

INSPECTION REPORT

ESTOVER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Estover, Plymouth

LEA area: City of Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113327

Headteacher: Mrs Kate Luffingham

Lead inspector: Mr Graham R Sims

Dates of inspection: Monday 13th – Wednesday 15th June 2005

Inspection number: 266802

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	209
School address:	Estover Primary School Miller Way Estover PLYMOUTH Devon
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Telephone number:	01752 709440
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Fowkes
Date of previous inspection:	24 th May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Estover Primary School is a seven-class primary school serving an area to the north of Plymouth. The school has a language support centre for up to 20 pupils from the reception year to Year 2. Most pupils come from the neighbouring estate, but a significant minority, including pupils who attend the language support centre, come from further afield. In total, the school caters for 209 boys and girls aged between 4 and 11. The school is just under the average size for primary schools, and numbers have fallen since the last inspection. The socio-economic circumstances of the neighbouring area are well below average, and an above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. An above average proportion of pupils join or leave the school, other than at the usual times of joining or leaving. Almost all pupils are of white British ethnic origin and have English as their first language. Five per cent of the school's population are looked-after children. Over 40 per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is a much higher proportion than in most schools. Of these, 55 receive help from outside specialists and 35 have a statement of special educational needs. These proportions are very much higher than most schools. The majority of their needs relate to speech and communication, physical, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Children are admitted into the reception class in the September or January of the academic year in which they become five. Although many children have attended a nursery before they join the school, the level of attainment when they enter is well below average. Apart from a number of staff changes, there have been no major changes since the last inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
28899	Mr G R Sims	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology English as an additional language
09086	Mrs R Watkins	Lay inspector	
16038	Mrs J Bavin	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs
15334	Mrs J Hooper	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education Personal, social and health education Foundation Stage curriculum

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Estover Primary School is a good school. The school is led and managed well and has an excellent commitment to the principles of inclusion. It is particularly successful in helping large numbers of pupils with significant learning difficulties or other problems to benefit from their primary education. Although standards are currently well below average at the end of Year 6, pupils of all capabilities achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The school provides a very good standard of care and good-quality teaching. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school deals compassionately, but also rigorously and effectively, with many pupils who have a very wide range of educational need.
- The well-respected headteacher provides good leadership and a very clear direction for the school, engendering a very good sense of teamwork amongst the highly committed staff.
- Although standards fluctuate, they have improved significantly at the end of Year 6 since the previous inspection, and pupils of all capabilities make good progress.
- Most pupils display good attitudes and behaviour and make good progress in their personal development, although a few pupils exhibit poor behaviour and a reluctance to learn.
- There is a significant amount of excellent and very good teaching within the school, but the quality of teaching is not entirely consistent across the school.
- The large number of capable teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, but their presence sometimes hinders the development of pupils' independence.
- The school provides a very good range of additional learning opportunities, but teachers miss opportunities to develop cross-curricular links and basic skills across the curriculum.
- The school has good procedures for keeping track of pupils' progress, but teachers do not give pupils clear enough guidance on how to improve when marking their work.
- The work of the language support centre is particularly effective in helping pupils with speech and communication difficulties integrate into mainstream schooling.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school has tackled nearly all of the key issues from the previous inspection effectively. There have been improvements in: curricular planning, monitoring of pupils' progress, challenging the more able pupils, improving standards in information and communication technology and religious education, pupils' spiritual development, and teachers' professional development. Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have risen much more than in most schools.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

This is a school which has a very high proportion of pupils who have complex learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural problems. Seventeen per cent of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs, because they need considerable help with their learning, and almost 10 per cent are pupils who have been excluded from other schools or are looked-after children. The overall attainment of children when they start school in the reception class is well below average, but a significant proportion of pupils join the school in later years, and the attainment of many of these is very low indeed. The ability profile of each year group and, hence, the standards achieved, varies widely. For example, pupils in Year 2 achieve average standards in mathematics, but in Year 6 standards are below average. This does not indicate a decline in standards, but reflects the proportion of pupils within the year group with particular needs. Throughout the school, significant efforts are made to ensure every pupil is catered for. As a result, the great majority of **pupils achieve well** throughout the school in relation to their prior attainment.

Children make good progress during their reception year in all areas of learning, but particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Standards at the end of the

reception year are still below average, except in personal and physical development, where most children achieve the goals expected for their age.

Standards at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated over the last six years, reaching a high point in 2002, before falling in 2004 to levels similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. The national test results at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were well below the national average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. When compared with similar schools, they were average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Inspection findings and preliminary results from the national tests in 2005 indicate that standards in the current Year 2 have improved and are below average in English and science and average in mathematics. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Pupils who attend the school's language support centre make particularly good progress in their personal development and in overcoming their speech and communication difficulties.

Although they fell back in 2004, standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have improved much more than most schools since the previous inspection. The results of the national tests in 2004 were below the national average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Inspection findings indicate that standards in the current Year 6 are well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics, but that pupils are nevertheless achieving well overall in relation to their prior attainment. Standards in information and communication technology and religious education are below average.

