

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **LONGCAUSE COMMUNITY SPECIAL SCHOOL**

St Maurice, Plympton, Plymouth

LEA area: Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113650

Headteacher: Mr M Jelly

Reporting inspector: Janet Bond  
2642

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 November, 2002

Inspection number: 249357

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special – Moderate learning difficulties, Communication difficulties, Autistic spectrum disorders
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	4 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Maurice Plympton Plymouth
Postcode:	PL7 1JB
Telephone number:	01752 336881
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. J. Davenport
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2642	Janet Bond	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music	The school's results and pupils' achievements  How well are pupils taught?
19727	Eric Langford	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?  How well does the school care for its pupils?
1987	George Davies	Team inspector	Information and communication technology  Geography  History  Citizenship	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  Special educational needs
20555	Andy Barnett	Team inspector	Religious education  Physical education  Educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1358	Glyn Essex	Team inspector	English  Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
22058	Christine Richardson	Team inspector	Science  Art and design  French  Autism	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Longcause is a mixed community special school for pupils with learning difficulties aged between 4 and 16 years. All pupils have a statement of Special Educational Needs. A number of pupils have additional sensory or emotional and behavioural needs. Provision is available for 18 pupils with communication needs and autistic spectrum disorders. It is not appropriate to compare the attainment of pupils with national expectations or averages. Currently there are 86 pupils on roll and almost all are of a white British heritage. No pupils have English as a second language. There is only one pupil of reception age, who is taught in a mixed-age class. Twenty-six percent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. In the last three years six pupils have been reintegrated into mainstream schools.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very effective school with many excellent features. Pupils make good progress because teaching is consistently good. Very high quality leadership and management have provided an excellent learning environment that enables pupils and staff to give of their best. The school provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Outstanding leadership has enabled the school, in a very short space of time, to significantly improve the quality of education provided.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to their work because the curriculum is relevant to their needs and they are fully involved in their learning.
- Pupils learn well because teaching is good and relationships are excellent. Pupils know their ideas and opinions are valued.
- Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development and are very well prepared for life after school.
- Excellent provision for pupils' social and moral development ensures all pupils are supportive of each other and fully contribute to the life of the school.
- Pupils' learning is very well supported by both the effective way the school and parents work together and the high quality of care they receive.

#### **What could be improved**

- Accommodation. Some classrooms are too small for the number and size of pupils. The hall is too small for physical education lessons for senior pupils. The lack of specialist rooms for art and information and communication technology limits the range of work undertaken.
- The planned use of information and communication technology in all subjects to further support pupils' learning.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

There have been significant improvements in all aspects of the school since the appointment of the current headteacher and since the previous inspection in April 1997. All key issues have been fully addressed. Teaching and learning have significantly improved, curriculum development across years is now good and older pupils are offered a greater range of accredited course work. Teachers now have good information and know pupils very well because Individual Education Plans have improved. Learning time has been extended. The role of curriculum co-ordinators has been developed well. The partnership with parents is now very good. Very good attention has been given to financial management. Good links and inclusion opportunities have been established with mainstream schools. All of these changes have significantly contributed to the improvement in pupils' achievements. As a result, pupils' achievements have improved in accredited course work and last year all leavers went on to continuing education.

### **STANDARDS**

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

<b>Progress in:</b>	<b>by Year 6</b>	<b>by Year 9</b>	<b>by Year 11</b>	<b>Key</b>  very good      A good            B satisfactory    C unsatisfactory D poor            E
speaking and listening	A	A	A	
reading	B	B	B	
writing	B	B	B	
mathematics	B	B	B	
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	

\* IEPs are Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs

Pupils of all ages make excellent progress in their personal and social development and this is a strength of the school. The school empowers pupils to take personal responsibility and be confident in their learning. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and of their contributions to school life. Standards have risen significantly and pupils make good progress and achieve well in English and mathematics and in all other subjects because teaching and planning have improved, because pupils have very good attitudes to learning and because the curriculum is of a high quality and made relevant to them. At all ages pupils achieve well in literacy and numeracy because teaching is good. This good progress has been enhanced by the effective use of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies and pupils use their skills well in other subjects. Pupils make good progress towards the targets set in their Annual Reviews and their Individual Education Plans because teachers plan effectively for them in lessons. Pupils achieve very well in art because teaching is often excellent. The youngest pupils have a very good start to learning because activities are appropriate to their age and needs. Pupils in the last two years of school are very well prepared for post-school life. Pupils make good progress towards the challenging targets set by the school for their improved achievement.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils know what is expected of them and are very aware of the impact of their own behaviour on themselves and others.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The culture of the school and excellent relationships support pupils in developing mature and responsible attitudes.
Attendance	Good. Pupils want to come to school.

Pupils are very aware of their own strengths and targets for improvement and try hard to succeed. They are also very aware of themselves and the importance of their role in the school and wider community. Pupils are confident, courteous and show a concern for the well-being of staff and other pupils. They show an improving independence and maturity as they move through the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	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.*

For pupils of all ages teaching in all subjects is consistently good and frequently very good, which is why pupils learn well. Teachers have a good understanding of the learning needs of pupils, of the curriculum and of their subject. Activities are well planned to involve pupils and are appropriate for their age. Because pupils are actively involved in their learning, use a good range of resources and learning is made enjoyable, they make good progress. Pupils with additional special needs are effectively supported and have full access to all learning. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils and very good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants effectively support all pupils in fully taking part in the curriculum.

Literacy and numeracy are taught well because teachers are skilled in applying the national strategies for literacy and numeracy across all subjects. Speaking and listening are taught very well and pupils respond very well because they know their ideas and opinions are valued. Teaching is exceptionally good in personal and social education, where pupils are very effectively enabled to be independent learners and take social responsibility. Teaching is good in science because pupils are actively involved in activities. Very high quality teaching in art enables pupils to make very good progress and achieve high standards. Until Year 10 and 11 insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Pupils have a rich range of learning experiences. They are very good for those in the early years of school and for those preparing to leave school. A widening range of accredited course work and good inclusion opportunities effectively support pupils learning. All statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent provision is made for pupils' moral and social development and this is reflected in the excellent personal development of pupils. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development and good provision for pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school provides a safe, secure learning environment where all are valued, challenged and encouraged to do their best.

Parents and carers have very positive views of the school and the school works very well with them to support pupils' learning. Excellent information is provided to parents and parents make a very positive contribution to school life. The school provides a rich and relevant range of learning opportunities, both in school and in the wider community. The curriculum for the youngest pupils provides a very effective foundation for learning and the curriculum for the oldest pupils very effectively prepares them for leaving school. Standards of care are very high, and pupils thrive in an atmosphere free from bullying, where all care for each other.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership by the headteacher and very good management by key staff. In a short space of time there have been significant improvements across all aspects of school life. There is a clear sense of direction effectively supported by an excellent development plan. Pupils and staff are very effectively enabled to achieve continuous improvement in all aspects of school life.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Statutory requirements are met and governors contribute effectively to school improvements and financial planning. Governors are well informed about school developments but less so about standards attained by pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good and improving. The school effectively uses the information gained to set challenging whole-school targets to further raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The budget is managed very well to improve pupils' learning opportunities.

The reflection of the school's aims and values in all aspects of school life is excellent. All - pupils, staff, parents and carers and those from the wider community - are valued and encouraged to give of their best. All effectively contribute to the school development plan and the action needed to make improvements. This is a forward-thinking, outward-looking school. The school makes excellent use of the principles of best value and is using a wider range of information against which to evaluate its achievements. Staff are well deployed to ensure individual needs are met. Resources are good and effectively used. Accommodation is very well maintained and the improvements made have contributed to raising standards. However, some classrooms are too small and some subjects do not have the accommodation necessary to provide the full range of learning experiences.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children like school, behave well and make good progress because teaching is good.</li> <li>The school is well led and managed and parents feel part of the school family. All are comfortable about approaching the school with questions and problems.</li> <li>Parents appreciate the range and quality of information they receive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A number of parents have concerns about the size of some of the classrooms and the size of the hall for physical education.</li> <li>Some parents do not think the school provides an interesting range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all but one of the views of the parents. Inspectors judge the school provides a good range of lunch-time and after-school clubs, given the time available and transport constraints.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils of all ages make good progress and achieve well because teaching is consistently good and frequently very good, because pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and because the curriculum is well planned and relevant. Teachers know the pupils very well and, in lessons, focus on the targets set for each pupil in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Pupils make good progress towards these targets. Parents are partners in setting targets and effectively contribute to pupils' achievements, which have improved significantly since the last inspection. There is no difference in the achievement of pupils of differing abilities or in those of pupils with additional special needs. All have full and effective access to all learning. During the last academic year the majority of Year 11 pupils gained accreditation through the Associated Examining Board in literacy and numeracy and through the Youth Award Scheme. Over the last three years pupils' attainments in these accredited courses have improved. Pupils also successfully undertake the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. This year, as a result of improving attainments, pupils are working towards the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in art.
2. Progress against targets in pupils' IEPs is good in academic development and excellent in personal development because target setting has improved and because teachers' planning has improved and is supported by a good and relevant curriculum. Personal development is exceptionally well supported across all aspects of school life. Progress against relevant whole-school targets, set to raise pupils' attainment and progress, is good. The setting of school targets has enabled senior management to target training, resources and support appropriately and effectively.
3. The achievements of pupils of all ages in English, mathematics and science are good. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies has developed teachers' knowledge and skills most effectively and raised expectations of what can be achieved. English and mathematics are well planned for and taught in other subjects. There have been significant improvements in the achievements of pupils in English. Pupils' achievements are consistently very good in speaking and listening because all opportunities, in all subjects, are taken for discussions and because pupils know their contributions are valued. The close working relationship between teachers and speech and language therapists has had a significant impact, for example through the introduction of picture-assisted learning for younger pupils and a social language programme. Pupils achieve well in reading and writing and by Year 11 show a pride and maturity in their work. Pupils' good levels of achievement in mathematics are the result of much better curriculum planning than at the time of the last inspection and of teachers' higher expectations and more skilful delivery of the numeracy strategy. Pupils achieve well in science because skilful teaching helps pupils improve their understanding through well-planned practical activities.
44. In information and communication technology (ICT) pupils achieve well in ICT lessons. However, although ICT is used to support some subjects it is not yet planned for and used effectively to support pupils' learning across all areas of the curriculum, other than in Years 10 and 11. There is insufficient use of ICT in, for example, mathematics, or in science. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in religious education because planning is very good and teaching is consistently good. In art, where teachers' planning is of an exceptionally high quality, Year 10 and 11 pupils are working towards higher accreditation and achieve standards higher than expected for their learning needs. Good coaching techniques are used in swimming, which enables pupils to achieve very well. In all other subjects pupils' achievements are good because teachers know their subject and make lessons interesting, relevant and fun.
55. Pupils achieve excellent standards in personal, social and moral education because teaching is frequently excellent and lessons support and show mutual respect and consideration for all. The climate and community spirit of the school, plus the recent introduction of a citizenship curriculum, all contribute effectively to the high achievements in personal and social education.

66. There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils on the autistic spectrum make good progress towards their personal targets and good progress towards their academic targets. This is because of the good and effective support from support assistants and because of the very consistent, appropriate and effective learning and behaviour management approaches used. The school is very effective in promoting individual achievement. Pupils respond well to the reward systems in place, such as “golden moments”, and are effectively motivated to improve academic and personal achievements.

### **Pupils’ attitudes, values and personal development**

77. Pupils’ very good attitudes and behaviour, together with the excellent relationships between pupils and adults, contribute significantly to the school’s happy, purposeful, and well-ordered atmosphere. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. Parents confirm that their children have very positive attitudes to school.

88. Pupils are keen to come to school and arrive in the morning showing pleasure as they greet staff in an open and friendly manner. The humour displayed by all as they move towards their classes makes for a very good start to the day. This very positive attitude continues as they settle quickly to work on tasks in their “arrival” folders or boxes. Registers are taken in an atmosphere of mutual respect and care, with the well-established start of day routines contributing much to the very positive attitudes that pupils display throughout the day. In class, pupils of all ages are highly motivated by their work, which they find stimulating and absorbing. Pupils concentrate well and work with effort when responding to the challenges set by teachers.

99. Younger pupils learn to work well independently and all pupils work very well in small groups. Good collaborative work is a strong feature of lessons because pupils consistently show care and respect for each other’s views, opinions and property. The ability of older pupils to work independently, an expectation as they grow older, is equally impressive and is not only the result of very good routines established by teachers and support staff, but also of their very positive attitudes. This was very well shown in a Year 10 lesson as three pupils worked independently at computers, putting the finishing touches to their Youth Award modules.

4010. The very good attitudes and behaviour and excellent relationships seen in lessons are also present when pupils are at play, having lunch or when off site on curricular visits. In the playground they interact very well with each other and consistently show consideration for others, such as helping when a friend falls over. At lunch they spontaneously pass cutlery to each other and when off site, such as when involved with community work with Dartmoor Rangers, stronger pupils readily provide extra muscle when cutting down trees. The very positive attitudes and values that pupils display are not just in class but in all activities and settings that have been organised by the school. Parents confirm that their children bring such attitudes home with them.

4411. Pupils’ personal development is excellent and is firmly based upon the positive attitudes and relationships that the school is successful in fostering. Pupils are courteous to each other and adults; they show respect for the feelings of others and are capable of reflecting upon their own and the behaviour of others in an honest way. Discussions during tutorials provide very good opportunities for them to do this as they evaluate how well the day has gone and what targets, social, personal or academic, they should aim for in the future. Pupils also show they can accept responsibility. They are always willing to undertake housekeeping jobs in class and as they grow older show initiative as they carry out tasks without being asked to do so. Very young pupils enjoy checking and responding to the day duty list for getting folders or organising place mats. It was with justifiable pride that the team responsible for making sure that the site is tidy and litter-free described their work. They reflect the pride that all pupils have in the school.

4212. Older pupils show they can accept responsibly for their own learning. This ability, although taught as a key skill in the courses they take, is also very much the result of a school climate that consistently promotes and supports pupils in accepting personal responsibility. Older pupils enjoy

the opportunity to prove they can travel to school on public transport or they can be relied upon to visit the local shops in a safe and responsible manner.

**4313.** The recently-developed peer mentoring system is already having a positive effect. It promotes the personal development of older pupils through their acceptance of responsibility for listening to and caring for younger peers. The mature insights and personal integrity shown in discussion by representatives of the school council and peer mentors confirm that the school is highly successful in promoting pupils' personal development.

**4414.** Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance at school is good. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection report. While levels of unauthorised pupil absence have increased, they continue to remain below the national average. No pupils have been excluded in the last year. Most pupils are transported to school and the good transport arrangements in place ensure pupils arrive on time. Punctuality in school is very good and lessons start on time.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

**4515.** Teaching is consistently good and frequently very good for pupils of all ages and in all subjects, and as a result pupils achieve well and make good progress. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is particularly effective for the youngest pupils and for pupils preparing to leave school. It is very effective in art and personal, moral and social education, where the majority of teaching is very good or excellent.

**4616.** A number of important developments have led to the significant improvement in all subjects and at all ages in teaching and learning. The curriculum has been rewritten with appropriate work planned for each year group and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully introduced. These changes have resulted in teachers being more knowledgeable about what pupils need to learn. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Improvements in IEPs mean that teachers can more accurately plan work for individual pupils. Monitoring of teaching and planning has enabled support to be appropriately given to teachers, where needed, through a very good professional development programme for staff. Particular strengths of the teaching are the teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants, the good subject knowledge of teachers and the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Because teachers know pupils very well, appropriate work is planned for individual pupils. As a result, pupils are interested and eager to do their work, try very hard and make good progress. The headteacher has created a very effective school where all, adults and pupils have a willingness to achieve of their best.

**4717.** Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and a good knowledge of the wide range of learning needs of the pupils, including those on the autistic spectrum. This results in teachers planning activities that allow all of the class to actively take part in each lesson. Teachers use information from IEP's to plan work which is closely matched to pupils' needs and which provides the right amount of challenge to help them move forwards. For example, in an excellent art lesson each pupil was encouraged and supported in improving their own illustrations for their story through effective questioning, use of appropriate technical language, very good exemplification of a sample image and allowing pupils opportunities to experiment with colour and media. Pupils had full ownership of their picture and although the teacher moved around them, reviewing each pupil's work and suggesting how they could be improved, pupils chose whether or not to accept the suggestions. Pupils were fully engrossed in the activities, gained confidence in their own abilities and were delighted with their own achievements. It is not until Years 10 and 11 that teachers effectively plan for and use ICT to further support pupils' learning across subjects.

**4818.** Teaching for pupils with significant additional special educational needs is good at all ages. Teachers understand the individual needs of pupils very well and plan lessons that build systematically upon their achievements. All pupils have full access to the curriculum. The use of appropriate resources and teaching strategies supports pupils' interest, concentration and effort. For example, younger pupils have their own key words and symbols in books they can use to support their understanding and involvement in the daily activities in the classroom. Speech

therapists and other visiting professionals provide very effective support, which further enhances pupils' learning opportunities.

1919. The effective partnership between teachers and learning support assistants contributes significantly to pupils' good progress. In nearly all lessons learning support assistants are fully aware of the role they are to play, which pupils they will be working with and what the pupils are to learn. In a numeracy lesson, for example, pupils made good progress in their learning because the teacher divided the class into three groups for part of the lesson, one led by her and the other two by support assistants. This allowed each pupil to be on work appropriate to their needs and to be given good individual support which helped them to concentrate and learn. Learning support assistants contribute well to the ongoing monitoring of pupils' achievements and needs, which enables lesson planning to be effectively informed. At the end of most lessons time is given for pupils to explain to the whole class what they have been doing, enabling all to celebrate individual achievements and enabling the teacher to check on what pupils have understood and remembered.

2020. Pupils behave very well in lessons because they find the work interesting, because they have excellent relationships with staff and because teachers manage pupils' behaviour skilfully. If any pupil does react inappropriately, teachers manage unobtrusively to make sure the learning of others is not interfered with. Because appropriate activities are planned for and, for younger pupils, frequently changed, and because pupils are actively involved, they are keen to participate and confident to try new challenges. In a well-paced music lesson pupils responded to the high expectations of the teacher by performing as well as possible and were confident to volunteer to perform in front of others. In most lessons teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to make choices and decisions and pupils are treated with respect and consideration. In the majority of lessons, activities and conversations appropriate to pupils' age support their appropriate responses, which aids their personal and social development well.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

2121. The quality of the curriculum is good. It is very good in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 10 and 11. The youngest pupils are taught alongside other year groups in the first class. Curriculum provision for the youngest pupils is very good and meets their learning needs well. A very effective range of well-planned learning activities for the early learning goals provides a very good foundation for National Curriculum work. School curriculum planning is good and structured to provide many creative and imaginative learning opportunities so pupils can systematically build on previous learning. The curriculum enables every pupil to take responsibility for their own learning, effectively emphasising how they learn and apply their knowledge and skills. High expectations and caring relationships help make the curriculum accessible and relevant to all. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

2222. The school curriculum policy is clear and concise providing guidance for teachers in a well-structured and systematic format, with planned opportunities for monitoring and evaluation so the quality of learning is continuously improving. The school development plan has appropriate and clearly identified targets for further developing the curriculum. A detailed curriculum review process is emerging which identifies areas for development in each subject. The impact of this is already evident in improvements in ICT, religious education, art, literacy, French and science.

2323. All statutory requirements are met, including full access to the National Curriculum, religious education and collective worship. The literacy and numeracy strategies are applied effectively across the curriculum, especially within the primary years, and have led to raised standards in literacy and numeracy since the last inspection. There is an appropriate balance of time allocated for subjects, although the structure of the timetable limits opportunities for physical education in Years 7 to 11. Pupils within the first years of school are appropriately taught the six key areas of learning. National Curriculum subjects are incorporated into topic work for class-based teaching within Years 3 to 6, which effectively builds on the foundation curriculum. Appropriately, secondary pupils are taught through a subject specific curriculum with specialist subject teaching.

2424. The inclusive culture of the school provides good learning opportunities beyond the formal curriculum through a variety of lunch-time and after-school clubs such as sailing, dance and gardening. These are very popular with pupils, who participate with great enthusiasm. The school makes very good use of the local environment and rich historical culture of the area. It organises an extensive range of educational visits to support the curriculum including trips to Plymouth Hoe, local farms and places of worship, and sporting and outdoor education activities. Pupils have access to a good range of residential activities in this country and abroad. All visits build on planned activities within the curriculum and are imaginatively celebrated through excellent displays around the school, significantly enhancing the learning experience. The contribution of this aspect of the curriculum to pupils' self-confidence, team building and relationships is of the highest order.

2525. Provision for pupils with additional special educational, social and emotional needs is good. Resources needed to support provision are carefully identified and allocated through the school development plan. Annual reviews of statements accurately reflect the contents of statements and are supported by a comprehensive range of reports, including those provided by external services such as the speech and language, social and health services. The quality of targets contained in IEPs is good. Parents' views are highly valued and are carefully considered, as are pupils' views, during annual reviews and any other reviews carried out by the school.

2626. The three key elements of citizenship are very well developed. The foundations of good citizenship are laid through the topic approach to personal, social and moral education. Pupils, amongst other topics, consider themselves as individuals and members of society; work on antisocial behaviour leads to study of crime with the latter being well linked to their considering human rights and behaviour. In Years 10 and 11 they build on previous work as they study the global dimension of human rights, consider crime prevention and, from their investigations of leisure and sport within the community, have a better understanding of the use of the media and community services. Careful thought has been given to the contribution of other subjects to the citizenship programme. The work-related programme for older pupils is already having a very positive impact upon the citizenship scheme of work.

2727. The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' spiritual development is now very good; their moral development is excellent and the very good social development seen during the last inspection is now excellent and a strength of the school. Parents are particularly pleased with what the school does to help their children make progress in their social skills. A strong emphasis on personal, social and moral skills helps create a school where every individual is valued and respected. Pupils show a mature and considerate approach to each other and their community. For example, they recently raised money for schools in Africa and supported a local donkey sanctuary. The school council is highly effective in representing the views of pupils. Issues raised are well respected and directly influence the decision-making process of the school.

28. The school community provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils' ideas and questions are always valued, with pupils in turn valuing the opinions and respecting the concerns of others. They show this in history lessons as they reflect upon and show empathy for the harshness of the lives of others and show admiration for and wonder at the bravery of people like Grace Darling. School assemblies provide opportunities for celebration of academic and personal gains and pupils value and understand that the "Golden Box" is there to recognise the successes of all.

2929. Pupils' moral development is excellently supported by the role models of kind and considerate behaviour shown by all adults in the school. The school's very clear behaviour policy, including its very strong views about bullying, and the short but very relevant list of whole-school rules are highly effective in helping pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. The very good behaviour of pupils at play or moving around the school shows they carry their understanding of what is right and wrong to other situations. Formal discussions, as in tutorials and informal discussions, both a strong feature of the school, well support pupils' moral development as they think about positive and not so positive aspects of the day or their behaviour. Because of the

mutual respect that exists in the school. pupils find it very easy to be honest in their comments and show significant insight when exploring issues to do with their moral attitudes.

30. A strength of the school is its ability in developing pupils' social skills. The school consistently shows it is a community that has common values shared by all. Pupils move around the school and site in a calm and purposeful manner and respond very positively to school routines as they apply to play, dinner and assembly times. The wide range of opportunities to work and use social skills in different settings, both in and out of school, are very effective in helping pupils to adjust to a range of work and social contexts. This was very apparent when senior pupils behaved in an exemplary social manner during a very wet canoeing session. Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils to develop personal qualities and social skills that are valued by society and by their parents.
31. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. All pupils have good opportunities to explore their own culture and how it has developed in history, geography and art with the later also providing opportunities for them to study the culture of other countries. Their response to the work of Van Gogh and Mondrian is of a very high standard and justifiably displayed in a celebratory fashion around the school. French lessons and the very well organised residential visit to France add further depth to their understanding of French society, while religious education lessons contribute to their understanding of values and traditions that are part of other cultures. As a result of such provision, pupils are well prepared for life in a multiculturally diverse society.

**3232.** Pupils are provided with very good opportunities to prepare for and learn about life after school. A very carefully organised careers education and guidance programme is interwoven into the curriculum from Year 9. This is well supported by the local Education and Business Partnerships and is complemented by an equally carefully organised and comprehensive work experience programme during Year 11. The school is currently using some 18 different venues for pupils to experience work. The school's strong links with local organisations provide pupils with very good access to sheltered work places and training. Courses at the local college of further education, and the regular half-day visits that take place to sample employment situations, are very effective in motivating pupils to carry on with their education and training. During the last year all pupils who left went on to participate in continuing education.

**3333.** The school has established very good links with other schools involved in the delivery of quality learning to its pupils. This represents an area of improvement since the last inspection. The high quality relationships that exist with the college and the very good transition arrangements in place have a significant and beneficial impact on the learning and progress made by pupils. Very good two-way pupil integration links have been established with a number of local schools. These include the placement and support of individual pupils into mainstream schools, pupils developing physical education skills alongside their peers in a local secondary school and the inclusion of pupils from another special school for social skill development work.

**3434.** Links with the community are very good and provide quality learning opportunities for all pupils. This is an area of improvement since the last inspection. The school makes very good use of local retail outlets and business organisations to provide the pupils with real life experiences geared to enhancing their citizenship skills. Pupils gain great benefit from the many and varied visitors who come into school to talk with, and work alongside them and enrich their learning and social skills development. Of particular note are the school's close partnership with the many agencies associated with the pupils' long-term development, and the potentially great benefits to be gained by pupils and their families from a multi-agency pilot initiative to maximise the "after-school" life opportunities available to pupils.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

**3535.** The provision for the care and welfare of pupils, and the quality of pastoral support they receive, is very good and a strength of the school. This is an area of significant improvement since the last inspection. Very good child protection procedures are in place, which are well understood and used

by staff in the best interests of the pupils. All staff are aware of the need for vigilance in the regular monitoring of the well-being and welfare of pupils in their care. Very good and effective procedures are in place to support “looked after children” and those pupils identified as having specific special educational needs.

3636. Good and appropriate filter procedures are in place to safeguard pupils from inappropriate material when accessing information on the Internet. There are very good arrangements in place for reporting any use of physical restraint in school and ensuring the best interests of pupils and staff are maintained at all times. Pupils feel safe and happy in school and have the confidence and independence to raise queries and concerns with staff. All staff work hard to ensure the best interests of the pupils at all times. The school provides pupils with a very good level of pastoral support during their time in school.

3737. Very good health and safety procedures are in place and risk assessment is an integral part of the school’s planning process and daily monitoring routines. Governors are fully involved in the school’s health and safety audit process. Formal health and safety audits of the school are undertaken each term and outcomes and recommendations are reported for discussion at governor meetings. Although some classrooms are small for the number and size of pupils, teachers are very aware of health and safety issues. The headteacher and school caretaker effectively deal with day-to-day health and safety matters. During the inspection period staff and pupils showed good health and safety awareness, both in and around the school and on out-of-school visits. The school premises are maintained to a very good level of cleanliness and provide a safe and secure environment.

3838. Most staff have received first aid training and effective procedures are in place for the management and reporting of pupil injuries occurred during their time at school. Very good and secure management arrangements are in place for the correct recording, storage and administration of prescribed medicines to pupils, as and when requested by parents.

3939. The very good and well-established behaviour management routines in school help to enhance and promote the self-image of pupils and contribute greatly to the overall very good attitudes to learning displayed by the majority of pupils. Great emphasis is placed on promoting good behaviour and the school operates a number of incentives to encourage and reward pupils’ good work and behaviour, both in and around the school. The comprehensive whole-school social behaviour policy is discussed and personalised within each classroom to provide pupils with a meaningful focus of their teacher’s expectations and rewards for good behaviour. The school’s simple four-rule code of conduct and well-documented behaviour procedures are liked and understood by pupils and parents, all of whom judge these to be applied by teachers in a fair and consistent manner.

4040. The school has a philosophy of zero tolerance towards bullying and has worked successfully to promote an anti-bullying culture amongst the pupils. During the inspection there was no evidence of any oppressive bullying or harassment of pupils. Past incidents of inappropriate behaviour are judged by pupils and parents to have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff to the benefit of all involved.

4141. Good procedures are in place for monitoring and improving attendance. The practice for pupil registration in school fully complies with statutory requirements. However, there is no formal practice to monitor and report absence levels to the governors’ formal meetings, other than as statistics in the governors’ annual report to parents.

4242. Teachers and support staff know pupils very well. Individual needs are very carefully identified when pupils enter school and those with additional special needs have extra support from skilled professionals. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent so that learning takes place in a purposeful and inclusive atmosphere. Staff work well together to ensure that any information about pupils’ work and progress is shared and the high quality of support and guidance has a significant positive effect upon pupils’ achievements and attitudes. The school is developing links with other agencies very effectively so that all the needs of pupils are met well.

4343. IEPs have improved since the last inspection and are now good. There are different formats for pupils in the primary and secondary departments. The primary ones cover all areas of the curriculum and clear targets, both academic and personal, are set for each pupil. The individual education plans for pupils in the secondary department are well conceived and also include personal and academic targets. However, a few targets are not consistently linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment and do not always indicate how a pupil is to improve. Annual reviews are carried out very effectively and targets are shared with parents, carers, other professionals and pupils.

4444. Procedures to track pupils' progress and attainment, and to adjust teaching programmes to meet pupils' needs, are now good. Teachers use information gained from any evaluations or marking of pupils' work to adjust the curriculum very effectively. The school is piloting a new approach to assessment in the inter-school assessment project BARE (Below Age Related Expectations). This is planned to give consistency in the setting of targets and track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Much hard work has gone into this project and indications are that it will improve the current systems. The school has set challenging targets for next year to increase the numbers of pupils in Year 11 achieving higher levels in Art, Youth Awards, and English and mathematics. Pupils are very proud of their detailed Record of Achievement folders, which are amended each year and clearly show their wide range of achievements.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

4545. Parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard, and believe their children receive a high quality of care and education. All consider it to be an open school with all staff very willing to listen and talk to parents. This represents an area of improvement since the last inspection. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good and the great majority of parents have signed the home-school agreement in support of their children's learning.

4646. Parents are welcomed in school and encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. There is a good practice for staff to telephone parents with any queries or concerns and to make good use of the "home-school diary" system for the regular exchange of comments and advice related to individual pupils' progress. The majority of parents attend the annual review meetings and most regularly attend the termly consultation evenings, organised by the school, for parents to see pupils' work and discuss their child's progress with staff. Parents spoken with during the inspection stated how valuable these meetings are and praised the support and guidance they received from staff in helping to manage their child's development in the home.

4747. The school appreciates greatly the valuable contribution of some ten regular volunteer parents, who are able to provide a pre-planned input and support to pupils learning in school and on out-of-school visits, all of which helps to enhance pupils' learning opportunities. The school benefits greatly from a very active Friends of Longcause association, which organises regular fund-raising social events throughout the year. These events are well attended and promote valuable informal opportunities for meetings and communications between teachers and parents and provide an effective conduit for making parent views known to the school. A parents support group is well organised on a two-weekly basis and enables parents to benefit from the sharing of experiences and strategies for use in managing their child's learning and development in the home. Parents are invited, and many attend, the school assemblies and special festivals, all of which provide further informal contact opportunities between staff and parents.

4848. The quality and range of information provided to parents are excellent and represent an area of significant improvement since the last inspection. Parents are kept up to date and well informed on a regular basis about all aspects of school life, organised events and pupil activities. Regular "Dear parent" correspondence and the school newspaper ensure parents are kept informed about plans and changes to their child's time in school. The comprehensive school prospectus and the governors' report to parents are informative and act as very helpful reference documents on all aspects of school life. Progress reports to parents are of a high quality, easy to read and provide a good level of detail to targets, work effort and attainments gained by their child in each of the

different subjects followed. A small minority of parents considered they were not kept well informed about how their child was doing at school. Given the range and frequency of information provided by the school and the willingness of staff to communicate with parents via the home school diary, by telephone or by a home visit, inspectors do not support this view.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

**4949.** The very high quality of the school's leadership and management is amply illustrated by the long list of significant advances made by the school since the headteacher's appointment in April 2000. These include the significant improvement in teaching and learning in all subjects of the curriculum, the introduction of very effective systems; for example, in subject planning, and monitoring of learning to support this process and the much-needed upgrading of accommodation. This is a school which has clear priorities for improvement and which makes excellent progress towards them.

**5050.** There have been several key factors in this success. An effective deputy headteacher has been appointed and staff morale and effort have been transformed since the last inspection. They are now fully involved and consulted. A much more effective system of delegation of responsibilities has greatly increased their contribution to and ownership of the development of the school. This is apparent not only in the very good support provided for the headteacher by members of his senior management team, but also in the increased effectiveness of the role of the subject co-ordinators, which was criticised in the last inspection report.

**5451.** The school development plan provides an excellent framework for the work of staff and governors. Appropriate priorities have been identified, action, funding and timescale very clearly set out and very thorough monitoring of the progress made is carried out on a regular basis so that the school knows exactly how well it is doing. Staff training has been a very important part of this process. It is closely linked with the development plan's priorities and has made a major contribution to the raising of standards in areas such as literacy, numeracy and the enhanced provision for pupils with severe communication difficulties. Although the observation of teaching and the induction of new staff are in place, they are not sufficiently structured. The school's use of new technology is also an area where development is at an early stage but overall the school's record of success in seeing through the very large number of priorities tackled in a comparatively short space of time has been remarkable.

**5252.** The use of resources is very efficient. The budget plan is an integral part of the school development process. Grants and other additional funding have been targeted very effectively. Management makes excellent use of the principles of best value, particularly in its analysis of the outcomes of its spending, and is developing the use of a range of statistics and performance indicators to further support this process. The resulting information is being used to set demanding targets, for example in the areas of literacy and numeracy. An external audit of the school's financial systems, carried out in June 2001, found that they were sound and the school has addressed the minor weaknesses revealed.

**5353.** As a result of the very effective focus on development, there is a very clear sense of direction and purpose in all that the school does. Underpinning the work on the raising of academic standards is a very strong set of broader aims and values. These are readily apparent, for example, in the excellent relationships that prevail throughout the school, in the quality of provision for the moral and social development of all pupils, and in the inclusive nature of all aspects of school life.

**5454.** The governing body has not enjoyed a full membership for some time. It organises its considerable workload very efficiently, however, and maintains a full programme of sub-committee meetings, the minutes of which show that it monitors most aspects of the school's work in considerable detail. It has been particularly effective in its strategic management of the school's financial resources. Staffing and accommodation have benefited from flexible but careful control of the budget and it has been very effective in supporting the school's case in negotiations with the local education authority over the school's funding. The local education authority, for its part, has been very supportive of the school's development through the positive response of its Schools

Review Group to the school's proposals. Governors do not yet have a reliable system for monitoring the school's standards, however. They do make individual visits to the school but this is not done on a planned basis and feedback to the governing body is done on an informal basis. Their corporate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, therefore, though satisfactory overall, is not secure in all areas of the school's work.

5555. The number and deployment of staff in the school are good and have improved since the last inspection. There is a good mix of qualifications and subject knowledge amongst staff, all of whom are deployed in a flexible and effective manner to make best use of their skills and experience in support of pupils' learning. Teachers and support staff work very well with each other to provide a full range of curricular activities for pupils. The school has invested in, and makes very good use of, learning support staff and this has had a beneficial effect on the good progress made by pupils. The school's administrative staff, caretaker and mealtime assistants are dedicated to their duties and ensure that the day-to-day life of the school functions effectively.

5656. The school provides an adequate level of accommodation that is well used by staff for the benefit of pupils' learning and personal development. However, the smaller sized classrooms provide little space between pupils and have a negative impact on the efficiency with which teachers can deliver their lessons. A number of parents expressed concern at the safety factors of the small classrooms. The inspection team agree that the cramped nature of the small classrooms with large numbers of pupils in them imposes a constraint on the range of teaching methods that can be applied to organise and challenge the learning of pupils. The governors' programme for refurbishment of the accommodation has improved pupils' access to science, design and technology, food technology and library facilities. However, the limited size of the hall restricts full access to the physical education curriculum for older pupils and there is no specialist art room or ICT room for pupils to work in. Good use is made of bright colours in most of the teaching areas to give a welcoming feel to the school. Walls are well decorated with examples of pupils' work and photographs of their achievements, all of which provide attractive and informative displays.

5757. The school grounds provide pupils with access to good-sized playgrounds and grassed areas. There is a good mixture of experiences for pupils with an adventure play area of large wooded apparatus, climbing frames on soft surface matting and well marked out asphalt games playground. The grounds include an attractive nature garden, picnic tables and seats for pupils to sit and socialise. The school grounds are securely fenced off, well maintained and all external doors are controlled by code locks with closed circuit television surveillance monitoring in place. The school provides a safe and secure environment for pupils.

5858. The range and quality of educational resources in the school are good, have improved since the last inspection and are well used by staff to support learning. The storage space in school is adequate, and the good use and organisation of the space available allows teachers to have easy access to required learning resources.

5959. The quality of leadership and management has been the key factor in the improvements achieved by the school since the last inspection. The school is now very well placed to continue its upward progress.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to continue to improve the quality of education provided, the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) Work with the local education authority to plan how the building can be improved to provide better opportunities for pupils in small classrooms, in physical education, art and ICT and to implement those decisions. (Paragraphs 41, 65, 80, 92, 106, 118)
- (2) Ensure the use of ICT is systematically planned for in lessons across all areas of the curriculum. (18, 78, 87, 93, 98, 102, 127, 137)

Both issues have already been identified as areas for development in the school development plan

61. The following should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Purchase age-appropriate books for older secondary pupils so they can read and respond to a wider range of fiction, poetry and drama (77)
- Monitor and report absence levels to governors (47)
- Develop systems for governors to monitor standards achieved to enable them to better understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. (63)
- Develop a more structured approach to the monitoring of teaching and the induction of new staff (60)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	25	26	9	0	0	0
Percentage	10	38	39	13	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	86
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	32

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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.7

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	83	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

**Teachers and classes****Financial information****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.5
Average class size	10.7

**Education support staff: YR – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	367.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	574942
Total expenditure	564235
Expenditure per pupil	6560
Balance brought forward from previous year	43548
Balance carried forward to next year	10707

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	86
Number of questionnaires returned	42

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	29	0	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	32	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	36	14	5	2
The teaching is good.	86	14	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	26	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	12	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	71	21	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	90	10	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	17	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	19	19	2	12

### Other issues raised by parents

A number of parents raised concerns about the lack of space in some classrooms and the smallness of the hall for physical education lessons.

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

### **ENGLISH**

**6262.** There has been a significant improvement in achievements in English since the last inspection. Overall progress by pupils in the subject then was described as satisfactory but the need to improve the standards of reading and writing by secondary age pupils in particular was identified as a key issue for action. Achievements in the subject at all ages are now good and this is reflected in pupils' attainments in statutory assessments at the end of Years 6 and 9 and in external examinations at the end of Year 11. In speaking and listening skills, pupils' achievements are very good throughout the school.

**6363.** The major factor in this improvement has been the very good development of the teaching of literacy, not only in English but also in other subjects of the curriculum. The structure and principles of the National Literacy Strategy have been very effectively adapted for use in the school. Training has boosted staff expertise and very good planning of the curriculum has provided them with a very clear and detailed structure for their work in the subject. Teaching is now consistently good.

**6464.** The very good development of speaking and listening skills throughout the school reflects the excellent relationships in classes. Pupils are well behaved and co-operative. Teachers listen to pupils and make very good use of questions to encourage all pupils to contribute to oral work. Pupils are also keen to ask questions themselves and numerous examples of lively dialogue in a variety of subjects were observed during the inspection week. As a result, from their earliest days in school, pupils quickly learn to take turns, to listen to others and to express themselves confidently. This is particularly noticeable in the case of pupils with severe communication difficulties.

**6565.** The teaching of reading to the youngest pupils makes very good use of "Big Books" and of a variety of resources in the "Story Sack" to stimulate their interest and to reinforce their understanding. Pupils enjoy stories. They point to pictures in their books, predict the end of sentences and make very good progress in recognising initial letters of words. By Year 6 they make good progress in their reading schemes. Higher-attaining pupils read a range of familiar words with growing independence. The reading records are very detailed and are used very effectively to address individual difficulties. In English in other classes, the use of individual education plans in this way, which was identified as a weakness in the last inspection, is often good although there is still some inconsistency in practice. A small number of individual targets in both reading and writing do not provide measurable targets, for example.

**6666.** The written work of primary pupils shows clear progress from finger painting and basic mark-making to copying or overwriting by the younger pupils to some well-presented independent writing by higher-attaining pupils by Year 6. Teaching links pupils' reading and writing very effectively. The use of writing frames and an increasing range of language worksheets from the reading schemes and other sources provides lots of practice in and reinforcement of handwriting, spelling and punctuation, and pupils make good progress in these skills.

**6767.** The younger secondary pupils continue to make steady progress through their reading schemes and they talk about other books, mainly fiction, which they have read and enjoyed outside the schemes. At the same time, teaching continues to make good provision for those pupils who have difficulties with their word-building skills and this is an area which shows distinct improvement since the last inspection. By Year 9, pupils' English books and folders include a much wider range of writing, including some good attempts by higher-attaining pupils at longer pieces of narrative. Their work in other subjects also show good progress in the accuracy and fluency of their writing.

**6868.** For pupils in Years 10 and 11, the emphasis moves to the functional aspects of the subject; for example, letter-writing and reading for information. This emphasis is clearly justified as a very

effective part of their preparation for life after school. However, there are insufficient opportunities for them to read and respond to fiction, poetry or drama and their writing contains little of a more personal or expressive nature. Some higher-attaining pupils, when asked, did mention books which they had read and enjoyed; in one case, "The Lord of the Rings", but generally not enough is done to encourage reading for pleasure. Resources are a factor here. In a Year 11 lesson, for example, pupils listened to the teacher reading from "Of Mice and Men" but had no copies of the book for themselves. Lower-attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are still using primary age reading schemes. The quality of pupils' writing in their Youth Award Scheme folders, however, is notable for its maturity, accuracy and very good presentation. Examples include a variety of extended projects and surveys which also show the very good progress pupils make in reading for information.

6969. Co-ordination of the subject has been very effective in taking it forward through a range of well-planned developments. The use of ICT is limited in the subject. Given the significant improvements since the last inspection, the subject is well placed to continue to build upon the good developments achieved.

## **MATHEMATICS**

7070. Pupils of all ages make good progress in all areas of mathematics. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and this has had a significant impact on improving teaching and learning in the subject. Teaching is good and lessons are well planned to ensure that all pupils have work that is appropriate to them. Pupils are confident and enthusiastic in lessons and try very hard to succeed because they are building on their earlier learning. Pupils make good progress towards the very appropriate targets set for them in their IEPs. There are no marked differences in the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils with additional special needs are well supported and make good progress. The good and improved progress made by pupils is reflected by their attainments in the Associated Examination Board (AEB) examinations, where there has been an increase in the higher levels achieved by Year 11 pupils.

7471. In lessons teachers' expectations are high and pupils respond well to the challenges provided. Pupils are effectively supported in using and building on previous learning and lessons are characterised by pupils working at a brisk pace. All pupils have individual learning targets for mathematics, which allows teachers to plan appropriate work for them. These factors contribute significantly to the good progress made by pupils. At all ages, because lessons are well planned with appropriate activities for individuals, pupils behave well, are engrossed in their work and enjoy what they are doing. Pupils try their best because they receive regular praise and encouragement. Teachers know and understand the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply effectively. The three-part lesson structure is firmly established until the end of Year 9 and is reflected in the good lesson planning. In some smaller classrooms activities are limited by the size of the rooms, particularly whole-class learning where active participation is hampered. For example, in one Year 5 lesson there was barely room for pupils to stand in order with their numeral cards, and in a Year 7 lesson it was difficult for pupils to get to the front of the class to participate with the number rod and numerals.

7272. Teaching for the youngest pupils is mainly very good and planned activities are very appropriate for the age and interest of the pupils. Pupils make good progress in their basic number work and all opportunities are taken to use and apply numeracy skills, for example through number rhymes and songs such as "There were ten in a bed" and through counting objects and people in the classroom. Teachers effectively use resources that pupils are interested in, such as "Peter", a puppet that counts with them, to engage pupils' attention. Because the numeracy activities are made fun pupils concentrate very well and enjoy the games such as rolling dice and counting up the ladder to get a honey pot for the bees tea party. Pupils match plates, bowls and cups for the teddy bears' picnic and higher-attaining pupils count the number of objects to ten, show the same number of fingers and say how many they have. Pupils are happy and keen to try because they receive regular praise and encouragement, and one pupil was so keen to participate he said loudly "let me do it" when teddies were being stuck in the bed.

**7373.** By Year 6 pupils have great fun counting beyond 20, with higher-attaining pupils counting to 100. By being actively involved in choosing and holding numerals pupils enjoy getting into sequence and finding the highest or lowest number. Good relationships help pupils be confident to have a go and pupils enjoy counting on or counting backwards. Through these activities, pupils are beginning to understand the operation of addition and subtraction. The use of games and stories are effective in promoting pupils' interest in mathematical activities. Throughout the primary part of the school teachers use number songs and rhymes very effectively to involve all pupils in using and applying their counting skills.

**7474.** By Year 9 pupils show good and very good progress in a growing range of mathematical activities. They learn and use the mathematical vocabulary effectively and, through practical activities, extend their skills, knowledge and understanding. They count in sequence forwards and backwards to and from twenty, and higher-attaining pupils count to a hundred, count in tens to a hundred, identify half of a hundred and can mentally calculate 10 more than or 10 less than. Good teaching ensures the work challenges pupils while very good questioning by teachers checks pupils' understanding and promotes learning by involving all pupils at an appropriate level. Because of this, pupils sustain their interest and effort for the whole lesson and are delighted with their achievements. When working on two-dimensional shape pupils used the words dimensional, pentagon, hexagon and octagon appropriately.

**7575.** Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use mathematics throughout the curriculum. For example, in history pupils apply their skills to time lines, in design and technology they measure and in science they measure and record their predictions and findings in a variety of ways.

**7676.** Older pupils work on their accredited mathematical course work and are grouped by ability for the AEB examination work, which allows more focus at an appropriate level. Planning for mathematics concentrates on the application of pupils' learning in other course work such as in food technology, where pupils weigh, shop for and time their cooking. They enjoy doing sport and leisure charts and completing shopping surveys. Pupils are engaged and enjoy the opportunities to explain how they have worked things out; for example, in a lesson looking at time lines pupils explained how they are doing things and saw the purpose of using graphs to obtain information. Pupils find the work demanding, but because of the age-appropriateness of the activities and the good pupil management by teachers, pupils concentrate, persevere and enjoy their work. Although they continue to build upon their mental and written numeracy skills, for example in understanding the connection between multiplication and division, there are insufficient opportunities for mental maths sessions that they have experienced in numeracy lessons lower down the school.

**7777.** Teaching and learning for pupils with additional special needs are good at all ages and all pupils have full access to mathematics. Learning support assistants are very effectively deployed to provide individual support and contribute significantly to the good progress pupils make. Because staff know pupils very well, all available opportunities are taken to extend pupils' learning. Good use is made of questioning and prompts at an appropriate level with sufficient challenge for each individual. The use of interesting resources and activities keeps pupils actively involved and helps them sustain their concentration.

**7878.** Good leadership and management of the subject and the high focus given to it by the school in the last two years have resulted in a significant improvement in pupils' achievements. Good quality training for staff and support with planning and teaching have supported all teachers in improving their teaching of mathematics. Resources are good and are used effectively although there is insufficient use of ICT before Year 10 to support pupils' learning. Clear and appropriate targets for improvement are in place, pupils' attainments are monitored and the information analysed and used to inform planning. There has been a significant improvement in mathematics since the last inspection.

## SCIENCE

**7979.** Pupils throughout the school achieve well in science because of good teaching. They increase their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively from a low level of attainment on entry to the school. The good features noted at the last inspection have been maintained and there have been good improvements to the provision, primarily through the development of the science laboratory and the planning for different groups.

**8080.** Pupils in Year 1 and 2 learn that they use their fingers and hands to identify objects by touching and feeling them. Very skilful teaching enables them to improve their understanding of the language used to describe soft and rough textures as they stick materials on card to make teddy bears. This work links very well with their topic on toys and senses. Pupils in Year 3 to 6 think hard about their topic of 'Changes' when explaining how use of batteries and electric cables make torches, cameras, watches, televisions and microwaves work. They concentrate well as they select pictures of items that require some form of electricity to work and make simple circuits on a circuit board. Pupils have a clear understanding of the need for safe use of electricity and identify the dangers in the home, if care is not taken, very sensibly and accurately. They produce very good workbooks on habitats and healthy plants that confirm their enjoyment of practical investigative activities.

**8481.** Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have an increasing knowledge of parts of the body. They make interesting skeletons and label diagrams clearly. Pupils carry out an investigation into whether taller people have bigger feet and produce good block graphs of their results. Pupils enjoy practical activities and know how to record their findings on grids. Pupils in Year 9 tried to identify different flavours of crisps when they could not smell them. Most found this very difficult and agreed that their sense of smell helped them to taste foods better. Pupils presented their results to the rest of the class swiftly and accurately. They analysed their results very sensibly and agreed that since the results were closer than they expected, they had not carried out a completely fair test. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 carry out scientific investigations on recycling and safety in the home during their Youth Award course. The development of thinking skills and problem-solving are regularly emphasised during other topics.

**8282.** Teaching and learning in science are good because teachers plan work that is matched well to the range of abilities within the groups. Planning includes clear links with other subjects and teachers use every opportunity to include visits and practical activities that involve problem-solving in all topics. Teachers and learning support assistants manage pupils' behaviour very sensitively and well. They divert pupils' attention if they find it difficult to join in discussions or activities. Warm humour helps lessons flow smoothly and briskly. As lessons progress, teachers check pupils' understanding of the work through good questioning techniques. They intervene at appropriate times to give specific teaching points to reinforce new vocabulary or to increase pupils' understanding of the task. At the end of the lesson, teachers discuss with pupils what has been achieved during the lesson. There is an enthusiasm for learning and a willingness to work hard. Pupils' contributions and suggestions are welcomed. For example, pupils offered several ideas about what could happen if water touched a light bulb in the bathroom or there were too many plugs in a socket.

**8383.** Teachers give careful attention to health and safety issues in the classroom or the science laboratory. Teachers are aware that this is particularly important where classrooms have limited space. From Year 6 pupils learn how to move safely in the science room and this increases their interest and excitement in science. Pupils like to draw and colour pictures about their activities but are taking an increasing pride in answering written questions about what they have done. Where pupils have difficulty in writing about their work, staff discuss this with them to check their understanding.

**8484.** The enthusiastic co-ordinator is new to the school this term and has plans to develop the range of learning opportunities within the subject further. There are good guidelines for the subject, with a strong emphasis on practical and investigative activities. There are good links with other subjects, especially mathematics, literacy and art, but the school is aware that there is scope for more use of ICT to display information arising from surveys. Visits are used well to support science topics and good use is made of the school grounds for studies of for example, minibeasts. Science

makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through opportunities for working together and sharing discoveries.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

**8585.** Pupils achieve very well in art because of high quality teaching and a range of opportunities to systematically develop their skills. As they move through the school they build on these skills and this enables them to achieve at a high level. Achievements have improved since the last inspection because there is now a wider range of tasks for pupils to explore. All pupils achieve at a high level because activities are planned to help them develop their own skills and ideas. As a result of this significant improvement, GCSE (General Certificate in Secondary Education) art is being worked towards for the first time this year.

**8686.** Pupils in Year 1 and 2 use a wide range of media and techniques to create imaginative work of high quality. Much of this is linked well to visits; for example, to a teapot factory, or with events such as harvest time. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 become skilled in mixing colours effectively. They work purposefully, with deliberation. They enjoy experimenting to see what happens when different colours are added to each other and select appropriate materials for a collage very thoughtfully. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make very good use of their sketchbooks, especially on visits to the beach or the zoo. They produce very good charcoal sketches of different objects and portraits that indicate very good skills of observing people and details. There is a delicate touch for some flower paintings and a bold approach to sketches and paintings of animals and birds. There is liveliness, confidence and enthusiasm in the execution of superb aboriginal pastels and three-dimensional work. Everyone produces work of high quality because they develop their ideas well.

**8787.** Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a very good knowledge and understanding of the range of media available for their work. They discuss the uses of acrylic or oil paints, express a preference for pastels or watercolours and produce pictures which convey their moods and feelings very expressively. Pupils like to paint landscapes 'because it makes me feel free and relaxes me' or see interesting shapes in buildings or waves on the sea. Some are intrigued by squares, triangles and rectangles and use these very imaginatively in their work. Pupils in Year 11 work very productively on storybooks for younger children. They plan their story before designing their illustrations, thinking carefully about the contents of their pictures and how they will present them.

**8888.** Teaching and learning are very good because staff have particular expertise and interest in the subject. Planning is of exceptionally high quality and all topics begin with time spent on researching what they are to do and finding appropriate source material. Pupils use the Internet, books, natural materials, and visits as a source of inspiration and are clear about what they are to learn. Teachers help pupils to celebrate what they have achieved in lessons and encourage them to respond well to time targets within the lessons. Pupils learn how to organise their work and materials. Preparation and clearing away are important aspects of lessons. Pupils are encouraged to bring a personal response to their work and express their feelings about what they have achieved. Learning support staff work very well with teachers and pupils to ensure that everyone gains confidence in lessons and improves their skills. Pupils look forward to their art lessons and are proud to talk about their work, which is displayed so attractively and effectively around the school. They concentrate very well in lessons and work extremely hard because they know their achievements are valued.

**8989.** The subject is led and managed very successfully. Staff are skilled and enthusiastic and work hard to provide a rich experience of artistic activities for pupils. Art and design makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is, however, no separate art room that would enable the large groups of pupils to work on a wider range of sculpture throughout the year.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

**9090.** Pupils' achievements in design and technology are good. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, particularly among secondary age pupils whose progress in the subject was judged to be unsatisfactory at that time. The main reason for this improvement has been the appointment of a co-ordinator with specialist qualifications in the subject, who has very successfully addressed issues in planning and resources to provide a greater range of activities, materials and experiences in the subject. Teaching is mainly good, and in addition, the school has allocated funds for the much needed refurbishment of the design technology room which is now, though still in need of some further development, very useful. The health and safety issues identified in the last inspection report have also been addressed.

**9191.** Planning now includes clear provision for pupils to build on their previous learning in the subject as they move through the school and this was apparent in the lessons observed and pupils' work seen. Year 1 pupils cut out and assemble paper and card to make invitations. Pupils in Year 6 think about the construction of a wall and work independently with a variety of materials to test the strength of their designs. In Year 9 they produce a design brief and make preparatory drawings for a finger puppet. They are also beginning to understand the importance of research into different techniques in the making of their products and into issues of cost. By Year 11, pupils show very good development of independence in food technology. They design their own menus and are beginning to evaluate their own and others' products and to suggest improvements.

**9292.** Pupils respond very well to their design and technology lessons, particularly when teaching challenges their ability to come up with their own ideas. When teaching is good, it makes very good use of questions, provides strong links with other subjects and reinforces very effectively the importance of following a clear sequence through the process of designing, making and evaluating. It also makes a strong contribution to literacy skills through the teaching of key words in the subject and, particularly in food technology for older pupils, in the written presentation of their work. When teaching is not as effective, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to exercise choice and independence in their work.

**9393.** Insufficient use is made of ICT in the subject. Insufficient use is made of different ways, for example, through the use of photographs, to record pupils' finished products. Overall, however, good progress has been made in the subject, particularly in the breadth and balance of the curriculum provided, in a relatively short period of time and the subject's development plan contains a clear and appropriate programme for further improvements.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

**9494.** Pupils achieve well in geography because teaching is good. Teachers plan their work well, provide pupils with interesting activities and effectively match the work to pupils' different learning styles and rates of learning.

**9595.** During Years 1 and 2 pupils learn about their immediate environment within the school, to prepare them for understanding the world outside school. They use their knowledge of directions as they move around the school and on a daily basis apply these early skills when, for example, they take registers back to the office. The teacher's very good use of the Bear's journeys around the world helps them to understand the need for different types of travel. The very interesting task of selecting appropriate clothing for different types of holiday gives them an early understanding of the climate in different countries. Making a passport in order to travel around the world not only supports their learning in geography but also provides them with an opportunity to use their design and technology skills. A well-organised visit to a woodland helps them learn about the differences between man-made and natural environments.

**9696.** By Year 6 pupils are confident in their use of correct geographical terminology. They understand the term environment; know that they have to look after it and make suggestions about how it can be improved. Their previous work about weather is extended into an understanding of the need for weather records and they use correct symbols to reflect day to day changes. Their learning in mathematics is well used when they use Venn diagrams to record the differences and similarities

between the seasons of the year, while their art lessons provide a very good opportunity to produce a colourful collage presenting the same information in a different way.

9797. In Years 7 to 9 pupils learn more about geographic processes and economic and social issues. Their subject vocabulary is increased when they study land contours and learn about river mouths, cliffs and beaches. Their study of water and its effect leads to work on the water cycle and flooding. The teacher's very good use of a sponge and basin to explain land saturation was not only very effective in helping pupils understand the causes for floods but also thoroughly enjoyed by pupils. However, the small size of some of the classrooms limits the activities teachers can provide. In the same lesson very good use of images from the Internet gave them excellent examples of the effect of floods in streets, car parks and in the countryside. Pupils with significant learning difficulties, with help from support assistants, responded particularly well to this very relevant and practical approach. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders enjoy their work about the geography of another country, Kenya. They know about farming methods, understand the importance of water and cattle and learn a few greetings that "their" villagers use. Well organised and presented files about volcanoes show that pupils are developing an understanding of some of the major land-forming processes, including knowing about the "Girdle of Fire" and different types of volcanoes.

9898. Geography is not taught as a subject in Years 10 and 11 but the courses that pupils follow make significant demands on the knowledge, understanding and skills they have acquired in previous years. For example, they effectively use grid references to plot tourist routes through Plymouth and read an Ordnance Survey map to identify the route of the South Devon Railway. ICT skills are effectively use to produce column graphs of the various surveys that they undertake. As a result of a comprehensive range of sampling visits to places of work, they have an understanding of the range of activities that go to make up the local economy.

9999. The schools' provision for geography is very well led. Good long and medium-term plans clearly reflect national guidelines. Resources for the subject are good, with the school making particularly good use of the local and wider community. The scheme of work helps pupils make progress in a systematic manner and represents very good improvement since the last inspection. Limited planned use is made of computers between Years 1 and 9 but there is evidence of good use of ICT by pupils in Years 10 and 11.

## HISTORY

400100. In history, because of good teaching pupils achieve well and make good progress. The good teaching seen during the last inspection has been sustained, as have the good attitudes that pupils show in lessons.

404101. No lessons of history for pupils in Years 1 and 2 were seen during the week of the inspection. Judgements about pupils' achievements are based upon a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work books and records of progress. Very young pupils are beginning to understand that events took place long ago and are learning to sequence events through a variety of activities, including placing photographs of "me, then and now" into the correct order. They are aware of the different ways in which the past is represented through looking at old photographs and handling artefacts such as toys from the past, and appreciate with excitement the value of first-hand experience when they visit the Barbican to learn about Elizabethan houses.

402102. Between Years 3 to 6 pupils recognise that the past can be divided into different periods and have better recall of factual knowledge of the events studied. Their understanding of chronology is consolidated through being introduced to a time line. Stories about people continue to help them understand why people in the past acted as they did. A well-organised visit to Smeaton's lighthouse not only provides background information in support of their work on how a lighthouse keeper lived but also provides very good stimulus for their story about Grace Darling. The teacher's well-led discussion about her bravery and how they are brave contributed very well to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

403103. During Years 7 to 9 pupils show they have significantly better recall of facts, dates and events and are more consistent in their use of correct terminology. The lesson about Henry VIII shows this well as pupils enjoyed showing they could place the wives in the correct order of marriage. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the history of other countries is developed as they study Ancient Egypt and slavery in America. They know that Cleopatra was the last queen of Egypt and they link their study of hieroglyphics and Egyptian numbers to their work in mathematics. A good range of photographs and work sheets help with their understanding of the causes and effects of slavery with this work being effectively linked to modern times through studying the life of Martin Luther King. Further work on modern history, on World War II, is very well introduced through considering the Blitz and its effect in Plymouth, particularly the need to evacuate young children. This unit of work generated good extended writing by pupils.

404104. History is well led and planning is good. Resources for history, including the good selection of reference books in the library, are good and are well organised. However, there is limited use of ICT in the subject. Subject leadership shows good improvement since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

405105. An insufficient number of ICT lessons were seen during the inspection. Judgements about pupils' achievements are therefore based upon a detailed scrutiny of work and records and discussions with pupils.

406106. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in ICT lessons because of good teaching. Teachers plan well, make good use of resources and make sure that pupils' previous learning is effectively used to help acquire new skills and understanding. However, pupils do not have sufficient planned opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects and the absence of an ICT room means that despite teachers' good organisational skills, pupils do not have enough time to work independently at a computer. The school development plan appropriately identifies the need to create a separate room for ICT.

407107. Between Years 1 and 2 pupils learn about cause and effect as they use different types of switches to control a range of devices such as tape recorders and video remote controls. They learn about the different parts of a computer such as screen, keyboard, printer and mouse and use these terms correctly. Their improving hand/eye control enables them to use a mouse to move a cursor across a screen with more accuracy. They use very simple text-producing packages to produce labels and symbols that have meaning. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have established the routines of switching on, loading and using programs and safely closing down. They use word-processing programs to produce text and show excitement when they succeed in using drop-down menus to change font size and colour. They are fully aware of the function of the different elements of their class computer station and understand how a remote printer can be linked to their computer. By Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the requirements of good word-processing skills such as the correct use of punctuation, capitals, paragraphs and spaces.

408108. Between Year 7 and 9 pupils word process with more accuracy, are more familiar with the keyboard, including the use of function keys, and use their basic skills for a wider range of purposes. For example, images, photographic and clip art, from different sources, are combined with text to produce greeting cards. Internet skills develop and search engines are used to find web pages that can be printed. Text amendment is regularly practised. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 do not have ICT lessons. The focus during these years is on using and developing their skills through their use across the curriculum. Both classes are well equipped to do this and in particular are successful in providing pupils with opportunities to extend their independent learning skills. By Year 11 pupils load and save work with confidence; they use multi-media techniques to enhance their work and access the Internet in an efficient and purposeful manner. Simple charts and graphs are effectively used to clarify work for their Youth Award and work-related modules. A business word-processing package is well used for real life purposes such as creating letters of application, curriculum vitae and reports or diaries about work-sampling visits or work experience placements.

409109. The subject is well managed. This represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when co-ordination was considered to be satisfactory. A clear policy reflects the school's aims and long and medium term plans provide enough information for non-specialist staff to help pupils to make progress in a systematic way. Targets for the subject clearly identify the need for pupils to have opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects. Overall, resources for ICT are satisfactory. All classes have at least one computer with a more adequate supply, linked to the Internet, for Years 10 and 11. However, the absence of a specialist room means that good material resources are not as available as they should be. Monitoring of pupils' work in the subject is good with each unit of work having clearly identified success criteria.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

440110. Since the last inspection provision for French has developed well. By the end of Years 9 and 11, pupils achieve well, especially in speaking and listening activities. This is due to the high quality teaching and very appropriate planning for reading, writing, speaking and listening in French.

441111. Achievements are good because pupils are keen to listen to and speak French. They try hard to read and write the language accurately. Pupils copy the intonation and speech of the teacher and French assistant so that they speak words, phrases and short sentences competently. Most pupils understand the gist of what the adults are saying to them because lessons are conducted in a mixture of French and English. They understand simple sentences and ask and answer questions in French on a wide range of topics, the level of difficulty increasing over time. For example, pupils in Years 7 and 8 sang the French alphabet song well before watching the teacher carefully to pronounce the letters correctly. They were comfortable with the routines of writing the date and heading for the lesson in French. Pupils in Year 9 listened carefully as the French assistant reads the names of animals in French. They translated these words into English silently before matching the pictures and French words. Pupils in Year 10 picked up subtle differences quickly as they tried to improve their pronunciation of new vocabulary. With varying levels of support they described the length and colour of their hair in a short sentence. Pupils counted spontaneously to ten in French and were confident in their use of numbers and days of the week. By the time they reach Year 11, pupils write information about their families in French and English. Pupils know many of the countries in the world in which French is spoken and write good reports of their visit to France in English, using and spelling French names and places accurately.

442112. Teaching is consistently good or very good, because the teacher and French assistant take all lessons and work well together. They have high expectations of responses in French. They provide very good models for learning the language because they speak clearly and reinforce any unusual pronunciations. Teaching assistants support the teaching very well because they help pupils unobtrusively and encourage them to participate. Pupils know the format of lessons well because the teacher has established routines and is very skilled in focusing pupils' attention on the vocabulary they are learning.

443113. Pupils really enjoy the subject and respond well to requests to speak in French. Some are too shy to speak in front of the whole group but join in discussions well. Pupils look forward to games that are an important feature of every lesson. These provide an opportunity to reinforce learning in an enjoyable and relaxed way. Pupils maintain their concentration and motivation well when writing and reading French because they have positive attitudes towards the subject.

444114. The very good working relationship between the language teacher from the community college and the school is helping the school to develop the provision very purposefully. The curriculum has been adapted well to meet the needs of each group and the two teachers and the language assistant work well together, looking carefully at each unit of work before planning future developments. The trip to France and a special French breakfast are important parts of the Year 11 Youth Award programme and are highlights of the final year of their studies. The learning of French makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## MUSIC

**445115.** In music, pupils throughout the school, including pupils with more significant learning needs, achieve well for their age and ability. Primary pupils, who have many of their lessons with a visiting specialist teacher, achieve particularly well in singing, and enjoy their music-making activities. Secondary pupils, who are taught by a teacher who has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, achieve particularly well in performing and listening and applying knowledge and understanding. Because teaching is consistently good or better pupils achieve well and make good progress. All pupils are confident to perform in front of others, for example in front of their class and in front of adults in concerts both in school and in the wider community.

**446116.** Because teaching is good younger pupils listen well, try very hard and show good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. They are effectively introduced to a range of music and encouraged to perform a series of movements that are challenging but achievable. They are effectively introduced to rhythms, for example by tapping their knees in time with the teacher. Most recognise a song by listening to the introduction being played and are keen and eager to join in. All participate fully in action songs and are pleased with their own achievements. Most pupils can hold a tune and sing in time to the music, keeping the correct tempo. All have great fun using the microphone and are confident to sing solo in front of others. Lessons are well planned to enable all to participate at an appropriate level and music plays an important part in the development of pupils' listening, language and communication skills. For example, pupils have great fun with the "hello" song. Groups of combined classes in the hall are effectively managed, with lessons going at a brisk pace and all fully participating.

**447117.** Older pupils delight in working with electronic keyboards, reading musical notation and exploring the effect, for example, of using crotchets and quavers. The series of lessons are well planned to enable all to participate and build on and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. The teacher has high expectations of pupils and pupils rise to this. They remembered, with good support from the teacher's demonstration, how to clap on the first beat of taped music they listened to and enjoyed clapping one-beat notes to the background beat and then half-beat notes. Great fun was had when the class was split into two, with half doing the one beat and the others doing the half beat. Throughout this activity pupils showed very good attention and listening. All pupils used the keyboard confidently and selected a drum section of their own choice. They all made a very good attempt to play the phrases of music and throughout showed very good effort and concentration. All were confident to perform in front of others. Excellent relationships support pupils' participation and confidence, and learning support assistants play an important role in supporting individual pupils.

**448118.** The primary curriculum for music is very well planned and organised with all aspects well covered. Teachers with a good subject knowledge take all music lessons. Work is planned to enable pupils to participate at an appropriate level. Great enthusiasm and fun, that pupils respond to, pervade all musical activities. Resources are good and well used, although there are few instruments from other cultures for pupils to experience and few ICT programs in use. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in the progress pupils make in music.

## Personal Social and Moral Education

**449119.** There have been considerable improvements in personal, social and moral education since the last inspection. Exemplary teaching and positive relationships have a direct impact on enabling pupils to achieve excellently in their work. Lessons are exciting, varied and challenging, set in a climate where mutual respect and consideration for others is modelled effectively by pupils and staff alike. Pupils are confident to express their opinions in a clear and considered manner. Most pupils have highly-developed social skills and are good at listening and turn-taking, and avoid being judgmental of one another.

**420120.** Younger pupils are given very effective opportunities to develop their listening and social skills. Most understand the difference between happy and sad when listening to a tale of the 'Lost Teddy'. All pupils listen well to each other and most can copy expressions to show how Teddy would feel.

The teacher makes very good use of questions such as 'Where is he going?' and 'What will happen next?' to draw out enthusiastic answers from the pupils, who are keen to show their concern and ideas to help Teddy. Excellent use of praise and encouragement ensures that all pupils are learning from each other.

424121. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are encouraged to explore feelings. Facial expressions are used to good effect in a group discussion about recognising how others feel by the expressions they use. Good planning and teaching help every pupil become fully involved in sharing their ideas and most can recognise fear, excitement and happiness from pictures, as well as being able to relate that to when they experience those feelings. This is illustrated well by a pupil describing a feeling of fear as a 'shaking in his tummy'. Positive and supportive relationships and flexible teaching skills ensure that everyone's views are valued. The pupils are very respectful and courteous when listening to each other.

422122. Pupils in the secondary part of the school are very effectively encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of each aspect of the personal, social and moral education programme and apply this to their work across and beyond school. Year 9 pupils explore the meaning of each word and most can talk about how they exist as an individual as well as part of society. One pupil describes his view of "moral" as "Doing the right thing", giving an example of how that might apply in real life. Very positive expectations combined with an energetic pace keep pupils attentive and enthusiastic through the lessons. Pupils are taught how to express opinions by using an example and reason for their view to help others understand them. Pupils are highly motivated and confident in expressing their views even if these differ from those of their peers.

423123. Pupils show a mature attitude when discussing moral dilemmas within current affairs. Excellent teaching of problem-solving strategies ensures they are very well equipped to consider a range of options; for example, when deciding how a family should cope with a kidnap threat. Working in pairs, informed options were considered and a decision taken which was in turn reported back to the group. All listened attentively and were confident to express their views. Excellent use was made of questions to stimulate further options and the infectious enthusiasm from the teacher ensured that all pupils felt valued and fully involved.

124. The leadership of this subject is very strong. The underlying principles of respect and empowerment of individuals is evident across the whole school. Excellent relationships ensure pupils are enthusiastic and respectful in expressing their views. A high degree of challenge ensures pupils are well informed and skilled in accessing information on a wide range of issues. Teachers' detailed understanding of individual needs and passion for empowering students result in teaching being consistently very good and often excellent. Pupils are involved in judging their own progress, which is comprehensively monitored through the IEPs. A clear and succinct policy ensures that all aspects of health, sex and drugs education are covered on a developmental basis. Thinking skills are beginning to be used to effectively further extend pupils' ability to manage their own learning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

425125. Good achievements by pupils in physical education have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress, and often very good progress, in learning. This is a direct result of well-planned and effective teaching which makes good use of praise and encouragement to raise pupils' expectations of what they can achieve. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the majority of lessons with high expectations being set by all staff with regard to behaviour and individual performance. The exceptionally high quality of relationships between staff and pupils enable well-planned lessons to lead to very good learning outcomes. Teaching and support staff work exceptionally well together in modelling positive relationships.

426126. The youngest pupils enjoy a rich variety of physical experiences, which build on a well planned curriculum. Themes such as balancing, travelling and body shape effectively help pupils become aware of their bodies and how they work. Most pupils can find a space and follow simple instructions to move a ball using different parts of their body, such as elbow or knee, and show a

reasonable degree of pace and accuracy. Lessons are fun and exciting with lots of variety which helps maintain pupils' concentration. Very good teaching involves full participation by teaching and support staff which, combined with plenty of praise, reinforcement and extension opportunities, result in pupils working confidently together even when the tasks are challenging.

427127. Timetable restrictions mean that physical education was not observed in Years 3 to 6; however, there is evidence of good levels of achievement across a wide range of activities. Good use is made of 'Sportability' kits, which have improved the access and variety of sporting opportunities available to pupils. Swimming is taught to all primary pupils. High expectations from teachers and very good coaching techniques give pupils the confidence and skills to achieve very well; many can swim without support and demonstrate a variety of strokes on their front and back. Pupils' attentive behaviour and enjoyment result in very good achievement.

428128. Secondary pupils show good physical skills. During a football session pupils are keen to develop and extend their skills and play close attention to detail. They use technical terms appropriately, such as dribbling and defending. Pupils work very well co-operatively, independently supporting and encouraging each other. They can honestly evaluate their own performance and suggest ways of improving techniques. Where the teaching is very good, lessons are well planned with a good knowledge of an appropriate level of challenge for individuals and high expectations of performance. However, during the inspection the impact of some lessons was restricted by large groups working in inadequate and restrictive accommodation, with only limited opportunity for tasks to be adapted for individual needs. The school realises that this is an issue and is re-establishing its links with a local sports college to provide more inclusive and extended learning opportunities. A good example of this is a recent initiative called "One Small Step", which uses grant money to good effect so that pupils benefit from visiting professional coaches and attending major sporting events in the region.

429129. Planning has improved significantly since the last inspection and has enabled pupils to build systematically on their skills, supported by a programme of activities including swimming, dance, athletics, gymnastics and outdoor adventure activities. National schemes of work are adopted with extension opportunities for higher-attaining pupils. Progress is effectively monitored through a series of skills checklists within the primary phase and an assessment and achievement record used with secondary pupils. Both systems are effective in informing a pupil of what they have achieved and help them reflect on how they can improve their performance in future. High regard is paid to health and safety at all times.

430130. Very good use is made of resources within the school and the local community to broaden the learning opportunities and range of activities available. The school offers a good range of additional sporting activities such as sailing and a very popular dance club. A comprehensive range of adventure activities further enhance the programme with regular day activities and residential visits being offered to pupils in Years 3 to 11. These are highly valued by pupils, who gain a great deal of confidence as well as physical skill improvement.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

434131. Achievements in religious education have improved dramatically since the last inspection. Progress is consistently good and very good in Year 1. This improvement is directly linked to very strong subject leadership, where skilled planning consistently reflects an understanding of pupils' needs. Individual lessons are creatively adapted to allow pupils to access difficult concepts. Pupils develop an awareness of values and respect for themselves and others through the use of well-told stories.

432132. There are strong links to other areas of the curriculum, as with art, where Year 5 pupils explore the role of art in celebrating Christmas. Most pupils are able to recognise the role of characters such as Jesus, Mary and Joseph and begin to see how artists use bright light and a halo to show the importance of the characters. Pupils enjoy sharing their knowledge and understanding of Christian traditions. Learning is enhanced by skilfully-managed discussions, with effective use of praise to celebrate good ideas from pupils. The imaginative use of resources extends the learning

experience with a wide variety of art styles to show different ways of presenting ideas. Pupils' work is delightfully presented in workbooks, which document a rich and colourful range of learning opportunities including Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Pupils take pride in their work and make good use of religious language when describing what they have achieved.

433133. Senior pupils begin to develop their skills in presenting alternative viewpoints within religion and broader ethical issues, such as personal relationships and the scarcity of world resources. Pupils make good progress in learning due to good teaching, which encourages pupils to challenge and investigate beliefs from a factual as well as spiritual perspective. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 are confident in expressing their views in discussions and show respect and courtesy for different points of view. They draw on previous experiences to recognise significant characters and events in the Christian calendar. Skilful teaching encourages informed discussion, with very good use of praise being used to ensure that all pupils feel their contributions are valued. Traditional and modern traditions are presented in an imaginative way through the use of advent calendars, with pupils given plenty of choice when selecting symbols which reflect important issues to Christians at Christmas.

434134. School-wide themes of "finding out about faith", "belonging" and "journeys to celebration" are imaginatively adapted through a two-year programme and enhanced by visits to local places of worship as well as by visiting speakers, who have included local clergy, and through workshops, such as for the festival of Diwali. Pupils' work is celebrated around the school in a range of bright and colourful displays. Celebration assemblies, harvest festivals and carol concerts combine with daily acts of collective worship to further enrich the spiritual learning opportunities within the school.

435135. The subject leader has produced a clear policy and guidance for teaching using the locally agreed syllabus. She has identified challenging targets for further improvement in a comprehensive development plan. A strong commitment to professional development and action research has enabled her to secure a Millennium grant which supports work in leading national and regional developments in assessing and resourcing religious education for pupils with special educational needs. The commitment to continuous improvement is considerably enhancing the quality of learning opportunities for pupils. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection.