of repair. It was designed as a secondary school and is not adequate for the needs of younger pupils. Independent learning strategies are often restricted due to high surfaces, unsatisfactory acoustics and insufficient areas to have equipment and resources readily available. This restricts pupils' independence. The outside area for the reception class has recently been developed but is currently unsatisfactory to support children's physical development due to an inadequate hard surface area for wheeled vehicles. The limited resources in the reception class have an adverse effect on the learning of the youngest children in the school.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is very good. The provision of support, guidance and advice is very good, and the involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures to ensure pupils and staff work in a safe and healthy environment are very good.
- The extent to which pupils have a good and trusting relationship with adults in the school is very good.
- Induction arrangements are good.

Commentary

20. The caretaker checks the secure school site on a daily basis: there is little vandalism. Termly risk assessments form the basis of future health and safety action planning. The school has a dedicated medical room and appropriate numbers of qualified first-aiders. All staff will receive health and safety training this term. Staff show a good awareness of safety during lessons, and place a strong emphasis on healthy eating and the importance of regular exercise. Fresh water is always available. All staff are aware of pupils with serious medical conditions and specialist training to support such pupils is given. The caretaker has been trained in the maintenance of the swimming pool and qualified staff supervise pupils' swimming. The headteacher is the child protection liaison officer and ensures all staff are fully briefed.

21. Pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified and given very good support. Staff manage behaviour well, and the role of teaching assistants is crucial in this respect. The school has begun to identify pupils with particular gifts and talents: a young artist went to a weekend workshop, and others had extra sports coaching. The school has effective assessment in place for English and mathematics: pupils are aware of their individual targets. Pupils were confident that adults at school would help them with problems.

22. Most pupils attend the pre-school housed on the site, and their transition to school life is therefore easier. From next term, reception staff will hold joint planning sessions with those from the pre-school. Children and parents pay several visits to the class before joining the school. Wherever possible, older pupils join their new class for one or more pre-visits, and teachers assign another pupil to be a 'buddy' for the first few days. Parents spoke warmly of the ease with which their children had settled in, particularly one whose child had never attended an English school before. As yet there is no school council. The headteacher consulted pupils informally over such issues as the redecoration of the toilets, and the installation of play equipment.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents, other schools and the community it serves.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes every effort to involve parents in school life.
- Procedures to ensure satisfaction and to deal with concerns and complaints are very good.
- The school plays a significant role in community life and public appreciation of its achievements is steadily increasing.
- Only a small number of parents play active roles in school life, and not all homework set gets done.

Commentary

23. The school makes every effort to inform and involve parents through frequent and lengthy newsletters and detailed curriculum information. Reports give grades for efforts and pupils' achievement in terms of National Curriculum levels. Parents are warmly encouraged to get involved in school life, and the school ran a course on supporting children's learning last year. Nevertheless, only a minority of parents take up these opportunities. Only four parents completed the course; and only those parents who were either governors or members of the parent-teacher committee turned

up to help redecorate the corridors. Very few parents responded to the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaires. However, attendance is good at school productions and the summer fair, and most parents come to parent consultation evenings.

24. The school estimates that about 70% of homework set gets done. It would seem, therefore, that whilst most parents give satisfactory support to their children's learning, few are able to give the school much practical support.

25. Staff are friendly and approachable, and the school has an 'open door' policy where parents can call in at any time and easily arrange to see the head or another staff member. Complaints are swiftly followed up, and feedback given to ensure satisfaction. The findings of the inspection team do not support the negative responses of parents given in some questionnaires and the pre-inspection meeting, and do confirm the more positive ones given by parents attending a meeting during the inspection.

26. The school's connection with the parish church has always been strong: the vicar takes assembly weekly and pupils take part in special events at the church (Britten's 'Noye's Fludde' this summer). The 'Bampton in Bloom' gardeners run a children's club in the central area, and the school hopes to offer parents and others access to the new computer suite. Many local people are ex-pupils, and enjoy returning to attend special events or talk about their lives to present pupils. The school has participated in events organised by the Rotary Club of Exmoor, such as 'Youth Speaks', and the local paper has given enthusiastic coverage to school events. A local pub collects donations for the school in a collection box, and local traders provided free Christmas lunch ingredients. There are regular lettings to community groups.

27. The headteacher is chair of the Tiverton Academic Council (ACTA), which organises some shared bidding for funding. For instance the Devon Artists in School Initiative organised Arts Week last year. ACTA funds 'transition workers' who support vulnerable pupils in Years 6 and 7. Students from the University of Plymouth complete teaching practices in the school. The school has links with Exeter University for the development of science and works closely with Tiverton High School, to which most Year 6 pupils transfer. East Devon College of Further Education provides support and opportunities in design and technology. The school has additional links with other local church schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. This is very heavily dependent on the excellent leadership and management of the head and the school's good governance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strategic management is excellent.
- The school improvement plan is a very effective tool for managing change.
- Staff are a good team.
- Governors give good support.
- Aspects of provision for the Foundation Stage are in need of review.

Commentary

28. Since her appointment just after the inspection of 2000 when the school was failing to provide a satisfactory education, the head has diligently and successfully sought to improve standards by developing the quality of provision. Significant improvements to planning and the use of assessment have been managed very well. These underpin the now good quality of teaching and support. The result so far is that pupils are beginning to achieve to their potential (and in many cases, especially for those with SEN, better than this). The head provides vision and practical educational direction which enables staff and governors to work together as a team to a common end, confident that they are on the right track. This can be a slow process notably where, as in the case of standards, there

is a long way to go. A measure of her success is the progress sustained over a four year period which has seen teaching, assessment and provision for SEN move from unsatisfactory to good.

29. The school improvement plan, although constructed by the head, seeks to represent the views of staff and governors. It is clear that the opportunity to contribute has good effects on team spirit and encouraging initiative. Staff are empowered to contribute to school development. Performance management of staff is used well to help teachers make the most of their potential and target weaknesses.

30. Strategic planning makes excellent use of limited finance to support initiatives. Until recently with the hope of new accommodation governors have held back from spending to develop existing buildings. The concern for pupils presently in the school has allowed for improvements to outdoor reception space, carpeting and furniture. Imminent (and much needed) improvements to facilities for ICT and the library are being well managed. Governors now make a good contribution to the management of the school with the most significant contributions being in terms of building and financial issues.

31. Improvements designed to raise standards have not driven the school to ignore pupils' personal development. The school continues to value the individual and very successfully promotes Christian ideals. This has a significant impact on the good ethos which is a feature of the school even in less than desirable accommodation.

32. The need to further develop provision to deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum fully to reception children is exemplified in other parts of this report. This is the most obvious area for future emphasis in terms of the management of the school and will require giving staff the opportunity to observe good practice elsewhere.

33. The large old building puts a huge burden on finances. Some of this is offset by extra grants: for example towards heating. These are well used but the long term future of accommodation is still a key area for consideration. Notwithstanding this, small schools are expensive to run. The school uses money wisely and seeks best value. The administrative officer very efficiently manages the day to day financial control and provides the head and governors with good information. Although spending per child is almost £700 more than the national average, to its credit the school is judged as giving satisfactory value for money, especially considering its success in overturning the need for special measures.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	323118
Total expenditure	301397
Expenditure per pupil	3276

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	21722
Balance carried forward to the next	21827

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory** overall but represents a variety of strengths and weaknesses. Teaching is satisfactory overall and children achieve satisfactorily. The co-ordinator's role is not yet fully developed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff provide a welcoming safe environment for children and have warm relationships.
- Planning is not consistently based on the recommended Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Good provision is made in physical, social and emotional development in addition to aspects of communication, language and literacy.
- Activities are over-directed and there are insufficient opportunities for children to play and experiment.
- There are too few activities to enable children to develop independence in their learning.
- Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory to support children's learning.

Commentary

34. High priority is given to **personal, social and emotional development** and attainment is above expectations. Good links with the pre-school group and parents help children settle well into school. The majority of children are happy, confident and secure and they work and play well together. Children know the classroom rules and have respect for each other. They show an interest in the activities they are offered and know where classroom resources are stored. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in this aspect and often good. Teachers and adult helpers have good relationships with the children. Good opportunities are planned for children to work in small and large groups. Children are keen to take responsibility and have recently been given weekly monitoring tasks such as tidying up and helping around the classroom.

35. By the end of the reception year most children will achieve the expected learning goals in **communication, language and literacy** and many will exceed them. Progress is good in speaking and listening and many children attain higher levels than those expected for their age. The children communicate confidently with each other and are able to write short sentences in a legible and appropriately formed style independently. Less able children develop confidence with their speaking and listening skills. High priority is given to teaching reading and writing. Most children can recognise letters and are aware that print is read from left to right and carries meaning. All children enjoy sharing books and taking them home regularly in their book bags. They are introduced to key words and letter sounds to decipher new words. As a result many children build simple words from their sounds and the more able read confidently. Good use is made of big books during lessons and questions are used well to extend speaking skills.

36. By the end of the reception year most children will achieve the expected learning goals in **mathematical development**. Some aspects of this area of learning are taught effectively which results in children achieving well. However, there are missed opportunities to reinforce counting in everyday situations and some activities are not well matched to children's needs. Teachers provide a range of play situations that could incorporate opportunities for counting and using mathematical language but children often spend time in unsupervised or unstructured situations where there is insufficient adult intervention in children's play to reinforce mathematical ideas.

37. With regard to children's **knowledge and understanding of the world**, topics provide a good range of interesting and exciting activities to support learning in this area. For example the current topic on plants and animals gives the children good opportunities to gain scientific knowledge. Through planting beans they learn to recognise the stages of change and growth in plants. There are

regular opportunities for children to walk into the village to look at different houses to develop a knowledge of old and new buildings. The children begin to develop their computing skills appropriately through regular practice.

38. There are limited opportunities provided to promote learning in **physical development** apart from those timetabled in the hall or playground for physical education. As a result many children are not reaching their full potential in this area of learning. A new designated area has recently been installed outside the reception class but presently it is not an attractive learning environment. The grass is too long and the surface too uneven for children to use wheeled toys. Resources are inadequate and there is limited outside play apparatus for children to develop their physical skills.

39. Attainment in **creative development** is adequate but the provision is often unsatisfactory due to prescriptive tasks set which do not encourage children to use their own imagination and creative skills. Opportunities for creative play are underdeveloped where there is a lack of direction when children use the sand and water play. As a result children soon become bored and disinterested and move to another activity. Inadequate resources and costumes inhibit children's imagination and scope in role play activities. Children enjoy playing percussion instruments and singing fun songs when given the opportunity.

40. Overall the teaching in the reception class is satisfactory but during the inspection the quality of teaching varied from good to unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning is at its best where activities are well planned for the needs of the early years when adults use conversation and questions effectively to draw out children's ideas and develop their confidence. When this is so children of all abilities achieve well. Where learning is less effective and unsatisfactory the pace is slow, tasks are too prescriptive, not all children are actively involved in learning, and questioning techniques fail to encourage the development of children's speaking and listening skills. Planning is not firmly based on the recommended six areas of learning and does not sufficiently cater for the needs of children in the reception class. Consequently many children are underachieving. Assessment procedures are underdeveloped to identify effectively the next stages of learning. Learning support assistants give valued support to teachers and in particular to children with special educational needs. The co-ordinator's role is underdeveloped to raise the profile and improve provision for children in the reception class.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is now **good**, much improved and still improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Support for pupils with SEN is good.
- Progress in speaking, listening and reading is at least satisfactory and for many pupils good.
- Standards of writing remain below average, but can be seen to be improving.
- Assessment is well used to set targets for improvement.

Commentary

41. Pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 was well below average. Despite the mitigating factor of high SEN levels within a group of only 14 pupils who were tested, improving standards measured in this way is one of the school's highest priorities. Analysis by the school of pupils' test papers indicated that comprehension was the main weakness, and as such negatively affects results in maths and science as well as English. New planning and an increased emphasis on this aspect are designed to improve matters. However, with an even higher proportion

of pupils with SEN in the current Year 6, improvements in average point scores compared with other schools are unlikely this year. The school can demonstrate that it does add value to pupils' skills and understanding in English over time and that individual pupils frequently achieve well considering their ability and previous knowledge.

42. There were too few pupils in Year 2 (only 5, none of whom had special needs) in 2003 to make use of scores in comparisons. However these pupils did well and reached their potential. Pupils currently in Year 2, where a high proportion have SEN, are likely to score well below average in both reading and writing this year. In terms of their individual needs their achievement is good and for the least able very good.

43. Evidence from the inspection, taking into account the full range of work covered, indicates that pupils are making good progress in speaking, listening and reading. The school's introduction of set guided reading time every day, where the teacher focuses on reading activities and discussion with groups and individuals, is proving very effective in helping pupils to improve their comprehension and express their preferences and opinions. Pupils heard to read by inspectors in Years 2 and 6 showed standards to be close to national expectations with the more able pupils above these.

44. Standards in writing are generally below, and for those pupils with SEN well below, average. Progress is evident across the school in pupils' books and staff records. The process whereby pupils have individual targets to aspire to that clearly identify how they are to make improvements is effective. Pupils respond well and are encouraged to try hard.

45. Work observed during lessons shows the National Literacy Strategy is being implemented well and results in appropriate coverage of all required elements. In writing this means pupils write for a range of purposes and in a variety of genres. There are some good examples of stories by Years 1 and 2, poetry about spring by Years 3 and 4, and some good persuasive writing by Years 5 and 6. There is a clear commitment to giving pupils the opportunity to enjoy writing, and pupils respond well, improving spelling, grammar and handwriting as they do so. A significant proportion of work sampled across the school was judged close to national expectations, which is a sign of improving standards.

46. A highlight of the consistently good teaching observed throughout was in the use of drama to enable pupils to experiment with communication skills. Very good teaching featured older pupils exploring the text and evocative vocabulary of Shakespeare's witches in Macbeth. Pupils achieved very well particularly in characterisation.

47. Strengths in teaching are in:

- Skilled use of questioning to get pupils to answer in full sentences based on inference and deduction;
- Marking which shows pupils how to improve;
- Good management of mixed age classes working towards the targets of the older year group to raise expectations, whilst remaining mindful of individuals' needs;
- The work of teaching assistants in withdrawal groups to give extra literacy support.

48. The subject is very well led by the head as subject leader. She has a clear focus on raising standards and is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of provision in each class. She is keen to promote the use of ICT and improve the library as a learning base. Work is to begin this term on new facilities to achieve this.

49. The school continues to make good progress in delivering the English curriculum. There is marked improvement from the 2000 report, sustained since the inspection of 2002.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Literacy skills are used effectively to support other subjects, most notably in discussions and in using reading for research purposes. Writing is less well used and consequently less well enhanced. There is evidence of sound writing in topic work such as about the Great Fire of London and describing the life of a Viking sailor, but too little advantage is taken in science to get pupils to write in factual or instructional form.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school continues to raise pupils' achievement but standards are below the national average.
- Good teaching is raising pupils' self esteem and has a positive impact on all pupils' achievements.
- A strong emphasis is placed on improving basic number skills.
- The school acknowledges the need for more opportunities for using and applying skills to problem solving activities.
- Assessment information is well used to target areas for development.
- Marking is inconsistent.
- Insufficient use is made of mathematical skills in many curriculum subjects.

Commentary

51. Standards are below average at the end of Year 6, which is a similar picture to the last report. The school is fully inclusive and has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs particularly in Year 2 and Year 6. This has a significant impact on standards achieved particularly for those pupils who find difficulty comprehending written questions. But most pupils achieve at least satisfactorily. The school has increased the emphasis on improving mental computation and fact retention, which is beginning to have a positive impact on raising pupils' basic number skills. The school recognises there are too limited opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills and knowledge to problem solving activities, which has a negative impact on their achievement particularly for higher attainers.

52. The quality of teaching is good which ensures that pupils make good progress in numeracy lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by learning support assistants to ensure they achieve well. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan effectively and use assessment information well to ensure learning is effective. As a result pupils have good attitudes and most behave well with positive relationships with their teachers. This has a positive impact on their self esteem and achievement.

53. The subject leader has clear ideas as how to improve provision and gives strong leadership. She has produced a detailed action plan based on careful analysis of test results to highlight areas for development, but has little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning. Good assessment procedures have been introduced including detailed tracking systems where individual targets are regularly set and reviewed to improve pupils' achievements. However, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent: work is not always marked and insufficient attention is given to showing pupils how to improve their work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Mathematical skills are not used sufficiently to support pupils' learning in most other subjects. A scrutiny of past and present work indicates that very limited use has been made of ICT to promote mathematical skills such as data handling. Appropriate use is made of measuring skills in science and for using number lines in history.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average in Year 6 but provision has improved since the last inspection.
- The school has acknowledged the need to increase opportunities for experimental and investigative science.
- The quality of teaching is improving.
- Marking is inconsistent with few evaluative comments to help pupils improve.
- Cross curricular links are underdeveloped with ICT and English.

Commentary

55. Standards in science are well below the national average at the end of Year 6 which is a similar picture to the last report. There is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in both Year 2 and Year 6, which has a significant impact on standards when compared with the national average. Many pupils lack the appropriate comprehension skills to understand questions given in formal tests and consequently are unable to answer. Provision has improved since the last inspection with the introduction of a new scheme of work and most pupils achieve satisfactorily. The accommodation, although spacious, is not designed for young pupils. The school has identified the need to increase the opportunities for experimental and investigative science to support pupils' learning and understanding.

56. The quality of science teaching is satisfactory overall but during the inspection was good with one excellent lesson. The judgement on teaching is based on work sampling, teachers' planning and talking to staff and pupils. Teaching and learning is at its best where teachers have confident class management, good subject knowledge, and provide high levels of challenge through practical investigations. In such instances good relationships with pupils ensure they are well motivated and achieve well. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicates a lack of consistency in provision. Examples of unfinished work were seen with much work unmarked and few evaluative comments made to help pupils improve. In such instances this has a negative impact on pupils' achievement.

57. The subject leader is keen to improve provision in the subject and has received good support from a colleague at Exeter University giving specialist advice and demonstration lessons. However, the leader has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning across the school. Good assessment procedures have recently been introduced and this information is beginning to be used to help teachers plan more effectively. The subject leader has identified the need to improve resources, provide more opportunities to develop literacy skills, and make use of the potential of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**. The school is aware of this and has plans in hand to address the situation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with what is expected at the end of Year 2.
- Standards are below expectations at the end of Year 6 through a lack of opportunity.
- Good assessment procedures have recently been introduced.

Commentary

58. The last report found standards in ICT were close to national expectations at the end of Year 2. This positive situation has been built on (despite the inadequacies of the suite where machines are incompatible and the work surface is so high pupils have to at best kneel up and at worst stand to operate computers!). Standards are now in line with expectations. This represents sound progress. Most pupils aged seven are able to use the computer for word processing, writing directly onto the screen, and inserting pictures of their own choice. At eleven most pupils achieve good standards in basic skills and understanding and do well.

59. The absence of suitable resources has led to a lack of opportunity for older pupils: for example to develop research skills using the Internet, and not all required elements of the National Curriculum have been covered in sufficient depth to get pupils to the expected standard by the end of Year 6. However, evidence shows work actually completed and saved on file is of a satisfactory standard for this age. The school is aware that the elements of modelling and controlling and presenting ideas are less well developed and planning is in place to address this once the planned-for new equipment and more suitable accommodation is in place for next term.

60. Only one lesson of direct ICT teaching was observed so no judgement is made on the quality of teaching or learning. However the response of pupils to technology is positive and due care and consideration is taken with equipment. Children in reception and Years 1 and 2 are given a sound introduction to the use of listening stations and tape recorders as tools to develop literacy skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. Currently there is adequate use made of ICT in other subjects. This is usually in the form of word processing and handling programs which provide support for spelling and computation. More able older pupils are beginning to work towards multimedia presentations, but these are at a relatively basic level for this age group. There is no evidence of ICT being used to measure changes in science: for example through using sensors. There are good examples of how ICT is used in art to produce original work using shape and colour.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Provision in geography and history is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

62. During the inspection it was not possible to see any lessons in geography and history. No judgements can therefore be made on standards, achievement, teaching or learning. Discussions with staff, together with planning documents, scrutiny of work and displays, indicate that suitable schemes of work have been established to support the development of pupils' skills. Good use is made of visits and visitors to reinforce learning effectively.

63. Religious education was inspected by a representative of the diocese. Her report appears under a separate cover.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

This curriculum area was not a main focus for the inspection and in only a short period in school it was only possible to see a very small number of lessons. Consequently these subjects were only sampled and detailed judgements about standards and teaching were not made. In **design and technology** no lessons were observed, but school planning does show provision to be satisfactory. One lesson each was seen in art and music which were sufficient to see that in these sessions pupils responded very well to very good teaching and reached high standards.

Commentary

64. There are clear strengths in **art** throughout the school. Provision is good. Pupils express themselves well making good use of skills taught in a systematic way. The subject leader is a skilled practitioner and has planned a scheme of work which makes a very good balance between techniques and creativity.

65. Opportunities to look at and work in the style of famous artists such as Van Gogh, Lowry and Mondrian make a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development as well as proving a very effective vehicle to improve observation and evaluative skills.

66. Art is enhanced by events such as Arts Week and visits from local artists. Pupils are encouraged to experiment with different materials and make choices to produce original work. Staff display this well and clearly value pupils' efforts. Appropriate use is made of ICT to create patterns and explore colour in a medium in addition to the traditional paint. Three dimensional art work is considered and pupils make use of making skills in topic work and science models. Appreciation of sculpture is encouraged starting with clay work in reception and working towards large outdoor creations in Years 3 to 6.

67. Art was a strength in the report of 2000. The school notes that it suffered during the interim period from a lack of emphasis and staff change. It is clearly now back on track.

68. Planning for **music** based a recently introduced and well resourced scheme of work shows provision is satisfactory and fast improving. The impact of the new subject leader, who is music trained, is significant. The profile of music is good and a high proportion of pupils attend recorders and choir in addition to those learning instruments with peripatetic music teachers.

69. Parents, staff and pupils report that the quality of school concerts and productions has always been high. Evidence from assemblies and the one lesson seen points to strength in singing.

70. **Physical education** was observed on two occasions. In both lessons standards were satisfactory and there were good features in how pupils were managed in a wider space than the classroom. Pupils were extended physically and encouraged to appreciate how their bodies respond to exercise. More opportunities to evaluate the performance of others to make improvements and develop techniques would enhance provision further. A very strong feature of physical education is that the school makes the most of its extensive grounds in teaching orienteering and has become a centre for the activity amongst local schools. The school team took part in a competition on Exmoor last year and completed the course successfully.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

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

Commentary

71. The school has a very full policy on PSHE, which is taught in all classes and is timetabled for all year groups from 1 to 6. The subject leader's planning shows clear progression as well as the opportunity to revisit particular areas at different levels of complexity. As yet she has had no opportunity to monitor teaching. All teachers use 'circle time' as a technique for discussing social issues such as bullying and friendship difficulties. PSHE messages are conveyed to pupils through displays throughout the school, emphasising such topics as the importance of good diet, standing up to bullies, and road safety.

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	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
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).