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

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.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The staff work hard to help pupils to improve their self-esteem and to develop positive relationships. Although there are instances of poor behaviour and some pupils are reluctant to work, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good. The level of attendance is average and punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good, although it is not entirely consistent throughout the school. The teaching in the language support centre and for children's personal development in the reception class is particularly good. Particular strengths in most classes are the ways teachers seek to provide for such a wide range of individual need, their insistence on high standards of behaviour, and their patience and equanimity. A large number of capable teaching assistants play a very important role in supporting and teaching individuals and small groups of pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs. However, the presence of so many adults hinders the development of independent learning skills, and many pupils lack the ability to work independently. In a few classes, pupils are given too many worksheets to complete and expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not high enough. The school has developed some good procedures for assessing pupils' progress but, when marking their work, the teachers do not give pupils a clear enough indication of what they have done well or what they need to improve.

Overall, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum, but the teaching of some subjects lacks depth. There are some excellent examples of enriching cross-curricular work, but most teachers miss opportunities to relate work in one subject to what is being covered in another, and to develop basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills through other subjects. The school provides a very good range of additional opportunities, including extra-curricular activities, for learning beyond lessons. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Overall, the school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

The school takes very good care of its pupils and has very good procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides them with good support and guidance, and keeps a continual check on pupils' progress. The school has satisfactory systems for seeking and acting on the views of the pupils. There are good links with parents, other schools and the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides good leadership and a very clear vision and sense of purpose which are rooted in the school's excellent commitment to the principles of inclusion. She is well respected by staff, governors and parents and engenders a very good sense of teamwork amongst the large staff. Other key staff provide good leadership and are very good role models to other staff and pupils. The leadership of the language support centre is very good. The management of the school is good and the school has a good understanding of its own strengths and areas for development. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are reliant on the direction provided by the headteacher, but are very supportive of the school and ensure that the school fulfils statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally appreciative of the education which the school provides. Parents whose children have particular difficulties or who have had unhappy educational experiences in other schools are particularly grateful for the way the school has helped their children. A few parents expressed concern about the demands made of their children in the reception class. The inspection team does not share these concerns, finding that the rigorous standards upheld by staff in the reception class contribute significantly to the children's personal development. The school acknowledges parents' concerns with regard to homework, particularly the lack of consistency in implementing the school's stated policies.

Although some pupils attend school reluctantly, the great majority of pupils are pleased with their school. They particularly like the additional activities and special events which the school organises, they feel the staff are helpful and have no concerns about the way they are treated.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do in order to continue its efforts to improve standards in English, mathematics and science are:

- to use the very good teaching models that exist within the school to disseminate good practice and ensure greater consistency of teaching across the school, particularly with regard to teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving and the methods used to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills;
- to develop pupils' abilities to work and learn independently by ensuring that adults' help is directed to this end and, where appropriate, by reducing the amount of adult help available and increasing the opportunities for pupils to undertake extended work on their own;
- to plan the curriculum more imaginatively, giving greater attention to cross-curricular work and ensuring that basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are developed through the teaching of all subjects;
- when marking pupils' work, to provide them with clearer guidance on what they have done wrong and how they can improve, and to make better use of the targets which are given to pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are below expectations at the end of the Foundation Stage¹, below average at the end of Year 2 and well below average at the end of Year 6. Pupils of all capabilities nevertheless achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Despite the complex learning difficulties exhibited by many of the pupils, good progress is evident throughout the school amongst pupils of all capabilities.
- Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development in the reception class.
- The school's results at the end of Year 6 have improved more than in most schools over the last five years.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them.
- Pupils achieve very well in the language support centre in their areas of greatest difficulty because of a high level of staff expertise.

Commentary

1. A picture of well below average standards at the end of Year 6 may appear at first glance to be gloomy reading. But Estover Primary School is unlike most primary schools in its outlook and composition, in that it has an abnormally high proportion of pupils who have complex learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural problems. Seventeen per cent of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need, because they need considerable help with their learning, and almost 10 per cent are pupils who have been excluded from other schools or are looked-after children. Although the attainment of children when they start school in the reception class varies widely, it is well below average. Many children start school with poor social skills, very poor speaking and listening skills, and very little knowledge and understanding of the world. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school part-way through their primary education is above average, and there is a tendency for the school to lose its more able pupils and to admit pupils whose attainment is very low indeed. Amongst the number of pupils on roll are 18 pupils with severe speech and communication difficulties who attend the school's language support centre. It is the centre's aim to reintegrate these pupils into mainstream schooling before they reach the end of Year 2, but a number of these pupils opt to stay at Estover until the end of Year 6. There are also significant differences between the ability profiles and makeup of different year groups. The 2004 cohort of pupils in Year 2 was smaller than normal, but contained a very high proportion of boys, a very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and behavioural problems, and almost 40 per cent did not start at Estover in the reception class. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the results of this year group were lower than those obtained in the previous year. Over half of the pupils in the current Year 6 joined the school part-way through their primary education and a significant proportion of the class experience difficulties with learning. All of these factors contribute to, and help account for, the wide variations in standards from one year to the next. The staff expend huge amounts of effort in dealing with the difficulties faced by many of the pupils, and it is not for lack of attention that standards are low in some year groups. It is the carefully considered opinion of the inspection team, taking all factors into account, that pupils of all capabilities achieve well at

¹ The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

Estover Primary School. For some pupils, even very small steps represent good achievement. The staff certainly try hard to ensure that all pupils achieve well.

- Children make good progress and achieve well in the reception class. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, which is rightly given a very high priority. The teaching is so successful in this area that the great majority of children achieve the goals expected for their age in this aspect. Children also achieve age-related expectations in their physical development. In all other areas of learning, standards are below those expected by the end of the reception year, but staff are successful in awakening in the children an interest in what happens in school and a desire to learn which provides a very good foundation for their future learning.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores² in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.7 (16.0)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.5 (12.9)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.1 (16.2)	16.2 (16.3)

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

- The school's national test results at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated since the last inspection. With the 2004 results being the lowest for some time, the overall improvement trend has been below that of other schools, but the significantly better preliminary results for 2005 have reversed the trend to one of overall improvement, similar to that achieved by most schools over the last five years. The national test results in reading and mathematics in 2004 were well below the national average and in writing they were below average. The results of the teacher's assessment for science were well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, the results were average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. The preliminary results for 2005, for which national comparative data are not yet available, show significant improvement in all three areas, being close to the previous year's national average in mathematics and just below the average mark range in reading and writing. Inspection findings indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 are below average in all aspects of English and science and average in mathematics. Pupils of all capabilities are making good progress and achieving well in relation to their prior attainment.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (27.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	25.5 (27.0)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	26.8 (29.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- As at the end of Year 2, results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated considerably in recent years, but the overall trend has been one of much greater improvement than in most schools. The school reached a high point in 2003, when the results were marginally above the national average in the three core subjects of English,

² **Average point scores** are used as a way of comparing fairly the performance of pupils in one school with those in another. The level achieved by each pupil in the national tests is converted into a points score. The points achieved by all of the pupils are added together and divided by the number of pupils who took the test to arrive at an average point score. An average point score of 15 at the end of Year 2 is equivalent to a middle of the range Level 2, which is the standard expected of seven-year-old pupils. At the end of Year 6, an average point score of 27 is equivalent to Level 4, the national expectation for eleven-year-olds.

mathematics and science. Even though results in each subject fell in 2004, they were higher than those pertaining at the time of the last inspection. In 2004, the national test results were below the national average and the average for similar schools in English and well below both averages in science. The current cohort of pupils in Year 6 is particularly weak in English, and preliminary results from the 2005 tests indicate a further fall in this subject, with results in mathematics improving slightly and those in science remaining at a similar level. A greater proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 than in the previous year, but the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 in English was much lower. The school sets itself ambitious targets, which it was successful in meeting in English, but not in mathematics in 2004. In 2005, the situation has been the reverse. Inspection findings indicate that standards at the end of Year 6 are well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics. Despite these comparisons, pupils of all capabilities are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment and are achieving well overall. From its own assessment data, the school can demonstrate very clearly that pupils who have spent the whole of their primary career at Estover make at least the expected amount of progress and, in many cases, more.

5. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in information and communication technology are below average and, in religious education, they are below the expectations of the agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in these two subjects, an improvement over the findings of the previous inspection, when achievement in both information and communication technology and religious education was identified as an area for further development. Standards and pupils' achievement in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education were not evaluated in depth during this inspection.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them. Many of the pupils have acute and complex needs, either in learning or emotional development or a combination of both. It is because these pupils benefit from good teaching overall and the invaluable support offered by teaching assistants that they do so well. The vast majority of pupils with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties achieve very well in learning to manage and control their behaviour. This is a consequence of the unfailing patience, and clear and consistent messages they receive from all members of staff under leadership of the headteacher which, in its desire to provide opportunities for disadvantaged pupils, is inspirational. The school is well aware of the need to provide sufficient challenge for the more able pupils and, although some teachers could provide a greater level of challenge for these pupils, there are signs that an increasing proportion of pupils now exceed the expected levels for their age. Girls achieve better results than boys in English at the end of Year 2, but this difference is all but eradicated by the end of Year 6. In mathematics and science, however, boys achieve better results than girls, a difference of which the school is aware, and which it is working to eradicate.
7. Pupils who join the language support centre are referred by professional agencies, and places are allocated at an admissions panel according to the greatest level of need. During the inspection, there were 18 pupils in the 20-place provision. Most pupils start school in the reception year having had pre-school nursery experience, and so are accustomed to working in small groups. A few pupils arrive having had negative experiences in mainstream settings. Sensitive support for pupils and their parents or carers through a system of visits begins before the admission panel meets, and continues until pupils are happily settled into the centre. The school is extremely welcoming of these pupils and wholeheartedly embraces their inclusion in all school activities as a matter of shared philosophy, policy and practice. This is extremely supportive for the centre staff and undoubtedly aids their work in successfully re-integrating pupils into mainstream provision. The pupils who attend the language support centre achieve very well in relation to their speech and language difficulties because of the considerable expertise within the centre and the very good teaching which the pupils receive. The centre's success is seen in the very successful way in which most pupils are reintegrated into mainstream schooling.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. Other aspects of their personal development are also good overall. Their moral, social and spiritual development is good and their cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes have improved since the previous inspection, because they understand that they should work hard and mostly find lessons interesting.
- Relationships are now very good, because staff consistently promote respect and care for each other.
- Pupils respond willingly to the needs of those in the wider community beyond the school.
- Attendance has improved recently in response to the school's good efforts.

