

INSPECTION REPORT

MOUNT STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL

Plymouth

LEA area: City of Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113281

Headteacher: Mrs S Roberts

Lead inspector: Mrs L Brackstone

Dates of inspection: 7th - 9th February 2005

Inspection number: 272669

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 209
School address: Mount Street
Greenbank
Plymouth
Postcode: PL4 8NZ
Telephone number: (01752) 205 091
Fax number: (01752) 205 092
Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs R Smith
governors:
Date of previous 6th December 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average sized inner city primary school in Plymouth has one class per year group. There are slightly more boys than girls. It also has a 39 place Nursery, which takes ten children citywide who have special educational needs. The socio-economic background of the pupils has changed since the last inspection and is now well below average with almost half the pupils entitled to free school meals. Many of the houses they live in are overcrowded and very few parents have experienced higher education. At the time of the last inspection only one per cent of pupils used English as an additional language. However, this number now is almost 20 per cent of the school population and is the highest number within the city. Most of the pupils are of white UK heritage, but there are a significant minority of children from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African and Chinese families. A small number are from mixed backgrounds. About eight per cent of the pupils come from families seeking asylum who have been housed close to the city centre services. Pupil mobility is a significant issue, because as soon as family units are re-housed elsewhere, new families, who move into the vacant accommodation, replace them. For instance, during the past year 75 pupils have left the school in the middle of term time and 35 have joined. Approximately 18 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is about average; their needs include severe learning, physical disabilities, social and emotional issues and speech problems. Four per cent of pupils have statements and this is above the national average. Attainment on entry is well below average and children's speaking and listening skills are particularly weak.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21872	Mrs L Brackstone	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage English as an additional language Religious education
11096	Mrs M Davie	Lay inspector	
23917	Mr T Clarke	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Physical education
22790	Mrs J Pinney	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Mount Street provides a satisfactory standard of education where all pupils are fully involved in the life of the school. The headteacher and her deputy lead and manage the school well. Overall achievement is satisfactory in relation to the prior attainment of the pupils, which is well below expected levels. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the school provides an adequate curriculum. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher is well supported by her deputy and they have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils.
- Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 but expectations could be higher in Years 3 and 4.
- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.
- Achievement by Year 6, although satisfactory, could be better in English, science and religious education.
- Weaknesses in pupils' speaking and listening skills limit their achievement and attainment across the range of subjects.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Extra-curricular activities are very good and provide the pupils with high quality enrichment.
- The very good links with other schools and the local community support the pupils well in their learning.
- Personal development is good and pupils are well cared for.
- Attendance is poor.

Improvement since the last inspection in December 1999 has been satisfactory. Standards have improved throughout the school in information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers now ensure that the more capable pupils are fully challenged. Although standards have improved in religious education in Year 2, there has been limited improvement in Year 6. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection. The role of the deputy headteacher has been clarified and he now has clearly defined roles. The weaknesses identified in the accommodation have been rectified, but the car park still remains a concern to the school. The school has a good capacity to improve under the leadership of the headteacher.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. The above table shows that the Year 6 pupils' performance in the national tests in 2004 was well below the national average.

When compared to similar schools their performance was average in mathematics and below average in English and science. The inspection findings endorse this picture. Although it appears that standards have declined since the last inspection, the school community has changed drastically. Many children now start school with poor levels of skills in all areas of learning; there is high mobility; an above average number have statements for special educational needs; and a significant group of pupils use English as an additional language. These factors have all had a negative impact on the standards achieved at Mount Street. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage but do not meet the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year because their speaking and listening skills are so weak. However, standards in Year 2 are average overall and this indicates good achievement in relation to their prior attainment. Although achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, the momentum seen in Years 1 and 2 is not as strong in Years 3 and 4. In addition, as the pupils move through the school they need constant encouragement and guidance. This is because they receive minimal support outside of school and lack the personal motivation to succeed. Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language, and the more capable pupils achieve well because they are given good quality support and activities are matched to meet their needs. Whilst appropriate use is made of the pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum, their literacy and numeracy knowledge could be used better to support other subject areas.

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are satisfactory. Attendance rates are poor. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6, where the children acquire new skills well. There are some weaknesses in teaching in Years 3 and 4; the teachers' expectations are not always high enough to ensure the pupils achieve as well as they might. The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. The school enriches the pupils' experiences very well by providing a high quality range of learning opportunities outside of lessons. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. All pupils are well cared for and given satisfactory guidance and support. Links with parents are good. Links with other schools and the local community are very good and impact positively on pupils' development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher's leadership is good and she is well supported by her deputy head. The role of key staff is satisfactory and developing as teachers gain an understanding of the standards in their subject through the school. The school is managed well and financial affairs are very well organised by the effective administrator. Governance is satisfactory overall. Governors are very supportive of the school, they are involved in planning for its future and know that they need to challenge decisions made by senior staff. However, the governors do not fulfil all their statutory requirements; the school's national test results and the comparative data have been omitted from the prospectus and the annual report to parents does not include essential information.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are pleased with the school and feel that they can approach staff if they have a problem. Pupils like their teachers and appreciate the way in which they are helped to learn.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in speaking and listening throughout the school.
- Improve the pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 in English, science and religious education.
- Eliminate the weaknesses in teaching, especially in respect of teachers' expectations, in Years 3 and 4.
- Work with parents to improve pupils' attendance.

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents contains all the required information.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Many children start school with poor skills in all areas of learning. Standards are below average by the end of Reception, broadly average by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 6. In relation to their prior attainment the pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well.
- Achievement in Years 3 and 4 is limited because of weaknesses in teaching.
- Pupils' weak skills in speaking and listening restrict their attainment across the range of subjects.

Commentary

1. In the Year 2 national tests of 2004 standards were well above average in mathematics and average in reading and writing. In comparison to similar schools standards in writing and mathematics were well above average and above average in reading. Standards in the teacher assessments for science in 2004 were well below average when compared nationally and with similar schools. Since 2000 there has been an upward trend in the results at the end of Year 2.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.8 (15.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.2 (13.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.5 (13.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In the Year 6 national tests of 2004, standards were well below the national average and when compared to similar schools in English, mathematics and science. National data analysis depicts a downward trend since 2000. Pupil mobility is high at this school and it is difficult to track through individual achievement over time. However, there is information available for 79 per cent of this Year 6 group and their achievement was judged to be satisfactory overall in relation to their prior attainment.

¹ All levels of the National Curriculum are awarded a points score. The average score for all pupils taking the test is used to grade schools in each year. The expected average points at age seven is 15.6. Tables are adjusted to reflect the national average score before grading. The grades are shown in the summary.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004²

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.2 (22.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	24.9 (25.0)	27.0 (26.8)
science	26.4 (25.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Many children start the Nursery with poor levels of skills in all areas of learning. Speaking and listening skills are particularly weak and some children have no knowledge of the English language. The children in the Nursery and Reception class are well cared for and the effective teaching ensures that they make good progress in their learning. However, it is unlikely that the vast majority of children will attain the expected level by the start of Year 1 of the National Curriculum. This is because they are not stimulated outside of school and many experience disruptive family lives. This has a negative impact on their communication skills and their development and awareness of the world around them.
4. Standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This represents a very good improvement in science since 2004, which can be explained by more focused teaching skills. Considering that nearly one-fifth of this class have special educational needs, and one-third are summer born (and therefore very young for their year group), this represents good achievement from their prior attainment into school. This is as a result of the effective teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 where pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive good support from experienced teaching assistants. Their input ensures that all children are fully included in each session and the achievement made is good.
5. Standards in Year 6 are average in mathematics but below average in English and science. This represents a good improvement since 2004, which can be explained by a more focused approach to pupil tracking and data analysis. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well in mathematics because they do not find their lack of vocabulary a hindrance. However, achievement from Year 2 is not as good as it could be for all pupils. This is because of high pupil mobility where many arrive at school with little or no English. The above average number with a statement of special educational need also has a bearing on the overall achievement of each year group. In addition to this, the good momentum started in their learning in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 slows down in Years 3 and 4. This is because whilst the teaching is satisfactory, it is not strong enough to maintain pupils' progress at an adequate rate because they are not sufficiently self-motivated and support from outside school is extremely limited. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 because the quality of teaching is good. However, a significant number of these pupils are not particularly interested in learning and are very challenging at times.

² All levels of the National Curriculum are awarded a points score. The average score for all pupils taking the test is used to grade schools in each year. The expected average points at age 11 is 27.5. Tables are adjusted to reflect the national average score before grading. The grades are shown in the summary.

Therefore, teacher expectations of behaviour often supersede those relating to work output because of the necessary focus on keeping the pupils on task.

6. Throughout the school, the pupils' speaking and listening skills are weak and this hinders their progress and attainment across many subjects. The poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils also has a negative impact on their overall progress and achievement.
7. The more capable pupils achieve well. For instance, there are a number of talented mathematicians in Years 3 to 6 and they are stimulated appropriately through extension activities. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve satisfactorily because they are adequately supported within individual and group sessions. This ensures that they have suitable access to the lessons and are able to achieve as well as their classmates.
8. Standards in ICT meet national expectations in both Years 2 and 6. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when they were considered unsatisfactory. The pupils' ICT skills are used adequately across the curriculum to support their learning. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in Year 2 but not in Year 6. This is because the pupils are unable to express themselves and their knowledge of the world around them is very limited. This means that they have difficulty tackling the issues required of them.
9. Pupils are given useful opportunities to use their literacy skills in history. However, there is a lack of opportunities provided for pupils to use their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills across other areas of the curriculum. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Mathematics is used appropriately in science and design and technology, but opportunities to investigate, solve problems and apply understanding in everyday situations are not fully developed.
10. Standards in art and design and physical education are as expected in Years 2 and 6. Pupils are not required to use their language skills in these subjects and consequently achievement is good. The inspection did not focus on any other subject area but it was noted that the pupils' poor communication skills hamper their progress in history and geography.
11. The good achievement and inclusion of pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. Individual education plans are informative, detailed and helpful. Reference to the targets in the education plans, school tracking records and discussions with the special educational needs and inclusion co-ordinator (INCO), class teachers and learning support assistants, indicate that many pupils are making good progress towards meeting their individual learning targets. The very good provision enables the pupils who have specific learning difficulties in English and mathematics to achieve well. The provision for those pupils who have behavioural and physical difficulties is equally comprehensive and detailed and they make the same good progress towards targets set for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are satisfactory. Attendance rates are poor. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' moral and social development is particularly well supported.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons but they are not as motivated to learn as they could be.
- Attendance is well below the national average.

Commentary

12. Most pupils say they like school, a view that parents strongly support. They usually cooperate with their teachers and most behave well in lessons and around the school. Occasionally in lessons their motivation is not as good as it should be, with teachers and support assistants sometimes having to work really hard to maintain the pupils' concentration. Additionally, some teachers allow too much low-level disruption to continue unchecked. This impacts on how much work pupils get done. Disappointingly, pupils say that lessons are not always interesting or exciting and express a preference for lessons where there are hands-on activities such as in art and design and science experiments.
13. The moral development of pupils is well supported by the school's caring ethos. Pupils are very aware of what is expected of them and say they really like '*golden time*', a short session on Friday afternoon where they can select an activity of their choice as a reward for good behaviour during the week (a fortnightly reward for the older pupils). Pupils are very friendly and polite to visitors and play together well at break times. Just occasionally relationships between pupils were observed to be less than satisfactory, children sometimes reacting aggressively or speaking inappropriately to their peers. Pupils do not feel that bullying or racism is a problem at their school and are confident that the staff will deal with any instances quickly. The vast majority of parents support this view. After making every effort to avoid taking such serious action, it was necessary to exclude one pupil for a short time during the last school year for unacceptable behaviour. This pupil has now left the school.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Black or Black British – African
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
158	1	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
8	0	0
3	0	0
9	0	0
3	0	0
10	0	0
9	0	0

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

14. Pupils' social development is also well supported. Most children are not expected to reach the nationally agreed level in personal and social development by the end of Reception; however they come a long way from a low starting point when they first enter the Nursery.
15. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities around the school, from class helpers and school councillors to acting as 'red caps', who help younger pupils on the playground. Regular sessions dedicated to personal, social and health education allow pupils to discuss their feelings, social issues and school council business. The very good links with the community and other local schools contribute significantly to pupils' social development. Opportunities to take part in sporting tournaments, the performing arts, environmental activities and residential trips give them good opportunities to work with and get to know other pupils. Pupils are keen fundraisers, supporting charities by sponsored activities. They have recently asked to raise money for the tsunami disaster and successfully did this through a non-uniform day and various collections.
16. Pupils experience a good range of cultural activities, visiting local places of interest such as the Plymouth Art Gallery and Museum. While multicultural week and occasional visits are dedicated to helping pupils understand cultural diversity, more could be done to celebrate the diversity of the local community.
17. Rates of attendance are well below the national average. The school reports that this is mostly attributable to parents taking their children out of school for a family holiday and to the very poor attendance of a few children whose families have social issues. Significant lateness by a small number of pupils continues to impact negatively on their achievement.
18. Contacting the families of children on the first day of their absence has improved overall attendance rates. Every effort is made to discourage parents from taking their children out of school during term time in order to lessen the impact that periods of absence have on their achievements.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.5	School data	0.3
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The planned curriculum adequately meets the needs of the pupils and is very well enriched by out-of-school activities. Pupils are well cared for and the support and guidance on offer are satisfactory. Links with other schools and the local community make a very positive contribution to the pupils' education.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Teacher assessment is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All teachers use resources well to support their teaching.
- Time is used well in all classes.
- Teaching staff ensure that all pupils are fully included during lessons.
- Procedures for assessment are good, but assessment information is not always used as well as it might be to plan pupils' future learning.
- Teachers' expectations could be higher in Years 3 and 4.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	2 (6%)	22 (65%)	10 (29%)	0 (0%)	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.

- At the time of the last inspection most of the teaching observed was satisfactory. There was also a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. About two thirds of the teaching observed during this inspection was good or better and no unsatisfactory lessons were noted. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Evidence from pupils' written work indicates that teaching over time is satisfactory and thus the overall quality of teaching and learning is judged to be satisfactory.
- Throughout the school, all teachers ensure that all pupils are given equal access to all learning situations and activities involve everyone. They have established calm, caring and supportive relationships with the pupils and work hard to ensure that the learning environment is interesting. Good use is made of the school day and lessons move along at an effective pace. Introductions are effective because they are well planned and learning intentions are clearly identified. Resources are used well to help support pupils' in their learning. This was particularly noticeable when teachers used interactive whiteboards to illustrate specific literacy and numeracy skills.
- Throughout the school the teaching staff encourage and support the pupils in their acquisition of skills. They praise their pupils well and offer high levels of encouragement such as '*you can do it*'. Whilst a reasonable number make good gains in their learning as a result of being encouraged, many are not easy to motivate or keen to apply themselves. This means that at times teacher input is greater than the actual learning capacity of the pupils.
- The teachers in the Foundation Stage have a secure understanding of the needs of young children and plan well to ensure that activities motivate these youngsters. For example, sessions are practically based and much emphasis is given to the development of their everyday language skills. Teacher subject knowledge is good in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 because teachers are confident about what they are teaching and this helps the pupils make good progress in their learning. Teachers' knowledge is satisfactory overall in Years 3 and 4. However, an analysis of pupils' work indicates

that weaker subject understanding impacts negatively on overall achievement. This is evident, for example, where the teacher incorrectly marks spelling mistakes.

23. Teachers in the Foundation Stage plan with careful regard to the nationally recommended curriculum for this age group. Key skills are highlighted and this ensures that the children progressively acquire new knowledge and develop their understanding of different concepts. In Years 1 and 2 the teachers effectively plan to meet the needs of all the pupils. Whilst planning is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, there is evidence in pupils' work that skills are not always taught progressively and there is a lack of continuity in the learning of some subjects such as geography and history.
24. During the inspection a good range of teaching methods was observed throughout the school. Teachers used an effective mix of individual, group and class teaching and this helped the pupils develop their application to learning in a range of ways. A very good science lesson was taken by the headteacher who was covering for an absent member of staff. She carefully set the scene with the context of the whole class and then skilfully organised the pupils into three sets. To ensure that all the pupils were fully involved she encouraged them to discuss their investigation with their partner and this heightened their interest.
25. In the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 teaching assistants are used well to support learning. In small groups the support assistants make good use of effective questioning to consolidate the pupils' development of their knowledge and skills. In one good religious education lesson the class teacher made effective use of a student teacher to support one group of pupils, thus releasing her to help another group with their task. However, very occasionally teaching assistants are not always as helpful as they might be.
26. Teacher expectation and challenge is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Teachers in the Nursery and Reception expect children to join in with all the planned activities and are challenged through individual interactions. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn well through high teacher expectations and well-planned extension activities. For example, in a good art and design lesson pupils were encouraged to extend their skills by using a computer program. However, teachers do not always have high enough expectations in Years 3 and 4. At times, the learning in lessons is not urgent enough and the use of practical investigations to reinforce learning is limited. Teachers rely too heavily on the use of worksheets that are not sufficiently challenging and expectations of work presentation are not high enough.
27. Homework is satisfactorily used to reinforce learning and help pupils apply the knowledge they have gained. There are good examples in Years 1 and 2 where parents are encouraged to make comments in the pupil's record book and this promotes links between home and school.
28. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good. All teachers are aware of the pupils' targets and make reference in planning to provide suitable activities to promote learning. Pupils are given very good, skilled help and encouragement from the good number of experienced and committed learning support assistants, who help ensure that all pupils are fully included in all activities. More capable pupils are also taught well. The good provision and support given to those pupils who need it, reflect the school's caring ethos and its commitment to inclusion.

29. Procedures for assessing pupils' work are good throughout the school and their progress consistently charted at regular intervals through the school year. The information gathered is used to inform teachers of weakness in pupils' learning, but it is not as yet being used sufficiently well to target areas requiring improvement. However, marking is not always used well enough to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum

The school provides a sound range of appropriate learning experiences for its pupils. Opportunities for pupils to participate in activities outside the school day are very good. The quality of the accommodation and the provision of resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for special educational needs and inclusion is good.
- The programme for personal, social and health education is good.
- The provision for extra-curricular and enrichment activities is very good.
- The good match of support staff to the curriculum ensures that pupils are assisted well.
- Some lessons are too long and do not reflect the preferred learning styles of all pupils.

Commentary

30. The curriculum fulfils all statutory requirements for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and generally meets the needs of all pupils. The allocation of curriculum time ensures that literacy and numeracy are well covered. However, the timing of some lessons is not as balanced as it might be. Lengthy consecutive morning sessions of English and mathematics and the rigid adherence to the literacy strategy do not always meet the learning styles of the average and less capable pupils. They find it hard to concentrate over a long period and as their attention wanes so does their learning. For these pupils, shorter practical activities prove more engaging and productive. The school has recognised this problem and consideration is being given to introducing '*thinking skills*' as a way of compensating for individual preferences. The structure of the curriculum is satisfactory overall, but assessment information is not always used effectively to inform planning and address areas of weakness. The school makes appropriate provision for religious education, which meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when requirements were not met.
31. All subjects and areas of learning have appropriate policies and schemes of work, which give appropriate guidance to teachers and support staff. The regular monitoring of teachers' planning by the headteacher helps ensure that there is progressive skill development in all subjects through the school.
32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school's very good commitment to inclusion is an impressive strength. Reference to individual and group education plans, discussions with the special educational needs and inclusion co-ordinator (INCO), class teachers and learning support assistants indicates that all pupils are provided for well. With a few exceptions, the school's tracking data show that most pupils make good progress in relation to their capabilities and prior attainment. Provision is made very well for those pupils who have specific learning

difficulties in English and mathematics. The provision for those pupils who have a statement of special need is equally comprehensive and detailed and they make the same good progress towards targets set. Although not having learning difficulties as such, pupils whose first language is not English make similarly good progress.

33. The school strives to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all activities. Generally work is appropriately set and the good support from all staff ensures that pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal and full access to all activities. However, inspection evidence indicates that there are occasions when pupils are not sufficiently challenged and they do not achieve as well as they might. The personal, social and health education and citizenship curriculum is well established. Personal development is promoted on a day-to-day basis through the good care and attention that staff pay to all pupils. Overall the curriculum successfully promotes well the school's caring ethos and pupils have good opportunities to discuss their feelings and problems with teachers and others. This helps promote the good social relationships found across the school.
34. The school organises a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities that appeal to the interests of a significant number of pupils. They have good opportunities to participate in sporting, artistic and musical activities. Field trips, cluster activities and tournaments based around Lipson Community College and the contribution of many visitors to the school all enhance the good provision in this area. Older pupils' social skills are developed well by annual residential visits.
35. The match of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory and there is a good match of learning support assistants to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. The contribution of the well qualified and experienced learning support assistants, particularly when involved with the less able, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language, is significant. The good progress that these pupils make owes much to their support.
36. The accommodation, overall, is satisfactory and many issues raised in the last inspection have been successfully addressed. However, there are still a number of concerns. The Nursery and Reception classes are situated some distance apart from each other. Two classes are based in aging huts and this limits interactions with the rest of the school. The necessity to use the hall and staff room as a thoroughfare can be very disruptive to both class and small group work. Adults and pupils passing by easily distract pupils withdrawn from classes for extra support and their learning suffers. During the inspection one lesson in the hall was very disrupted by pupils returning to their classroom from an outside visit. External facilities are quite good, with a large playing field, reasonably sized playgrounds and a wild life area. Internally there is a library area and the concerns expressed in the last inspection about soundproofing have been addressed well. Overall, resources are satisfactory, but they are good for the Foundation Stage. Whilst the pupils benefit from a good range of ICT resources, there are difficulties for teachers in the planning of lessons, which are caused by the need to use two very small suites for a class. The car park is still unsatisfactory. Great ingenuity and considerable time is spent ensuring that staff and visitors have access. However, the narrowness of the adjoining road and the lack of adjacent parking are constant concerns and any access for emergency vehicles is severely restricted. The governors of the school are very aware of the difficulties the restricted space poses and are engaged in a continuous effort to alleviate the situation.

Care, guidance and support

Care for pupils is good and the way the school involves them in its work and development is effective. The support and guidance the pupils are given are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good systems to ensure that pupils are well taken care of.
- Pupils get a good introduction when they first start school.
- The views of the pupils are taken seriously.

Commentary

37. Pupils are well cared for and like school. They say they trust the adults who work with them and this has a positive impact on their achievements because they have the confidence to ask for help when they need it. Pupils are well supervised and there are appropriate procedures in place to ensure they are working and playing in a safe environment. However, annual servicing of the fire extinguishers was overlooked last year and as a result they were out of date at the beginning of the inspection, although this was quickly rectified. All staff are aware of how to deal with any child protection issues. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all that the school has to offer. Additional helpers both in lessons and at break times help those pupils with significant special needs play a full part in school life. This has a very positive impact on how well they are accepted by the whole school community. Early support for asylum seekers and refugees is impacting positively on how well these children settle in school.
38. Pupils get a good start when they are new to the school. Arrangements for children and their parents to familiarise themselves with the school and teachers when they start in the Nursery are very good. All families are offered a home visit and are invited to take part in the '*welcome to the Nursery*' programme, comprising ten sessions geared to helping children start their education with confidence. Increasingly, pupils are arriving at the school mid-year and very good procedures have also been put in place to make this transition as smooth as possible. Individual needs are quickly assessed so that support can be given, a buddy is assigned to help new children settle and parents meet with staff twice to ensure there are no problems. These very good systems contribute positively to the harmonious atmosphere in the school.
39. The support and guidance pupils get are satisfactory. Marking of work is generally helpful and encouraging. Learning targets are used in writing and ICT and '*writing conferencing sessions*', where pupils discuss how well they are doing with their teachers, are used well to show pupils what they need to do to improve their writing skills. The way the school uses the information it has about how well pupils are doing academically is variable; in some classes it is used thoroughly to plan work but sometimes work does not suit individual needs and, as a result, pupils are occasionally frustrated in lessons because they do not understand the work they have been asked to do.

40. The school council gives pupils good opportunities to make their views known and their opinions are valued. For example, they are involved when candidates are interviewed for jobs in the school. However, some of the views pupils expressed to the inspection team, particularly about lunchtime provision and some aspects of the accommodation, surprised staff. Inspectors feel that these concerns may have been justified in the past but the headteacher and senior lunchtime supervisor work extremely hard to ensure that any of the pupils' complaints are quickly dealt with.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are good. Links with other schools and the local community are very good and contribute positively to pupils' development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' learning is significantly enriched because of the very good relationships with the community and other local schools.
- Parents are not sufficiently supportive of the school's endeavours to reduce pupils' absence.

Commentary

41. Every effort is made to establish and maintain good communication with parents. When children start in the Nursery parents are encouraged to bring them into the classroom to get to know the staff. Newsletters, called *'Our school – Your school'* are sent out regularly and give parents lots of information about what is going on in school, about the work of the school governors and any news from the friends' association (FOMSS). Year-end reports are good, as they give a detailed overview of what children have learned over the year and how much progress they have made. They also share improvement targets with parents so that they can support their children at home if they wish. Early contact is made with all parents as soon as concerns are noted about their children and there is evidence of parental involvement in all stages of the Code of Practice.
42. Parents' views are regularly sought and they feel that the school has become more approachable in recent years. Parents feel that the office staff are particularly friendly and helpful. Translations of school documents and interpreters for meetings are provided whenever needed.
43. Parents are generally supportive of the school, but too many do not support the school's efforts to reduce absence because they take their children on holiday during term time.
44. Links with the community and other local schools are very good. The school makes the most of these relationships to enrich pupils' learning. For example, links with Lipson Community College give pupils very good opportunities to participate in the performing arts and in sporting activities. Pupils take part in joint drama productions, benefit from music and French tuition and join sports clubs such as hockey and football. As this is the secondary school most pupils transfer to in Year 7 these very

good links also benefit their transition. Both pupils and staff have had dance tuition from a local dance company and the university played a big part in helping to establish the environmental area, a resource that is available for community use. The Friends Association (FOMSS) evaluates its own work well and is continually striving to engage parents more fully with the school and their children's learning. It actively encourages very close links with the Greenbank and Mutley community. Residents are invited to school productions and local businesses donate generously to make the summer Fayre, which is the school's most important fundraising activity, very successful.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher and her deputy are good. The leadership of key staff is satisfactory and developing. The effectiveness of management is good. Governance is satisfactory overall, but governors fail to meet the statutory requirements in the information provided in the prospectus and in their annual report to parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and her deputy work well together.
- Provision for special educational needs is managed very well.
- Financial management is very good.
- Governors are very supportive of the school.

Commentary

45. The headteacher has a clear vision for this school within its changing local community and her sense of purpose is very good. She has high aspirations for all the pupils and is keen to provide them with the best quality of education, irrespective of their communication problems, their difficulties at home, their varying degrees of special educational needs or the short time some may stay in the school. The headteacher is well supported by her long serving deputy, who is conscientious and communicates well with staff and parents. They are both well involved in a leadership initiative within Plymouth, which is effectively supporting further development of their roles.
46. The headteacher firmly believes that each member of staff has an important role to play in leadership and encourages delegation. She has successfully created a team approach for all staff. This includes lunchtime supervisors, the play scheme staff and teaching assistants who all have clear lines of responsibilities. Performance management procedures are carefully delegated to team leaders. They are also responsible for the professional development of their staff. This efficient delegation has had a positive impact on the effectiveness of communication throughout the school.
47. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall. Co-ordinators have been given adequate time to look at standards and teaching in their subjects, which have enabled them to devise action plans. However, some key staff are too remote from the full spread of age and ability within the school and do not hold themselves accountable for declining standards in their subject area. The headteacher recognises the need for further leadership training in these roles. This is because several senior staff have been at the school for a considerable length of time and, although knowledgeable in their own specific areas, their experiences need to be further developed across the whole

school. Other staff are fairly new to the profession and need to develop their leadership role further.

48. The management of the special needs provision is very good. The well-qualified co-ordinator is very experienced and is both diligent and very efficient co-ordinating and overseeing special educational needs provision. In association with other members of staff she ensures that education plans are appropriate to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met and keeps detailed records of provision and progress.
49. Strategic planning is good and is closely linked to the ambitions and goals of the school. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning well and has a good understanding of the strength and weaknesses of her staff. She has been very proactive in the collection of data from the national test results and other information that she has carefully collected and analysed. However, staff are at an early stage of using this information to identify key areas of weakness in the attainment of the pupils.
50. Since the last inspection the mobility of staff has been minimal. However, with the imminent retirement of the Nursery teacher and other staff movements, the headteacher has good scope for redeploying roles and responsibilities. Staff workload is appropriate, and the necessary steps have been taken to implement the new legislation for workforce reform. Induction procedures for all staff are good with mentors clearly identified to provide support at all levels. The school is well involved in initial teacher training programmes and this provides a positive experience for both the students and the school.
51. The school is managed very well on a day-to-day basis by administration staff who are extremely welcoming and helpful. Office duties are delegated efficiently and school routines run smoothly. Financial management is very good. The school receives high quality support and expert advice on a fortnightly basis. This is used well to ensure that financial information is accurately maintained and expenditure monitored. The school administrator works closely with the finance committee of the governing body to ensure that all funds available are spent wisely.
52. The governors are very supportive of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They are involved in shaping the future direction of the school through participation in the school improvement plan, staff recruitment and the headteacher's performance management programme. Governors are gaining confidence in their ability to challenge the senior management of the school and the finance committee ensures that best use is made of all available funds. However, a number of statutory requirements are missing from school documentation and this is unsatisfactory. For example, the school's national test results and the comparative data have been omitted from the prospectus and the annual report to parents.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	711,735
Total expenditure	710,469
Expenditure per pupil	3,657

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	23,428
Balance carried forward to the next year	24,694

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. At the time of the last inspection provision was judged to be excellent. This does not indicate a decline since the time of the last report but reflects the introduction of an agreed curriculum and a sharper framework for inspection. The children enter the Nursery on a part-time basis when they are three. They continue their Foundation Stage education in the Reception class at the start of the academic year in which they will be five. Many children start Nursery with levels of attainment that are well below those expected; their speech and language are so poor that this has a negative impact on all other areas of learning. A significant minority of the children have high levels of special educational needs and several start the Nursery with no knowledge of the English language. By the time they reach Year 1, all children have made good progress in their learning and achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Attainment in physical development falls just short of the expected national levels by the end of the Reception class, but standards in all other areas of learning are below expectations. The quality of teaching is consistently good with staff understanding the needs of these young children well. Staff make good use of the outdoor areas, which are safe and secure and resources are well prepared. Adults enthusiastically encourage the children in their learning and insist on high standards of behaviour. The curriculum is of good quality and is well planned to ensure that the needs of all the children are met. There are a good number of adults employed in the Foundation Stage, but they are unable to work as a cohesive team because of the accommodation, which results in the two classes being situated some distance apart. Co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching staff provide a warm and caring environment in both the Nursery and Reception class.
- The induction process has a good impact on the development of the children.

Commentary

53. Nursery children generally leave their parents and carers confidently and feel secure in the caring environment. This is because the induction process is carefully planned and takes place over several sessions. The children form good relationships with the caring staff but only the most capable demonstrate care and concern for others. The children start to show a developing acceptance of the nursery rules and are proud of their own achievements such as paintings and models. Many have started to choose what they want to do and a small proportion of children show a developing sense of curiosity. Many are able to take off their socks and shoes for physical development lessons in the hall, but others still have personal hygiene 'accidents'. By the time the children have started Reception their concentration skills have developed well and this was evident when a group of children were observed making bags from a range of differing materials. Most are keen to interact with others and are learning to take turns in the role-play area. Teaching staff encourage the children well and achievement is

good overall. However, by the time they leave Reception it is unlikely that all of the learning goals in personal, social and emotional development will have been reached.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Resources are used well to stimulate the children.

Commentary

54. Most children start Nursery with poor communication, language and literacy skills. Children achieve well in both the Nursery and Reception classes because the quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Speaking and listening skills are particularly weak. Most children start Nursery with very limited speech and are not keen to participate when they are sat in groups. Words are frequently used in isolation and only the more capable use simple statements. Activities that encourage speaking and listening are well planned. Teachers know that the children learn effectively when interesting resources stimulate them. For example, nursery children enjoyed looking at the pictures in a big book. This helped them identify the main characters in the book, which enabled them to talk about the story. In Reception the children sequence pictures with adult support and this encourages them to understand key features of stories. They also share books together in pairs and in groups and this helps them to learn how to handle books carefully. Teachers encourage writing by providing lots of opportunities for the children to communicate. This is evident when they paint and chalk outside on the paving and make marks on paper. For instance, Nursery children '*write their shopping lists*' when they play in their shop. In Reception they are taught to write letter shapes systematically. However, they also gain experience of communicating on paper by writing random letter shapes and then explaining to adults what they have written. Despite the good quality teaching, most children do not meet the expected national levels at the end of their time in Reception. This is because communication, language and literacy skills are, in many cases, not reinforced or modelled at home.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Activities are practical and made relevant to everyday life.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support the children.

Commentary

55. Many children start school with a very limited understanding of mathematical vocabulary and few have gained any practical experiences working with number and shape. The quality of teaching is good in the Nursery and Reception classes. This helps the children achieve well in their learning. In the Nursery the children are encouraged to talk about numbers and have started to recognise familiar counting songs such as *'Five Little Speckled Frogs'*. The teachers help them to recognise objects that are *'shorter and longer'*, *'smaller and larger'* and *'heavier and lighter'*. This also promotes their language skills. In the Reception class most children count up to five and recognise two-dimensional shapes. The more capable children sort different shapes into groups and explain how many sides they each have. Those children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are supported well by teaching assistants. In both classes the teaching staff make good use of questioning techniques to help the children progress in their learning. However, despite this good provision, it is unlikely that the children will have attained the recommended national levels in mathematical development by the time that they leave Reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children confidently use ICT equipment.
- Teaching is good.
- Children do not start school with natural curiosity and their experiences are very limited.
- Children do not learn enough about other cultures and beliefs.

Commentary

56. Achievement in this area of learning is good because teachers provide an interesting range of activities. However, by the end of Reception the children will not have attained the expected national level for this age group. This is because the children start school with poor skills in this area of learning. They lack the knowledge of everyday experiences and their weak communication skills hamper their learning. Teaching staff support very carefully the learning activities and this ensures that the children understand what they need to know. This was evident in a Nursery class where the children were developing their sense of smell. They were required to sample a selection of different smells but many of the most common smells were not recognised by the children. This was because their experiences out of school were so limited. Sessions are well planned to help them develop their observation skills. In Nursery they watch how plants grow and discuss the changes in popcorn when it is heated. In Reception they explore different types of materials and are encouraged to discuss what they need to wear when it is cold. In both classes very good use is made of ICT equipment to support the children's learning, particularly those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The Foundation Stage children are encouraged to appreciate the beliefs of their own culture. For example, they talk about Christmas long ago and discuss why people celebrate *'pancake day'*. However, the children have insufficient opportunities to talk about the richness and diversity of other customs and lifestyles.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor area is used well to support the children's physical skills.
- The quality of teaching is good.

Commentary

57. Although standards are well below nationally expected levels when they arrive at school, the children start to develop their skills quickly and they rapidly gain confidence in this area of learning. This is because they are able to develop their skills with minimal need to communicate with their classmates or adults. Most children quickly learn how to use a pair of scissors and successfully develop their cutting skills. They squeeze, roll, cut and twist malleable materials, such as dough, using a wide range of tools. In the outdoor area the children climb over and under equipment and pedal tricycles energetically around the playground. However, although the children can move backwards and sideways in whole-class sessions in the hall, they have little understanding of space and tend to bump into each other. Achievement is good overall in physical development but very few children understand the importance of keeping healthy by the end of their time in the Reception class. Consequently, despite the good quality of teaching in this area of learning, the expected level is not reached by the start of Year 1.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Good use is made of role-play to develop the children's social skills.
- Learning is made interesting through the use of suitable nursery rhymes and songs.

Commentary

58. Most children start school with no knowledge of nursery rhymes and few are eager join in the songs they learn at school. Staff energetically and enthusiastically reinforce basic communication skills through the good use of nursery rhymes and songs. This was evident in a good music lesson when the teacher worked hard to motivate the children to recognise the difference between '*loud and soft*'. Particular support was given to children who were using English as an additional language but much reassurance was needed. More confident children enjoy playing in the '*shop*' and '*home corner*'. Most enjoy working with paints and create paintings but these lack detail. However, by the end of Reception their pictures contain appropriate features such as noses and eyes. This indicates that achievement is good which is particularly impressive because of their limited experiences and lack of social development when they start school. However, standards in creative development are still below the expected level at the end of the Foundation Stage.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in Years 1 and 2.
- Test results and pupils' work are inadequately analysed for specific areas of weakness.
- Initiatives for improvement are insufficiently monitored for consistent implementation across the school or for their effectiveness in improving standards.

Commentary

59. At the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in English is average. At the end of Year 6, attainment is below average. This is not as good as at the time of the last inspection. However, since then there has been a significant increase in pupil mobility, in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language and these factors present significant barriers to learning. Last year's test results at the end of Year 6 were well below the national average and when compared with similar schools. In the current Year 6, more pupils are expected to achieve the expected levels, but standards remain below average. For the last three years there has been a focus on raising attainment in writing and this is beginning to have a positive effect. The school is proud that test results last year showed an improvement in writing in Year 2, when standards in both reading and writing were average nationally and well above average when compared with similar schools. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to build on the good grounding in literacy they have received in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress and achieve well against their prior attainment. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make sound progress. Although there are high levels of mobility, the schools own tracking systems show that for those Year 6 pupils who have remained in the school since Year 2, achievement is satisfactory and sometimes good overall. In the national tests, boys performed better than girls, but during the inspection no difference was noted in their performance.
60. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, with some strengths. The good teaching is characterised by a secure knowledge of the subject and work that is well planned to meet individual needs. Homework is used well to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language are well included in lessons and achieve well because of the good support they receive. In most lessons, good relationships prevail between adults and pupils. Teachers and support staff treat pupils in a friendly manner with sensitivity and respect, so that potentially disruptive pupils are well controlled and no time is wasted through unsatisfactory behaviour. ICT is used effectively to enhance learning. Marking is used well, particularly in Years 5 and 6, to move pupils forward in their learning. These older pupils are given good opportunity to draft and improve their work. In Years 3, 4 and 6 a weakness in the teaching is when teachers demonstrate low expectations by using broad learning objectives for lessons, rather than focussing on the specific skills that individual pupils need to acquire to move them on to a higher level of attainment. Teachers also demonstrate low expectations when they accept work too readily from pupils who are capable of achieving better.
61. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below expectations. Across the school they demonstrate a limited vocabulary and experience difficulty in formulating their thoughts and expressing themselves articulately. In lessons and discussions, pupils

do not always listen attentively to adults or to each other and this sometimes impedes their learning. The school has identified speaking and listening as a weakness and has recently begun to implement initiatives for improvement. However, these have not yet had sufficient time to affect standards. Currently, planned opportunities for pupils to develop their oral skills are provided inconsistently across the school.

62. Standards in reading are average in Year 2. Most pupils read fluently for their age, with good expression, as was the case when the class read the story of The Little Red Riding Hood with obvious enjoyment. From the Foundation Stage onwards, pupils are systematically taught the strategies for effective reading and they make good progress against their levels of attainment on entry to the school. At the end of Year 6, standards are below average. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, but is impeded because procedures that have been instigated to improve standards are not consistently applied. For example, guided reading sessions are not planned to a common format and they happen more regularly in some classes than in others. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 keep comprehensive reading journals and these enhance both their reading and writing skills. However, this is not, as yet, the practice in Years 3 and 4. The quality and quantity of reading books have been improved since the last inspection, but the school library remains a limited resource for learning because, unavoidably, it is used as a thoroughfare and pupils are not given regular timetabled sessions for its use.
63. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in writing because of good teaching. By the end of Year 2 attainment is broadly average. Most pupils can write a simple sentence and they are beginning to use speech marks. Handwriting is satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, standards are below average. Pupils' progress in writing is adversely affected by their limited oral skills. For example, there is limited use of interesting adjectives to add interest. The teaching of writing is satisfactory, but as with speaking and listening and reading, pupils' progress is limited when useful initiatives for raising standards are not consistently or effectively applied. For example, although individual targets for improvement have been introduced, teachers made no reference to them during lessons. When asked, pupils were unable to remember what their targets were.
64. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and committed and has been instrumental in the introduction of many of the initiatives to raise standards. There are detailed assessment procedures in place to record pupils' achievement and track their progress. However, assessment records are not used effectively towards the improvement of attainment. For example, while the school is aware that writing is a weakness, there has been no detailed analysis of test results to identify the specific aspects of writing that are most in need of improvement. The subject leader is aware of the importance of closely monitoring new initiatives to ensure they are applied consistently across the school and to judge their effectiveness in raising standards.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

65. Pupils are given useful opportunities to use their literacy skills in history, as when they write accounts of the ancient Greek gods. However, more opportunities could be beneficially provided across other areas of the curriculum for speaking and listening and for making reading and writing tasks purposeful.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Considering pupils' low attainment on entry their achievement overall is good.
- There is insufficient emphasis on pupils using and applying their numeracy skills to solve problems and present evidence from investigations.

COMMENTARY

66. Inspection evidence indicates that the number of Year 2 pupils attaining the expected levels in mathematics is average, as is the percentage of pupils working at higher levels. These findings are similar to those shown in the 2004 national tests. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 6 are average and slightly higher than those attained in the 2004 national tests. The attainment of pupils in both infant and junior age groups must be considered in the context of a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties: a higher than average percentage of pupils with English as an additional language and a much higher than usual number of pupils from transient refugee families. Whilst many pupils, much to their credit, prove to be able learners, for a significant proportion the challenge of new surroundings and a new language has a negative impact upon their learning. However, inspection evidence indicates that those pupils using English as an additional language and those who have learning or behavioural difficulties are given well-informed support and make good progress. Analysis of pupils' work shows that those pupils who do not have English as their first language are often amongst the most talented in mathematics and the school's own tracking records show that those pupils who join the school in Reception make at least satisfactory and often good progress.
67. The school effectively delivers the National Numeracy Strategy, which overall has a positive impact upon pupils' ability to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Pupils enjoy the lively, challenging mental introductions of many lessons. They respond enthusiastically and with informed direction and support gain confidence and become more proficient at making quick and accurate calculations. However, there are occasions when the lengthy numeracy lessons prove too long for many average and less capable pupils and they lose concentration. This is particularly the case when numeracy follows closely on from the literacy hour. With the well-informed patient support given by the learning support assistants, pupils with special educational needs stay on task and make good progress.
68. By the end of Year 2, more capable pupils have progressed sufficiently to identify number patterns and understand fractions such as $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$. They recognise symmetry and use simple standard measurements to estimate length. Most pupils use competently duplicate coins to pay for articles up to one pound and have a reasonably secure grasp of the hour and half-hour readings of a clock face. Year 6 pupils confidently multiply together two and three digit numbers. They understand the properties of three-dimensional shapes and can calculate the area of a rectangle. Many use co-ordinates accurately, they are able to calculate time intervals and understand the conversion of decimals and fractions. However, from the analysis of pupils' work and the scrutiny of displays it is clear that insufficient opportunities are presented for pupils to apply their mathematical competence in investigations and problem solving activities and consequently the chances to extend learning, particularly for the enthusiastic and more capable, are missed.

69. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Throughout the school, teachers effectively adhere to the National Numeracy Strategy and this enables skills to be developed accurately and thoroughly. Good use is made of resources, particularly interactive whiteboards, which provide very successful teaching aids. In the best lessons teachers effectively question the pupils and this extends the understanding of pupils. It also encourages them to consider and explain their different methods of calculation. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is consistently good and pupils of all abilities are challenged well. Subject knowledge is secure, planning is effective and there are high expectations of work and behaviour. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The more successful lessons are well planned, continue at a good pace and involve all pupils. However, there are occasions, when working independently, both the average and the more capable pupils do not achieve as much as they might. They do not work at a sufficiently high rate and appear to lack any sense of urgency. For example, in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were drawing and measuring angles with a protractor, only one or two completed the task set. There are also occasions when the work presented to pupils does not offer sufficient challenge and teacher expectation is not high enough. The analysis of pupils' work shows that throughout the school there is a strong reliance upon professionally produced worksheets. Whilst the use of such material helps to ensure coverage of the various programmes of study, it fails to stimulate or address the different learning styles of many pupils.
70. The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The headteacher and the co-ordinator monitor and record pupils' progress and oversee teachers' planning. However, although the action plan is reasonably detailed, it is not closely linked to issues gathered from the analysis of pupils' work and from previous test data. Currently the areas of development such as '*calculation*' are too broad and do not focus on improving standards in specific areas of weakness.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

71. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Although there is evidence that mathematics is used in science and design and technology the opportunities to investigate, solve problems and apply understanding in everyday situations are not fully developed. It is noticeable that amongst the many attractive displays around the school there is a dearth of presentations recording and celebrating pupils' work in numeracy across all subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in Year 2.
- Pupils particularly enjoy practical activities.
- Achievement in Years 3 to 6, although satisfactory, could be better if more opportunities were provided for independent enquiry and for developing an appreciation of fair testing.
- Visual resources and the environmental study area, are used well to support learning.

Commentary

72. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are average and in relation to their prior attainment achievement is good. This is a similar picture to the last inspection but represents a very good improvement since the teacher assessment tests of 2004 which were well below the national average and when compared to similar schools. The quality of teaching and use of assessment to inform planning has improved in Year 2 and this is having a positive impact on all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
73. In Year 6 standards are below average for their age. This represents a decline since the time of the last inspection when standards were average in Year 6. However, it is important to note that the context of the school has changed considerably since the last inspection. In fact, current inspection findings indicate an improvement since the 2004 national test results. Pupils in Year 6 achieve satisfactorily as they build up their science knowledge throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because they are well supported by teaching assistants.
74. The high level of mobility amongst pupils and the restricted vocabulary and literacy skills of some pupils, have a negative impact on standards. These are recognised by the school. The school is developing assessment practices and other ways to enable greater feedback to help pupils know how to improve.
75. Pupils enjoy practical activities offered by investigations and they work well together in pairs or small groups. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed putting forward suggestions about possible investigations of torchlight shadows. Pupils in Years 2 and 4 considered fair testing in relation to their topics of '*forces*' and '*temperatures differences*'. However, an examination of pupils' work in books and talking with pupils, indicate that inconsistent attention is given to ensuring that pupils steadily develop an appreciation of fair testing. They also do not have enough opportunities to develop their own enquiries, select their own materials, or suggest their own methods of recording a '*test*'. This means that they do not become fully familiar with conventional steps in a scientific method of investigation and, thus, are not encouraged to use appropriate science vocabulary.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Over time, it is consistently good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. However, some very good teaching was observed in Year 4, which was taken by the headteacher in the absence of their class teacher. During this session the pupils were kept very involved through the use of lively activities and their learning was promoted through searching questioning skills. In another good lesson in Year 3 the pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language were well supported by teaching assistants and this meant that all pupils were involved and fully included in the activities. Good use was also made of visual resources, such as a large set of jawbones, which were used well to grab pupils' attention. Pupils throughout the school make effective use of the environmental study area to help develop their scientific knowledge and ICT skills well. For example, Year 5 pupils developed multimedia presentations on '*habitats*' within the school's environmental area. However, the lack of opportunities for fair testing was evident in one lesson where pupils did not practically investigate what causes shadows to change their shape.

77. The subject co-ordinator was absent during the inspection, but scrutiny of her file and planning indicates leadership and management of science are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a good improvement since the last inspection.
- Innovations, including revised assessment practices, have been successfully adopted.
- Good quality resources have been expanded and this has helped to raise standards.
- Good quality teaching has had a positive impact on standards and encourages enthusiastic attitudes amongst the pupils.
- ICT skills are used well to support learning in other areas of the curriculum.

COMMENTARY

78. Standards in ICT at the time of the last inspection were judged to be below national expectations. They are now in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve well. This represents a great improvement in performance. The scheme of work developed in the school ensures pupils now cover an appropriate range of activities, which was a weakness at the time of the last report. ICT is also used appropriately to support language development with pupils for whom English is an additional language. These pupils and those with special educational needs, also achieve well in this area of the curriculum.
79. Staff have worked well together as a team to successfully improve standards. The recently appointed subject leader has made a promising start to the co-ordination of ICT and there are indications that she will maintain the good standards of her predecessor. Innovations that have been enthusiastically adopted by staff and have contributed to the rising standards, include the training and enhancement of staff expertise and skills and the development of more focused assessment practices. Stimulating target board activities in classrooms have been recently established and these provide ongoing guidance for pupils. Good curriculum planning also enables pupils to apply ICT skills to support learning in other subjects.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils are enthusiastic and become fully involved in their work. Teaching staff use a variety of different approaches to engage their pupils in their ICT work. For example, Year 1 pupils, who were organised into four groups, worked with three different activities. These included devising routes for programmable toys, mathematical games and shapes. Year 3 pupils also worked well in groups using guidelines, which had been carefully prepared by the teacher, to access the Internet. This enabled them to develop their research skills for a history topic. On the other hand, Year 5 pupils were observed working as a class together with their teacher to share their skills of using the recently acquired interactive whiteboard. However, there are difficulties for teachers in the planning of lessons because the ICT equipment is located in two very small suites, neither of which can accommodate a whole class.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

81. Pupils' competence in the use of their ICT skills is satisfactory. The school has developed cross-curricular elements well in their plans and the pupils use their ICT skills satisfactorily to support work in other subjects. For instance, they use data handling techniques in mathematics and geography and present different information in science.

HUMANITIES

The inspection focused on religious education. Aspects of history and geography were sampled.

No lessons were seen in history and geography so no judgement can be made on provision. Pupils' work was scrutinized and teachers' planning was examined together with pupils' work on display. Discussions with teachers, including the subject leader, also provided evidence of pupils' work and progress.

History

82. The programme of work planned for both subjects draws in part upon national guidelines, but is supplemented with some school-developed units appropriate to the school and its setting. In **history**, pupils develop their understanding of important events and people in the past, linked to a sense of chronology. Their learning is greatly enriched by visits, such as to Morwellan Quay in Year 5 and by visitors in Year 2, including grandparents coming in to describe seaside holidays. Learning is also enlivened by role-play activities and drama in some lessons. Pupils in Year 6 respond well when able to apply their writing skills to record work on Tudor topics.

Geography

83. In **geography**, pupils study people and places and pupils gain from field visits such as to support a village study in Year 2 and Dartmoor rivers in Year 5. Pupils also experience work with maps, such as mapping school grounds. However, opportunities are missed to extend their understanding of links between people and their environment.
84. The quality of medium-term plans varies. In some classes work can be over reliant upon completing worksheets. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory. However, some topics do not always build progressively upon the previously acquired levels of understanding, such as physical features influencing human activity. Similarly planning does not underpin a steady refinement of pupils' skills, such as mapping, interpreting historical evidence, or recognising how the past can be represented in different ways.
85. Both subjects are well led by a co-ordinator who has a good picture of provision throughout the school. Pupils' learning is enriched by the good use the school makes of local resources, including museums and the Plymouth Museum loan service. Both subjects are promoted well in the classrooms through effective display work.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been good improvements since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are supported well.
- By Year 6 the pupils do not have sufficient communication skills to meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Commentary

86. Standards at the end of Year 2 meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and pupils achieve well. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2 teachers encourage the development of knowledge and skills through practical activities and this promotes learning well. Pupils are generally keen to learn and listen carefully to their teachers. For example, in one good lesson the pupils listened intently to a story about Zacchaeus. The teacher made the session interesting by reading a version of the story that was well suited to the needs of the pupils. She then reinforced the learning intention through the use of well-chosen resources and the follow-up activity was practically based. The pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, were well supported by teaching assistants and this enabled them to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
87. Standards at the end of Year 6 do not meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and this is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. This is because the pupils' ability to express their views, both orally and in written form, is weak. A significant proportion of these pupils have arrived midway through their primary education and, consequently, their progression of skills is weak. They have minimal interest in the subject and, despite good teacher stimulus, lack the maturity to consider issues and feelings. For example, Year 6 pupils were asked to consider someone whom they admired. The teacher took the opportunity to express his admiration of Ellen Macarthur who had just completed her round the world journey, but the pupils were unable to consider anyone outside their own family unit. This was because they did not have access to the vocabulary they needed to express their feelings. However, achievement in relation to their prior attainment was satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, were well supported by a teaching assistant who sensitively handled some disruptive behaviour and this enabled the class teacher to carry on with the lesson.
88. At the time of the last inspection it was felt that standards were weak because insufficient time was allocated to the subject. There was also some confusion with the Locally Agreed Syllabus and assessment procedures were unsatisfactory. However, the subject leader has effectively rectified all these weaknesses and has monitored and evaluated the quality of teaching and learning within the school. Resources have been maintained at a good level and effective use is made of places of worship within the local environment.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

The inspection focused on art and design and physical education. Work was sampled in design and technology and music and so it is not possible to give a judgement on provision in these subjects.

Design and technology

89. It is clear from the teachers' planning and some examples of pupils' work that an appropriate range of work is covered in **design and technology**. The designs and models seen show appropriate skills for the ages of the pupils, with Year 2 designing and making puppets and Year 6 designing and making slippers. Year 6 pupils describe the use of a range of materials and tools as they explain how they have made toys with moving parts.
90. Documentation for the subjects indicates that leadership and management of design and technology are satisfactory.

Music

91. No lessons were seen in **music**, but teachers' planning files and discussions with staff and pupils, indicate an appropriate range of activities is covered. Pupils heard singing in the hall did so tunefully. This is an improvement since the last inspection when their collective singing was judged to be '*disappointing*'. Learning is well enhanced for those older pupils who belong to the school choir. These pupils sing to a high standard, with good attention to dynamics and tempo as they perform in two-part harmony. A number of pupils benefit from the opportunity for instrumental tuition from several visiting experts and a programme of concerts and performances enhances pupils' learning.
92. Since the last inspection a specialist music teacher has been appointed and she has taken over the leadership and management of the subject. Her expertise and enthusiasm are already having a positive impact because she is strongly committed to raising the profile of music throughout the school and has recently revised the scheme of work to provide improved guidance to other teachers. Under her management, the subject is well placed for further improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

Provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good, so pupils achieve well.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards the subject.

Commentary

93. Standards in art and design meet national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are lower than at the last inspection, but this is because of population changes in the year group of pupils rather than deterioration in the provision for the subject.
94. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress. This is because the curriculum is interesting, creative and well planned. Pupils do not use their speaking and listening skills when working on their own piece of work, but they are given good opportunities

to explore and use a wide range of materials in two and three-dimensions, developing their use skilfully as they move through the school.

95. Pupils receive good teaching and this helps them to achieve well against their prior attainment. Teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm have a positive influence on pupils' attitudes and the efforts they put into their work. Good resources are used well to increase their interest in art and design. For example, Year 6 pupils expressed wonder as they were shown how to make a silk screen print. Some Year 2 pupils produced observational work of a high quality because the teacher carefully emphasised attention to detail. Pupils have a sound knowledge of a range of artists and the techniques they use, as was the case when Year 3 pupils used geometric shapes to produce artwork in the style of Kandinsky.
96. The school is justifiably proud of the Artsmark award they received in 2003. This is an indication of the high profile of the arts within the school and continues to be the case. Through the annual arts week, pupils have been given the opportunity to explore ideas and meanings in the work of visiting artists. This enhances their learning well and makes a valuable contribution to their spiritual, social and cultural development.
97. There is no subject leader for art and design during the current school term but this will be rectified when a new teacher starts in April. The headteacher is overseeing the subject to ensure that the absence of a co-ordinator for one term does not have an adverse effect on standards.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Physical education is used well to promote pupils' personal development.
- The management of physical education is good.

Commentary

98. The school places much importance on the provision of physical education and the adherence to a healthy regime. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and attain average standards in gymnastics, games, dance and swimming where most pupils reach the standard expected at the end of Year 6 (to swim 25 metres). No judgement was made on standards at the time of the last inspection so no comparison can be made.
99. In the two lessons seen, all pupils including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, take a full and active part. Year 2 pupils showed much enthusiasm and behaved very sensibly in an indoor hockey lesson. The class teacher, who managed the pupils well in the confined space, gave them encouragement and her instruction was informed. Pupils worked in pairs, showing good control and some showed above average skills when they practised their push stroke. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils benefited from the very good knowledge and high expectations of their teacher, who is the physical education co-ordinator. During this session the pupils enthusiastically produced a good range of movement

sequences on apparatus that were better than expected for their age group. With encouragement, pupils used the opportunities to observe and evaluate others well. They were then able to refine their own performances and, consequently, many made good progress.

100. A wide range of activities provided outside the normal school day enhances the physical education curriculum. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Adventurous activities are undertaken on two annual residential visits. During the inspection a group of pupils who attend an after-school dance club, demonstrated a number of well-choreographed routines in preparation for a performance in a local theatre. All pupils who wish to, can attend the wide range of activities on offer and for many less capable academically the activities provide a valuable opportunity to develop confidence and self-esteem.
101. The co-ordinator provides good, well-qualified leadership and management. She sets a high standard of teaching and is particularly active in promoting pupils' participation in sport and activities beyond the school day. She and the school are justifiably proud of their Active Mark award, their focus on team building skills and the very good links with local clubs and the community. At the time of the last inspection it was noted that there was a lack of a scheme of work. This has now been rectified.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

102. No lessons were observed in this curricular area, but planning was scrutinised and an interview held with the recently appointed co-ordinator. From the information available, it is clear that the school plans well for pupils' personal, social and health education. All classes have opportunities for quiet discussions during lessons, known as '*circle time*' and these help pupils to think about social and moral issues, as well as practise their speaking and listening skills. With its great commitment to inclusion the school values all pupils' contributions, whatever their ability or background and this has a most positive effect on pupils' social development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	4
Attendance	6
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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