

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Tiverton

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113340

Headteacher: Mr D Barnes

Lead inspector: David Westall

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 268045

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  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 275  
School address: Barrington Street  
Tiverton  
Devon  
Postcode: EX16 6QR  
Telephone number: (01884) 253 398  
Fax number: (01884) 252 610  
Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mrs Felicity Salter  
governors:  
Date of previous 14<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> June 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This is an above average sized school with 275 pupils, aged between four and 11 years. There are 11 classes, plus a special needs unit which caters for eight pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. However, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above average, and 12 pupils have statements of special educational need. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school is situated in a relatively disadvantaged area, and pupils' standards on entry generally range from below to well below average, depending on the proportion of children with significant special educational needs in the year group.

The school achieved the Investor in People award in 2003, and the Eco-Schools and Devon Travelwise awards in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2414	David Westall	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music
19365	Gordon Stockley	Lay inspector	
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English History Religious education Personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHEC) Special educational needs
19302	Christine Perrett	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Geography
19082	Tessa Farley	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Physical education
18498	Denise Morris	Team inspector	Provision in the special needs unit

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>6 - 10</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10 - 15</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15 - 18</b>
<b>THE UNIT FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>19 - 35</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>36</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a sound school** where pupils generally make steady progress as a result of satisfactory teaching. It fosters pupils' personal development well, makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and is a caring community where everyone matters. However, there is not enough good teaching and this restricts pupils' achievement. In addition, while the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, some aspects of its work are not monitored and evaluated with enough rigour. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, including for those in the special needs unit.
- Pupils' achievements are restricted by teaching that is satisfactory, rather than better, in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 to 6 and in most areas of learning in the Reception classes (the Foundation Stage).
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good, and the school makes good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The co-ordinators for English, mathematics and special educational needs are fulfilling their roles well.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory, and most co-ordinators do not monitor their subjects with enough rigour.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used sufficiently by pupils to support their learning in other subjects.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors.
- Pupils are well cared for, and their welfare is a high priority.

Overall, the school has made insufficient progress since its last inspection, in 1999, when it provided good value for money. Assessment procedures have improved but weaknesses in the monitoring roles of most subject co-ordinators have not been adequately rectified. Most significantly, the quality of teaching has declined since the last inspection, when it was judged to be good. However, the school has maintained its good provision for pupils with special educational needs and for the personal development of all pupils.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory** across the school. Overall standards are below national expectations in Year 2 and are well below national expectations in Year 6. However, these reflect pupils' generally low starting points on entry to the school and the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, especially in the Year 6 classes.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	E	E*	C
mathematics	E	E*	E	B
science	E	E	E	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* - in the lowest five per cent nationally. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The table above shows that the school's results in Year 6 in 2004 were considerably more favourable when compared with the results of similar schools than with national averages.

Inspection findings show that current standards in Year 6 are well below national expectations in English and mathematics, and are below national expectations in science. These standards reflect pupils' satisfactory achievement, particularly since over one third of the pupils in the current Year 6 classes have special educational needs. In religious education, pupils achieve well to reach the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 6. Pupils also do well in personal, social and health education and citizenship. Standards are in line with national expectations in art and design and design and technology, and represent pupils' satisfactory achievement. Insufficient evidence was collected to make secure judgements about pupils' standards in Year 6 in other subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the special unit, achieve well in relation to the targets in their individual education plans. The relatively small number of very capable pupils make adequate progress, overall, although they sometimes mark time because their work is too easy. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups do as well as their peers. No significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls were evident during the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are good, overall. Their behaviour is generally good, although a very small minority do not always conduct themselves well enough. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The attendance rate is broadly in line with the national average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils.** The teaching is mainly satisfactory and means that most pupils make sound progress in their learning in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. Overall, there is not enough good teaching in the school, with only four in every ten lessons demonstrating good, and occasionally better, teaching. This restricts pupils' achievement. The most effective provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, including for those in the special needs unit, and enables these pupils to make good progress in relation to their capabilities. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of worthwhile learning opportunities and is considerably enhanced by visits, visitors and after-school clubs. However, pupils are given insufficient opportunities to use and develop their ICT skills in work in other subjects. The pupils are well cared for and the school's partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.** The headteacher has sound leadership and management skills, and the work of the senior management team is satisfactory and improving. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has made a good start, and the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and special educational needs are fulfilling their roles well. However, the monitoring and evaluation roles of most subject co-ordinators are underdeveloped and the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory. School governance is good, and statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents and pupils are generally satisfied with the school.



## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Increase the amount of good teaching in order to raise standards, especially in English, mathematics and science, and in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, and the monitoring and evaluation roles of most subject co-ordinators.
- Ensure that pupils are given sufficient opportunities to use and develop their ICT skills through work across the curriculum.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**. Their overall standards are well below national expectations in Year 6 but reflect the very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 6 classes, and pupils' generally low starting points on entry to the school.

#### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the special unit, achieve well in relation to the targets in their individual education plans.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education to meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 6, and make good progress in Years 1 to 6 in their personal, social and health education and in citizenship (PSHEC).
- Pupils' achievements are restricted by teaching which is mainly satisfactory, rather than better, in English, mathematics and science, in Years 1 to 6, and in most areas of learning in the Reception classes (the Foundation Stage).
- The most capable pupils sometimes mark time, including in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science, because their work is too easy.

#### Commentary

##### *Standards on entry to the school*

1. Children's standards on entry to the school usually range from below average to well below average each year, depending on the percentages of children with significant learning difficulties. The standards on entry of the children currently in the Reception classes were generally at the more favourable end of the range and were below average, overall, with a significant minority demonstrating underdeveloped language skills. The current Year 6 cohort of pupils includes a particularly high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties, some of whom have joined the school after starting their statutory education elsewhere.

##### *The school's results in national tests*

##### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004**

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.2 (14.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.2 (13.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.7 (13.7)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The table above shows that the results in reading and writing were well below the national average. They were below the results of similar schools in reading, and well below the results of similar schools in writing. In mathematics, the results in 2004 were a notable improvement on those reached in 2003, and were below the national average but in line with the average results of similar schools. Although there was a dip in the results in writing in 2004, the school's overall results in the national tests in Year 2 have been gradually improving from a particularly low point in 2000. As a result, the overall trend in the school's results, from 2000 to 2004, was above the national trend.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.4 (23.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	24.5 (22.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	25.7 (26.8)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. The table above shows that the results of the national tests in Year 6 in 2004 were very low in relation to the national average in English, and were well below the national average in mathematics and science. These results were more favourable when compared with the results of schools where pupils achieved similarly when in Year 2. They were in line with the results of similar schools in English and science, and above the results of these schools in mathematics. Although there was an improvement in the mathematics results in 2004, the overall results in the last academic year were broadly similar to those reached in 2003 – which were notably lower than the 2002 results. As a consequence, the trend in the Year 6 results, from 2000 to 2004, was below the national trend. It is clear that variations in the percentage of pupils with special educational needs have a significant impact on the results, for example, the percentage was considerably lower in 2002 than in 2003 and 2004. In 2004, the school met its statutory targets in mathematics. However, it missed its targets in English by a wide margin, and the results came as a disappointing surprise to the school, despite the fact that about a quarter of all pupils in the Year 6 classes were identified as having special educational needs.

*Standards at the time of the last inspection*

4. When the school was last inspected, in 1999, pupils' standards were above national expectations in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. However, the make-up of this cohort was very different from the present one and included a percentage of very capable pupils which was unusually high for the school. As a consequence, while the national test results in Year 6 were above average in 1999, they dropped very significantly the following year.

*Inspection findings*

*The Foundation Stage*

5. **Children's achievement is satisfactory** in the Reception classes, and results from satisfactory teaching. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, which is fostered strongly by the staff. Most children are on course to meet the nationally expected standards by the end of the Reception year in their personal, social and emotional development, and in their creative and physical development. However, their attainment in the more academic aspects of their learning is considerably weaker, reflecting children's standards on entry to the school. As a consequence, despite making steady progress, they are set to demonstrate overall standards which are below those expected nationally in communication, language and literacy, in their mathematical development and in their scientific understanding of the world. Although the teaching is generally satisfactory in the Reception classes and enables children to make satisfactory overall progress, there

are sometimes weaknesses in elements of the teaching which are restricting children's achievements, particularly in communication, language and literacy.

#### *Years 1 to 6*

6. **Pupils' achievement is satisfactory** in these year groups. Pupils' standards in Year 2 are below national expectations in reading and well below national expectations in writing. In English, in Year 6, pupils' overall standards are well below national expectations although, as in Year 2, pupils generally do better in reading than in writing. In mathematics, standards are below national expectations in Year 2 and well below national expectations in Year 6; and in science they are below national expectations in both Years 2 and 6. While these standards are notably lower than in most schools, they generally reflect pupils' satisfactory achievement in these key subjects, given pupils' starting points on entry to the school and the significant percentage of pupils with learning difficulties in these year groups. Indeed, in Year 6, over one third of all pupils have special educational needs. However, there is clear scope for improvement in the achievement of most pupils, which is restricted by the overall quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science which is satisfactory, rather than better.
7. In information and communication technology (ICT) the school was able to provide hardly any examples of work completed prior to the inspection due to a serious computer breakdown which meant that pupils' work was lost and could not be retrieved. As a consequence, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about pupils' standards and achievement in the subject. In the lessons observed, pupils in Year 2 were demonstrating standards that were satisfactory for their ages in relation to the specific skills that were taught. However, the lessons seen in Year 6 show that pupils' keyboard skills are generally underdeveloped, and discussions with the pupils revealed gaps in their learning because they had not had sufficiently regular ICT lessons until the current educational year. In religious education, pupils achieve well to reach the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 6. However, insufficient evidence was available to judge pupils' standards in the subject in Year 2. Standards are in line with national expectations in art and design and design and technology in Years 2 and 6, and reflect pupils' satisfactory achievement. Pupils generally achieve well in personal, social and health education and citizenship, as a result of the school's good provision for this important aspect of their development. Insufficient evidence was collected to make secure overall judgements about pupils' standards in other subjects.

#### *The achievement of different groups*

8. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the special unit, achieve well in relation to the targets in their individual education plans. The relatively small number of very capable pupils make broadly adequate progress, overall. However, they sometimes mark time in lessons in English, mathematics and science, because their work is too easy. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups do as well as their peers, and no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls were evident during the inspection.

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

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good** overall. Most pupils enjoy school and try hard to meet their teachers' expectations of them. Behaviour is generally **good** although a very small minority of pupils do not always conduct themselves well

enough. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory but their punctuality is unsatisfactory.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Most pupils enjoy all aspects of school life.
- Pupils establish good relationships with their peers and with adults.
- The school sets high standards for pupils' behaviour and most pupils behave well at all times.
- Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Some pupils lack confidence in themselves as learners.
- There is sometimes inappropriate behaviour by a small number of pupils.
- Too many pupils arrive late.

### **Commentary**

#### *Attitudes and behaviour*

9. Most pupils say they enjoy school and all it offers. When questioned by inspectors, they confess to preferences between subjects and it is clear that not all pupils have a love of learning for its own sake. Nevertheless, most pupils are very attentive during lessons and try hard to complete the tasks they are given. In spite of their teachers' best efforts, each class has a minority of pupils who still lack confidence in themselves as learners and whose uncertainty sometimes means they make a slow start when asked to work on their own. This lack of confidence is also apparent when some pupils speak in class and when they read aloud, so that, for example, even when they read accurately, they do not always read aloud audibly or confidently. A significant number of pupils of all ages depend on their teachers to set appropriate expectations for them in regard to the pace at which they should work and what they should be able to achieve. When teachers' expectations are too low, then they do not always give of their best, for example by doing too little or taking insufficient care with the presentation of their work. At the same time, they value the help they are given to overcome difficulties in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and almost always approach new challenges with a positive attitude. The few pupils with special needs associated with emotional and behavioural difficulties are making good progress towards their targets and, in some cases, their ability to manage their own behaviour has improved dramatically. Very many pupils thoroughly enjoy what might be called the 'social side' of school life. They enjoy being with their friends and they relish many of the clubs, extra-curricular activities and visits made available to them. When given the opportunity to do so, they take pride in carrying out special jobs to help the smooth running of their classes or the wider school, and they can be trusted to organise fundraising events for charity.
10. The vast majority of the pupils respond particularly to the school's provision for their moral and social development. They behave well at all times and in all circumstances. They establish good relationships with their peers and with all the adults who work with them, and they show respect for others, for their environment and for property. However, a small number of pupils, primarily though not exclusively from the older classes, do not always behave as well as they should and sometimes show a lack of respect both for others and for the school rules. Pupils, parents and staff report occasional incidents involving harassment of a verbal nature and there is some evidence of occasional incidents involving physical harassment. These incidents, including the very rare ones involving racial elements, are generally dealt with very

quickly and effectively by the school. There were no exclusions in the last educational year but one pupil was temporarily excluded earlier in the current educational year.

### *Attendance*

11. Attendance and unauthorised absence are broadly in line with the national median. However, too many pupils arrive after the end of the registration session. This means that they may miss the introduction to the first lesson, as well as disrupting the lesson for those pupils who have arrived on time.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.4
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

### *Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development*

12. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The ethos of the school, like its aims, promotes caring attitudes, self-respect and respect for others.
13. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and permeates all aspects of school life. Daily acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements. They promote strong themes designed to foster pupils' understanding of right and wrong, of the best examples of human conduct and aspirations, and of what it means to be human. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they hear, to make links with their own experience of life and to consider the choices they would make in given circumstances. Religious education lessons give pupils a good understanding of the special power of religious faith to motivate and inspire individuals and of the strength believers are able to draw from their faith in times of trouble. In their personal, social and health education and in extra-curricular activities, such as the visit made by Year 5 to an outdoor activities centre and the Exmoor Challenge undertaken by some pupils in Year 6, pupils are given further opportunities to develop self-awareness. Many other activities, including team sports, clubs and drama productions give pupils the opportunity to interact socially with others, while their understanding of social responsibility is well promoted through activities such as caring for younger pupils, raising funds for charities and taking on responsibilities within the school, for example as house captains or as representatives on the school council.
14. The recently established links with a number of schools in Africa have raised pupils' awareness of the very different circumstances in which children sometimes live and are educated. As a consequence, many pupils have felt inspired to help in whatever way they can. Just as the pupils are taught to care for those less fortunate than themselves, so they are also taught to care for their immediate environment and to learn about mankind's moral responsibility to nurture and safeguard the Earth. The environmental club has proved popular, while the positive response of pupils to various 'environmentally friendly' projects such as recycling has led to the school receiving a national award as a recognised 'Eco-school'.
15. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. A wide variety of clubs gives pupils opportunities to engage in sports, recreational and cultural activities. Special events, visits and visitors enhance pupils' experience and learning in subjects such as history, music and art. The celebration of religious festivals in local churches and the

school's involvement in local community activities help pupils to gain an understanding of their own cultural heritage. The visit by an African dance company and the developing links with schools in Africa are helping to raise pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of cultures.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education for its pupils. The teaching is mainly satisfactory and means that most pupils make sound progress in their learning in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of worthwhile learning opportunities and is considerably enhanced by visits, visitors and after-school clubs. The pupils are well cared for and are given sound support and guidance. The school's partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are good, and benefit pupils' learning.

### **Teaching and learning**

Overall, the quality of teaching is **satisfactory** and pupils make mainly satisfactory progress in their learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the special needs unit.
- Overall, there is not enough good teaching across the school, and pupils' progress is sometimes constrained by teaching that is broadly satisfactory but has areas for improvement.
- Assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics and for pupils with special educational needs.
- Teachers successfully promote good behaviour in lessons.
- Teachers do not sufficiently enable pupils to use ICT to support their work in other subjects.
- Assessment procedures are not yet established in ICT.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	4 (8%)	15 (31%)	28 (57%)	2 (4%)	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.*

16. The table above shows that the teaching observed during the inspection was mainly satisfactory. This represents a decline since the last inspection, when the overall quality of teaching was judged to be good. However, pupils with special educational needs are taught well, including by teaching assistants. There are no significant overall differences between the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage (the Reception classes), in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), and in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6). However, good teaching is particularly rare in the Foundation Stage and is most frequently evident in Year 6. Overall, the teaching is enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning. Pupils are restricted from making better progress because there is not enough good teaching in the school, including in the Foundation Stage and in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science in Years 1 to 6.
17. In the Reception classes, the teachers promote children's personal, social and emotional development well, although they do not always give children enough opportunities to develop their initiative and decision-making skills. In the other required areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, the teaching is satisfactory, overall. However, there are areas for improvement in the teaching of language and literacy. In particular, too little emphasis is given to teaching some key reading skills, and teachers do not always make accurate enough assessments of children's next steps in literacy.
18. In Years 1 to 6, satisfactory teaching in English, mathematics and science enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning. In religious education, few lessons were seen. However, those observed were well taught, and teachers' planning for the subject is good in all classes. Although insufficient evidence was available to judge pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2, it is clear that the teaching is enabling pupils to make good progress in religious education in Years 3 to 6. Insufficient lessons were observed in other subjects to make secure overall judgements about the quality of teaching. However, a careful analysis of pupils' completed work shows that the teaching is enabling pupils to make sound progress in art and design and in design and technology in Years 1 to 6. In ICT, it is clear that teachers do not sufficiently enable the pupils to develop and use their skills in work across the curriculum.
19. Various groupings and teaching arrangements ensure that pupils with special educational needs are given the help they need to make good progress towards their targets and to overcome other, less specific difficulties associated with their learning. Well-trained teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream lessons. Some specially trained teaching assistants also take a lead in running successful intervention programmes for small groups of pupils with particular needs in literacy, while the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides very effective tuition in reading for individual pupils in the form of a 'Reading Recovery' programme. All class teachers strongly promote inclusion and involve pupils with special educational needs at each and every stage of their lessons. Pupils with



special educational needs are consistently well taught by the SENCO and support staff when they are working in the special unit.

20. Across the school, teaching is characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils like and respect their teachers, and it is clear that these feelings are reciprocated. Teachers' planning is sound, overall, and resources to support pupils' learning are prepared carefully. Teachers ensure that teaching assistants are well briefed and these key staff make valuable contributions to pupils' learning, as a result. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach is secure, and recent training has had a beneficial impact on their knowledge in English and mathematics. In the most effective lessons, good use is made of time and teachers know just when to intervene with well-judged questions or comments to ensure that pupils are both supported and challenged. This was evident, for example, in lessons taught by the recently appointed deputy headteacher, working with pupils in Years 5 and 6, and in sessions when pupils with special educational needs were taught in small groups. Unsatisfactory teaching was occasionally demonstrated during the inspection when tasks were inappropriately matched to pupils' learning needs, and meant that they learned very little. In addition, some common weaknesses are evident in lessons which are broadly satisfactory, overall, and these restrict pupils' progress. These include times when there is too much teacher talk and too little pupil activity; when the most capable pupils are not sufficiently challenged; when teachers do not use questions well enough to check pupils' understanding; and when the pace of lessons becomes rather slow.

#### *Assessing pupils' progress*

21. Overall, assessment procedures are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. The assessment of the achievements and learning requirements of pupils with special educational needs, including those in the special unit, is thorough and effective. In addition, assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics, and have improved in the current educational year. In nearly all other subjects, assessment procedures are satisfactory, although they are less well developed than in English and mathematics and are having a more limited impact on teachers' planning. In ICT, coherent assessment procedures are not established, although the new co-ordinator has firm plans to rectify this situation in the very near future. In the Foundation Stage, the teachers regularly record children's achievements, and the quality of their assessments is generally satisfactory. However, their assessments in language and literacy are not always rigorous enough to ensure that children's needs are accurately addressed. The quality of teachers' marking is variable, across the school, but is generally satisfactory. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to ensure that pupils are sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve their work.

### **THE CURRICULUM**

Curricular provision is **satisfactory** and a good range of additional opportunities enhances pupils' learning. The school's accommodation is good and learning resources are satisfactory.

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

- A wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school enhances the curriculum.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, including for those in the special needs unit.
- Good attention is given to equality of opportunity and the inclusion of all pupils.
- There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.

- The teaching assistants are well qualified and skilful.
- In the recent past, ICT has had insufficient emphasis in the curriculum, and pupils are currently making insufficient use of ICT to support their learning in other subjects.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' writing skills in work across the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

22. The curriculum is sufficiently broad, is reasonably balanced and meets statutory requirements. In the Foundation Stage, the teachers provide good opportunities for children's personal, social and emotional development and make satisfactory provision for children's learning in all of the other required areas of learning. When the school was last inspected, although statutory requirements were met, insufficient time was allocated for art and design in Years 1 to 6. This weakness has been rectified. While religious education and all subjects of the National Curriculum are soundly covered in Years 1 to 6, ICT has received too little attention until quite recently.
23. Ample time is allocated for English and mathematics, in accordance with the school's drive to raise standards in these subjects. The use and development of pupils' language and literacy skills in work across the curriculum is broadly adequate. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' writing skills because, in some subjects, teachers rely too heavily on worksheets which require only brief written responses from the pupils. Pupils' mathematical skills are soundly promoted in work in other subjects. There is some evidence to show that ICT is beginning to be used more widely to support pupils' work across the curriculum but, overall, pupils' ICT skills are not developed and used sufficiently in other subjects.
24. The school provides a good personal, social and health education programme which permeates all aspects of school life. Before they leave the school, pupils experience programmes which ensure that they are aware of appropriate issues related to sex education, alcohol and drug misuse. Good attention is paid to equality of opportunity, and care is taken to include all pupils in the learning opportunities that are available, regardless of their gender, ethnicity or special educational needs.
25. There are good opportunities for curricular enrichment. There is a wide range of after-school clubs, and the school participates in a variety of competitive sports, in which they have enjoyed considerable success. All pupils in Years 4 to 6 have the opportunity to participate in a residential visit each year, and many visits and visitors to school help to bring the curriculum alive. Good use is made of the local leisure centre to enable pupils from Year 2 upwards to go swimming, resulting in all pupils quickly learning to swim.

26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, including for pupils in the special needs unit. Teachers and teaching assistants work together closely to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have full access to every aspect of the curriculum and to all extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Any periods of withdrawal from mainstream classes are short, with purposeful activities designed to meet each pupils' precise needs. Assessment is used well to identify pupils' needs and to record gains made in their learning. Their progress is tracked and monitored closely both by class teachers and by the special needs co-ordinator, and pupils are able to benefit from a number of intervention programmes to help them with aspects of literacy.
27. The accommodation is good, although there is need for some redecoration. Classrooms are spacious and there are two halls and a specialist computer suite. The school has plenty of hard-surfaced areas outside for play and physical education, and a sizable field. There is a separate outside area for the Reception children, enabling them to play safely throughout the day. There are sufficient staff, and the job-share arrangements appear to work well. The school benefits particularly from a strong team of teaching assistants, who have a very positive impact on learning throughout the school. Learning resources are satisfactory, overall, and are well organised.

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

The school provides a **good** standard of care, welfare, health and safety for its pupils. Pupils receive satisfactory support, advice and guidance. There are good opportunities for pupils to be involved in decision-making.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good pastoral care and staff know pupils well.
- The school provides a pleasant, healthy and safe environment in which pupils feel secure.
- Pupils' views are sought and valued.

### **Commentary**

28. The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority. The staff know the pupils well and provide good pastoral care. Pupils feel happy and safe in school and they have good relationships with their teachers and other adults working in the school. Support assistants have a vital and successful role, particularly dealing with pupils who have special educational needs. They work well with groups of pupils and individuals, giving them help in a sensitive and encouraging way. In general, pupils receive sound support, advice and guidance in relation to their academic development, and pupils with special educational needs benefit from particularly well-focused support.
29. The school pays good attention to the daily care of its pupils. Sickness and accidents are handled sensitively and sympathetically to minimise children's distress. Parents are informed by a note home when their child has received treatment. Health and safety checks across the school site are carried out regularly and risk assessments have been made for all the significant areas of risk. Child protection issues are handled conscientiously and effectively. Pupils' healthy and safe living is well promoted through the school's good personal, social and health education programme.

30. Pupils' views and opinions are valued and treated seriously, and the school finds out their views by means of regular questionnaires. The school council, which had been in abeyance for some time, has recently been re-established by the new deputy headteacher. Members of the council have visited another school to find out more about their role and they have suggested ways in which the school could be improved. These include picnic benches in the playground and more play equipment. The benches have already been provided and the council have approached the home school association with a request for help in buying the play equipment. Pupils were also actively involved in helping to gain the Eco School Award. They held meetings with staff and parents, organised recycling initiatives and raised money to provide litterbins. These activities show pupils that their opinions matter and they also help them to learn about how decisions are made in a democratic way.

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

Partnerships with parents, other schools and the wider community are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are provided with good information about the school and their children's work.
- The school involves parents well and seeks, values and acts on their views.
- Good links with other schools enhance pupils' learning and help them to transfer smoothly to the next stage of their education.
- Good links with the local community provide many opportunities for enhancing pupils' learning and personal development.

### **Commentary**

31. The school has a genuine 'open door' policy that encourages parents to get involved in their children's education. Parents are welcomed into classrooms at the start of the school day. This allows them to settle their children well and to have a quick word with the teacher if they wish. The headteacher is also available to see parents at most times and they are encouraged to get in touch if they have a concern. Parents are generally satisfied with the school and what it provides. However, a significant minority feel that their child is bullied or harassed at school and that they are not well informed about their child's progress. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying and children said that when bullying occurred it usually stopped very quickly after the teacher was informed. The school provides good quality information by means of termly parent-teacher consultation meetings and a written annual report. The reports give appropriate details of the pupils' strengths and weaknesses, together with grades for attainment and effort in English, mathematics and science.
32. The school encourages parents to help their children at home and there is a good response from the majority. An attractive prospectus gives information about the school and the curriculum. Further information about the curriculum is given to parents at the Autumn Term meeting and displayed outside classroom doors. The school also provides daytime and evening sessions for parents to help them understand how lessons such as numeracy and ICT are taught. In addition, parents have also had opportunities to sit in on literacy and numeracy lessons. The home-school books provide a valuable way for parents and teachers to keep in touch with each other.

33. The headteacher finds out what parents like about the school and whether they have any concerns by means of regular questionnaires and by informal discussions with groups of parents. Outcomes are shared with governors and are reported back to parents, so that they are aware that their views are important.
34. The parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed when their child's needs are first identified, and every effort is made by the special educational needs co-ordinator and by class teachers to keep them informed and involved at each stage of the Code of Practice. Most parents attend meetings arranged to review their child's progress, and, with very rare exceptions, value the effort made by staff on their child's behalf. Some parents are able to help their children with work at home, thereby reinforcing what has been taught and learned in school. Sometimes, parents and carers feel ill equipped to help. With a view to boosting parents' confidence and skills and bringing parents and children together as learners, the special educational needs co-ordinator has run successful family literacy and numeracy programmes from time to time. The school has good transition arrangements for pupils with special educational needs with the main secondary school to which most pupils transfer at the age of 11.
35. Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared and supported to help them move smoothly to the next stage of their education. As part of this process they take part in the Tiverton Challenge, an orienteering event, where they work in small groups with Year 6 pupils from other local schools. They also take part in arts activities at the secondary school prior to their transfer. Pupils who are likely to find the transfer difficult are given additional support as well as the opportunity to take part in confidence-building activities.
36. Pupils' personal and social development is enhanced by the good links with the local community. The children take part in a number of local festivals and customs, including the local churches and a local vicar leads a monthly assembly in school. Several local organisations regularly use the school's facilities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.** The headteacher has sound leadership and management skills, and the work of the senior management team is satisfactory and improving. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has made a good start, and the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and special educational needs are fulfilling their roles well. However, the monitoring and evaluation roles of most subject co-ordinators are underdeveloped and the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. School governance is good, and statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are good, including for pupils in the special educational needs unit.
- The co-ordinators for English and mathematics are fulfilling their roles well, and are benefiting from good advice and support from specialists from the local education authority.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory, and most co-ordinators do not monitor and evaluate provision in their subjects with enough rigour.
- Some areas for improvement in the teaching have only recently started to be addressed.

- The governors fulfil their roles well.

## Commentary

37. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory but were judged to be good when the school was last inspected. The headteacher is conscientious and has sound leadership and management skills. He is firmly committed to running a school where each individual matters, and his caring approach helps to provide the lead for the good provision made for pupils with special educational needs and for the personal development of all pupils. The headteacher has good interpersonal skills and promotes a positive atmosphere in the school through his constructive relationships with pupils, staff, parents and governors.
38. The headteacher has well-established procedures for carefully analysing the results of statutory testing in Years 2 and 6, including by taking account of the impact of the performances of the significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs on the overall figures. This enables him to provide pertinent reports to governors to keep them informed about the school's achievements. However, in the last academic year, he only saw lessons in relation to the formal requirements of performance management. Weaknesses in pupils' progress in English were not clearly identified, and his monitoring lacked depth and rigour. As a consequence, areas for improvement in elements of the teaching were not addressed effectively enough, and the school's results in the statutory tests in English in 2004 came as a disappointing surprise. Procedures for tracking pupils' academic progress, as they moved through the school, were underdeveloped and teachers did not always have sufficiently clear targets for the achievement of pupils in their classes. In the current educational year, the headteacher has responded very positively to the help which has been offered by specialists from the local education authority, particularly in relation to raising standards in English and mathematics. His own monitoring is now considerably more thorough, and he has observed teaching and learning regularly, providing teachers with well-focused feedback which identifies strengths as well as areas for improvement. In some cases, his observations have led him to arrange for individual teachers to receive particular support from the subject co-ordinators for English and mathematics, or from the specialists from the local education authority. This is good practice. However, the headteacher has not always been sufficiently thorough in checking whether there has been a consequent improvement in the work of those staff who have received guidance.
39. The school improvement plan is soundly organised and the headteacher has ensured that staff and governors have contributed to its creation. The planning for improvements in literacy and numeracy is good, and has been informed by the advice from specialists from the local education authority. Overall, the plan is having a beneficial effect on school improvement and identifies sensible priorities. However, some important weaknesses are not targeted for attention in the plan, including the need to develop the monitoring roles of most co-ordinators – which also required improvement in 1999 when the school was last inspected.
40. The deputy headteacher, who took up his post in January 2005, has made a good start and is already making a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. The headteacher has appropriately given him regular opportunities to observe lessons, and the deputy headteacher has quickly gathered a sound overview of the school's main strengths and areas for improvement. Together, in particular, with the co-ordinators for English and mathematics, the deputy headteacher is helping the

senior management team to play a sound and developing role in the school's strategic management.

41. The leadership and management of English have improved significantly since the current co-ordinator took up her post in September 2004, and are good. The work of the mathematics co-ordinator is also a strength, and both English and mathematics co-ordinators have benefited considerably from the guidance they have regularly received from specialists from the local education authority. They monitor the quality of teaching and learning well, and have a good awareness of what children need to do better. Overall, the leadership provided by other subject co-ordinators is broadly satisfactory. All willingly provide advice for their colleagues and have formulated action plans which identify some useful areas for attention. However, procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' standards and achievements are not securely established in most subjects. This means that subject co-ordinators are generally in relatively poor positions to identify strengths and weaknesses accurately, and to target areas for improvement with enough precision. There is no co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage, and the only effective monitoring of overall provision in the Reception classes has been from the recent visits from a specialist adviser from the local education authority. A clear sense of direction has yet to be established, and the school recognises that this is a weakness which needs to be rectified from within its own staff.
42. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), the headteacher and the special needs governor together provide effective leadership of special needs provision. The SENCO's management of day-to-day operations in special needs work is very efficient and very effective. Holding the position of SENCO only in a temporary capacity during the absence of the designated post-holder, she has benefited from the good procedures and practices that were already in place. She is now maintaining and adapting systems and procedures according to changes in the pupils' needs and the training needs of staff. There are good links with parents and with many specialists and external agencies involved in supporting pupils and staff in different aspects of special needs provision.
43. Overall, the school's policy for performance management is soundly implemented, and teachers have ample opportunities to attend training courses. However, most subject co-ordinators have not received enough focused advice and support in order to develop their roles. Procedures for the induction of new staff, including newly qualified teachers, are sound.
44. Financial planning is sound. Most initiatives in the school improvement plan are properly costed, the annual budget is debated rigorously at governors' meetings and the principles of best value are soundly applied. The expenditure per pupil is notably higher than in most primary schools. However, this is understandable due to the special educational needs unit in the school and the considerable number of pupils with statements of special educational need. Overall, the school makes sound use of its resources and provides satisfactory value for money.

**Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	822,332	Balance from previous year	15,440
Total expenditure	814,105	Balance carried forward to the next year	8,227

Expenditure per pupil	3,004
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### *Governance*

45. The governance of the school is good. The governors are highly committed to the school and their attendance at meetings is good. A range of appropriate committees is established and all provide valuable support for the leadership and management of the school. The chair of governors fulfils her role well. She visits the school frequently and ensures that governors' meetings are carefully planned. The chair is well informed about the school's work as a result of discussions with the headteacher and her involvement as the responsible governor for literacy and special educational needs. She regularly meets the co-ordinators for literacy and special educational needs, and has observed lessons in English and sessions to support pupils who need extra help with reading. The governor with responsibility for mathematics is also well informed, has regular meetings with the co-ordinator and has observed numeracy lessons. In addition, there are governors who take a particular interest in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, a valuable contribution has been made by the governor with responsibility for history and geography through his observation of teaching and learning in these subjects. All governors provide well-focused written feedback following their classroom observations, and this benefits the awareness of all governors. The results of statutory testing are debated carefully, and the governors have helped to shape the strategic planning through regular discussions. As a result, they are very well aware of the school's identified priorities for improvement in the current educational year. The governors' relationship with the headteacher is very positive, and issues are debated openly and frankly. Statutory requirements are fully met.

### **THE UNIT FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Provision in the Special Needs Unit is **good**.

#### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils achieve well due to the good teaching and support that they receive.
- Tasks are very closely linked to pupils' abilities, leading to enjoyment and success in learning.
- Lessons are occasionally too long and the pace of pupils' learning and their attention dips at these times.
- Good inclusion opportunities ensure that pupils are fully involved in the life of the school.
- Leadership and management are good, leading to well-organised provision that meets pupils' needs effectively.

#### **COMMENTARY**

46. Pupils achieve well in the special needs unit because of the good specialist teaching and support that they receive. The teacher and teaching assistants are skilled in devising tasks that meet each pupil's needs well. In one literacy lesson, for example, pupils achieved well because of the good multi-sensory approaches used to teach phonics. This led to pupils learning to identify words beginning with the sound "sh" very quickly. They showed good understanding of alliteration as they wrote sentences with as many words as possible beginning with the same initial sound as their own name. Good modelling by the teacher helped to improve their language skills and pronunciation of more difficult words. In a



numeracy lesson, pupils also achieved well as they counted to 20 and beyond, and began to count in tens. They are beginning to understand the value of coins to 20 pence. Because of good practical tasks, pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to show what they can do. Just occasionally, lessons are too long. Pupils are expected to sit on the carpet for too long and they then become restless and their learning is affected.

47. Inclusion opportunities for pupils from the Special Needs Unit are good. Pupils spend half of each day in their peer group. In one physical education lesson in Year 3, for example, a pupil from the Unit was fully involved in group work to plan and perform a sequence of movements, achieving as well as other pupils in the class.
48. Leadership and management of the Unit are good. The provision is well organised and pupils' achievements are carefully monitored to ensure success. Transition arrangements for pupils moving to other schools are good and there are close links with the local authority's support services.

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

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

Children are able to start full time school in September or in January in the Reception classes. The majority of children have attended some form of pre-school provision. From year to year, there is some variation in children's standards on entry to the school. They usually range from below average to well below average, depending on the percentages of children with significant learning difficulties. The standards of entry of the children in the current Reception classes were below average overall, although the language and literacy skills of a significant number were particularly weak. At present, most children are on course to meet the nationally expected standards by the end of the Reception Year in their personal, social and emotional development, and in their creative and physical development. However, their attainment in the more academic aspects of their learning is considerably weaker, and their overall standards will consequently be below national expectations at the end of the Reception period.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, although there are strengths in the promotion of children's personal, social and emotional development. The quality of the curriculum for Reception children is satisfactory, although children would benefit from more carefully focused opportunities to develop their literacy skills. There is no co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage, which is a weakness. Although the Reception teachers have recently benefited from useful guidance from specialists from the local education authority, the senior management of the school is not providing a clear sense of direction for the development of the Foundation Stage. The accommodation and resources are sound, and children have ready access to a secure outside area with a range of outdoor equipment.

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

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

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

- Good behaviour is promoted well, and children learn to take account of the feelings of others.
- Relationships between children, and between children and adults, are good and help children to feel secure.
- Too few opportunities are provided for children to develop their initiative and decision-making skills.

#### **Commentary**

49. Children achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development, as a result of effective teaching. The teachers are caring and help children to feel secure and to develop positive attitudes to school. Children develop good relationships with their peers and learn to take turns, share resources and co-operate in groups. They are encouraged to start to take responsibility for the resources they use and to pack away at the end of sessions. Mixing with older children at lunchtime and in the playground also helps to develop the children's social skills. Some opportunities for children to make choices in their learning are provided. However, these are rather limited, and children are given too few chances to use their initiative, including by selecting the resources they want to use in some lessons.
50. Through discussions, which are sometimes effectively enlivened by the use of puppets, and through the teachers' clear expectations of children in regard to their

behaviour, they develop a good understanding of what is right and wrong. They are taught to recognise their own feelings and to be aware of the consequences of their actions. Relationships between the children and adults are good, and regular routines help to establish a positive classroom atmosphere. Children have learned to put their hands up to respond to questions during class and group sessions, and their behaviour is good. Children look after their personal needs well; they can all dress themselves and take care of their personal hygiene. Most of the pupils are on course to meet the nationally expected standards in this area of their development by the end of the Reception year.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Children's basic literary skills are not always assessed with sufficient rigour by the teachers, and this means that children's needs are not always addressed with enough precision.
- Insufficient time is allocated to teach children how the sounds of letters blend to form common words, and to practise their handwriting skills.

### **COMMENTARY**

51. Many children enter school with poorly developed oral communication skills but make sound progress through satisfactory teaching. Almost all the children interact well with one another and with their teachers and teaching assistants. Most are confident enough to answer questions addressed to the whole class. However, few children give detailed or extended answers to questions and many make very brief responses. Children do not often raise their own questions during class and group discussions, and teachers sometimes do not sufficiently encourage children to express their ideas in detail. The children are taught to listen attentively and to follow instructions. Staff provide good opportunities for the development of speaking and listening skills when children work in small groups on practical activities, for example, when they are using clay or making fruit kebabs. Children also have some opportunities to engage in imaginative play, for example in the class shop, and their use of imaginative language is enhanced when adults engage with them in their play.
52. The children are being introduced to letters and their sounds and some are able to hear and recognise sounds at the end of words. However, few can blend sounds together to help their early reading. At present, insufficient time is allocated to teach children how the sounds of letters blend to form common words. Although these 'phonic skills' sessions are provided, they are too infrequent. Children enjoy having stories read to them and most listen well. However, some incidental opportunities are missed to reinforce reading, for example, when children select the 'weather sentences' for the day or by drawing attention to key words in stories. Weaknesses in the rigour of teachers' assessment procedures sometimes mean that the particular needs of individuals and groups of pupils are not catered for well enough in lessons. Children are encouraged to take books home regularly to share with parents and have individual words to practise and learn at home. The highest attaining children can recognise some words on sight and are beginning to read very simple books independently.

53. Nearly all children will attempt to write their own names and can express an idea for an adult to scribe to accompany their own illustrations. Most still require considerable help from adults to record their ideas, and a few make attempts at writing independently. Overall, children are given too few opportunities to develop their handwriting skills. However, when small groups were able to practise letter formation during the inspection, they made good progress as a result of effective guidance from a teaching assistant. Often from very low starting points, children are making steady progress in communication, language and literacy. Nevertheless, their overall attainment will be below national expectations at the end of the Reception period.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good opportunities are provided for children to develop mathematical skills through practical tasks.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop children's mathematical vocabulary, and teachers' questions sometimes need to check children's understanding more carefully.

### **Commentary**

54. Children make satisfactory progress in the development of their mathematical skills, often from low starting points on entry to the Reception classes. Teachers make sound use of a range of activities to promote children's mathematical understanding, many of which are practical and enable children to learn through direct experiences. Children make steady progress in counting by having daily practice.
55. Mathematics teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection, children were given clear instructions and guidance, and benefited from well-organised activities. The children were eager to learn, took turns when sharing equipment, and made sound progress with counting, writing numbers and learning about the weight of different objects. However, opportunities were missed to introduce and reinforce mathematical vocabulary, and teachers' questions sometimes needed to probe children's understanding more deeply.
56. During the inspection, the teachers provided children with a range of opportunities to develop their awareness of mathematical patterns. However, children often had difficulty in transferring their knowledge to different situations – for example, some could make repeating patterns of body movement but were unable to create repeating patterns with cubes or when printing. Teachers ensure that children have sound opportunities to develop their numeracy skills when role-playing in the class shop and when using computer programs. Despite children's steady progress, they are on course to demonstrate overall skills in mathematics that are below those expected nationally at the end of the Reception period.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their understanding about the locality.
- In whole class discussions, children sometimes need more focused support from the teacher in order to challenge their ideas and develop their thinking.

## **COMMENTARY**

57. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in this area of children's learning. As a result, their progress is satisfactory. Children's knowledge and understanding of place is developing steadily as a result of regular opportunities to explore the local environment. For example, they visit the church and note the houses and features on the way. Children examine African instruments, discussing what they are made from, and notice the colours and patterns on items of clothing from Kenya. Regular use of the two computers in each class benefits children's ICT skills. They are able to drag, use the mouse to draw, and use some letters and digits on the keyboard.
58. In order to develop an understanding of the past and of the passage of time, the children have appropriate opportunities to talk about significant events in their own lives and about changes in their lives. They note the changing seasons and the weather. There was evidence of effective learning when children planned and drew a fruit kebab before making it. The children worked well in groups, peeling, slicing and chopping fruit, and developed their making skills and awareness of healthy eating. During the inspection, children made broadly satisfactory progress in developing their scientific understanding when talking about materials, and describing their basic characteristics. However, the teacher did not always provide the focused support which children needed to develop their ideas, and her questioning skills required improvement. Pupils' observational skills are often limited and many find it difficult to describe materials. Most children are on course to demonstrate broadly average standards by the end of the Reception period in relation to their understanding of time and place, and in their making and ICT skills. However, most children will demonstrate scientific knowledge and understanding that are below average.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A range of outdoor activities promote children's physical development.

### **Commentary**

59. Children's sound physical skills were seen in group free play situations as well as a whole class physical education lesson. These experiences show that the vast majority of children will meet the early learning goals for physical development at the end of the Reception year. Children's achievement is satisfactory in relation to their physical development, and results from satisfactory teaching.

60. Children in both classes have regular physical education lessons in the hall. In the lesson seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Children enjoy the opportunity to move and travel in different ways and develop their awareness of others and the use of space. The regular access to the outdoor activity trail makes a valuable contribution to the development of their control and co-ordination skills. There is a range of daily opportunities for children to play outside, sometimes using balls, bats and other equipment. In these sessions, children demonstrate sound co-ordination when hitting, kicking, throwing and catching balls and when using wheeled toys. They work well together and share equipment amicably. In the classroom, they show slightly less confidence in the use of some smaller tools and equipment such as pens, paint brushes and scissors, but can build and use construction kits, pegboards and beads with reasonable dexterity.

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

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

- There are few opportunities for children to create artwork that stems from their own ideas, and to select and use a range of creative materials independently.

### **COMMENTARY**

61. Children make satisfactory progress in developing their musical skills. They join older children for singing sessions, handle instruments and sometimes sing the register. They learn simple songs, demonstrating satisfactory singing skills, and enjoy listening to music.
62. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and children have regular opportunities to draw and paint, to print and to use clay. They are given sound support from adults during these activities, and are taught to use tools and materials appropriately. However, children have few opportunities to use their initiative in their artwork, by developing their own ideas and selecting the materials they decide they will need.
63. Some opportunities for role-play are provided, and these foster children's creative development. Children love to dress up, for example, when customers in the vegetable shop, and to act out their roles. When an adult enters their play, as when the children prepared a party, the language opportunities are extended. In addition, children benefit from imaginative play with 'small world' equipment. Children's overall achievement in their creative development is satisfactory and most are on course to meet the nationally expected standards by the end of the Reception period.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- There is not enough good teaching in the subject, and some satisfactory lessons have important areas for improvement. These factors inhibit pupils' progress.

- Pupils are not made sufficiently aware of the differences between their own spoken language and Standard English in its spoken and written forms.
- Assessment procedures have recently improved significantly, and are good.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support pupils' work in English.

## **COMMENTARY**

64. Standards are below national expectations in reading and well below national expectations in writing in Year 2. In Year 6, overall standards in English are well below national expectations although, as in Year 2, pupils generally do better in reading than in writing. Although lower than the standards found by inspectors in 1999, the current standards reflect pupils' satisfactory achievement, given their starting points on entry to the school and the significant percentage of pupils with special educational needs in both year groups. Indeed, over one third of all pupils in the Year 6 classes have special educational needs which restrict their academic standards, and include four pupils with statements of special educational need. Pupils with special educational needs make mainly good progress in relation to the targets in their individual education plans, although their standards are understandably low. The progress made by the limited number of very capable pupils in the school is adequate, although these pupils mark time in some lessons. In recent national tests, girls outperformed boys in English. However, during the inspection, there was no evidence that the teaching was more effective for girls than boys and the differences in their standards were not particularly marked.
65. In the national tests for pupils aged seven in 2004, the school's results were well below the national average in both reading and writing, They were below the average results of similar schools in reading, and well below the results of similar schools in writing. While the school's results in the national English tests for pupils aged 11 that year were in the lowest five per cent nationally, they were in line with the results of other schools where pupils had achieved similarly at the age of seven.
66. Evidence from lessons and from the work seen shows that many pupils find it difficult to bring together, at the same time, all the skills and knowledge required to produce writing of the expected standard for their ages. In all year groups, most of the pupils write willingly and have interesting ideas. Both in Year 2 and Year 6, weaknesses in the pupils' writing are most commonly related to structure and organisation, including sentence structure, and to grammar, punctuation and spelling. Many pupils are unaware of the differences between the grammar and vocabulary of their own spoken language and those of Standard English in its spoken and written forms, so that they are not always able to adapt their language when a more formal style is required. By the age of 11, most of the higher attaining pupils have developed a sound 'ear for language' and are alert to the variety of patterns of English they have encountered in their reading. This means that they are more readily able to adapt the style of their writing to match its intended purpose and audience, although the use of complex sentences seldom comes easily to them. Many pupils of all ages and abilities struggle with spelling and punctuation. Standards of handwriting and presentation vary, but largely reflect teachers' differing expectations.
67. By the age of seven, most pupils are able to read and understand simple texts and take both pleasure and pride in their achievement. By the age of eleven, most have developed preferences for particular kinds of stories and for the work of well known authors, and read non-fiction, for example to follow up particular personal interests. When asked to do so, they can also use information books and other sources – such as the Internet – to find things out in relation to their work in school, for example in

history. Most of the pupils in Year 6 read texts appropriate for their age accurately and with reasonable fluency, although they do not always grasp hidden meanings in the writing. When reading aloud or when speaking to an 'audience' such as their own class, few pupils take sufficient account of those listening, for example by ensuring that everyone can hear them.

68. The teaching is mainly satisfactory, although it is occasionally good or very good. When the school was last inspected, the overall quality of teaching was judged to be good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The support for, and inclusion of, pupils with special educational needs are strengths of the teaching throughout the school. Lessons are planned carefully, and all teachers sequence activities in such a way that pupils have time to learn, practise and consolidate new skills. Resources are prepared carefully, and the management of behaviour is good. Teachers have responded well to an intensive support programme for literacy initiated by the local education authority and are working hard to implement the changes needed to raise standards, particularly in writing. In the best lessons, pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged, the teaching methods used are varied and engage pupils' interest, teachers have high expectations for what pupils should achieve, and feedback to the pupils, both in lessons and through marking, makes very clear to each one what they need to do next in order to improve. However, good or better teaching is not yet sufficiently commonplace in English lessons, despite the hard work of staff and specialists from the local education authority. In order to raise standards further, it is important that the amount of good teaching increases and that weaknesses which are evident in some satisfactory lessons are addressed. Where teaching is satisfactory, weaknesses vary, but include:

- insufficient challenge for the most capable pupils;
- a tendency to focus on what pupils are talking or writing about rather than on the quality and accuracy of their spoken and written language;
- superficial evaluation of pupils' work – overlooking persistent weaknesses; and
- insufficient involvement of the pupils themselves in the informed evaluation of their own and others' performance by known criteria.

69. In a more general sense, evidence from some lessons and from the sampling of pupils' written work shows that there are occasions when opportunities are missed to develop pupils' writing skills. For example, teachers sometimes set tasks that are too prescriptive, and sometimes over-simplify the writing demands made on pupils by providing worksheets with questions that only require very short written answers.

70. When the co-ordinator took up her role in September 2004, there was much to do to improve the leadership and management of the subject, including through more rigorous monitoring procedures. There were particular weaknesses in the awareness of some teachers about the progress pupils might reasonably be expected to make in their classes, and assessment procedures were generally underdeveloped. The co-ordinator is fulfilling her role well, and a much more rigorous monitoring programme is now established, involving the co-ordinator, the headteacher and deputy, as well as specialists from the local education authority. As a result, the school is now much more aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and is tackling the areas for improvement. Good assessment procedures are now in place, and assessment is increasingly informing both teachers' planning and the tracking of pupils' progress. There has been a sustained programme of literacy training for all staff. The monitoring of teaching and learning, together with the analysis of pupils' test results and other assessments has led to increased support for individual teachers and pupils where relevant. Those pupils experiencing difficulties now benefit from a number of



intervention programmes and strategies designed to help them, not least the effective reading recovery programme implemented by the special needs co-ordinator. There are clear plans for the school's continuing strong focus on English with the aim of further enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The determination of the co-ordinator, and the support from senior staff and the local education authority, mean that the school is well placed to secure more improvements in the future.

71. Resources for literacy are satisfactory, although the classroom collections of fiction designed to promote 'free reading' need updating, and the library is not yet fulfilling its potential as a learning resource. Overall, insufficient use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning in literacy, although some teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards in their lessons.

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

72. Overall, pupils' language and literacy skills are satisfactorily promoted and used across the curriculum. However, there are some important areas for improvement. In the best practice seen, teachers ensure that pupils master the technical terms needed to understand and discuss their work in all subjects. Teachers ensure that pupils read independently to find things out and produce at least some examples of extended writing related to their work, for example in history and in religious education. However, much of the work done by pupils in subjects other than English is worksheet based and requires only short written answers to given questions. These activities do not give the pupils - and in particular the more able pupils - the opportunities they need to develop the skills of independent research through reading, or to show what they have learned and understood by writing about it in some detail and in their own words.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- There is not enough good mathematics teaching, and weaker elements in some lessons are restricting pupils' progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support and enhance pupils' mathematical learning.

### **COMMENTARY**

73. Standards in Year 2 are below national expectations. However, when account is taken of pupils' starting points on entry to the school, and the significant percentage of pupils with learning difficulties, pupils' achievement is sound. The current Year 6 classes have a particularly high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and, although standards in mathematics are well below national expectations, they nevertheless reflect pupils' satisfactory overall achievement. At the time of the last inspection, standards in Year 6 were above national expectations, but the make-up of this cohort was very different from the present one and included a percentage of very capable pupils that was unusually high for this school. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress from Years 1 to 6, as a result of the good support they are given. The progress of the most capable pupils is broadly adequate although

they sometimes underachieve when their work is too easy. No significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls were evident during the inspection.

74. The school's results in the statutory assessments in mathematics in Year 2 in 2004 were a notable improvement on those reached in 2003. They were below the national average but in line with the average results of similar schools. Although 85 per cent of pupils reached the expected standard, relatively few did better and this considerably reduced the school's overall results. The statutory test results in mathematics in Year 6 in 2004 were also an improvement on those reached in 2003. They were well below the national average but above the results of schools where pupils achieved similarly when in Year 2.
75. Although some pupils in Year 2 are working below the expected level for their age, the vast majority are working just within the expected standard. However, in common with the situation in 2004, few are achieving higher standards. Most have a reasonably secure knowledge and understanding of place value, recognise simple number patterns, and are beginning to use different strategies to solve number problems. However, their recall of number is often slow, and most pupils still use their fingers to count. As pupils move up the school, the range of mental calculations increases, and pupils are encouraged to use their previous knowledge to solve word problems. By Year 6, the majority can carry out number calculations accurately, if slowly, and deal satisfactorily with fractions, decimals, percentages, data and metric measures.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. When the school was last inspected, the overall quality of teaching was judged to be good. Teachers appropriately use the National Numeracy Strategy as the basis for planning, and provide opportunities for pupils to explore a variety of strategies for calculation. The most effective lessons are characterised by: clearly defined learning objectives which are shared with the pupils so that they all know what they are to learn; high expectations that promote good attitudes and behaviour; and very good support provided by well-briefed teaching assistants. In the best practice, good use is also made of the recommended three-part lesson, for example, to rehearse and sharpen pupils' mathematical skills through well-focused oral and mental work during the introductory sessions, and to check and reinforce pupils' learning as lessons draw to a close. Where teachers are confident to use digital projectors and interactive whiteboards this has a very positive impact on the initial demonstrations and explanations. Unfortunately, not all teachers have access to these. In lessons that are satisfactory, rather than better - which is currently the most common situation in the school - there are often weaknesses which are inhibiting pupils' progress. These include: a rather slow pace because teachers talk for too long; a lack of challenge for the most capable pupils; and weaknesses in teachers' questioning skills. In one lesson seen, a number of these weaknesses were particularly marked, and pupils made little progress as a result of unsatisfactory teaching. Occasionally, particularly with the oldest pupils, a small minority of boys do not concentrate on their tasks, disrupting the learning for others. Insufficient use is made of ICT to support and enhance pupils' mathematical learning, although pupils in Years 5 and 6 confidently input formulae into spreadsheets to aid their calculations. Presentation of work varies widely across the school, with some work being untidy, which reflects the differing expectations of teachers.
77. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator knows her subject well and has benefited from well-focused support and guidance from specialists from the local education authority. She monitors teaching and learning well,

and now has a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She has a detailed and sensible action plan to address areas for improvement, and works closely with the local authority staff to improve standards. The assessment of pupils' mathematical learning has been improved in the current educational year, and is now good. Much data is collected and is used to track pupils' achievement and highlight pupils that need extra help. However, the marking of work is inconsistent and, too often does not give pupils an indication of what they have to do next to improve their learning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

78. The use of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. For example, pupils are encouraged to measure accurately during science and design and technology work, and use their knowledge of co-ordinates to find places on maps in geography lessons.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- The teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory, and some satisfactory lessons have important areas for improvement.
- There is not enough good teaching in the subject.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, including by teaching assistants.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the teaching and pupils' achievements are not rigorous enough.

#### **COMMENTARY**

79. Standards in science are below national expectations in Years 2 and 6. These standards reflect pupils' satisfactory overall achievement, given their starting points on entry to the school and the significant proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, especially in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and benefit from well-focused support from teaching assistants. However, weaknesses in aspects of the teaching are sometimes inhibiting progress of many pupils, including the small minority of very capable pupils. Current standards are a little higher than those shown in the results of the statutory teacher assessments in 2004, which were well below the national average in Years 2 and 6. Standards have fallen since the school was last inspected, when they were in line with national expectations in Year 2 and above national expectations in Year 6. However, it is clear that the current classes in Years 2 and 6 include a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and fewer very capable pupils, than in 1999.
80. In Year 1, pupils make satisfactory progress when naming the main parts of plants and learning about the germination of seeds. In Year 2, pupils have a reasonable understanding about how some creatures change and develop as they mature, and have made satisfactory progress when learning about healthy eating. However, even with considerable help, many find it difficult to suggest ideas for simple experiments, demonstrate limited prediction skills and have little awareness of the need for fair testing. No pupil exceeded the nationally expected standard in the statutory teacher assessments in 2004, and inspection evidence shows that little has changed.

81. In Year 3, pupils understand that different living things are found in various habitats but have a very limited awareness of how some animals are adapted to their environments. In Year 4, pupils understand the function of the human skeleton and know that movement depends on the skeleton and muscles. However, their skills in predicting and evaluating the results of simple experiments are generally weak. Most Year 5 pupils can identify the main organs of plants but make limited progress when colouring in and completing too many worksheets about the Earth, Sun and Moon. In Year 6, pupils' completed work shows that they have made satisfactory progress when learning about the effects of gravity. Most can carry out simple investigations which are prescribed by their teachers but often demonstrate limited skills in developing their own hypotheses and drawing conclusions from the results of experiments. Few Year 6 pupils understand and use an appropriate scientific vocabulary.
82. The quality of teaching in science is broadly satisfactory. However, good teaching is rare and some lessons which are satisfactory, overall, have important areas for improvement. In addition, one unsatisfactory science lesson was observed during the inspection. The amount of good teaching has reduced since the last inspection when nearly half of all lessons seen were good. In the main, the teaching is enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress in their scientific learning. In the most effective practice, good use is made of questions to probe pupils' understanding, scientific vocabulary is introduced and reinforced well and pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn. Across the school, pupils' behaviour is managed effectively and teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well in science lessons. However, weaknesses in the teaching are sometimes restricting pupils' progress. Unsatisfactory teaching was demonstrated when the task set for a mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class made too few demands on the pupils, especially the most capable, and pupils were not made sufficiently aware of the need for fair testing when conducting their very simple experiments. In addition, there are some common weaknesses in lessons which are broadly satisfactory. These include times when there is too much teacher talk and too little pupil activity; when the most capable pupils are not sufficiently challenged; when teachers do not use questions well enough to check pupils' understanding; when the pace of lessons becomes rather slow; and when opportunities are missed to develop pupils' scientific vocabulary. While teachers are generally effective in motivating pupils, including by taking care to value their ideas, pupils' misconceptions are not always rectified, and sometimes pupils require brief periods of direct instruction to put them on the right track. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, with teachers judging whether pupils have met the success criteria identified in the scheme of work for the end of each unit of study.
83. In general, pupils' language and literacy skills are satisfactorily promoted in science lessons although, as stated above, scientific language is not always introduced and reinforced well. While a small number of pupils used ICT in science lessons during the inspection, its use to support their scientific learning is too limited, overall.
84. The leadership of the subject is just adequate and is impaired by a lack of rigorous procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher, who is the science co-ordinator, checks teachers' planning and readily provides advice to staff when it is requested. In addition, he organises enrichment opportunities, such as the science week, which benefit pupils' learning and increase the profile of the subject in the school. However, he does not have a programme for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in the subject through lesson observations, and has not seen science lessons in the current or last educational year. Although he has very recently examined some examples of pupils' work, he does not have a sufficiently

clear overview about pupils' progress and achievement across the school. This means that he is in a relatively poor position to identify and target areas for improvement with enough accuracy, including weaknesses in elements of the teaching which are sometimes inhibiting pupils' progress.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

85. **There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of provision in the subject.** There was virtually no evidence of pupils' work completed prior to the inspection as this was lost due to a serious computer breakdown. As a consequence, secure judgements cannot be made about current standards or pupils' achievement.
86. In the lessons seen, pupils in Year 2 were reaching standards commensurate with those expected for their age in relation to the specific skills being taught. Pupils were familiar with the skills of logging on and off. Their skills in using the mouse were developing satisfactorily, and they knew how to use the Internet, for example to find out information about famous people, linked with their history topic. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also used the Internet for research, and experimented with different search engines to find the most appropriate to meet their needs. Although pupils knew set procedures well, their keyboard skills were often relatively underdeveloped, and much time was wasted in searching for letters and numbers. From discussions with pupils, it is clear that there are gaps in their knowledge, as they have not had sufficiently regular ICT lessons until the current educational year.
87. The quality of teaching in the few lessons seen varied from very good to satisfactory, and this reflected the teachers' confidence and expertise in the subject. In the best lesson, the teacher had very good subject knowledge and was able to guide very effectively the pupils through their search of the Internet. Pupils' ideas were valued which helped to build their confidence, and very efficient organisation meant the lesson moved at a good pace. In the less successful lesson, the pace was a little slow, because pupils were not allowed to progress at their own speed, and the most able pupils were often kept waiting. Pupils' underdeveloped literacy skills have an adverse effect on the pace of learning, as some pupils often have difficulty reading the information on the screen.

88. The school has made significant efforts recently to improve its provision for ICT. A new subject co-ordinator was appointed in September, and he already had a beneficial impact. However, he recognises that there is still a lot to do, due to previous weaknesses in the leadership and management of the subject. He has introduced comprehensive guidelines for teachers to ensure that all the elements of the subject are taught, and that skills are progressively developed as pupils get older. All pupils now have regular access to computers, and teachers have received training so that they are now more confident to teach skills. The school has updated software so that all elements of the subject can be delivered. In the past, for example, the control and modelling parts of the ICT curriculum were not covered adequately due to a lack of suitable software. There is a now satisfactory balance to the curriculum, all aspects of which are now being taught. The subject co-ordinator is providing sound and energetic leadership. However, his procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are not yet established. Assessment procedures were not developed at the time of the last report, and are still not in place, although the subject co-ordinator has devised sensible systems to be used next term.

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

89. The development and use of pupils' ICT skills to support their work across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, and is an important area for development. However, there is evidence that pupils are beginning to use ICT in some subjects, including history, science and English. For example, pupils are increasingly encouraged to use the Internet for research and use their word-processing skills to present work in English. However, the potential for improving the quality of pupils' writing, for example, by producing successive drafts on a word processor and using tools such as the spell-check facility to improve the accuracy of their spelling, is not exploited sufficiently. Some teachers are making increasingly good use of new technology as teaching aids within lessons, through use of either the interactive whiteboards or the digital projectors, but there is still a need for further training for some teachers in how to use this technology. Co-ordinators for subjects, across the curriculum, are now expected to identify how ICT should be used within their own subject areas, but little progress has yet been made with this new expectation.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

90. **Insufficient evidence was collected during the inspection to make an overall judgement about the quality of provision in geography.** Two lessons were observed. Discussions took place with staff and pupils, pupils' current and past work was examined where available, and school plans were scrutinised.
91. The limited evidence shows that the subject meets statutory requirements and is enriched by fieldwork activities. For example, during residential visits pupils in Year 6 undertake a river study, and those in Year 4 visit Hay Tor on Dartmoor. Appropriate attention is given to the study of contrasting localities including a focus on a village in

India. In the lessons seen, the teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. In the more successful lesson, effective teaching enabled pupils in Years 3 and 4 to make good progress in learning mapping skills and to use four-figure references to locate places. In the other lesson, also for mixed Year 3 and 4 pupils, they made satisfactory progress when learning about rivers, although the pace of the lesson was rather slow and pupils were required to listen to their teacher for too long. The co-ordinator, who is relatively new to the post, has good geographical knowledge and provides useful advice and support for colleagues. However, her monitoring and evaluation role is not established, and she has yet to check the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement.

## HISTORY

92. **There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about the overall quality of provision in history.** No lessons were seen, and the bulk of the work in pupils' exercise books consists of worksheets with only short written answers from the pupils. However, discussions with staff, the sampling of pupils' work and the analysis of documentation do make it possible for some key judgements to be made.
93. Pupils cover a suitably broad curriculum and statutory requirements are met. However, the widespread use of commercially produced worksheets on which pupils record what they have learned makes it difficult to judge not only the standards achieved by individual pupils, but also the extent to which the provision made ensures the progressive development of key historical skills by all pupils. The evidence shows, for example, that the most capable pupils are not often expected to read or examine different sources of historical evidence on their own, to collate information and then to communicate their findings, in their own words, in the form of extended pieces of writing. The use of visits, visitors, drama and role-play enhances pupils' experience of history and their enjoyment of it as a subject.
94. The subject co-ordinator has not monitored the quality of teaching and learning directly by observing lessons and this restricts the depth of his understanding about the quality of provision in the subject. However, since the last inspection in 1999 he has introduced satisfactory assessment procedures which have been soundly implemented by teachers. There is some evidence to show that some teachers and pupils are beginning to use websites and software to sound effect, although this is by no means widespread and there is very little evidence of data-handling involving the use of ICT. Books and other printed sources of evidence are not used enough to promote independent research and to develop the higher order reading skills of the most capable pupils, while pupils generally have too few opportunities to develop their skills as writers in relation to their work in history.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Religious education makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Pupils are encouraged to consider what is to be learned from religion as well as learning about religion.
- The widespread use of worksheets in some classes means that pupils are not always given the best opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned.

## COMMENTARY

95. Standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 6. In Year 2, only one lesson was seen, and in this the pupils achieved broadly average standards. However, little of the work done in religious education is recorded by pupils in writing in the younger classes, and it is not possible to reach a secure judgement about overall standards in Year 2. What is clear from the lessons seen - and from pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 - is that pupils respond well both to the teaching and to the subject. Although standards in Year 6 are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, they nevertheless represent good achievement by the pupils concerned. When the school was last inspected, standards were above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. However, as previously noted in this report, there is evidence to show that there were considerably more capable pupils in the Year 2 and 6 classes in 1999.
96. Throughout their time in the school, the pupils are taught in some detail about the major religions practised in the United Kingdom. By the age of 11 they are familiar with the most significant religious festivals, rituals and ceremonies in which Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus engage and are aware of some of the similarities and differences between the different religions. They know about the lives and work of the founders and leaders of the major religions, and about what inspired them. They have a sound understanding of practices such as pilgrimage that are inspired by religious faith, and they can retell famous stories from different religions, for example the Christian story of Easter and the Hindu story of the Ramayana. Taught to consider the deeper meanings of religion, they recognise, and can explain the meaning of, religious symbols such as the Christian cross and the Hindu mandala, and even religious metaphors such as the description of Christ as the 'light of the world.' In a well-taught lesson in a Year 1/2 class, most pupils were able to understand and explain the concept of forgiveness in the context of the story of The Good Samaritan. In Year 6, again in response to good teaching, the pupils recognised the emotional attachment felt by those who had brought in 'special books' to share with the class, and they were then able to equate this attachment with the value accorded by the followers of different faiths to the texts they regard as sacred.
97. The teaching seen in Years 2 and 6 was good and, in each case, enabled pupils to reflect on their own experience of life in order to reach an understanding of the meaning of religious faith to those who believe. These lessons represent too small a sample on which to base a secure judgement about the overall quality of the teaching of religious education. Nevertheless, it is clear from the range of pupils' work sampled that the teaching is underpinned by the good practical written guidance that accompanies the locally agreed Devon syllabus for religious education. As a consequence, lessons are planned well, and religious education makes a strong contribution not only to the pupils' spiritual development, but also to their moral, social and cultural development.
98. The subject co-ordinator's monitoring and evaluation role is currently underdeveloped, and she has had no recent opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. However, she checks teachers' planning and readily provides advice for



her colleagues. She is aware that the many worksheets used in some classes do not give pupils the best opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned. Assessment procedures are sound, and the co-ordinator keeps careful records of pupils' progress in the subject.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

**It is not possible to judge the overall quality of provision in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education**, because too few lessons were observed in these subjects. However, pupils' completed work was carefully examined in art and design and design and technology and pupils' singing was heard in assemblies. In addition, a range of documentation was examined and discussions were held with subject co-ordinators.

### **Art and design**

99. In art and design, pupils' completed work shows that their standards are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6, and reflect satisfactory achievement. When the school was last inspected, pupils' standards were also in line with national expectations.
100. In Year 1, pupils demonstrate satisfactory painting skills, including by creating pictures which have been inspired by looking at the work of George Seurat, and are made from tiny dots of colour. These pupils have created interesting collage pictures, using a range of fabrics, and these demonstrate satisfactory standards. In Year 2, pupils have made careful drawings and paintings after studying the school building, and some of the completed work is detailed and of a good standard. Their collage interpretations of landscapes demonstrate their satisfactory skills; in common with their clay tiles which have been incised with patterns they have observed in natural materials found in the school grounds.
101. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have created satisfactory interpretations of different stones, using pencil, paint, charcoal or pastels. Year 5 pupils have learned about the art of William Morris and, together with pupils in Year 6, have created their own simple designs which are based on his work. Year 6 pupils have made bold pictures of African artefacts, which demonstrate their sound drawing and painting skills, and have made satisfactory prints using polystyrene blocks.
102. While it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching in the subject, pupils' completed work clearly shows that the teaching is enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress in art and design. When the school was last inspected, insufficient time was allocated for the subject. This is no longer the case, and statutory requirements are fully met.
103. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. At present, there is no art co-ordinator, and sufficiently rigorous procedures are not established to monitor the quality of provision. Assessment procedures are broadly satisfactory with teachers assessing whether pupils have met the success criteria for units of completed work.

### **Design and technology**

104. In design and technology, pupils' standards in Year 6 are in line with national expectations and reflect pupils' satisfactory achievement. There was insufficient evidence available to judge pupils' standards in Year 2, since pupils had taken their

completed work home. However, in Year 1, examples of pupils' designs and model buildings clearly demonstrate that they are reaching satisfactory standards for their ages. When the school was last inspected, standards in design and technology were in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6.

105. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have designed and made small bags, using fabrics, and have created 'moving monsters' by making models which have parts that move as a result of the use of pneumatics. This work is of a satisfactory standard. In Year 5, pupils demonstrate sound making skills using wood and card to create toys which are inspired by those used by Victorian children, and Year 6 pupils take considerable care when stitching samplers. In a part of a lesson briefly observed during the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrated a sound understanding of how cams can be used to create a moving toy, and were making sound progress when making their simple machines.
106. It is not possible to judge the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology and, owing to the lack of work for examination in Year 2, it is also impossible to make a secure judgement about how well pupils progress across Years 1 and 2. However, while no judgement can be made about the teaching in Years 3 to 6, pupils' completed work provides secure evidence that it is enabling them to make satisfactory progress in the subject.
107. The co-ordinator provides advice for his colleagues when it is requested, and the leadership of the subject is adequate. However, although the co-ordinator checks that teachers are implementing the scheme of work, the management of design and technology is unsatisfactory because there is a lack of rigour in procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision. However, assessment procedures are broadly satisfactory with teachers assessing whether pupils have met the success criteria identified at the end of units of work.

## **Music**

108. While no judgement can be made about pupils' overall standards in music, their performance in assemblies shows that their singing skills are generally good. Pupils obviously enjoy singing and most have a secure control of pitch and dynamics. All pupils in Year 4 are currently learning to play the recorder, and about 40 pupils benefit from specialist tuition in relation to the playing of other instruments, including violin, flute, clarinet, trumpet, guitar and keyboards. There is a school choir, which regularly performs at local festivals. The music co-ordinator promotes pupils' singing skills well during assemblies and has a satisfactory overview of teachers' planning. However, procedures for monitoring and evaluating pupils' standards and achievements are not securely established.

## **Physical education**

109. In physical education, only two lessons were seen during the inspection, and these were for pupils in Year 3 and Year 4. The standards in these lessons were in line with expectations for pupils of their ages. Discussion with the co-ordinator and examination of timetables indicate the school is offering full curriculum access for this subject, including swimming. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities including football, table tennis, gymnastics, netball and dance, plus active promotion of games at lunchtimes which enhances the subject. There is involvement in inter-school and community sports events. Some children with special needs achieve particular

success in this subject, which increases their self-esteem and positive attitudes to school. The school has ample space inside, with the advantage of two halls and good outside grounds.

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

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils achieve well in this important aspect of their development.
- While most pupils respond well to the school's good provision, a small number of pupils do not respond as well as they should.
- There remains scope to increase the opportunities for pupils of all ages to take on greater responsibility for their own learning.

### **COMMENTARY**

110. In the one lesson seen, in a Year 1/2 class, pupils achieved well when learning what it means to 'work together as a team'. After a very short while, by working together in groups, they were able to identify key factors affecting their success: listening, sharing ideas, and taking turns. The lesson was taught effectively and no time was lost. No other PSHEC lessons could be seen during the inspection, but the good provision made is evident in the comprehensive programme of work that is planned into the curriculum and into extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Discussions with pupils and first-hand observations of their attitudes and behaviour (as described in a separate section of this report) show that the vast majority of the pupils respond positively to the provision and achieve in this important aspect of their development. In spite of the best efforts of the staff, a small number of older pupils, in particular, do not respond as well as they might: some continue to lack confidence, and some occasionally behave inappropriately or show a lack of respect for others.
111. Through questionnaires and through the work of the newly reconstituted school council, the pupils are invited to express their views and have a voice in the development of the school. Emphasis is placed on good relationships and how to achieve them, and also on how to counteract bullying, should it occur. If and when pupils fall out amongst themselves, staff ensure that all those concerned have an opportunity to express their grievances and to give their own account of what has happened. The award of house-points, the public recognition when certificates are presented to pupils for effort, good behaviour and achievement, and the positions of responsibility given to some older pupils are all designed to raise pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. Their ability to handle and manage money is encouraged in connection with the organisation of fund-raising events to support various local, national and international charities. Events such as the residential visit to an outdoor activities centre for pupils in Year 5 and the 'Exmoor Challenge' for pupils in Year 6 give the pupils concerned valuable opportunities to develop self-reliance, to learn about outdoor safety and to appreciate the contribution they can make to the success of a team.
112. The pupils are given a secure understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. At the beginning of each academic year, all pupils are involved in drawing up the rules that will govern their conduct in class and are reminded, where necessary, of the school rules. The recent democratic elections of pupils as members of the school council and the ongoing consultation processes between council representatives and their peer groups develop pupils' awareness of democracy and decision-making.

Members of the school council also benefit from the opportunity to debate issues in the local council chamber, an event at which the mayor of Tiverton officiates. Through regular discussion opportunities, pupils in Year 6 become increasingly aware of the wider issues that affect their lives and of the role of the media in presenting information. Work on pollution, recycling and on the care of the environment - including that of the popular environmental club - enhances the pupils' awareness of practical ways in which they can make a difference to the world in which they live and prepares them well to be future citizens. In 2004, the school won national recognition as an 'Eco-School' for its work on 'eco-friendly' environmental projects.

113. Good provision is made for other aspects of pupils' personal development and personal safety, and also for health education, through a comprehensive programme of work integrated into the curriculum in all year groups. Elements of health education such as healthy eating, personal care, personal safety, drugs awareness and sex education are included in the programme of work for every year group. Cycle training, including work on road safety, is offered to pupils in Year 6. In a drive to promote healthy eating, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are given regular snacks of fruit each day, while older pupils participate with a 'fruity Friday'. Exercise is encouraged and promoted. Staff and pupils in Years 5 and 6 have recently undergone aerobics training, and staff are currently planning to introduce a programme provided by the local education authority to promote physical exercise through a series of videos.
114. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for PSHEC. He has made sure that there is a comprehensive range of provision and continues to extend and refine it. The programme and its associated activities give older pupils, in particular, good opportunities to use their initiative and exercise responsibility. However, pupils are not always given the opportunities they need to make decisions, take responsibility and initiate their own learning in other subjects.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>6</b>
Pupils' achievement	4

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

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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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