Commentary

8. The school community is pleasant and orderly. Children receive a very good start to their education in the reception class, where the emphasis given to children's personal, social and emotional development enables them to make rapid strides in this area of their learning. Pupils usually arrive at school in good time, ready to enjoy the wake-and-shake exercise session at the start of the day. In lessons, they listen to their teacher, concentrate very well and persevere with their tasks, prompted by the way teaching assistants and other helpers are often at hand to support them. Willingness to work independently is less evident in pupils' attitudes, partly because a sizeable number come to school low in confidence, but also because, for all pupils, opportunities to exercise independence are rather limited. Where independence is encouraged in other areas of the life of the school, individuals selected to perform duties respond with confidence, for instance when they act as junior mealtime assistants. Parents have concerns that pupils with behavioural difficulties at times find it hard to live up to the school's expectations of hard work and sensible behaviour. However, these pupils usually behave well because of the quality of the support extended to them. It is only rarely that individuals become really uncooperative and instances of poor behaviour occur. There are no exclusions, because it is the school's policy never to use this sanction. Instead, pupils who show poor behaviour receive individual support, either in class or, on occasion, to work separately from other pupils. The school's strategies are pursued consistently and to very good effect; individuals usually learn to control themselves better and their behaviour improves considerably.
9. The school's effective promotion of social and moral development is especially apparent in its climate of friendly attitudes and mutual respect. The expectations and example of the headteacher and other staff are reflected in pupils' relationships both with each other and towards adults. Planned input in assembly promotes thought about others' feelings and viewpoints. Pupils' understanding is further extended by teachers' response to everyday situations. For instance, the reception teacher listened to children's views on whether a particular sanction would be fair for a boy who misbehaved. On occasion, pupils show a mature degree of tolerance towards each other. Most are unhappy about the occasional times when individuals misbehave, but they make allowances for others' personalities and difficulties and work happily alongside them again after any incident is resolved. The strong promotion of care and respect leaves little room for bullying or other harassment. Parents have few concerns about bullying and staff are very alert to intervene if any concerns arise.
10. Pupils also recognise the rights and needs of those in the wider community. They regularly join in supporting generously the charities selected by their school council. They respond thoughtfully to the good opportunities created for reflection, for instance, when an exchange of postcards with a partner school told them how much the lives of pupils in Uganda differ from their own. Reflection on religious topics has a lower profile, but links with a local community church enable weekly input from visitors of several Christian religions. Pupils have ample opportunity to learn about their own culture, for instance through visits. Their understanding of the breadth of other cultural and religious traditions represented in their country today is rather shallow, though they talk with respect about these topics.

11. Attendance improved after the last inspection but then fell again. In 2003-2004 it was well below that usually seen in other primary schools. During 2004-2005, the school, in partnership with the educational welfare officer, made renewed efforts to enforce expectations of regular attendance. As a result, attendance up to the end of May 2005 was around 94.3 per cent, a significant improvement on the previous year. Unauthorised absence is low. Nevertheless, frequent absence of a few pupils continues to cause some concern. Such absences are followed up by the school and the educational welfare officer, even if parents give plausible excuses.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.6	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The overall quality of the teaching is good. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which is enriched by a very good variety of activities outside the normal curriculum. The staff provide a very good level of care for the pupils. The school's links with parents, other schools and the local community are good.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of the teaching, the standards of learning and the school's procedures for assessment are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- There are examples of excellent and very good teaching in different parts of the school, but the teaching varies from class to class and is not always of a consistently high quality.
- The quality of the teaching in the reception class is particularly good, especially in the area of children's personal, social and emotional development.
- The teachers are very good at managing pupils' behaviour.
- Well-trained teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs.
- Pupils become very reliant on adult help and find it hard to work independently.
- In some classes, teachers use too many worksheets and do not challenge pupils enough.
- Teaching in the language support centre is very good overall because of teachers' expertise and very good teamwork.
- Good assessment procedures help teachers to keep track of pupils' progress.
- Target-setting and the marking of their work do not give pupils a clear enough indication of what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

12. Overall, the quality of the teaching and standard of pupils' learning are good. The quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection. The result of this is seen in the better provision for pupils with special educational needs and in improvements in the school's results at the end of Year 6. There is more good and very good teaching than before. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of the teaching ranged from excellent to

satisfactory. The teaching in the reception class and in the language support centre was of consistently high quality. Although the overall quality of the teaching is good, it is not entirely consistent, and the teaching in some classes is better than in others. There are, however, no major weaknesses and no subjects in which the teaching is unsatisfactory. In some areas, notably information and communication technology and religious education, teachers' expertise has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (6)	8 (24)	13 (39)	10 (30)	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.

13. Teaching and learning in the reception class are consistently good and frequently very good and, as a result, children are achieving well in all areas of learning. There is very good teamwork between all adults, and this ensures effective support for children's learning. Lesson planning is detailed and provides effective learning opportunities for the range of children's abilities. Good assessment practices result in all adults keeping detailed records of children's development in each area of learning. This provides secure information for the next steps and enables teachers to match work appropriately to children's abilities. The teaching for children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly good, enabling children to make rapid gains in this area of learning and to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the reception year. A few parents expressed concern at the demands made of their children in this class. The inspection team found no evidence to substantiate these concerns, finding instead a very secure learning environment in which the children are challenged appropriately, relationships between adults and children are very good, and clear boundaries are set.
14. In the rest of the school, the teachers work very hard to encourage and engage the pupils, a significant minority of whom often find it hard to concentrate on their work. The teachers are very good at managing pupils' behaviour; they exhibit great patience and equanimity, have appropriate sanctions and systems for reward, yet insist on high standards of behaviour. In most classes, the teachers are good at planning work at differing levels according to pupils' needs. A large band of well-trained teaching assistants enable teachers to cope with this range of needs and have a significant impact on pupils' learning. Apart from during some of the whole-class sessions, they make good use of their time, are thoughtful in their interactions with pupils and provide considerable assistance to the teachers. Some of the teaching assistants teach small groups of pupils very capably away from the main class, others provide good support for individual pupils within the classroom, but are also attentive to the needs of others. The large amount of additional help provided is certainly needed, but also has its drawbacks in that it is easy for pupils to request help from the adults who are present rather than trying to solve problems on their own. Many pupils lack the ability to work independently, and the school has not yet solved the conundrum of how to provide a high level of support whilst at the same time helping pupils to develop independent learning skills.
15. A key feature in the classes where teaching is strongest is the quality of teachers' planning, which seeks to link the development of key skills in various subjects through a common theme. In Year 6, for example, the geography topic of rivers has been explored not only in geography lessons, but in art and design through observation and paintings of rivers, in mathematics through measurements undertaken on a field trip, in information and communication technology through turning these measurements into graphs, and in English through writing haiku poems on the subject of rivers. This carefully planned linkage helps to deepen pupils' understanding of the common theme whilst providing a purpose for the learning of skills in other subjects. However, this very good cross-curricular planning and development of key skills through other subjects is not evident in some classes, especially where the teachers' planning relies heavily on the use of worksheets, many of which lack intrinsic interest, are not challenging enough and do not encourage the development of independent learning skills.

16. There is a very good awareness in nearly all classes of the differing needs of pupils, and staff work hard to provide levels of work which are appropriate to these needs. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils with special educational needs very well. They make good use of information about what pupils have learned in planning to address areas of particular need. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from extra support and modified work alongside their peers in class. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to plan to meet the needs of small groups of pupils. They have strong relationships with pupils who trust them and so work well with them. Consequently, pupils also achieve well when they are working in these small groups.
17. Pupils who attend the language support centre receive very good teaching. Two of the lessons observed during the inspection were excellent. Staff plan and assess what pupils can do meticulously. The teacher-in-charge is highly skilled at focusing upon the pupils' greatest needs while ensuring that pupils have fun and develop self-confidence at an impressive rate. This was evident during the inspection when excellent teaching in the hall enabled all the pupils in the group to develop their physical co-ordination skills and awareness of the space around them, while recalling and predicting a familiar story. The teaching methods totally engaged pupils' imaginations and everyone enjoyed 'going on a bear hunt' enormously, unaware that they were tackling areas of huge potential difficulty. Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together so pupils receive consistently positive messages about the extent to which their efforts are valued. Consequently, pupils await the next lesson with eager expectation, confidently and rightly anticipating fun and success. As a result, they are very ready to learn, and this attitude makes a significant contribution to their very good rates of progress.
18. The school's procedures for assessment are good and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. The school has a detailed timetable for assessment which includes twice-yearly reading tests and target-setting in partnership with parents, writing assessments and teachers' assessments in each subject each term, and the gathering of other data. In addition, the school uses an Internet-based assessment package which provides detailed information about how well pupils are doing in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology and indicates areas which individual pupils need to work on and teachers need to cover in more detail. The results of national tests are analysed to highlight any areas of weakness. As a result of these procedures, the school is able to track pupils' progress as they move through the school, identify how well pupils are doing in relation to their prior attainment and set appropriate targets. The school also participates in the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) Project run by the University of Durham, which allows the school to look objectively at the progress and attitudes of individual pupils and provides further feedback on the school's performance.
19. The school's day-to-day assessment procedures are not as strong and do not always give pupils a clear enough indication of how they can improve. Although individual targets are set for pupils, some of them are far too general, and not enough attention is given to the targets on a daily basis, with the result that pupils lose their focus on these areas for development. Pupils' work is checked regularly, and teachers frequently write positive comments at the end of a piece of work. However, they frequently overlook pupils' mistakes and do not give individuals a clear enough indication of what they have done well or what they need to improve. As a result, pupils are not aware of, and, therefore, do not learn enough from, the mistakes they make. In addition, not enough time is built into lessons for pupils to review work they have completed, either on their own, with the help of adults or through working with their peers, in order to make improvements.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum and a very good range of activities outside the formal curriculum. The overall range of learning resources and the quality of the school's accommodation are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for children in the reception class is good.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities add breadth, depth and enrichment to pupils' learning.
- The school works very successfully to provide all pupils with equal opportunities to learn.
- The school promotes the pupils' personal development well.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and very good provision for those with highly specialised needs.

Commentary

20. The staff in the reception class plan a good curriculum for the children because they have a clear understanding of the learning needs of children of this age. There is a very good emphasis on developing the children's personal and social awareness. Children are given a good range of opportunities to explore through structured play activities both inside and outside the classroom. In general, there is an appropriate balance between activities directed by the adults and those where children can choose what to do.
21. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 meets statutory requirements fully and is generally broad and balanced, which is an improvement since the last inspection. However, the time allocated for teaching in Years 3 to 6 is well below that in most schools, and this limits the depth of work, particularly in some foundation subjects. Although timetables indicate that coverage for most subjects is within the recommended amount, time allocations for individual subjects vary from class to class. All subjects have good medium-term plans, which indicate that pupils' learning is developed progressively as they move through the school. In some classes, these plans identify opportunities for cross-curricular links so that pupils can see coherence and relevance for their learning; this aspect of the school's work is properly established in other classes.
22. The school develops pupils' personal qualities effectively. The whole ethos of the school contributes to this very well. A high priority is placed on all pupils being fully involved in all aspects of learning. In lessons where teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves, this has a major impact on personal development and in raising standards across the curriculum. However, there are some examples where, because of the generous allocation of staff, pupils tend to seek help from them rather than think things out for themselves and develop independence in their own learning. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school and the wider community, and pupils fulfil these responsibilities well. The school council is becoming a valuable system for hearing pupils' views.
23. The school's highly flexible response to pupils with a wide range of emotional, behavioural and learning needs is impressive. This accounts for the school's very good success rate in helping pupils with behavioural difficulties to succeed when they have previously failed in other schools. The headteacher leads a school committed to each pupil, constantly seeking to meet individual needs. As a result of this commitment, the school makes very good use of both its own expertise and that of other professionals. The partnership with staff in the language support centre is a case in point. Here, pupils are provided with a specialised programme tailored to their individual needs, but pupils in the main school also benefit from the expertise which exists as teachers learn new techniques from their specialist colleagues. As a result, the school either provides highly specific individual support or special programmes tailored to the needs of a group of pupils. This results in a highly inclusive school that is also a very orderly community.

24. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning outside lesson time. A large number of after-school clubs, for example, for dance and sports, are well supported. Pupils take part and do well in inter-school sporting events. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in residential visits, and this enhances their personal development. Many visits are arranged to enrich all areas of the curriculum. Visitors are frequently welcomed into school to support different subjects, and whole-day workshops are arranged. Themed weeks, for example, a science week and book week, give pupils a broader knowledge of the subjects. Good links with other schools and colleges enrich the curriculum and enhance opportunities, especially for more able pupils.
25. The school has an adequate number of well-qualified teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum and a very good number of well-trained teaching assistants, who make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The range of learning resources is satisfactory. Although many of the classrooms are cramped, the school's accommodation is satisfactory. Outdoor facilities for children in the reception class have improved since the last inspection, but are still too small to enable pupils to use wheeled toys or large apparatus.

Care, guidance and support

The school gives very good attention to pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides them with good support and guidance. The school gives satisfactory consideration to pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements are very good, so newcomers soon settle, whichever class they join.
- Personal care and guidance is very good, with particular care for those at risk of missing out through disadvantageous personal circumstances.
- Targets are not used consistently enough to help pupils understand the next steps they must make in learning.
- Effective strategies encourage pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils who attend the language support centre are very well supported when they are working outside the centre.

Commentary

26. A very good induction programme prepares children to cope happily when they join the reception class. Home visits are offered and conducted with sensitivity, providing friendly first contact. Parents have the opportunity to meet with the staff and find out how they can help their children learn. Children make visits to the school during the term before they start and have the chance to do their first piece of homework when they fill in a book about what they can do. Similarly effective support is extended to the considerable number of pupils who transfer into other classes. Quite often, they arrive with particular personal or educational needs, some of them having been excluded from their previous school. The headteacher ensures that very good support is in place for these pupils. She and other staff soon understand the pupils' individual characteristics and needs. This, coupled with the friendly attitudes of other pupils, ensures that newcomers soon grasp the school's expectations and routines.
27. Staff create a very caring environment. Pupils are confident they can ask for help over any worry. Staff use verbal encouragement and awards skilfully, so all pupils benefit, especially those who are low in confidence. Adept management of behaviour helps individuals who lack self-control. The well-judged support helps pupils to begin to enjoy learning and to achieve more. However, support for pupils to grow further in responsibility for their own learning is limited. In the learning support centre, individual targets for improvement are routinely shared with pupils in terms that they can grasp. Elsewhere, targets are referred to less often, whether they be for groups or for individuals. Pupils tend to be vague about the individual targets agreed at the consultation meetings between teacher, parent and pupil. Good efforts are made to liaise with each of a wide range of outside agencies, to support pupils' diverse personal and educational needs, including the needs of those in public care. Under the

extended campus initiative, the school has recently joined in appointing a co-ordinator to lead in linking with such outside agencies, to increase further the efficacy of liaison in supporting pupils' needs.

28. Good thought is given to promoting pupils' health and safe living. Most pupils, and many staff, join enthusiastically in the 'wake up, shake up' exercise session at the start of the day. Teachers are gaining success with efforts to promote understanding of healthy eating. They liaise with catering staff to help pupils grow in enjoyment of a healthy diet. Suitable attention is given to health and safety procedures, to ensure the safe conduct of the range of school activities.
29. Pupils' views are sought in a variety of ways. Pupils themselves helped to decide which of them should be trained as mediators, and those selected can now aid others' well-being by sorting out minor problems. Pupils suggest ideas through the school council; for instance, they have asked for more rubbish bins in the playground. As part of a behaviour project, one group of pupils completed a questionnaire about the teaching they experience. Teachers could then take account of their perceptions. However, consideration of pupils' views about aspects of their own learning is not a regular feature.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents and with the community is good. Links with other schools and educational establishments are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes good efforts to work in partnership with parents, and to gain support from those who are slow to get involved in their children's learning.
- A range of links with the community and with other schools and colleges are developed successfully to add to the breadth of pupils' learning.
- Liaison between the learning support centre and other schools, to support pupils with special educational needs, is very effective.

Commentary

30. The school takes good steps to inform parents and to involve them in its work. The prospectus is readable and helpful. A summary of each class's curriculum is sent home at the start of each year. Regular, informative newsletters give good advance notice of key dates. The headteacher makes particular efforts to gain support from those families where there is concern about a pupil's attendance or behaviour. Most parents come to the consultation meetings offered, to discuss their children's work and targets for their next steps in learning. The targets discussed are generally ones that parents might help their children reach, but there are occasional instances when they are recorded in terms that are unhelpful to both parents and pupils. The learning support centre has a wide range of helpful leaflets to enable parents to help their children with specific topics. Staff in the reception class also make efforts to involve parents. Elsewhere in the school, such ongoing encouragement of parental involvement is less well developed. The annual reports issued in the summer term give parents a good amount of information about their children's achievements, what they can do and what they find difficult. However, comments about religious education and personal, social and moral education tend to be less informative. Despite the overall good flow of information, a number of parents feel they would still like to know more about their children's progress. Other parents, however, are less keen to be involved. Their lack of time or interest is seen in lack of support over homework. Previously, the school ran family learning sessions but, this year, despite encouragement from the school, parents' lack of interest meant the course could not run.
31. The school works hard to include parents of pupils with special educational needs in discussions and decisions about the best way to help their children. Individual education plans consistently provide sensible and manageable guidance for parents and carers to use at home.

32. A number of volunteers from the community come into school to contribute to the pupils' personal growth and learning. A recent highlight was arranged with help from the 'befriending consortium'. This group of older residents helped pupils in Year 5 prepare for and participate in a tea dance, so they could create their own VE day celebrations as part of their studies on the Second World War. In return, pupils in Year 5 will share their computer skills with members of the group. Visits to the local area, that add to the breadth of pupils' learning, are a regular feature in all classes, and pupils talk enthusiastically about what they see and do on their trips.
33. Links with other schools and educational establishments are good. A particular feature is the two-week transition programme arranged for pupils in Year 6 in partnership with the college to which most of them transfer. In all classes, pupils benefit from the termly drama and music workshops held with the help of this college. Higher-attaining pupils make visits to the local university for relevant extension activities, and the school regularly welcomes students for work experience and training. Very good liaison is developed with schools from which pupils transfer into the learning support centre, so that staff in the centre can provide effectively for their needs. If pupils become ready to rejoin their mainstream school, continuing liaison, achieved with the help of the centre's outreach teacher, helps them face this step confidently.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership and management of the headteacher and of other key staff are good. Governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school, which is communicated well to staff and governors.
- The school's commitment to including pupils regardless of their previous difficulties or problems is excellent.
- Good leadership has led to good improvement since the previous inspection in the quality of education provided.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and managed very well.
- The language support centre is led very well by a knowledgeable and highly effective practitioner.

Commentary

34. The quality of the school's leadership and management has improved since the last inspection, benefiting from the greater stability experienced by the school over the last six years compared with the very unsettled period prior to the previous inspection. The headteacher provides good leadership. She has a very clear vision of the sort of school she wants Estover to be, and high on the list of priorities is the supreme importance attached to catering for the individual pupil, whatever their needs might be. At the pre-inspection meeting for parents, a number of parents commented on how grateful they were for the way the school had helped their children overcome particular difficulties or settle into a new school after experiencing problems elsewhere. The headteacher's inclusive philosophy is shared by governors and staff, all of whom go the second mile when needed. The headteacher is well respected by parents, governors and staff and has built a strong team of committed, hard-working and loyal staff. Under her leadership, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection, with the school tackling effectively nearly all of the key issues identified at that time and standards at the end of Year 6 rising more than in most schools. The headteacher also provides very strong leadership for the school's work with pupils with special educational needs. This results in a totally shared commitment from staff to support all their pupils, however much those pupils might test their resolve. Systems for translating this ambitious intention into practice are well organised; paperwork is sensible and manageable. Previous weaknesses in the procedures for assessing and recording what pupils with special educational needs know, understand and can do have been addressed

very well and are now good. The headteacher carries a very heavy load, which some would consider is too great given the range of needs within the school. Sensibly, more curricular responsibilities are being delegated to the deputy headteacher and much of the routine administrative work for special educational needs is to be undertaken by an assistant in the coming year.

35. Subject leadership has also improved, and the most recent initiative, started at the beginning of the school year, to assign staff to leadership teams, each of which takes responsibility for different areas of the curriculum, has strengthened the leadership further and made good provision for continuity of leadership should a member of staff leave. The leadership of English and mathematics has been most influential, and other leadership teams are beginning to follow suit. The recently appointed deputy headteacher provides a good role-model for other staff and is beginning to take on greater responsibility for curricular matters. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher is very experienced with children of this age and clearly knows their needs. There is a very good team spirit between the staff because the class teacher works very closely with the experienced teaching assistants who take a full part in the education of the children.
36. Within the language support centre, strong leadership from the headteacher and the teacher-in-charge has ensured that the previous strengths of the centre have been maintained, in spite of increasing numbers of pupils and the greater complexity and severity of their needs. This represents good development of the provision since the previous inspection. Under the knowledgeable and highly effective leadership of the teacher-in-charge, the centre staff never lose sight of their primary aim, to prepare pupils to learn effectively with their peers in mainstream classes. They waste no time in working towards this goal, while always remaining sensitive to the needs of the individual. Programmes for introducing pupils to mainstream lessons are planned very carefully to ensure success. For example, it is a matter of policy to introduce pupils initially to lessons where they have greatest skill or interest, and teaching assistants provide invaluable support as trusted adults while pupils extend their mainstream experience. Staff have produced several very detailed leaflets to help parents and carers with practical information and guidance. Parents and carers are, justifiably, highly appreciative of the centre's work. They recognise that their children are flourishing and feel very well informed.
37. The management of the school is good. There are well-established daily routines, administrative staff are helpful, and finances are managed well. The school pays good attention to the principles of best value. It evaluates its own performance well and has a good understanding of its own strengths and areas for development. The school's development plan contains a large number of priorities for improvement, all of which are appropriate, but they are too many in number and not sufficiently well prioritised to provide a clear and manageable focus for development.
38. Governance is satisfactory. The school has a very committed body of governors who are supportive of the headteacher and staff and also fiercely committed to the principles of inclusion. They have a good understanding of the school's strength, but are very reliant on the headteacher's expertise in matters of future development. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils all of its major statutory responsibilities. A number of individual governors are regular visitors to the school and provide a significant amount of voluntary help within the school.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	779,673
Total expenditure	775,435
Expenditure per pupil	3,710

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	31,551
Balance carried forward to the next	35,789

39. The school receives an above average income per pupil, reflecting the high costs of provision in the language support centre and the additional costs associated with providing for so many pupils with special educational needs. Taking account of the quality of education provided, the leadership and management of the school and the progress pupils are making, 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

40. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage and its leadership and management are good. The children achieve well, and often very well, from starting points which are very low, because of good, and often very good, teaching, a well-planned curriculum and good liaison with parents. All staff work together very well as a team, and they make learning fun for the children. Assessment is used well on a day-to-day basis, and there are good procedures to record progress towards the standards children are expected to reach. The school has maintained this good-quality provision since the last inspection. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. However, although there has been some improvement to the outside learning environment, it is still not large enough for children to develop their physical and creative skills to the full.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make rapid progress in their personal development because of the high priority given to this area of learning.
- Children behave very well, relate well to one another and concentrate on the work they are given to do.
- Induction procedures are very good.

Commentary

41. Many of the children have poor social skills and the standard of their personal development is low when they enter the reception class. As a result, the school gives a very high priority to their personal, social and emotional development. When they start school, the children settle quickly into the class because of the very effective induction procedures. Staff work hard to ensure that all children feel happy and secure in class. Because of the very good provision and very good teaching, children make rapid progress and achieve very well, so that standards in this area of learning are in line with those expected when they enter Year 1.
42. Children are learning that good behaviour is a fundamental requirement in the classroom and are very familiar with class and school routines. Their behaviour is good because this aspect of their development is continually promoted and expectations are high. They have learned the importance of putting up their hands before answering questions or making comments, and they pay attention to adults and to one another. They trust the adults who work with them, and it is obvious that they feel secure. Children relate well to one another, play happily together, and there is no evidence of any unkindness between children. Almost all children concentrate on the tasks that have been set for them and try to succeed.
43. The environment in the classrooms is controlled effectively, which has the positive effects described above. The children are also given sufficient opportunity to choose activities, which helps them to develop their own decision-making skills.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening skills are developed well across the curriculum.
- Opportunities for reading and writing are planned well.

Commentary

44. All children achieve well, despite their low starting points on entry. Children make good progress towards the expected standards by the end of reception, but very few are likely to attain these despite good and often very good teaching and an imaginative curriculum. The teachers and teaching assistants work hard at developing opportunities for speaking and listening, and their thorough approach helps children, including those with special educational needs, to understand and speak with growing confidence. The emphasis on clear instructions and open-ended questioning sets challenges for the children and encourages their participation whilst developing their vocabulary.
45. A wide range of activities helps children to attain early reading skills. For example, a very good lesson in the library led by the teaching assistant encouraged the children to discuss their books with each other and learn book-specific language, such as 'author' and 'illustrator', and the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. As a result, the children enjoy sharing books and learning new words. The more able children read simple texts, others recognise some key words or tell a story using the pictures as a guide. Letter sounds are taught systematically but, overall, most children's knowledge of letter sounds is below average. This affects their ability to write and writing skills are underdeveloped; some children cannot yet write their own names without help. Role-play areas are used well to develop language skills across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a good range of mathematical activities and frequent opportunities to reinforce mathematical skills.

Commentary

46. On entry to the reception class, children's mathematical attainment is very low. Although they make good progress and achieve well, standards are still below those expected by the time they enter Year 1. The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good. All staff are aware of the need to count and focus on number values from the outset. Games and practical activities are used frequently and well to develop skills. