

INSPECTION REPORT

HOOE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Plymstock

LEA area: Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113313

Headteacher: Mr J Daykin

Lead inspector: Mr Kevin Hodge

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th July 2004

Inspection number: 263585

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	265
School address:	Hooe Road Hooe Plymstock Plymouth
Postcode:	PL9 9RG
Telephone number:	01752 402042
Fax number:	01752 481628
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Gagg
Date of previous inspection:	9 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is located in the village of Hooe, in the Plymstock district of Plymouth. Its ten classes include several that have pupils from more than one year group. There are 265 pupils on roll and currently more boys than girls. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority groups or speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, around five per cent, is much lower than average. At 16 per cent, the number of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average; five pupils have educational statements. The socio-economic background of the pupils varies, but is generally average. The pupils come to the school with a range of abilities but their attainment is average overall. The area has a mixture of owner-occupied houses and local authority rented accommodation. The majority of the pupils live in the local area and few travel far to get to the school.

The school gained the government's 'Basic skills' quality mark in 2003 and had its 'Investors in People' status reconfirmed in 2002. In September 2003, the school became a recognised teacher-training school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18466	Kevin Hodge	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English; Information and Communication Technology; Music; Physical Education; English as an Additional Language.
14032	Marion Saunders	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
30695	Geraldine Dinan	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Science; Art and Design; Design and Technology.
14509	Phillip Mann	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Geography; History; Religious Education; Citizenship; Special Educational Needs.

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education and skills Ltd
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Hooe Primary is an effective school. It provides good value for money. The pupils achieve well in a number of subjects and in the areas of learning for children under five. The standard of care shown to pupils is high and the pupils respond by behaving well and relating to all staff with respect. Links with other schools, colleges and the community are of a very high quality. The school is led well by the headteacher and governors.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English and mathematics are better than expected nationally for pupils aged seven.
- The pupils in the Reception class achieve well.
- The pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) achieve well and the work is co-ordinated very well.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school and is particularly good in the Foundation Stage.
- The headteacher and governors manage the school effectively, develop a good learning ethos and promote high levels of care for pupils.
- Links with parents are very productive and collaboration with other schools is of very high quality.
- Teachers' written comments on pupils' work in Years 1 to 6 are not diagnostic enough or followed up.
- The care and welfare of pupils are promoted very well.
- The higher attaining pupils in Years 1 to 6 do not always achieve well enough.
- The length of time allocated for some lessons in Years 1 to 6 is too long, which reduces the interest and motivation of pupils.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The minor points raised, such as improving the Foundation Stage provision and consolidating the national strategies for English and mathematics, have been achieved. Children now achieve well in the Foundation Stage, and standards in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 have been maintained since the last inspection. In Years 3 to 6, results in national tests have varied, but the trend has matched the national picture. The school became a training school in September 2003. It now has the 'Basic skills' quality mark and its 'Investors in People' status was reconfirmed in 2002.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, given their average attainment when they enter the school. In the Foundation Stage, children are on track to reach or exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception and they achieve well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in their writing, reading and mathematics. In some practical subjects, and in geography and history, they achieve well. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve satisfactorily overall; they achieve well in listening skills, art and design, design and technology and history. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are promoted well in most subjects. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 generally achieve better than pupils in Years 3 to 6, due to the higher proportion of very good teaching and the benefits of improvements made in the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	C	C	C
Mathematics	B	A	B	B
Science	C	C	C	C

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

In the national tests for 2003 for the oldest pupils, the results in English and science were maintained from the previous year, although mathematics fell slightly. In two subjects, results matched those reached nationally and mathematics was still above average. Compared to similar schools, the picture was the same. Since 2000, the rate of improvement has broadly matched the national trend for pupils aged seven and eleven, but with some yearly variations due to the nature of each year group. The latest test results for these years indicate improvements in English, and at the higher levels in science, but a possible decline in mathematics. Those pupils who have SEN, or who are from ethnic minorities, achieve well.

Pupils’ personal development is good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave well, and are particularly willing to take responsibility. Aspects of pupils’ multi-cultural awareness are less well promoted, but their social and moral development is good. Attendance is satisfactory overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good overall. The teaching is good overall.

Teaching is consistently strong throughout the school and very good in the Foundation Stage. There are some weaknesses in day-to-day marking of work for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Pupils’ learning is good in key aspects of English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. The curriculum is good overall. It is extended by a very good range of activities that take place after school or at lunchtime. Links with local secondary schools and other organisations are excellent. Some lessons are too long and some activities do not stretch the higher attaining pupils. The school has highlighted these areas in its improvement planning. All pupils benefit from very good levels of care and are included well within activities. This contributes to the quality of their learning and their achievement. Links with parents are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the school are good. Since his recent appointment, the headteacher has built on the strengths of the school and is beginning to establish new routines and direction for development. He is ably supported by a leadership team that oversees the work of the school effectively. The governors ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements; support its work with vigour, and provide good expertise, in finance and appointments, for example.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school and encourage their children to learn. An active parent-teacher association both raises money and organises social events that are well supported by parents. Parents find the curriculum evenings, such as a recent one on the teaching of numeracy, very useful. Pupils generally enjoy school and value their involvement in the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should now do to raise standards and improve are:

In Years 1 to 6:

- Make sure that teachers use marking consistently to check, guide and improve pupils' progress.
- Make sure planned activities to challenge the higher attaining pupils are followed through within lessons.
- To improve pupils' learning and further raise standards, shorten the time given to certain lessons so that pupils are more motivated by the pace and rigour of activities.

The school has identified these issues in its self-evaluation and plans for improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve well. A significant majority are on course to reach or exceed the expected standards in all the areas of learning. Pupils achieve particularly well in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils reach the expected standards or better in all subject areas and achieve at least satisfactorily in all subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage.
- Nearly all pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in writing, reading and mathematics, as well as art, design and technology, geography and history.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well in listening, art and design, design and technology, history and geography.
- Some of the higher attaining pupils in Years 1 to 6 do not achieve well enough.

Commentary

1. The children come into the school with varying levels of ability, but show broadly average attainment overall. This view is confirmed by the school's own analysis, which recognises an improvement. Children in the Reception class achieve well in all areas of learning. The vast majority are on course to meet or exceed the Early Learning Goals that children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.6 (16.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.1 (15.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.1 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In English, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and reach better than expected standards. They listen carefully, have a good vocabulary and develop their creative writing well. Their reading skills are developed systematically. In mathematics, they achieve well. They are confident in working out calculations involving money and in simple doubling and halving of numbers. In the national tests, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected levels in writing, reading and mathematics compared particularly well to the national picture. Compared to similar schools, the pupils achieved satisfactorily in reading and mathematics and did particularly well in writing. Overall, the school has kept pace with national trends.

3. The majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in their listening skills. They have secure skills in their reading, speaking and writing. Pupils use their literacy skills well in other subjects such as science, geography and history. In mathematics and science, pupils reach the expected standards. They are confident in problem solving and in mental calculation. In science, they understand concepts of testing, and methods of problem solving and planning work.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (27.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.5 (28.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.6 (28.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. The tables above show that results slightly dipped in mathematics from the previous year, but they generally matched the national average in English and science. Compared to similar schools, these results were above average in mathematics and average in the other two subjects. The school missed the ambitious targets it set last year in both English and mathematics, but the national tests taken this term indicate that it will exceed its latest targets. Overall, the school has kept pace with national trends.

5. In ICT, the pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Increased resources are beginning to improve pupils' application of skills and their knowledge of how computers help them. In the remaining subjects, whether inspected in detail or sampled, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in art and design, design and technology, geography and history. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well in art and design, design and technology and history.

6. No significant differences in current achievement between year groups or classes were noted during the inspection, although provision in the Foundation Stage is strong. The higher attaining pupils in Years 1 to 6 are not always given the most challenging work, and they do not achieve well enough. The higher than average results being reached in Year 2 are beginning to have a developing influence as pupils move through the school. This is reflected in the latest results. If these are confirmed, the current Year 6 has reached above average standards in English, despite having a high percentage of pupils with SEN. Provision for pupils with SEN is good, as was the case at the last inspection. These pupils achieve well in their day-to-day class work. This is due to well-thought-out activities, group work and co-ordination.

7. There are some differences in the attainment reached in national test results. The pupils generally reach higher than average standards by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6 the results have varied each year. Last year they matched the national average in English and science, and were above average in mathematics. The higher proportion of very good teaching found in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is contributing to the rising trend in standards. The trends in pupils' attainment throughout the school have broadly matched the national picture over the past three years.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **satisfactory** and punctuality is **good**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school is very successful at promoting pupils' moral and social development.
- Older pupils are very keen to take on the many responsibilities the school offers them.
- The school has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and deals very effectively with bullying.
- The school could do more to prepare pupils for life in multi-cultural Britain.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002/03

Authorised absence	
School data	5.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.4

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

8. Throughout the school, pupils have many opportunities to develop an understanding of right and wrong and to appreciate the responsibilities of living as part of a community. This remains a strength of the school since the last inspection. A personal, social and moral education lesson in Years 3 and 4 explored how pupils might tell friends that they thought they were doing something wrong. Pupils understand that, although they may not always be able to do as they choose, the rules are used to ensure the safety of everyone. This is particularly evident at lunchtime when football is restricted to certain areas. Pupils readily celebrate and commiserate with each other. During a physical education lesson, the penalty shootout was entered into with enthusiasm, without being unduly competitive. Older pupils have a good understanding of the difficulties faced by some pupils with SEN and a significant number readily offer support. Pupils willingly participate in the 'circle of friends' set up to support some individual pupils.

9. The school council has been effective in giving pupils an opportunity to take responsibility for some decisions in the school. Pupils, who are consulted by their council representatives, generally see it as successful. The council is currently considering what equipment could be provided in the playground, using a sum of money given by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Older pupils have the opportunity to become prefects. This role involves a wide range of responsibilities, including taking the infant pupils to lunch and helping during wet playtimes.

10. The system of peer mentoring makes a significant contribution both to pupils' personal development and to the management of unwanted behaviour. Mentors from Year 4 upwards are trained to provide advice and support to any pupil asking for this. The mentor team on duty have their photographs prominently displayed and all pupils know that they can approach any of them if they prefer to talk to someone other than a teacher. Mentors have clear guidelines about when to refer matters to adults. Pupils believe that there are fewer incidents of minor bullying as a result of the mentoring system.

11. The school has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and uses a wide range of strategies both to promote good behaviour and deal with unwanted behaviour. Teaching and support staff provide good role models in class, where there are good and often very good relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils. Expectations of behaviour are prominently displayed and pupils respond well to the system of rewards and sanctions. A courtesy cup is given out weekly to recognise courteous and kind behaviour. Nominations come from staff, pupils and parents for this award, which is highly valued by pupils. Rewards are well understood by pupils and generally regarded as being administered fairly. Serious incidents of bullying are rare and are very effectively dealt with. There have been no exclusions in the reporting year.

12. The school makes good provision overall for pupils' cultural development, particularly their knowledge of the local cultural heritage. A limited range of opportunities to study other cultures through geography and art includes links with schools in Kenya and St Lucia. However, the school needs to do more to prepare pupils for life in multi-cultural Britain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good overall**. The curriculum generally provides a secure framework for teachers to plan, but does not yet fully exploit the interests and potential of the highest attaining pupils. Extra-curricular provision is well developed. Teaching is good overall and a higher proportion of very good teaching was seen in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall, throughout the school. They are very good in the Reception class for children in the Foundation Stage. Assessment of pupils' progress is good overall, but there are some weaknesses in the quality of teachers' day-to-day marking comments.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The teaching in the Foundation Stage is particularly strong.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well throughout the school.
- Teachers review prior learning at the start of lessons, using good, focused questioning techniques.
- The school has made a good start in its role as a teacher-training institution.
- Teaching assistants are well briefed and make a good contribution to learning.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent across some year groups and curriculum areas.
- In Years 3 to 6, the higher attaining pupils are not always stretched and stimulated to achieve their best.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with a good proportion of very good lessons observed. It is particularly strong in the Reception class. The best teaching was characterised by thoughtful and thorough planning of stimulating learning activities. Good co-operation between teachers and assistants improves learning opportunities for all pupils. Relationships, in and outside of lessons are good. Teachers encourage pupils well and they respond with good behaviour and interest.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	8 (21%)	23 (58%)	8 (21%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

14. The quality of teaching in the Reception class is generally very good. It impacts very strongly on childrens' learning, especially in their personal, social and emotional development, their numeracy development and their communication, language and literacy. Teaching and learning in Reception are typified by warm relationships, very good planning, imaginative use of resources and good support from the teaching assistant.

15. In Years 1 to 6, teachers share clear learning objectives with pupils at the start of lessons and return to them at the end. Some teachers reaffirm what has been covered rather than what has been learned, which is a lost opportunity for informing future planning for learning. Some lessons lack pace because the teachers spend too long on initial explanations. Generally teachers are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils. They set behavioural and academic expectations, appropriate to individual needs and this is very effective in ensuring educational inclusion. There are exceptions to this. Specific work for higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 is often planned, but

during the inspection, the teaching didn't ensure the planning was followed through. Homework is generally well used to reinforce and extend work in lessons.

16. The way that pupils learn is often good in Years 1 to 6. It is very good in the Reception class. Pupils sustain concentration and take pride in their presentation skills. They enjoy working in pairs and small groups. Pupils listen to each other's ideas respectfully and support one another's efforts in class. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' ability to concentrate and work independently is good. In Years 1 and 2 they are good at working alone when the teacher is working with other pupils. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils are mature and sustain their interest, even though some lessons are long. The learning decreases, however, in these sessions. Pupils generally co-operate well with each other, such as the physical education sessions seen in Years 4, 5 and 6, where pupils helped each other to solve some physical challenges.

17. Since 2003, the school has taken a major role in training students to become qualified teachers. The training school manager liaises well with partners from other schools in the scheme and the college. Specialist teachers have undertaken mentor training to support trainees in the classroom. The first cohort of students has been successful in gaining qualified status. There have been some benefits to the school. The teachers who supervise the students are also challenged to reflect upon their own practice. This has helped improved the quality of teaching and pupils' learning, and the teachers are contributing to future teacher training-materials for the college.

18. Assessment is generally good, particularly where it is used to track the achievement of year groups. Information is collected and interpreted well in nearly all areas and appropriate action is taken for improvement. Teachers' day-to-day assessment in lessons or in their comments on pupils' work is not diagnostic or informative enough for the pupils. The marking for older pupils in Years 1 to 6 is regular, but is not always consistent in its content or usefulness. Factual correctness is covered well, but it is not focused sufficiently on giving pupils clues about what they need to do next in order to improve.

The Curriculum

Curricular provision is **good**. **Very good** opportunities are provided to extend learning outside of lessons. Provision for pupils with SEN is very good. Resources for learning are **good** and the school is making the best use of its **very good** accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good enrichment opportunities contribute to children's personal development and broaden their experiences.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is very good so that they achieve well.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to participate in a range of sporting activities.
- Activities planned for the highest attaining pupils do not always take place.
- The daily timings allocated to some subjects are too long.
- The school's accommodation and resources for learning are very good.

Commentary

19. The school provides a broad curriculum and very good opportunities for its enrichment. As well as the good extra-curricular activities available after school, stimulating activities enable pupils to broaden their learning in many subjects.

20. The morning timetable focuses on literacy and numeracy. These sessions, along with some other subjects in the afternoon, are too long, especially for the younger pupils. This reduces the pace of lessons and the pupils are less motivated to learn. The school is working to develop alternative arrangements from next term, such as planning for shorter sessions.

21. Curricular provision in the classroom is good overall, with some strong features. Provision in basic literacy and numeracy skills is good. In art and design, geography, history, and design and technology, the planning is particularly good. A range of activities provides additional stimulus for written work, such as a story-telling visit to a local castle and a Shakespearean Day. A good range of activities offers creative opportunities. Visits outside school enhance work in art, history, geography and religious education. For example, a visit to the National Maritime Aquarium enabled pupils to produce a variety of good art and design work. Visits for children in Years 4, 5 and 6 contribute much to their learning and personal development in history, where local houses provide a wealth of activities that also support literacy and geography. Teachers provide a good range of activities to suit the needs of the majority of their pupils. However, the higher attaining pupils, who are clearly identified, have too few challenging activities. Activities for them are often planned, but during the inspection the teachers didn't consistently implement them. Pupils receive their health education chiefly through the science curriculum. Opportunities for personal and social education and citizenship are developed through regular sessions held during the term. Well-managed additional responsibilities, such as those of school council members and specially trained mediators, extend pupils' social and moral awareness. The provision to develop the pupils' multi-cultural experiences is limited.

22. Children with SEN receive good provision in the way of targeted support from teachers and learning support assistants, which results in them achieving well overall. These pupils are fully included in all areas of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities. Teachers have realistic expectations of these children, who know their contribution to lessons is valued and this increases their confidence and self-esteem.

23. The school makes effective use of the local Plymstock Academic Council, and specialist teachers from the two local secondary schools provide expert help in various areas, including mathematics, French, sporting activities and specialist ICT. These opportunities make a very good contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. A good range of clubs enriches the overall provision in physical education and music, both in school time and after school. For example, children can sing in the choir, learn to play a range of musical instruments and play in an ensemble. Children in Year 6 are very well prepared to start their secondary education through strong links with two local secondary schools.

24. The school's accommodation is very good. The recent additions provide comfortable and airy accommodation for both pupils and administrative staff. The music room, SEN rooms, computer suite and library all support pupils' learning effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Very good arrangements ensure pupils' care, welfare and safety. **Good** support, advice and guidance are based on monitoring of overall progress. The involvement of pupils through seeking, appreciating and acting on their views is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school is very successful in providing a safe and secure environment in which pupils can learn.
- Very good induction arrangements help pupils move smoothly both into the Reception class and to each next stage of their education.
- Staff know and support pupils well.

Commentary

25. Very good policies and procedures support the friendly and caring ethos of the school. Pupils feel safe and secure. This enhances their ability to learn and their confidence to participate in the

very good range of activities that the school offers. Pupils are involved in deciding class rules and the reward system for their class. The school premises are well maintained and provide a good learning environment. The school is aware of the need to cater for a wide range of pupils during the lunchtime break and is asking the school council to decide upon additional play resources for the playground areas. The school actively encourages pupils to walk to school and provides 'Walkwise' training for all Year 2 pupils, using parent and volunteer helpers. This enhances pupils' understanding of how to stay safe.

26. There are very good links with the main pre-school playgroup. Termly events are held at the school for these children. This helps to familiarise them with the school setting. The school provides very good support to the playgroup for those pupils who may have SEN. During induction meetings, a crèche is provided for younger children. This is much appreciated by parents. Pupils are very well prepared at the end of each year for transition to the next class.

