

INSPECTION REPORT

The Erme Primary School

Ivybridge

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113254

Headteacher: Mr. G Wall

Reporting inspector: Philip Inness
21015

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th September 2000

Inspection number: 224609

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Station Road
Ivybridge
Devon

Postcode: PL21 0AJ

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. Elizabeth Aspin

Date of previous inspection: 2 - 5 March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr P Inness Registered inspector [21015]	Special educational needs; English as an additional language; Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage; English; Information and communications technology; Art.	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? Areas for Improvement.
Mr M Whittaker Lay inspector [9644]		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr J Palethorpe Team inspector [20671]	Equal opportunities; mathematics; Design and technology; Physical education; Music.	Results and achievements.
Mrs K Henry Team inspector [30976]	Science; Geography; History; Religious Education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school is set in the centre of the riverside village of Ivybridge, Devonshire. The school is about average size consisting of 186 girls and boys aged between four and eleven years old, all who attend full time. About twelve per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is below the national average. Four pupils have statements of special educational needs allocated to them under the terms of the DfEE Code of Practice¹. Children come from predominantly white European families. Nine per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is the basis for comparing similar schools and is lower than the national average. Attainment on entry to school in the term before children are five is a strong average.

The last inspection of the school reported serious weaknesses particularly in leadership, management and teaching. There have been few changes in staff since the time of the last inspection. One teacher is currently absent on long term sick leave. During this inspection a temporary supply teacher, as well as the headteacher, taught this teacher's lessons.

The inspection covered all aspects of the school's work including all subjects taught as well as religious education and collective worship.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

From a position of weakness the school has improved rapidly. Standards in most subjects across the school are broadly average, importantly there are above average features in English, including speaking, listening, reading and handwriting. However, pupils' achievements are not as good as they could be in information and communications technology (ICT) and design and technology, especially by the time they leave school aged eleven. Most pupils have good attitudes to their work and play. Across the school teaching is good, and in literacy and numeracy lessons it is good overall and frequently very good. Most pupils learn well. The school provides a largely balanced curriculum, but does not provide a broad enough outdoor curriculum for reception children. Teaching and assessment and its use could be developed even further through more active management and organisation. There are good care arrangements. Relationships including links with the community are strong. The school gives at least satisfactory value for money and above that judged in the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Determined leadership has been effective in eliminating many weaknesses.
- A very well informed governing body provides energetic but unobtrusive help and guidance.
- Teaching across the school is usually good but particularly effective in raising standards in English, mathematics and music.
- The literacy curriculum is implemented very effectively.
- The school helps to create and maintain good attitudes and behaviour in pupils.
- The management and leadership of special educational needs are very good.
- The school has established good resources for information and communications technology, and its arrangements by which standards are improving rapidly.

¹ The DfEE Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards in design and technology and information and communications technology are too low.
- The outdoor curriculum, accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage² are not statutory.
- Teachers' lesson planning linked to day to day assessment, evaluation and marking of pupils' work are not always as good as they should be.
- The temporary teaching accommodation and overhanging trees pose problems for efficiency and health and safety.
- The facilities for physical education make teaching and organisation difficult.
- Teachers' job descriptions; and staff meeting minutes are insufficiently detailed to provide good action points for improvement.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement in the short time since the previous inspection in March 1998. Nearly all of the elements within the key issues for action in the previous inspection have been dealt with effectively. The school is clearly on a path of improvement. Leadership is successful in redefining priorities by improved monitoring by headteacher, staff and governors. There is still room to improve assessment and evaluation of pupils' achievements and some work of the school. The quality of teaching is better in most respects. Subject managers have begun to develop their leadership roles which are particularly effective in the main subjects of English, mathematics and science. Attainments in writing across the school, and science at the end of Year 2, have been raised. Pupils' behaviour has improved. Teachers' knowledge is improving but some planning for teaching needs further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	E	A	B
Mathematics	C	E	A	B
Science	B	C	A	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows that in 1999 national assessments the school was successful in getting a higher than average proportion of pupils to the expected level, Level 4, and to the higher Level 5. Results show an increasing trend on average, and within the current year, the school has been working hard in continuing to raise standards. It has established realistic targets in English and mathematics for eleven year olds. Early indications from preliminary results show a sustained improvement in English, mathematics and science in national

² From September 2000, the term Foundation Stage refers to children's education from the age of three until the end of the reception year.

assessments 2000, particularly at the higher than average Level 5. Achievements currently, in science, art, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education are average. They are above average in speaking, listening and reading across the school. However, standards are below expectations in information and communications technology, and design and technology, although good improvements are being achieved in the former.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have purposeful attitudes to work and are keen to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Even in less formal play occasions pupils behave well.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. Pupils help each other and are keen to accept responsibilities.
Attendance	Average. Pupils are punctual and lessons start promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

During the inspection teaching was mostly good across the school. Nearly all lessons in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 were taught well, none being unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 2 most teaching was good and even though there was a very small number of unsatisfactory lessons this represented a considerable improvement over the previous inspection. Availability of space and planning for out of doors activities to enable children to meet this part of the required Early Learning Goals³ on a regular basis in reception, is insufficient. Teaching of information and communications technology is improving but there is too little planning for design and technology. Teaching of special educational needs is good, but day to day planning of some lessons could provide a greater range of modified work than was seen. Literacy lessons were mostly good and frequently very good. There were very good lessons taught in numeracy and music. Assessment and evaluation including marking is still underdeveloped.

³ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals', comprised of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of the reception year. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literature; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; and physical development.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad and mostly balanced; good in English and literacy but with deficiencies in aspects of learning for reception, information and communications technology and design and technology. The curriculum for early years and design and technology does not meet requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils supported well with useful targets for improvement. Occasionally insufficient modification of work is presented in some lessons, even though good adult support is provided to guide pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made in personal, moral, and social and most cultural development; spiritual is satisfactory, but teaching about cultural diversity within British society is underemphasised.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Staff have a good knowledge of pupils and monitor personal development and welfare. Some assessment of pupils' achievements in non-core subjects is underdeveloped. Some aspects of health and safety with regard to the temporary classroom and overhanging trees in need of attention.

The school provides a good number of club and extracurricular activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Indications are that effective leadership by headteacher and managers is raising achievements and making improvements. Some organisation within the school, and of subjects, assessment and planning, need further rigour.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have much improved the monitoring of the curriculum and evaluation of school performance. They have an informed view and a very clear understanding of strategic planning. There is an effective school improvement plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; although further analysis of pupils' learning to identify areas for improvement on a day to day basis should be made.
The strategic use of resources	Successful. Good use of local facilities has helped relieve the constraints of this school site. Staffing is directed well to support pupils' progress.

The headteacher, staff and governors are working closely together to provide a positive way forward for improvement. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and the curriculum by subject managers has proceeded steadily in almost all areas. Day to day management of the school is good. Finances are well organised and office administration and allocation of the budget are efficient. Governors' reports and school documents meet requirements.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year 6 booster groups to raise standards in English and mathematics.• Good relationships and a happy school.• Management of special educational needs.• The school listens to their concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further information, especially about the progress children are making.• A fairer system for pupils' rewards and sanctions.• More art and music.• Maintenance of special educational needs provision at the expense of booster groups in core subjects.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. However, some progress reports tend to be informal. The curriculum allows for an appropriate amount of time for physical education, art and music balanced against literacy and numeracy requirements. The school agrees to review the sanction and rewards policy in the light of some unfair application and inconsistency of use. Special educational needs is managed well but although individual education plans are consulted insufficiently in some lessons, the overall provision to help pupils in need is good in the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Inspection shows that children in reception progress well in most learning experiences as outlined in the principles for early years education, particularly in language development. However, there are still too few opportunities for a wide enough variety of outdoor learning and play where aspects of children's development could be even better.
2. Results of 1999 National Curriculum English tests for Year 2 pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 show the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2, the expected level, to be well above the national average in reading. These pupils are now in Year 4. Standards were very high in comparison with the national average in writing and mathematics.
3. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, (that is those with up to 8 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals), results in reading and writing are very high, and results in mathematics were well above the national average.
4. Over the past four years, there has been an overall increase in performance in national assessments, although there was a sharp dip in 1998 followed by a corresponding rise in 1999.
5. Science results for Key Stage 1 are from teacher assessments. In 1999, they were very high in comparison with all schools, and in line with similar schools. 2000 results are not as high as those in 1999, but at the time of the inspection there were no national comparisons available.
6. Results of 1999 National Curriculum tests in English for Year 6 pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, show the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4, the expected level, and the higher Level 5, to be well above the national average. In mathematics, the Level 4 results were above the national average, whilst the Level 5 results were well above. In science, the Level 4 results were close to the national average, and the Level 5 results well above.

7. When compared with similar schools, results in all three subjects are above the national average. Overall, results have improved over the last four years, with the exception of a sharp dip in 1998.

8. Preliminary results for 2000, show a sustained trend, with an above average percentage reaching Level 4 and the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics. In science, results are slightly lower for Level 4 and considerably higher for Level 5. Pupils' attainment when they join the school is a strong average, and they leave the school with achievements which are generally high in relation to their age. This means that pupils have made good progress during their time at the school.

9. The poor performance in 1998 was largely attributable to three factors. There was a larger than usual number of pupils with special educational needs; there were a number of pupils with behavioural difficulties who disrupted the learning of others; and some teaching did not meet the required standard. The targets set for English in 1999 were met, whilst the targets for mathematics were exceeded by ten per cent. The 2000 targets were missed by one per cent in English and by eight per cent in mathematics. The school has made vast improvements since the last inspection in 1998. The most important factors in improvements have been:-

- A determined effort by the governors, headteacher and senior managers to monitor and evaluate the work of the school;
- An improvement in the quality of most teaching;
- A thorough analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, with strategies in place to remedy the weaknesses;
- An effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

10. Pupils who join the school under five have a strong average attainment on arrival. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage in most areas, but because of restricted accommodation and a lack of resources and opportunity, progress in the development of physical and some associated skills is slower than it might be.

11. Inspection confirms that pupils' achievements in English at Key Stage 1 are in line with national averages, but with good development being made in reading and writing. Speaking and listening, and reading are above average by the end of Key Stage 2, with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 being above average in reading for their age. Writing is close to being above average, and likely to be so by the end of Year 6. Referencing skills using books and documents, need further development, especially in Years 4 and 5.

12. Standards in mathematics have fluctuated a good deal, but have improved dramatically since 1998. In particular, pupils are developing a good facility to work on mental problems and find different ways to do calculations. The co-ordinator's role in monitoring has been developed, although there is still a lack of rigour in this area.

13. Standards in science at this early stage in the year are in line with national expectations throughout the school. This represents an improvement since the school was last inspected. The improved quality of teaching, and careful planning to remedy pupils' gaps in knowledge, have been important factors in the improvement.

14. Pupils' attainment in information and communications technology (ICT) is below the expected levels in all strands of the subject, but is rapidly improving, especially in research, Internet and publishing. This is mainly due to the significant effect of the new resources and instruction in the recently opened information technology suite. However, there are deficiencies in data handling and use of computers in mathematics and science.

15. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the local education authority's agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages.

16. The last inspection found pupils' attainment and progress in design and technology to be in line with national expectations at both key stages. However, this is an area where there has been deterioration. The school has put its energies into remedying the deficiencies identified in other areas, and into implementing literacy and numeracy strategies. Unfortunately, this has meant that design and technology has suffered through lack of emphasis, and the National Curriculum requirements are not being met.

17. Evidence based on a scrutiny of pupils' past and present work, teachers' planning, and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that standards for geography and history are in line with national expectations in both subjects.

18. In the last inspection, attainment in music was broadly in line with national expectations at both key stages, although there was some below average attainment at Key Stage 2. Due to positive teaching the situation has now improved in that attainment is firmly in line with national expectations at both key stages, with strength in performing skills.

19. The school has inadequate facilities for physical education with a small hall and an unsuitable field in the adjacent public park. However, in spite of this, teachers and pupils work very hard to achieve an acceptable standard in gymnastics, dance and games. In swimming, there are good achievements.

20. The small number of pupils with special educational needs is well supported by management and learning support assistants. Pupils are making good progress with regard to their capabilities, towards the targets set for them. Individual education plans contain appropriate targets for both academic attainment and improvements in behaviour. Teachers and learning support assistants work hard together to monitor pupils' performance, and to recognise and praise what pupils have done well. Occasionally lessons designed for whole class groups do not contain enough information and modifications to provide even more support for such pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. Pupils' attitudes to school are good, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. Pupils bustle confidently into school at the beginning of the day. In lessons they are interested and keen to participate. They are generally able to sustain concentration, as for example in a Year 1 class watching a video of the story of Ruth in religious education. More able pupils in particular are developing the skills of independent study. A number of pupils, however, are rather passive, and wait to be told what to do.

22. Behaviour is good. This represents an improvement on the satisfactory behaviour noted in the previous inspection report. Pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 quickly absorb the school's codes of conduct. They know that they must share, take turns and put a hand up to speak. Pupils move about the school in an orderly fashion, displaying consideration and good manners. Most automatically hold doors open for adults. At lunch, they eat and chat together sociably, displaying good table manners. Play is lively but orderly. Constructive play is helped by the school's provision of class play boxes, containing balls, ropes and games. Pupils cope particularly well with the frustrations of being confined to their classrooms on wet days. There is no evidence of any unacceptable behaviour towards particular groups of pupils. There have been two fixed period exclusions over the preceding twelve months, both for very short periods.

23. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils are able to take responsibility for duties in their classrooms and about the school. Year 3 pupils, for example, help reception children to play co-operatively in their classroom on rainy days. Pupils with musical skills perform confidently in front of the rest of the school in assemblies. Whilst pupils respond well to duties they are allocated, there is less evidence of their acting on their own initiative.

24. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 offer sensible and constructive suggestions at meetings of the School Council. In personal, social and moral education lessons and assemblies, pupils of all ages demonstrate an increasing ability to appreciate issues such as sexism and racism.

25. Relationships throughout the school are good, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. The adults in school provide good role models of co-operative working. Teachers encourage pupils, allowing them to express their views; valuing these. Pupils are supportive of each other. They work co-operatively together and help each other in group tasks. They listen attentively to each other's contributions, sometimes rewarding particularly good efforts with spontaneous applause.

26. Attendance, at 95.09 per cent for the current academic year, is satisfactory and broadly in line with the level noted in the previous inspection report. There is no unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. The quality of teaching varies between very good and unsatisfactory. Across the school it is good. It is good in the infant classes with pupils aged seven and younger being taught well, as in the junior section. The good teaching of reception children has been maintained since the last inspection.

28. Organisation for, and the teaching of, pupils with special educational needs are managed well. Assessment and planning of work appropriate to each pupil's capability is accomplished successfully, especially when taught in small groups, or one to one by additional staff. Some individual education plans are referred to insufficiently to modify the work set for a whole class lesson.

29. The most successful lessons are accomplished because the teacher has a very clear idea of the range of pupils' capabilities and has carefully prepared activities to support their needs. Where the curriculum and structure for lessons is clearly documented, such as in literacy and numeracy, very good sessions were taught. Very good routines and relationships have been established and an understanding of what is expected to be accomplished is shared with pupils clearly. In turn pupils respond with interest, especially where debates are initiated from stimulating resources, coupled with interesting activities and a bright manner of delivery to promote good attention. Very good examples were in Years 2, 3 and 5 literacy, where pupils were inspired to reach above average achievements for their age due to very good organisation of resources and other adult support.

30. Lessons were less successfully taught where curriculum planning did not allow for a good balance of challenging work for all groups of pupils. For example, planning for a science lesson did not allow for the wide differences in pupils' age, understanding and previous knowledge sufficiently. Although good challenge using computers was provided for the most capable, other pupils needed more assistance and examples to consolidate facts about changes in daylight time as seasons progress, before comparisons could be made and complex problems solved.

31. Teachers mostly identify clear learning objectives in their lessons. Targets for improvements are prominent in exercise books. Marking is normally encouraging, showing errors made. Although pupils are made aware of targets for improvement there is little evidence that corrections are being made and consolidation taking place before the next piece of work is undertaken. Some written comments are often too complicated and difficult for pupils to read and act upon. Literacy is usually successfully taught because the clear structure of lessons is known by all and consequently lessons are conducted, and work carried out, with good pace and energy. Teachers are beginning to use ICT and computers well to support a range of different subjects, such as art and English and research using the Internet.

32. Classroom assistants provide a valuable addition to pupils' learning and are competent to carry out learning objectives on behalf of teaching staff. There is no doubt that teachers are working very hard in actual lessons, but there is not always enough detail of the short term objectives in some subjects to make lesson planning really efficient and to provide a subsequent useful scheme of work tailored to the needs of pupils. Although much informal discussion is carried out between teachers to provide a balanced programme so that relevant work for pupils can be planned, this is not always easily accomplished and some management by subject leaders could be better in the non-core subjects. Assessments of what pupils can do at the end of a lesson or sequence of work is not always written down even though it might be carried in the head of the teacher. Shortage of time makes it difficult for evaluations to be done later. Importantly, this makes it difficult for teachers to plan enough different activities across a wide number of subjects with which to support some pupils well enough in subsequent lessons.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

33. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good in most of the areas of learning for children under five, but good for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in all areas except design and technology in the key stages and aspects of the principles for early years education. Apart from these the curriculum is suitably structured to meet the needs of all pupils.

34. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for health and sex education and drugs awareness. They are covered in the science curriculum and as part of the Health Education programme.

35. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils in both key stages. However children under five lack equipment or facilities for outdoor play. This deficiency has not been improved upon even though reported in the last inspection. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy throughout the school and, with the exception of design and technology, all subjects are covered in the depth required. Literacy lessons are stimulating and well planned. Pupils' interest is sustained and their learning moves forward. The National Numeracy guidelines are used to support teachers' planning in mathematics and the levels of attainment in mental calculation have improved. A particular strength of the school is the links made between subjects, especially at Key Stage 1 where a cross-curricular approach is taken to integrate science, history and geography wherever possible. Since the last inspection curriculum development has focused mainly on the core subjects, and resulted in the successful implementation of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies.

36. Published schemes of work form the basis of teachers' planning for each term. This ensures that there is appropriate progression over time and that the areas of study are matched with the abilities of the majority of pupils. However, not all teachers' planning takes sufficient account of the need to provide opportunities for pupils to carry out independent investigations and research. Whilst pupils often work in pairs under the direct guidance of the teacher there is little evidence of them working collaboratively in groups on projects that build on knowledge and understanding gained in other areas of the curriculum. Teachers' weekly planning is clear about the content of lessons, but in a number of cases there is insufficient attention to the objectives that they wish to achieve, particularly in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

37. The school has good links with the nearby community college. A science week earlier in the year owed its success to the constructive relationship that has been fostered between the two schools. Members of the local community, particularly those connected with public services such as the fire brigade, police and nursing, come into school to discuss issues with groups of pupils.

38. A good range of extracurricular activities is provided for pupils, including art, dance, information and communications technology, music and sport. Regular outside visits, to the immediate local area and beyond, enhance the curriculum. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to visit a residential, multi-activity, outdoor centre where they gain experience in a range of activities as individuals and in teams.

39. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. The school has a caring ethos which permeates all aspects of school life. The policy for pupils' personal, social and moral education emphasises the need to be sensitive to the individual needs of pupils. The provision for the social, moral and cultural development of pupils is good. Provision for their spiritual development is satisfactory as there are only limited opportunities to develop this area. The school is aware of this and is seeking to promote more opportunities for pupils to reflect on their lives and their responses to aspects of the world around them.

40. Pupils' social development is promoted through many aspects of school life. Pupils in Year 6 are divided into teams, which have responsibilities around the school. The School Council is made up of pupils from Years 5 and 6. It is intended that all pupils will have the opportunity to take part in this. Across both key stages there are many planned opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs, sharing ideas and co-operating to achieve particular objectives. Right from the beginning of their school life pupils are encouraged to take turns and share resources. For example, Year 3 pupils discuss the meaning of friendship and how their actions would reflect that they had the right qualities to be considered a friend. The wide range of visits undertaken by all year groups enhance pupils' social development and aid their understanding of their place in the wider community. The residential visit enjoyed by Year 6 pupils provides them with an opportunity to live and work together in a different social context.

41. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. At the beginning of the school year each class works co-operatively to produce a code of conduct which is then displayed in the classroom. Consideration of the Ten Commandments during assembly was linked well to these classroom rules. On another occasion discrimination was taken as a theme for the assembly. Pupils were asked to consider how it might feel to be discriminated against and reference was made to the life of Nelson Mandela. Staff listen to pupils and provide good role models. Their interactions are supportive and encouraging.

42. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is fostered mainly through the daily act of collective worship and religious education lessons. The use of 'a prayer candle' in assemblies creates an atmosphere of stillness and reflection. There is evidence of art appreciation in the many stimulating displays around the school. Poetry is used to explore feelings and responses to given ideas. Music is now being developed more fully in the curriculum and pupils take pleasure in listening and performing.

43. Many areas of the curriculum contribute to pupils' cultural development. In English, pupils study the work of various poets. The artwork displayed around the school explores a range of media in a variety of styles. In Year 5, pupils look at the work of the artist Kandinsky to produce lively, colourful work in a similar style. In religious education Year 2 pupils study creation stories from other parts of the world.

44. A considerable number of visits are planned each year to enhance the curriculum and develop pupils' awareness of their own local culture. During the course of the inspection Year 1 pupils visited Saltram House to support their work in history. They compared the house with homes today. Pupils have visited Buckland Abbey, former home of Sir Francis Drake. There are visits to museums, the local woods and the nearby town to study the environment. Pupils receive an insight into the beliefs of others through their study of other world faiths in religious education. Provision for multicultural awareness is less well developed. The school has plans to extend this area of the curriculum. At present the school is visited every term by a small group of foreign students who are studying at the local

teachers' training college. A number of staff work hard to develop and maintain links with other countries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. There are satisfactory procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. The headteacher is responsible for matters relating to child protection. All staff, including assistants, are aware of the action to be taken in cases of concern. The headteacher has a co-operative working relationship with other statutory agencies. All necessary procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are in place. Some potential hazards were noted, however. The public park which pupils use in the absence of a field of their own is used by members of the public for dog walking. Some dog fouling is, therefore, inevitable. The raised pond in the environmental area is uncovered and the surface of that area - Victorian tiles - is very slippery when wet or covered in leaves. The sloping, covered walkway connecting classrooms gets wet and slippery in heavy rain. Overhanging branches add to this danger.

46. There are satisfactory arrangements for pupils' medical care, including first aid. Regular safety inspection of electrical appliances, fire equipment and physical education apparatus is carried out. Fire drills are held regularly.

47. Pupil attendance is monitored satisfactorily. Registers are properly maintained and checked daily. The school is aware of those older pupils who walk to school unescorted and would contact their homes if they failed to arrive. In cases where pupil attendance presents a problem, the services of an education welfare officer are available. Parents are reminded that holidays in term time are not a right and adversely affect pupils' learning. The incidence of families taking holidays in term time is increasing, but has yet to constitute a real problem.

48. The school has sound procedures for promoting good behaviour. Children are introduced to the school's behavioural requirements as soon as they enter the reception class; most respond quickly. There are codes of conduct for both key stages, to which pupils themselves contributed. Good work, behaviour and effort are rewarded by stamps, which lead to further rewards and certificates issued at celebration assemblies. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were concerned that the reward system was inconsistent, and not valued by pupils. Inspection evidence supports that view. Consequently, the school has initiated a review of the system. Records are kept of behavioural problems and, where necessary, parents are involved. A 'no-blame' approach is taken when instances of bullying occur. Staff use personal, social and moral education lessons and 'circle time' (an informal opportunity for pupils to discuss sensitive matters with their teacher) to address issues such as personal relationships. The machinery for dealing with racial harassment exists, but the school is successful in creating an atmosphere which reduces such behaviour.

49. Satisfactory procedures are in place for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress. The school undertakes a detailed analysis of national test results and uses the findings effectively to target areas of weakness. Optional national and other assessments are used in Years 3, 4 and 5 and trends are identified to provide information about attainment and progress in each year group. Specific areas for development have been identified in both English and mathematics. Pupils' progress in English is monitored and assessed through the use of 'Special Books'. Each pupil has a book which is designed to travel with him or her throughout the school. Every half term an assessment task is set, which is recorded in such a book. The work is given a level of national attainment and areas for development are noted. This is a good feature and will provide a useful record with which to measure pupils' progress.

50. Assessment information is used satisfactorily to inform planning in mathematics and English. However, with the exception of a newly introduced logbook for ICT there are no agreed systems for the assessment of science, religious education and the non core subjects. The absence of assessment criteria for these areas means that teachers lack the information needed to identify clearly what pupils know, understand and can do, so that they

can then plan the curriculum accordingly. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent, ranging from good at the end of Key Stage 2, where specific targets to help pupils improve are clearly stated, to simple ticks further down the school. There is evidence of evaluative comment on teachers' weekly plans, however this initiative is in its early stages and the depth and value of the comments differs from class to class.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school has developed good links with parents. It provides information of good quality about the school, educational issues and the progress of individual pupils. The school prospectus is informative and written in parent-friendly language. The headteacher keeps parents informed of staffing matters. Regular newsletters are issued, giving good notice of school events. Parents are given advance notice of the topics their children will be studying. Pupil reports are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements. Parents have three formal opportunities a year for individual consultations with their children's teachers at which targets and the child's progress against those targets are discussed. In addition, parents are invited to open evenings when their children first start school and again when they change classes. Parents regard staff as very approachable; minor problems are easily resolved with a swift word after school. The school makes strenuous efforts to involve parents in reviews of the progress of children with special educational needs.

52. The school promotes a good degree of parental involvement. As many as twenty parents volunteer their help in school. They provide general assistance in Key Stage 1 classes; they help with reading, with after school clubs and in providing transport for school visits. Parents with particular expertise, such as music, are well used to supplement the school's resources. Parents are consulted on matters such as sex education and homework, and the school has provided information meetings on curriculum matters - numeracy hour for example. Parents are welcome to attend school events such as sports day, music and drama productions and class assemblies.

53. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning at home. Each child has a home-school book, which is used to record homework and for passing messages between home and school. In addition all pupils have home-school reading records. These records can act as effective vehicles for home-school dialogue, but this opportunity is not always taken up.

54. Whilst parents generally have a very positive view of the school, respondents to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed concerns regarding three aspects; the quality of information for parents, the range of extracurricular opportunities; and the school's co-operation with parents. The inspection team considers that the school provides a good range of information about school activities and pupil progress. Pupil reports are basic but they must be considered together with formal and informal opportunities for parent-teacher dialogue. The range of extracurricular opportunities, including lunchtime and after school clubs and the Year 6 residential visit, is good. Finally, the school goes out of its way to involve parents and secure their co-operation.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The school has successfully implemented changes in leadership and management and established predominantly good structures whereby pupils' achievements and learning are enhanced. Many procedures were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The senior management team has been reorganised, and leadership of the most important curriculum areas of English and mathematics, including major aspects of the school's work, has been improved. Governors have extended their insight into the work of the school to provide a clear understanding and informed view which was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. Governors fulfil their statutory duties very well in all, but do not ensure full curriculum provision for children in the Foundation Stage and, in the key stages, for

design and technology. Here, coverage is inadequate and pupils' achievements are lower than they should be.

56. Sufficient monitoring is an improvement over the last inspection. Good relationships exist between staff and governors so that monitoring of lessons and other observations are undertaken in an atmosphere of mutual trust.

57. The management of change is satisfactory. However, there is room for improvement to complement beneficial effects that frequent monitoring is beginning to have. Observation of teaching, as well as sampling pupils' work, is made regularly by subject leaders, teachers, headteacher and governors, but sometimes only strengths of lessons are noted. A balance of successful teaching points with those areas for development is not made sufficiently in some reviews. Furthermore, for example, assessments are not always accurate in providing the correct National Curriculum level for some pieces of writing. Evaluation leading to improvements still needs developing, especially in improving day to day planning and recording of the curriculum linked to pupils' individual needs.

58. The school has an adequate number of staff. They are suitably qualified to deliver the curriculum. Classroom assistants, who are deployed well and make a significant contribution to the progress of pupils, help effectively. Appropriate induction arrangements are in place for newly appointed staff and these have been successfully followed by the headteacher. Staff have professional development interviews every term. As well as identifying areas in which they require support or would like further training, it enables a regular input of their ideas and perspectives on whole school issues. All members of staff have job descriptions. However, with the exception of the one for the headteacher, all others are not sufficiently detailed. Subject co-ordinators simply have an additional sheet of paper with their job description, which says what subject(s) they are responsible for. There is no indication of how they should fulfil their role.

59. The school has an adequate equal opportunities policy and all subject policies include a statement on equal opportunities. Teachers ensure that all pupils feel valued regardless of gender or ability. Equal opportunities for the two sexes were observed in practice throughout the school, and particular attention was paid to boys working with girls in pairs, especially in physical education. However, in a few cases, equal opportunities are provided, but not taken up, as is the case of music clubs, where nearly all participants are girls. Multicultural importance is stressed when studying other faiths in religious education.

60. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school occupies a number of buildings - some Victorian, some modern, some permanent, some temporary - which have been extended and modified on numerous occasions. The consequence is inconveniently arranged accommodation, which is not totally suited to the delivery of a 21st century curriculum. There is insufficient outdoor space for the number and ages of pupils and there is no discrete secure play space for Foundation Stage children. Pupils use the adjacent public park for play and outdoor activities but that space is not under the school's control. The public has free access and dog droppings in particular present a health hazard. The classroom used by Year 3 is small and has no internal toilet facilities. During the inspection, torrential rain made conditions extremely poor for pupils and staff using this classroom. The temporary building housing the class has reached the end of its useful life having already had remedial work done to secure the roof. Other classrooms, though adequate in size, have poor acoustics because of solid floors and very high ceilings, and there is insufficient light in the Year 6 classroom because external foliage obscures the windows. There is insufficient storage space. Arrangements to provide enough space for a full class of five year olds are somewhat inadequate. There is a distinct possibility that for the predicted number anticipated next term it will not be possible to provide a good enough learning environment.

61. First aid is administered in a space between hall and adult lavatories - there is no room for a bed for children who are unwell. The premises are cleaned and maintained to the

best of the cleaner-in-charge's ability and diligence, but efficiency is difficult due to the many nooks and crannies afforded by the arrangement of buildings.

62. There are sufficient resources to enable the school to carry out most of its work reasonably well. However there are deficiencies in the school library provision and for the outdoor curriculum for Foundation Stage children.

63. The school creates a positive ethos for most of its work, and has secured success in meeting its aims and intentions to improve on the last inspection. It has established realistic targets to raise pupils' achievements. The senior management team and governors have appropriate vision and have set goals for development. The school improvement plan is detailed for the current year and includes some longer term plans, which highlight the development of computer facilities and improving accommodation. School administration and its day to day running is efficient. However, the cause and effect of some decisions could be better in the short term. For example there is no clear idea for the siting of the library now that the computer suite has been installed. Storage and organisation of accommodation and its efficient heating, poses considerable problems due to constraints of the school site. Much hard work has gone into minuting staff meetings but actions and timescales are not always documented and adhered to.

64. Overall much progress has been achieved in the short term and taking into consideration that:-

- good progress has been made in most weak aspects identified in the last inspection;
- a higher than average percentage of pupils are achieving the expected (Level 4) and that above (Level 5) at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science;
- the overall good level of teaching across the school;
- most pupils display good attitudes;
- some curriculum, resources, assessment and its use are underdeveloped;

The school gives at least satisfactory value for money which is an improvement over the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The school has already identified and made good progress in some of the areas for development, but in order for it to improve further and to increase the pace of change the headteacher, staff and governors should:-

- **Raise** the achievements of pupils in technology by:-
 - o Building on good planning already in place in information and communications technology so that data handling, control and measurement are extended across the curriculum particularly into mathematics and science;
 - o Planning for, and teaching, the complete curriculum for design and technology.

Paragraphs: 14, 16, 33, 35, 55, 92, 97, 109, 117, 118.

- **Extend** leadership and management roles to improve the overall good teaching even further by;
 - o Developing an effective system of assessment and evaluation of pupils' work; creating written records in order to provide good learning opportunities in day to day planning of lessons;
 - o Ensuring that marking is understandable to pupils and that those targets set for improvement are met;
 - o Establishing that examples of pupils' work are levelled against the National Curriculum, accurately to a consistent standard;
 - o Setting timescales and allocating responsibilities for completion of agreements made by staff in staff meetings;
 - o Improving the details in teachers' job descriptions to show how responsibilities may be carried out.

Paragraphs: 20, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 36, 50, 57, 58, 63, 75, 83, 91, 93, 99, 104, 106, 115, 130, 135, 136.

- **Improve** resources and their organisation for reception children, so that the principles for early education are met completely.

Paragraphs: 1, 10, 33, 35, 55, 60, 62, 67, 73.

- **Press** forward with plans to improve accommodation:
 - o Improving the quality of the 'stand alone' temporary classroom;
 - o Improving lighting in temporary classrooms;
 - o Securing pupils' safety from the overhanging trees growing within, or on, the boundaries of the school.

Paragraphs: 45, 60.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

48

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14.6	52	29.2	4.2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

195

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

18

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

26

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

5

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

9

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.91
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	20	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	19	20	20
	Total	33	34	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97(100)	100(85)	100(79)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	34	34	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (82)	100 (79)	100 (85)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	17	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	13	12	12
	Total	28	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (46)	82 (33)	85 (75)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	12	11	11
	Total	27	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52	82	82
	National	68	69	75

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	193
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.07
Average class size	27.85

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	94

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
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	£
Total income	357429
Total expenditure	360534
Expenditure per pupil	1888
Balance brought forward from previous year	19786
Balance carried forward to next year	16681

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	197
Number of questionnaires returned	75

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	23	9	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	38	13	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	51	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	53	8	4	3
The teaching is good.	38	58	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	40	26	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	29	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	42	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	51	16	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	20	64	15	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	53	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	36	25	5	15

Percentages above may not total 100 due to rounding.

Other issues raised by parents

The registered inspector attended a meeting of 34 parents before the inspection. There were 15 letters with the Ofsted questionnaires. The letters represented a balance of views including good support for the school, headteacher and staff. There were a number of concerns about the variation of the quality and consistency of some homework. The regularity in checking spellings was questioned, as was the imbalance of art and music lessons in favour of literacy and numeracy. Parents were pleased with the quality of extra help given to their children who were in Year 6, but some felt that this support was at the expense of special educational needs provision. A considerable debate about the effectiveness and inconsistency of the sanctions and rewards to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes was raised at the meeting.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

66. All children in the Foundation Stage were under the age of five at the time of the inspection. Judging by achievements of pupils just starting the new school year in Year 1, attainment in most of the required goals is considered a good average, but good in speaking and listening.

67. As raised in the last inspection, provision, so that children can receive ample opportunities in the outdoor curriculum is insufficient. This impinges on some of their social and physical development. The present classroom has restricted space due to its size, storage and large resources and this makes it difficult for the teacher to establish the full range of early years experiences, especially when a full complement of children attend later in the year.

68. Children are given the opportunity to start school in the term before they are five. Most have had pre-school experience at local playgroups. This prepares them well for sustained concentration and group work. The school makes appropriate baseline assessment of children's attainments on entry. These are judged to be a strong average.

69. There is a good response in lessons. Children show an interest in all activities and listen well to stories and information from the teacher or learning assistant. They contribute to whole class feedback sessions well. Most can follow simple instructions and concentrate for expected periods of time. The behaviour of this small group of children is very good and children are developing a firm understanding of right and wrong.

70. Children understand that print and illustrations convey meaning. They are encouraged to write simple annotations on their work and most begin to write their names and simple words independently. Children enjoy drawing and discussing the exploits of Goldilocks. The teaching of literacy is good and children talk readily about the content of the stories they are told.

71. Children are provided with a satisfactory range of mathematical experiences and have opportunities to extend the use of appropriate language. They develop the concept of one to one correspondence, copying and creating repeating patterns to develop counting, matching and sequencing skills. The majority can name simple shapes such as square and triangle and are familiar with numbers up to ten. Most are beginning to recognise written numbers.

72. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed satisfactorily within the classroom. Some very good role play is encouraged such as through the Great Kitchen linked to a recent visit the children made to the nearby National Trust's Saltram House. Planning shows that themes are regularly changed and this is beneficial to children's interest and learning. Aspects of technology are developed sufficiently through the use of construction toys and using computers in the computer suite where, for example, children create pictures representing the exploits of the Three Bears.

73. Most of the children hold pencils correctly and use scissors appropriately. The development of their physical skills is encouraged in a good number of ways. Children are given opportunities to cut, stick, handle tools and explore a variety of materials to develop their manipulative skills. For example, children make model figures out of paper and card as well as using constructional resources. Provision for the development of gross motor skills is restricted by limited regular access to an outdoor play area and there are insufficient large toys and gardens specific for their use.

74. Children's creative awareness is developed effectively through a variety of activities. Children have many opportunities to draw and paint in response to a range of stimuli including making commendable sketches of the school buildings. They sing with confidence and enjoyment, along with others in assemblies.

75. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the positive teaching and curriculum provision reported, thus making a strong contribution to children's early learning experiences, attainment and progress. Strategies for managing the use of space and equipment in and out of the classroom could be better, although there are long term aims to build improved facilities. In line with development across the school, daily assessment opportunities could be improved.

English

76. Across the school, implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been thorough, resulting in above average achievements in speaking, listening and reading, of most pupils leaving school aged eleven. Realistic targets have been set which are above national expectations at this moment and inspection shows that there are indications that such targets will be again be met in the current year with an above average percentage of pupils reaching the expected levels or above.

77. Broadly speaking, national assessments in the reporting year 1999 show that most pupils at the end of Year 2 were achieving levels that are about two terms ahead in reading and writing when compared to most other schools. By the time the majority of pupils leave the school at the age of eleven in Year 6, they are reaching standards in English as a whole that are a good average, if not better, with overall progress exceeding the national average by the equivalent of almost three terms. Inspection shows that by the time pupils are eleven there is every likelihood that a majority will reach above that normally expected at this age.

78. The majority of children come into Year 1 with some good experiences of language. School assessments show that their attainments are a strong average particularly in speaking, listening and reading.

79. Inspection confirms that a majority of infant pupils are continuing to learn well, and judging from the solid attainments of most pupils who have just started Year 3, reach good standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1. The quality of handwriting and extended writing shows good progress, and an improvement over the previous inspection where writing was judged to be unsatisfactory at the end of Year 2.

80. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 speaking and listening skills are good. Their understanding about complex social issues is suitably developed by good opportunities to debate: for example for and against the killing of basking sharks simply to make shark-fin soup. By the end of the lesson pupils had grasped a good appreciation of the situation, developing skills of prediction and inference.

81. Most pupils enjoy reading. By the time they reach the end of the junior phase, reading skills are predominantly above average although the ability to use books and the library to research and make references is variable from year to year. Pupils are given good opportunities to draft their work and to develop an appreciation of poetry and prose, and write their own. They express themselves sensitively in written texts. Presentation of written work is neat and careful across the curriculum and school. Apart from the previous Year 4 class, handwriting shows good progression.

82. Teaching of literacy is often very good, but good in the majority of lessons. The reason for the good quality of lessons is that both teachers and pupils are well versed in the pattern of the session. Pupils enjoy the pace generated and the interesting variation to each section. They work hard. Special needs teaching of English is of a good quality and is beneficial in improving reading and writing skills. Teachers are gaining confidence in the

comparatively recent framework for teaching literacy, but occasionally, in the less successful lessons, day to day planning for the objectives for work is not varied sufficiently to help some pupils. For example, in an overall satisfactorily taught poetry appreciation lesson in Year 4 some pupils made too little progress in writing their own poems to the theme of 'Danny the Cat'. Guidelines and strategies for tackling this appropriate but tough challenge were insufficient.

83. The school has emphasised in planning, the development of literacy and pupils' skills in English and drama. It has identified the need to extend writing for a broader range of different purposes such as imaginative stories, styles and accuracy. Management of the subject is most effective in supporting improvements although currently the amount of time the subject manager has to monitor teaching is less than desirable. In other respects good sampling of work is being made; the keeping of a 'special book' whereby pupils regularly retain samples of writing is a good feature. However, some assessment of this work against national levels is not accurate enough. There is a need to improve the consistency of different teachers' marking and evaluation, as well as ensuring that pupils make corrections and consolidate work thoroughly through the general reminders set in individual targets.

84. Sufficient training for teachers and governors is made available and regular 'booster classes' to extend pupils' learning, are bringing about improvements in knowledge and skills. Local education authority advisors are assisting improvements in pupil performance by providing training and guidance for staff. Governors are active in monitoring progress in pupils' achievements, especially in the sharing of information through the teacher/governor buddy system, which is proving very effective.

85. Resources are sufficient to teach literacy across the school. Good use of the newly installed computer suite in obtaining and using information through the Internet is raising achievements across the school. Links with the local press are made well and Year 6 pupils learn much about journalism by publishing their own newspaper. However, research and referencing through books is an area for development. Opportunities are not always made in some year groups to teach the desired skills. The range of books in the library is too narrow and its position, following the introduction of the ICT suite, needs clarification.

Mathematics

86. The 1999 National Curriculum tests showed the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 and above at the end of Key Stage 1 were very high in comparison with the national average and similar schools. Indications are that Year 2000 results are similar. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4, the expected level, and the higher Level 5, was above the national average. These results were very high compared with similar schools. Year 2000 results are similar, although there are fewer pupils achieving Level 5. The trend in both key stages has been upward over the last four years, with the exception of a dip in 1998. However, the school has more than made up for this in 1999 and 2000.

87. Inspection findings show that at the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is well in line with national expectations. This is a strong position to be in at this early stage of the academic year. There are indications that pupils in Year 2 are well placed to achieve better than the national average by the end of the key stage, as are the pupils in Year 6, who have a significant number of pupils already at Level 4 and approaching Level 5. This is an improvement since the last inspection in Key Stage 2 where attainment at the higher levels was below expectations. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented which has ensured that pupils are developing proficiency and confidence with numbers. For example, by the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils can accurately read, write and order numbers to 1000, and can round numbers to the nearest ten. They are developing a variety of mental methods for addition and subtraction calculations, with the more able adding two sums of money in their heads. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can find solutions to a variety of mental problems. This includes negative numbers, fractions,

decimals and percentages. The emphasis on pupils finding their own strategies for calculations is having a beneficial impact on their understanding of number, and consequently on their achievements

88. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in Key Stage 1 are satisfactory and pupils are beginning to work without direct supervision from the teacher. In Key Stage 2, attitudes and behaviour are usually good. Most pupils settle well to their work and concentrate for good periods of time. They become very involved in their work and co-operate sensibly with each other. A minority of pupils, particularly in Year 4, have yet to reach this stage.

89. Mathematics teaching has many strengths and some areas which need to be developed. Overall, teaching in both key stages is good with some very good teaching in Key Stage 2. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection and has been brought about by help and advice from the local education authority, and the good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, which has added a helpful structure to the curriculum and to each lesson.

90. The good aspects of teaching, seen in both key stages, are:

- A clear direction to the lesson, with appropriate learning objectives.
- Teachers' secure subject knowledge with clear explanations and demonstrations.
- Different levels of work set for different groups within the class.
- Pupils that are well managed, motivated and on task.
- Group work is well organised with plenty of opportunity for pupils to practise what they have learned.
- Good use of learning support assistants with individuals and groups.

91. In some instances, teaching could be developed further by:

- Ensuring that tasks set are appropriate for the level of pupils.
- Ensuring that instructions are clear, enabling groups to work at tasks without relying on the teacher.
- Making sure that the pace of lessons is sufficient to maintain pupils' interest.
- Adopting strategies which will be successful in maintaining attentive behaviour.

92. Numeracy skills are being taught well and are consolidated in other subjects such as science, with data handling, and design and technology through measurement. This is having a positive impact on pupils' skills with number. However, the use of information and communications technology to give practice in a variety of number skills, to present data in graphic form, or, for example, to study tessellation, is underdeveloped.

93. The subject is managed effectively. Test results are analysed carefully to identify areas of strength and weakness, and this informs planning. The co-ordinator's observation of lessons at present is restricted to the mental/oral sessions which, though valuable, is not sufficiently thorough, and is not rigorous enough to ensure that maximum benefit is gained from the exercise. There are sufficient resources to teach the curriculum, although an audit of resources is required to replace much equipment which is looking tired. Homework is used satisfactorily to support mathematics.

Science

94. Results of 1999 National Curriculum assessments for eleven year olds, showed that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 was well above the national average. Comparison of these results with those for pupils in similar schools showed them to be well above average. The results of the most recent end of key stage assessments show that standards have been maintained. Teacher assessments of seven year olds in 1999 showed standards of attainment above or well above the national average in all aspects of the subject, except experimental and investigative science. In this aspect results were in line with national expectation. The most recent teacher assessments show, that whilst the number of pupils

achieving the expected Level 2 has increased, the proportion achieving the higher Level 3 has dropped significantly.

95. The evidence gained from the inspection shows standards at this early stage in the year to be in line with national expectations throughout the school. At Key Stage 1 this represents an improvement since the school was last inspected. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils have a growing understanding of the properties of materials and that they have studied the differences and similarities between various groups of living things. They have made simple circuits and have undertaken some investigative work. In some instances there is a tendency to focus on carrying out the investigation rather than the questions raised by the outcomes. Work by Year 2 pupils requiring them to compare the living things found on an ivy covered wall, with those found in the park, demonstrated their ability to use their knowledge and understanding of the preferred habitats of living things. Pupils in Year 1 discuss ways in which different animals move and understand that this has a bearing on the lifestyle of each animal.

96. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils understand the need for a fair test and can make reasoned predictions about the outcomes of investigative work. Year 3 pupils are developing an understanding of the importance of each stage of an investigation and the need to examine what they already know before they can make appropriate predictions. Pupils in Year 4 use scientific terms to discuss how and why resistance slows an object moving through water. They relate this well to an experiment recently carried out to investigate air resistance. At the end of the key stage, pupils learning about the life cycle of plants labelled diagrams using the correct terms for each stage. However, some lower attaining pupils are not secure in their understanding of what happens at each point in the cycle. Previously completed work focusing on the analysis of soil samples shows pupils' good observational skills and use of scientific knowledge.

97. Whilst most pupils make at least satisfactory progress, higher attaining pupils do not always have opportunities to set up their own experiments to test ideas and hypotheses. This combined with limited opportunities to use ICT to collate data and produce reports, limits the extension of their thinking in science. There is limited evidence of work being varied to take account of lower attaining pupils. This results in difficulties in the recording of investigative work and pupils' poor understanding of results.

98. Pupils enjoy science and most show a positive attitude to their work. They listen well to the teacher and to each other, following instructions carefully. Although there are few opportunities for pupils to show initiative and explore their own questions, they respond well to the practical activities devised by the teacher, working co-operatively and with enthusiasm.

99. The quality of science teaching is usually satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and lessons are well planned to build on previous work. Well directed questioning was a feature of most of the lessons observed. In some instances however, questions are so tightly focused that they do not allow pupils to answer at their own level of understanding. Good use of appropriate scientific vocabulary was evident in both key stages as well as a commitment to developing good practice in the recording of scientific investigations. This good foundation is not exploited enough to encourage independent investigations by pupils. The school lacks agreed systems for assessment in science. In Years 5 and 6 work in books is well annotated to identify areas that need to be further developed. However, this good practice is not used consistently throughout the school. At Key Stage 1 although work is marked, the quality of this marking is inconsistent. As work books are the only record of pupils' understanding, a tick does not give sufficient indication of areas in which pupils need further support.

100. Following the last inspection the subject co-ordinator was given time to monitor teaching throughout the school and to support and advise colleagues. She has worked hard to raise the profile of science and increase understanding of curriculum requirements. Last

year the school held a highly successful science week with the support of the local community college. A commercially produced scheme of work is used throughout the school to ensure that all areas of scientific understanding are covered at a level appropriate to each year group. The programme of school based in-service training is set to continue later this term. The subject co-ordinator keeps portfolios of previously completed work with examples from all year groups. Work is levelled against the National Curriculum and annotated enabling her to monitor standards and track progress throughout the school.

Art

101. Considering the early stage of the academic year there is a good range of displayed art which demonstrates a wide use of a variety of media and application to an above average standard. However, inspection of lessons and further scrutiny of the full age and capability across the school shows most pupils' achievements are broadly average.

102. Learning is good across the school. Art is valued for itself and as an important, enriching activity. It is used as a link with other subjects, such as geography, history and literature. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. However, there is an underuse of art and reference books from a sufficiently wide range of non-Western influences.

103. By the time pupils have reached the end of Year 2, they have had a good experience of the application of paint, including colour mixing, printing and modelling. Achievements are satisfactory although observational drawings and paintings of sunflowers show careful brushwork, clear colours and pencil lines. Year 1 pupils' display of seascape paintings shows a similar level of care.

104. Provision for junior pupils is broad and interesting and includes clay and fabric-work. Year 4 pupils reach good standards in capturing, in pencil, the details of 'Oliver's bicycle'. Whilst Year 6 pupils work hard to incorporate successfully light and shade into still life drawings of geometric shapes and wooden blocks. Teaching is good, particularly where interest and relevance is encouraged, such as reception pupils making lively sketches of the school buildings; or Year 6 pupils' flower studies translated into appliqué and cross-stitch embroideries. Pupils are motivated sufficiently and make perceptive comments. They enjoy talking about their work.

105. Members of the art club rise to imaginative challenges: for example in their use of oil pastels to create careful and colourful compositions of a fishing village.

106. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Although pupils are encouraged to try out ideas on scrap paper, the school has decided to abandon the use of sketchbooks. As there is no class collection of previous work which is assessed and levelled, teachers and parents as well as pupils are denied the opportunity to fully gauge the progress being made. As in the last inspection, assessment procedures for art are weak.

Design and Technology

107. Only one lesson of design and technology was observable during the inspection. In this lesson, teaching was good, with good pace and challenge, which was readily accepted by pupils. Good questioning encouraged pupils to think about solutions to the problem of making a strong beam from a piece of A4 paper.

108. In the very few samples of work seen, pupils' skills of making appear satisfactory. They measure, mark out, cut and shape a variety of materials and assemble components with an appropriate degree of accuracy. In Key Stage 2, assembled photograph frames show that pupils understand the importance of quality in the finished product. Good links have been made with other subjects. For example, careful drawings are made at the planning stage, and electric circuits are used when making models, some to light bulbs and others to

use electric motors. There is too little evidence on which to base a detailed analysis of the subject. However, overall, it is apparent that pupils are not developing their skills satisfactorily as they practise them on too few occasions. They need more opportunities to investigate the workings of familiar products and to choose the tools and materials from which to make their models.

109. The last inspection indicated attainment in line with national expectations at both key stages for design and technology, although there were serious weaknesses in other areas of the curriculum. Understandably, the school has put much time and effort into overcoming these weaknesses. In addition, national initiatives have necessitated considerable attention being given to literacy, numeracy, and information and communications technology. This has led to insufficient emphasis being placed on design and technology, which has taken a back seat in the school's development plans. As such, it has caused the current situation where the National Curriculum requirements are not being met.

Geography and History

110. Pupils' achievements are in line with national expectations in geography and history.

111. At Key Stage 1 pupils develop an awareness of the ways lives have changed over time through a planned visit to Saltram House; an historic building. They compare the rooms in the house with those in their own homes and consider how people lived in the past. Previous work comparing seaside holidays now, with those enjoyed in Victorian times gives further evidence of pupils' growing awareness of how things change over time. Year 2 pupils learn about famous people and write about someone they would like to meet from the past.

112. At Key Stage 2 the one lesson observable was at the end of the key stage where the history focus was Britain in the 1930s. This lesson built on pupils' understanding of life in Britain at this time so that pupils could understand the actions of the men who took part in the Jarrow march. Pupils extracted key information from a series of newspaper articles, which tracked the progress of the march. This helped pupils to gain a clearer picture of how the actions of the marchers were perceived at the time.

113. In geography, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are developing a good understanding of the location of other countries in relation to Britain. They identify some of the key countries on a world map and are developing good geographical language. This was evident in their description of the journey of an apple from New Zealand to England. Previous work shows that pupils can compare the similarities and differences between the local area of Ivybridge and the Isle of Struay which is featured in a popular children's book. Year 1 pupils use the local area well to support the development of their knowledge and understanding of places.

114. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils know the names of the continents and some of the countries within them. They use atlases competently to locate key cities within those countries. Pupils show satisfactory enquiry skills and use appropriate geographical language to discuss areas of understanding. Pupils in Year 4 examine the water cycle and how water is treated. This is very well linked to aspects of science.

115. The quality of pupils' responses is usually good. There is a high level of co-operation when sharing resources or discussing aspects of their learning. Pupils listen carefully and are keen to answer questions. In a history lesson observed, the teaching was good. The teacher had good subject knowledge and used resources well to support pupils' learning. In the two geography lessons observed teachers' questioning was well structured, pupils were fully involved and a good pace was maintained. Whilst there are schemes of work in place for both these subjects there are no identified assessment criteria to pinpoint what pupils know and can do. This sometimes results in a lack of challenge for more able pupils.

116. The co-ordinator for these subjects is enthusiastic and has successfully maintained the profile of both. It is some time since she has been able to monitor teaching and learning

in other classrooms. However, teachers' planning is checked regularly and pupils' work scrutinised to ascertain that there is appropriate progression in their skills and understanding. The curriculum for both these subjects is greatly enhanced by a wide range of educational visits and homework is used satisfactorily.

Information and Communications Technology

117. This is a subject which is showing much improvement but pupils' achievements are below current expectations. It is difficult to compare standards with those of the last inspection, for although they were deemed good at that time the requirements for ICT have changed and are much more demanding.

118. New resources have been purchased and an effective computer suite established. Governors have been closely involved in the facility and the raising of the subject's profile on the curriculum. Careful planning ensures that all pupils receive at least the minimum recommended taught time to use computers. A good feature is the extension to lessons by allowing pupils to make use of the resources at other times, including lunchtimes and after school. Pupils' capabilities to research data and information is growing in confidence. For example, pupils investigated the progress made by athletes in the Sydney Olympic games using the Internet, with fast improving skills. Pupils' ability to assemble, interrogate and make good use of data they have collected to help with mathematics or science is underemphasised, although improvements within curriculum planning are developing. Creating and printing newspaper style publications have become a regular and successful feature of the work of Year 6 pupils. Across the school sufficient opportunities are made for text writing and artwork.

119. Staff expertise in ICT is growing and, as the subject is a focus for development, further in-service training is planned. Even whilst waiting for suitable training, teachers and assistants are increasing their confidence to operate equipment and learn new programs for themselves. There is a good sharing of ideas and knowledge so that good practice is seen in all lessons. Methods of storing pupils' work and assessing standards are underdeveloped but curriculum planning is improving, based on national guidelines and county advice to extend resources.

Music

120. In the last inspection, attainment was broadly in line with national expectations at both key stages, although there was some below average attainment at Key Stage 2. The situation has now improved in that attainment is in line with national expectations at both key stages, with a strength in performing skills.

121. Pupils are given good opportunities to play a variety of instruments both in class lessons, assembly and in the extracurricular music clubs. They enjoy this work and handle instruments with care and sensitivity. They have a sound sense of rhythm and good appreciation of loud and soft. In Key Stage 1, pupils combine these effectively to appreciate texture in music. Key Stage 2 pupils experiment with sound to represent a space journey. Here, good links are made with their studies of the sun, moon and earth in science. They carefully rehearse their piece in preparation for playing it to others in class. Good use is made of vocabulary in describing their feelings when pupils hear percussion music. Good opportunities are given to recorder, flute and keyboard players to accompany the singing of hymns in assembly. Pupils sing well in assembly and in lessons, and know a range of songs by heart.

122. Only one lesson was observable in each key stage, but teaching was good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. All pupils are given plenty of opportunities to play percussion instruments during lessons, and they are encouraged to experiment with sound. They do so enthusiastically, and teachers maintain very good order with firm discipline, but with sympathetic understanding of the situation. This allows pupils to try different

approaches to making sound with some effective results. Subject knowledge is satisfactory, but very good in Key Stage 2 where the lesson was taken by the co-ordinator. Resources are easily accessible and used well.

123. Pupils respond very enthusiastically when playing instruments. They handle instruments with care and sensitivity, and co-operate very well with each other to produce shared music.

124. At the time of the inspection the present co-ordinator had only been in post for two weeks. She has a very good understanding of the subject and how she wants to develop it. The school is just adopting the new curriculum developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Due attention is given to all areas of music education, with an emphasis on performance. Additional opportunities are offered to pupils at choir, lunchtime recorder clubs, and an after school instrumental group, where pupils who learn flute and clarinet outside school are encouraged to join with percussion and recorder players to form an ensemble. Whilst all these opportunities are open to all, they are taken up almost entirely by girls. A review of the type of songs sung and music played could do much to encourage boys to participate. Assessment opportunities have yet to be identified. Accommodation allows for a separate studio, which is often used for teaching music. There is a sufficient range of instruments for pupils to play, although a wider range of opportunities could be offered with more tuned percussion and instruments of non-Western, ethnic origin. Instruments are stored well and are easily accessible. However, there are too few books about music, composers or instruments in the library.

Physical education

125. The school has inadequate facilities for physical education with a small hall and an unsuitable field in the adjacent park. However, in spite of this, teachers and pupils work very hard and achieve an acceptable standard in gymnastics, dance and games. In swimming, good standards are reached.

126. In Key Stage 1, pupils are gaining control over their gymnastic movements, and beginning to put them together into simple sequences. In games, pupils are able to control and strike a ball with their hands, feet and implements, with good co-ordination. In dance, most pupils perform expressive movements from a music stimulus. For example, they move as animals in response to Saint Saens' Carnival of the Animals. Dance is well linked to other areas of the curriculum. Naturally, music plays an important part, but so do other subjects. For instance, in geography pupils are studying the journey of an apple, which they then portray in dance.

127. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop gymnastic skills further, planning and performing three movement sequences, with very good quality movements produced by some pupils in Year 6. In dance, some older pupils' performances are restricted when they display uncharacteristic self-consciousness. No games or swimming were seen, but records indicate a high standard, with all pupils leaving the school able to swim at least 25 metres.

128. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour range between very good and unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 1, nothing less than good was observed, and in dance in particular, pupils were thoroughly involved in their work. Some good responses were seen in Key Stage 2 as well, but some pupils were less inclined to join in dance activities.

129. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good overall, and sometimes very good. In Key Stage 2, teaching is mostly good, although one lesson was unsatisfactory. Teachers and pupils wear appropriate games clothing, although insufficient attention is given to safety, with pupils wearing watches, bracelets and earrings, and long hair not being tied back. Lessons begin with an appropriate warm-up, and varied activities enable pupils to maintain interest, work hard, and often make good progress. Pupils are well managed and good use is made of confined space in the hall. Aspects where improvement is needed include ensuring that

pupils are active for a large part of the lesson, not waiting around for their turn, and giving help and advice on how to improve their skills. Limited space means that it is not easy to get out and put away large apparatus, but some classes work at this far more efficiently and effectively than others.

130. Effective curriculum leadership is having a positive effect on teaching and attainment. The school uses the Devon Approach to Physical Education, and has drawn up a scheme of work with lesson plans for Years R to 6. In addition, most teachers are trained to use 'TOPS' equipment for games, and use the activity cards to present well structured lessons. There is a broad coverage of physical activities, including swimming, where the local pool is regularly used. The revised policy is sound and includes items on health and safety and appropriate wear. Little attention is given to assessment to enable teachers to gauge the appropriate level at which to pitch some activities. There are adequate resources to support teaching, but some are not easily accessible. More thought needs to be given to storage in the outside shed.

Religious education

131. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the local education authority's agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. Although only three lessons were observable during the inspection a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils within lessons show that progress is satisfactory at both key stages.

132. At Key Stage 1 pupils explore the question of whom is important to them. They look at what a family is and draw a family tree. They consider special people, which leads to learning about Jesus and key figures in other religions. Previously completed work shows a good knowledge of the symbolism in a church building. Pupils understand the key features that are associated with the Christian church.

133. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils explore what motivates Christians and other religious people. They discuss what is meant by creeds and what they say about Jesus. They are able to understand that Christians believe Jesus to be a Saviour. Discussions with pupils suggest that they are aware of other world religions although the depth of knowledge of a significant minority is very limited. Pupils in Year 4 look at special artefacts connected with Judaism particularly the Torah. Most pupils are developing an understanding of religious stories and their significance. In Year 5 pupils study the Hindu story of creation. Pupils at both key stages understand the Christian calendar as they are actively involved in the cycle of celebrations associated with Christmas and Easter.

134. Pupils show positive attitudes to religious education. They are interested and respond well to the pace and challenge of lessons. They listen well and present their written work with care. Pupils have produced a stimulating display of the Christian creation story and a display to show some of the special celebrations in the Jewish calendar.

135. In the very few lessons observed teaching was good. Lessons are carefully prepared and successful teaching is characterised by skilful questioning which directs pupils' thinking and challenges their perceptions. Whilst this gives teachers instant feedback there is no evidence of any form of assessment which tracks pupils' understanding of the key concepts and ideas covered.

136. Religious education is well planned and there is appropriate breadth and balance within and between year groups. Collective worship makes a positive contribution to provision. The subject co-ordinator has prepared a box of artefacts to support teaching and learning in the three main religions covered by the syllabus. He has monitored some teaching and talked to pupils to assess levels of understanding. The absence of agreed assessment procedures makes it difficult for teachers to track pupils' understanding and progress accurately, which in turn has negative implications for maintaining satisfactory standards of attainment.