27. All staff in the school know their pupils well. Lesson planning clearly records the support some pupils require and very effective use is made of teaching assistants to work with particular groups of pupils or individuals. There is very well targeted support for pupils with SEN. Older pupils have weekly targets that they record in their yearly planners. The good informal monitoring of pupils' personal development is explicitly summarised in annual reports on pupils' progress. Good use is made of the external support given when necessary by, for example, the education welfare officer and the school nurse.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are **very good**. Links with the local community are **good**, and links with other schools and colleges are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school provides parents with a very good range of information.
- Parents are supportive of the school and make a valuable contribution to children's progress at school.
- The school is very open to parents' suggestions and concerns.
- The school has excellent links with a range of organisations, schools and colleges.

Commentary

28. The school prospectus and the annual report to parents from governors are informative and well written. Each class, including the Reception class, receives a curriculum sheet at the start of the term, outlining what is to be covered. Annual reports to parents of pupils' progress are concise but clearly personal to each child. A regular newsletter is effectively used to inform parents of impending events and to reinforce school requirements such as attendance.

29. Parents are very supportive of the school and encourage their children to learn. They make good use of the reading diaries and yearly planners to communicate with class teachers. The majority of parents are involved in hearing their child read on a regular basis. An active parent-teacher association (PTA) both raises money and organises social events. Events are well supported by parents. A good number of parents help with school outings and some with school clubs, for example the Netball club. The school is starting to address how best to use parent helpers in class. Parents find the curriculum evenings, for example a recent evening about the teaching of mathematics, very useful.

30. Staff are regularly available to speak with parents before school and also offer a programme of evening consultations. Parents value the school's openness regarding access to their work and are very positive about being able to stay with Reception children for a welcoming ten minutes each day.

Last year, parents approached the school over the amount of homework being set. The school listened to the parents' concerns and they are now happy with how homework is organised.

31. The school plays a very active part in the local academic council that represents the group of schools serving the local area. This includes two local secondary schools, a special school and several primary schools. Excellent links with the specialist sports college enable the school to benefit from regular specialist physical education teaching and support. A similar link with the technology school provides specialist technician support for ICT and help with mathematics. These links also ensure a smooth transition from primary to secondary education through planning the curriculum across the different age groups. Very good use is made of external organisations, such as Plymouth Argyle football club to provide football skills coaching, and the Plymouth Life Education Centre caravan to support the science curriculum. The school has recently helped to start up and promote an after-school club and a breakfast club for pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher leads the school with vision and determination.
- The management of daily routines is orderly and effective.
- Governors provide good support to the school, although their evaluation of the impact of initiatives is a weaker aspect.
- Links with other partner institutions are managed very effectively.
- The financial management of the school is good.

Commentary

32. The headteacher, senior staff and governors are committed to improvement. The school's 'Investors in People' status was reaccredited in 2002 and it gained the 'basic skills' quality mark in June 2003. Although the previous inspection report had no significant key issues for the school to address, improvements have been made in several areas. Since his permanent appointment in April, the headteacher has continued to focus on maintaining the positive aspects of the school, while leading it in new directions. The school's development from September as a training centre for trainee teachers is a good example of this.

33. The drive to raise academic standards has been partially successful, particularly for the pupils aged seven, who have reached above average standards in national tests for the past three years. The results for the pupils aged 11 have varied between subjects over the same period. The initial indications from the latest results in 2004 for the oldest pupils are positive in some subjects, but not all. The indications are that they have reached above average levels in English, which is an improvement from last year. In mathematics, standards in the tests appear to have declined, but in science the number of pupils reaching the higher levels has improved. The high percentage of SEN in this particular Year 6 group has affected the results. They have achieved well in English, however, if the results are confirmed in the autumn. The school makes appropriate use of other nationally recognised ways of measuring progress, and the information is used to decide priorities and direct training needs. It is also used effectively to decide the deployment of teaching assistants, for example.

34. The headteacher manages the school in a reflective and determined way. The daily routines are well established, unobtrusive and effective. The headteacher has managed the change from his acting capacity to permanent appointment with sensitivity. He has built upon the existing strengths of the school while establishing new routines and expectations. For example, the school's status as a training centre for new teachers is an area of strength, which has provided benefits for staff and

students alike. The headteacher, supported by a leadership team, creates an effective ethos for learning throughout the school. The school has already identified those areas of weakness raised in the inspection and has plans to improve them. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed to start in September to complete the leadership team. The staff are managed effectively, and support is provided where needed. The staff work closely as a team, set appropriate standards for themselves and relate very well to the pupils. They liaise well with other schools and institutions across different subjects and aspects. Their involvement with the local academic council is a notable and effective partnership. The school is seen, rightly, as a supportive member of the cluster.

35. The office staff, teaching assistants and site manager work hard to set good examples. The teaching assistants also make an effective contribution when working with pupils in small-groups in areas such as ICT and music, and by supporting them within classes. The school promotes staff development through performance management and training. From September, one member of staff will not have a specific class responsibility but will teach different classes to give colleagues planning and preparation time. The school's improvement planning is thorough and focuses on the essential areas, but is now being reviewed. The actions have largely been completed and there are clear plans to set new priorities. These will be determined by the school's own evaluation and the outcomes of the inspection. The school has rightly highlighted the need to develop the work and achievement of the higher attaining pupils, for example.

36. The governors provide the school with good support and they meet all their statutory responsibilities. They help the school achieve an 'inclusive' ethos effectively and promote harmony among pupils from different backgrounds. They give the school some specific additional expertise, particularly in the area of staff appointments, finance and building. The chair of governors leads the role of 'critical friend', and provides good personal support and challenge to the headteacher. Governors are aware of the different areas of the school's work and their 'governors' walkabout day' gives them insight into activities. The focus for visits however, is not always linked to finding out what is working well or how initiatives are progressing. The school has identified several areas which are barriers to improvement, such as finance and time, but has identified ways of using finance wisely and has created some preparation time for staff from September.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	748,484.00	Balance from previous year	8,606.00
Total expenditure	730,331.00	Balance carried forward to the next	17,230.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,777.00		

37. The school's finances are organised and administered well. The priorities for development are budgeted for, and both the administrative officer and headteacher monitor ongoing expenditure carefully. The headteacher regularly gives governors some indicators about how money is being spent and if it is providing good value. This provides governors with good levels of information. The school was last audited three years ago and had few points to address. The school implements 'best value' principles effectively, such as obtaining competitive quotations for work and supplies. It also consults widely with parents, pupils and other institutions. There is an ethos of challenge to see why decisions are being made and if they are the right ones such as building development, for example. The governors' knowledge and collection of information about day-to-day activities is a weaker aspect of their monitoring. Taking into account the staffing levels, the standards reached and the income available per pupil, the school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage for children in the Reception class is **very good**.

38. Provision for children in the Reception class has improved significantly since the last inspection. Children make good progress and achieve well in all areas of the curriculum. The majority reach all the expected Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1, with a significant number of children exceeding them, especially in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. The Foundation Stage leader has produced an exemplary written policy, which underpins all areas of planning and assessment. Teachers and the classroom assistant work closely together to track individual children's achievement on a day-to-day basis. This information is shared sensitively and used effectively to inform future planning. Children receive good levels of verbal feedback from teachers, so that they know what they need to do to improve. Unless otherwise stated, the pupils with SEN make good progress in line with their abilities in all of the areas of learning. The level of adult help effectively supports their involvement and achievement in activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children develop independence and responsibility.
- Adults create a welcoming ethos that helps all children to feel valued.
- Teachers set high expectations and clear rules to ensure children behave very well.

Commentary

39. The inclusive ethos that encourages all children to learn in Reception also ensures that all children feel welcome, secure and valued. Adults, including parent helpers, promote discussion, listen to the children's ideas and help them to develop self-confidence. Classroom routines are quickly established. All children enter the room quietly, sit politely and listen carefully when the register is taken. Teaching is very good. Teachers set high expectations for how children behave. They are firm but fair when alerting children to what is appropriate and acceptable behaviour. Children learn to co-operate well with each other in pairs and groups. They are aware of how their actions affect others. They are taught to develop independence and undertake small responsibilities, such as returning the attendance registers and daily lunch requirements to the school office. Teachers sustain a very good balance of adult-led and child-led choices and these lead to harmonious, enjoyable and effective learning. This was illustrated to good effect when children played with sand and water, used computers, or shared and took turns with the large wheeled play vehicles outdoors.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and support staff take every opportunity to develop children's language skills.
- There are regular opportunities for role-play and social interaction, which adults use well to encourage skills in listening and speaking.
- All children achieve well. They reach expected goals by the end of Reception and some will exceed them.

Commentary

40. The teaching is very good. Children are encouraged to communicate clearly through speech, shared play opportunities, drawing and writing in a consistent manner. They enjoy the daily shared-reading time with teachers, when they read stories that engage their interest and imagination and also develop the skills of reading and gathering information. They particularly enjoyed reading 'Dear Greenpeace' by Simon James. They were quick to notice the illustrated envelope on the book-cover bearing a Plymouth post-mark and to work out that the author lived locally. Children worked in pairs or individually to compose and write their own letters of thanks to people who had recently helped to design, build and plant a new garden area for their use. Handwriting skills are developing well. They write simple sentences accurately and use good levels of punctuation. A plentiful supply of good quality books and other reading materials supports the steady progression of children's reading and writing skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The curriculum is planned very effectively to ensure that the children develop their numeracy skills systematically over time.
- Teaching and learning are very good and promote good achievement for all children.
- Learning is supported by the good use of a wide range of resources.

Commentary

41. Children are given regular opportunities to count, individually and in groups. They have very good understanding of shape, space, colours, non-standard measurements and numbers. Teachers, assistants and other helpers are skilled in developing children's numeracy skills through day-to-day activities. For example, children take the register, or they do shopping tasks in which they use real coins to practise addition and subtraction, and to help them understand money transactions involving giving and receiving change. Teachers devise exciting and attractive hand-made teaching materials, which engage children's interest and make learning more fun. They also introduce counting rhymes and songs, which develop mathematical language and concepts and raise the quality of learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers plan a very good range of interesting practical activities that stimulate children's interest and extend concentration.
- Children develop good language skills for scientific enquiry.
- Children's understanding of religious practices and beliefs is well developed.

Commentary

42. Children have a good understanding of how to keep healthy. The teaching is good and promotes good investigation of their senses by sampling and testing different foods. They explore hot and cold substances and develop good levels of scientific vocabulary relating to freezing and melting. In addition to activities provided by their teachers, the children benefit from the expertise of the school nurse, such as when learning how to look after their ears. They tested hearing levels and explored a range of hearing aids. Children, including those with SEN, are also becoming adept at using sign language when reciting rhymes, singing songs or greeting each other. Children's understanding of mainly Christian practices and beliefs develop well. They know the significance of candles, the crucifix and stained-glass windows in churches. Children recite the school prayer together, with reverence. They design and make a variety of models, using a good range of materials, and use computers to reinforce learning. They study a range of environments, such as the beach and seaside, to develop a sense of place.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children's skills in art and design and music are well developed.
- Teachers plan activities that develop children's creativity and imagination.

Commentary

43. Teaching is good overall. Teachers prepare very attractive and purposeful practical activities to develop children's painting, drawing and modelling skills. They also use classroom displays very well to celebrate children's creative work. Teachers link learning opportunities well across subjects. For example, children learned the species names of three rose varieties and incorporated them in their final work. Children develop sound cultural awareness through the work of well-known artists. In response to Van Gogh's painting, 'Sunflowers', children accurately drew and painted roses from first-hand experience, showing clear observational skills and good painting techniques. The children handled a wide range of mark-making materials and tools with good levels of skill, such as oil crayons, pastels, paints and pencils. They also rolled, coiled and modelled clay dextrously when making small replica animals and insects for a topic about mini-beasts. Children sing well together and enjoy using simple percussion instruments to tap out different rhythms to spoken poems or songs.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The very good new outdoor learning area makes a very good impact on children's learning.
- Teachers plan complex physical activities, which link with children's social and language development, through role-play.

Commentary

44. The new outdoor accommodation, including the covered areas, provides very well for outdoor activities in all weathers, and makes a very good contribution to children's learning. Children work amicably in pairs and co-operate well in team games. The teaching is good. Teachers develop children's vocabulary such as 'under', 'over', 'middle' and 'up and down', which helps them to direct their aim accurately when practising skills of throwing and catching. In the hall, children perform and refine movements in response to an activity based upon 'The Bear's Adventure' whilst sitting in a large circle. They enact aspects of the tale with control and sensitivity. The least confident pupils show little embarrassment about performing because teachers are very supportive. There are, however, some lost opportunities to introduce music into movement lessons, to improve participation.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2 (Years 1 to 6)

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils write creatively and imaginatively; pupils in Years 1 and 2 do this particularly well.
- Pupils' listening skills are well developed in Years 3 to 6.
- Literacy skills are applied well in other subjects.
- The leadership of the subject is good.
- The oldest pupils speak confidently in small groups, but are less confident when speaking in more formal situations.

Commentary

45. By the time pupils are seven, they exceed the nationally expected standards in their work. The oldest pupils in Year 6 reach the standards for their age and their listening skills are better than expected. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn and achieve well; those in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in their listening and satisfactorily in the other areas. In last year's tests for Year 6, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels was above average compared with their previous results when in Year 2.

46. Pupils speak with confidence and clarity by the end of Year 2. They achieve well and willingly explain their learning to visitors, class teacher and each other. They listen well and this helps them to learn well and make good progress. The teachers provide relevant opportunities to extend their vocabulary. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Year 6, they are clear speakers, particularly in small groups and one-to-one discussions. They are not confident when

speaking in front of the class or in assembly. In a Year 6 lesson about similes and metaphors, pupils were reluctant to discuss or offer examples.

47. In reading, pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' skills develop systematically, building on the skills gained in the Reception class. They read fluently and with good expression, and have secure ways of working out unfamiliar words and try to read them. Pupils' enjoyment is promoted well. In a Years 3 and 4 class, the teacher read a well-known book very well, which enthused the pupils. Some lower attaining pupils find new words difficult, but choose interesting books that help them succeed. Although pupils read regularly, few say that they read widely. Classes have reading reviews and have school/home reading diaries to record progress. The pupils understand the arrangements for their reading books and, where appropriate, know how they can make progress from one to another.

48. By the time the pupils are seven, their writing skills develop well. They achieve well and reach standards that are better than expected for their age. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6 and, by the time they leave the school, they reach average standards. In Year 2, the pupils develop their writing skills well. They accurately write labels describing characters' features and they use different written styles, such as narrative and dialogue. The quality of pupils' writing improves; spelling becomes more accurate and handwriting develops well. In Years 3 to 6 pupils make satisfactory progress in their writing. Their past work shows that they write in a wide range of styles, such as arguments for and against television, letters of complaint to a theme park and letters to newspapers. Although some of the writing is structured well, only the highest attaining pupils write with flair and imagination. Work is presented appropriately, but it does not always improve over time.

49. The teaching is good overall, and some very good teaching was seen. The proportion of very good teaching in Years 1 and 2 is raising the achievement of pupils, but this is not always sustained in the older age groups. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher captured the pupils' interest by using puppets and filming them. In contrast, some teaching in Year 3 and in a Years 3 and 4 class, relied on too much explanation before activities started, thereby reducing the time for actual writing. The highest attaining pupils often have work that has the same starting point as all other pupils, and this limits their achievement. The marking of pupils' work throughout is generally regular, but varies in quality. Some does not point out weaknesses sufficiently compared to other classes.

50. The subject leader co-ordinates the subject well in terms of developing policies and ensuring the national training provided for the subject has been organised effectively. The standards in the subject have been analysed for each pupil to see where weakness occur, but the conclusions are not always realistic. For example, results compared to similar schools in national tests last year were below average, but this is not always acknowledged. Pupils spoke about using the recently improved library, but it has minimal additional features to promote its extended use.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum, particularly writing. Good examples were seen in descriptions of volcanoes, instructions for making placemats in design and technology and accounts of different eco systems in science. Speaking and listening skills are given high prominence throughout the school, although in some activities the pupils' speaking skills are not developed to their fullest extent. Reading skills throughout the school are well integrated into many subject areas such as history and science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

- Teaching is consistently good.
- Most children, including those with SEN, achieve well.
- Children enjoy mathematics and have good attitudes to learning.
- The higher attaining pupils are not always effectively challenged, although work is planned for them.
- Assessment of pupils' progress over time is good.

Commentary

52. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are above the national average in all areas of mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that children in Year 6 are attaining standards in line with the national average. The analysis of work from Year 5 pupils indicates rising standards. The national test results have varied, but indicate that standards have declined in 2004, partly due to the higher than average levels of pupils with SEN.

53. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 as a result of good teaching. The pupils add a series of three numbers mentally. They work out number sentences such as $1+7+2=10$ by using toy darts on a dartboard to generate the numbers. Their mental calculation is quick and accurate. They are beginning to be confident in working with numbers beyond 100 and are confident with their knowledge of times tables. In a well-taught lesson in Year 2, the teacher promoted good levels of challenge in their mental warm up, before the pupils worked out simple money problems when buying a meal in an imaginary café. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and know how their learning can be applied. For example, they readily understood the processes in working out costs from a menu and could say how this knowledge would be useful.

54. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve satisfactorily and the present Year 6 achieve well, given their lower than average starting point and high proportion of SEN pupils. Good teaching in Years 3 to 6 promotes good levels of problem solving, confidence in number work and good levels of understanding. In a Years 4 and 5 class, the pupils were confident and accurate when working out clock times both in 12 and 24-hour times. In a well-taught Year 6 lesson, the properties of shapes were explored and pupils knew about acute and obtuse angles. All pupils made satisfactory progress in learning to use a protractor to measure angles, although not all pupils measured them easily or accurately. Follow-on work using compasses to draw angles was completed carefully, but few pupils recognised any emerging patterns to the angles they drew. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy so that teaching throughout the school is at least good. It is generally lively and interesting, so children are well motivated. Teachers plan lessons in great detail. Lessons, in general, provide an appropriate challenge for all children, although sometimes not enough for the higher attaining pupils.

55. Teachers plan well for children with SEN. As a result they make good progress in learning, achieving as well as the other pupils, and the team of teaching assistants provide very good support in this area of learning. There is usually a good pace to lessons, although some go beyond the recommended hour and this can affect pupils' concentration. Children respond enthusiastically and display good attitudes to learning. They work well co-operatively, as in Years 4 and Year 5, where they were learning to use the 24-hour clock through role-play activities.

56. The school uses long-term assessment successfully to monitor pupils' progress and this information enables the school to provide support where necessary. The shorter assessment procedures, such as day-to-day comments on work, vary in quality. Teaching is better where pupils have a good understanding of where they are and what they need to do to improve. The school, through its productive links with local secondary schools, provides a Mathematical Challenge and this has helped to increase knowledge and interest in the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Children often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and this helps them to develop an appreciation of the practical uses of mathematical skills. For example, pupils measure when designing and drawing plans in design and technology. They take measurements and use graphs and tables to record data in science. In history, a recent visit to a country house was used as an unusual context for role-play and the learning of the 24-hour clock.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school.
- Investigative science is well planned throughout the curriculum.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 is not informative enough.
- Leadership is good.

Commentary

58. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are in line with national expectations and have been maintained at this level since the last inspection. An exception to this, and an area of good improvement, is pupils' investigative skills, which are well developed. Pupils' eager responses to good teaching in all areas of the science curriculum lead to good learning. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory, but their past work indicates that some pupils achieve well because of their extended investigative work. This includes those with SEN. Pupils enjoy practical workshop sessions and problem-solving activities. During the inspection, the annual visit from the Plymouth Life Science trailer played a significant part in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the workings of the human body. These sessions, which encompass every age group at their own level, have become an established part of the health education programme. In addition, sessions for pupils in Years 3 - 6 helped them to consider issues of peer pressure in the use of harmful substances, such as alcohol, drugs and tobacco. Pupils demonstrated positive moral, social and logical reasons for saying 'no', and this showed good linking of their science learning with religious education and citizenship within the curriculum.

59. Pupils enjoy practical investigations and record their work in a variety of ways, including diagrams, annotated sketches, tables, graphs and written work. Presentation skills are well developed and show that pupils have a clear understanding of the processes involved.

60. All teachers have high expectations for the neatness of pupils' work. There are some inconsistencies in the way teachers mark pupils' books. Not all teachers give clear guidance for pupils, to show how they might improve. Pupils are encouraged to express scientific concepts in good levels of spoken and written English, which helps them to clarify and refine concepts. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

61. The school monitors achievement across year groups effectively, but day-to-day observations made by class teachers are not informative enough. Marking is not critical enough to tell individual pupils what they need to do to gain higher marks. This is particularly the case with higher attaining pupils. The work set is planned at a higher level, but is not always carried out in the lesson. This limits their achievement.

62. The subject is well led. Its strengths and weaknesses are understood well. The good subject policies, schemes of work and in-service training sessions have been well maintained since the last

inspection. The focus on investigative work, along with additional activities taught by outside visitors, is improving this area of the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are enthusiastic to use computers.
- Pupils are confident in using databases and word processing programs.
- Pupils in Year 6 produce multimedia presentations effectively.
- Extra small-group teaching for the lower attaining pupils is effective.
- The computer suite is a high quality resource that is used well, but is so new that the pupils' skills are developing comparatively slowly.

Commentary

63. By the time the pupils are seven and eleven, they reach standards that are in line with the nationally expected level. The computer suite provides a very good and well-used resource for teaching. Although the suite is timetabled effectively, pupils can use it only once or twice a week. This means learning new skills and consolidating them are slow. Some computers are used within lessons, but this is comparatively infrequent. In some areas of the subject, such as control technology, pupils have a better than expected knowledge. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now systematically gaining the skills needed for work in Years 3 to 6. Pupils of all abilities make steady and appropriate progress and achieve satisfactorily.

64. By the time they are seven, the pupils know the basic functions of a computer, although few could recall where they could be used in everyday situations. They know the outline of a keyboard, and the functions of a space bar and enter key, and how to use the backspace key to correct misspelling. A number of pupils say they use computers at home, and this supplements their general awareness of what they can do. Pupils used the functions of an art program to draw rock-pool pictures. They understood how to change shapes and use different fill patterns. The teaching was satisfactory and a good ethos for learning was created. The pupils achieved the task, although opportunities to help them improve or refine their work were missed. Their past work shows they can use a presentation program to tell the story of Old Mother Hubbard, which also had digital pictures to illustrate it. Other pupils' work in Year 2 shows the appropriate use of a word processor to write some simple poetry for example.

65. The oldest pupils are confident users of computers. The teaching is satisfactory, and some good teaching was seen in a small group taken by the headteacher. In one session, a teaching assistant led the activity and this was a good use of her skills. Pupils in Year 3 learn about simple control procedures and how a computer can switch a light on and off. In a lower attaining group in Year 6, this work was built upon and pupils extended it by developing sequences of instructions, using flow diagrams to help. The headteacher led the group well and the pupils achieved well during the activity. In Year 6, presentation work combining pictures, texts and graphics was developed well by adding hyperlinks to navigate the presentation. The quality of the presentations was satisfactory, although few made use of the additional capabilities of the software. The pupils enjoy their work and are enthusiastic to use computers and explain their features. Their past work covers a good range. This includes work on spreadsheets to display results, art programs to design a stained-glass window in Year 4, and word processors to design adverts for homemade biscuits.

66. The subject leadership is good. The monitoring of pupils' work using electronic storage is effective, and enables the leader to see how the planned work is being covered. The use of the suite is generally good and the deployment of a teaching assistant to lead some sessions is effective. Occasionally the number of pupils using it makes it difficult to oversee work or check on

progress. A technician, employed to maintain the technical side, is a valuable resource appreciated by the staff. The leader monitors the plans of all staff to see where links can be made to other subjects. Plans to upgrade the software and capabilities of the suite place the subject in a good position to improve further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily through the curriculum. There are a suitable number of opportunities for pupils to use the computers to help develop skills in other subjects. Computers are used in classrooms throughout the school, although during the inspection, this was infrequent. In Years 1 and 2, work is linked well to art and literacy, and in Years 3 to 6, pupils use computers to design place mats and coasters linked to their work in design and technology. In science, pupils have used spreadsheets appropriately to collate information and present conclusions in the form of graphs. Their literacy work is also developed through designing adverts and word processing their own character profiles.

HUMANITIES

68. Only one lesson was observed in both **history** and **geography**. These subjects were not a focus for the inspection or inspected in depth. In both lessons observed the teaching was good. The management of both subjects is effective and places an emphasis on the development of subject skills, with an increased use of cross-subject links.

69. Standards in **geography** are higher than expected in Year 2 and in line with expectations by Year 6. Pupils achieve well. Good use is made of local resources and places of interest to help widen pupils' knowledge. Year 2 pupils visited Mount Batten and drew maps of their routes. They made good progress when they compared houses and home life with children on St Lucia and become familiar with features of countryside, coast and town within the United Kingdom. Year 6 pupils study mountain areas around the world. They develop their research skills to determine the effect of tourism on the mountain environment. Pupils used their numeracy skills to create rainfall charts of varying seasons and different places in the world. There is evidence of good use of ICT to research and present their information.

70. Pupils reach better than expected standards throughout in **history** and they achieve well. Very good use is made of local resources to help develop pupils' research skills. The younger pupils develop a sense of history through the study of old toys. 'Then and now' activities enable them to appreciate how and why things have changed. All pupils have access to a variety of historical evidence. In Year 5 the contents of old pictures provide good material for their research and the development of questioning skills. Questions like, 'How can you tell the people are rich?' enable pupils to reason and seek evidence for their answers. The reliability of sources of evidence is also questioned and pupils are able to judge what evidence is more reliable and to give their reasons. Visits to local places, such as Buckland Abbey and Saltram House, provide fruitful material for pupils to learn.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There are strong links with local churches.
- Activities link well to personal development.
- An understanding of a wider range of world religions is comparatively limited.

71. On the evidence of children's work and the two lessons observed, pupils are making steady progress and reaching the standards expected. Planning indicates that most aspects of the subject are taught systematically throughout the school. There are good links between the school and two local churches, where pupils are able to learn about Christian beliefs and practices. Pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on their visits, in response to questions such as, 'What was your first impression when you entered the church?' There are activities planned to explore other world religions, but these are relatively limited in terms of visitors to school, Internet-links with children in other schools, or visits to a range of places of worship.

72. The school works hard at linking opportunities for pupils' personal development with religious education activities. Assembly themes frequently link with lesson content to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of personal and emotional issues. Feelings and emotions were explored when Year 2 pupils wrote about the qualities of friendship and Year 6 recorded times when they had been put down and when they had been extra-kind to someone. Pupils' work is sampled across the school and this gives clear information as to what resources and training are required.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

73. It was possible to see only a limited range of work in **art and design, design and technology, music and PE**, and these subjects were not a focus for the inspection. They were not inspected in depth, and no firm overall judgement can be offered on provision.

74. In **art**, standards of pupils' work by the end of Years 2 and 6 are good and have been maintained since the last inspection. Achievement by all groups, including those with SEN, is also good. Pupils enjoy image-making activities. They skilfully use a wide range of drawing implements and media, such as pencils, pastels, charcoal and wax crayons. Pupils understand line, tone and elements of textural rendering, and use them expressively. Sketchbooks show that pupils in Years 1 to 4 have few opportunities to learn the skills of accurate representation on a step-by-step basis. For this reason drawing skills are not as strong. All pupils produced good work with a marine theme following a visit locally. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have worked closely from first-hand experience to draw fishes, shells and marine creatures with flair and detail. Their sketches imaginatively captured water movements and patterns. Large collaborative class paintings displayed their efforts to good effect. The school's policy of not making comments on pupils' workbooks means that they have little written guidance about how to improve. Leadership of the subject is good. As yet there have been no opportunities for the subject leader to monitor teaching and learning in classrooms, but she has good strategies for future subject improvement.

75. From the limited sample of work seen and reviewed, standards in **design and technology** are better than expected nationally throughout the school and have been maintained since the last inspection. The best teaching links pupils' knowledge with learning in other subject areas. Pupils make good written evaluations of their own work at the end of each project. Teachers often use stories taken from literacy lessons as familiar starting points for pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 combine knowledge from science and English when deciding to design a pulley system to solve a haulage problem arising from 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'. Pupils use an appropriate range of materials, including fabrics, threads, card and food. Photographs and evidence around the school suggest a good coverage of the curriculum that enables pupils to learn well and achieve good standards. Food is a popular starting point for all pupils, and focuses attention well. Pupils in Year 2 taste-tested sandwich fillings, using carefully selected criteria on which to base preferences and judgements. Teachers' day-to-day marking does not always help pupils know what they need to do to improve. Subject leadership is generally good, although as yet no time has been allocated for monitoring teaching and learning.

76. In **music** in a Year 5 and 6 class, a well-organised activity promoted good levels of composing and performing in connection with stories they had written. Pupils used percussion instruments to play a sequence of sounds to accompany the story. The class assistant questioned them skilfully

about the sequence of sounds, although little graphical recording of their sounds was covered. In another group, the pupils composed lyrics to the tune of 'Twinkle, twinkle little star', and a third group used some computer software to compose short musical sequences. In Year 3, pupils composed short sequences of music to accompany a video sequence. This was taught satisfactorily, although the number of instruments for the number of pupils was too few and pupils were not actively involved. Music is integral to assemblies and the school has staged several productions and has also performed at local events. There are a number of clubs, such as the choir and the recorder group, and some additional music tuition. The subject leader is an enthusiast, promoting the schools' wider musical involvement and supporting colleagues well. From next term, her role changes and she will teach music lessons to release staff for planning and preparation time.

77. In **physical education**, two outside games activities and one inside activity were observed. There are significant strengths in the way the curriculum is broadened by the use of outside specialists. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils warmed up effectively and developed their fine motor skills in balancing and racquet control. There was some repetitiveness to the activity, but pupils learnt the chosen skill appropriately. In a combined Years 4, 5 and 6 lesson, pupils were completing a short sequence of activities involving orienteering, a 'blindfold challenge', and two other physical challenges. Specialist teachers from the local secondary school supported the lesson effectively. The school's links with outside institutions are a strength and are effectively co-ordinated. A number of sporting clubs help to support class activities, and some pupils have been chosen to develop their skills further by attending local expert coaching sessions.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78. This is an area of the curriculum that the school has plans to improve, but the provision is satisfactory overall. Much of the learning with respect to health issues is covered in science lessons. Aspects of personal and social development are also covered in religious education, where pupils' feelings about 'facing your fears', for example, are covered in class assemblies. During one assembly, the theme of 'new things' helped pupils recognise their fears about changing classes and giving them ways of coping. In another assembly led by a local minister, the pupils were encouraged to think about 'facing the future' and the role they can play in shaping it as members of a wider society. Representatives of the wider society who visit the school include the police and parents. Community involvement, at special times of the year such as harvest festival, promotes pupils' awareness of the need to care for others. The school also has a charities week and pupils in Year 6 are responsible for raising money for local and national causes.

79. As yet there is no systematic programme of study that enables staff to know which topics are being covered, and when and in what depth. The school and class councils make a good contribution to children's understanding of citizenship. These are proving to be a good forum for debate on areas for improvement in the school. The school council, for example, was part of the selection procedure for new staff. The system of playground mediators also gives very good opportunities for the development of social and personal responsibilities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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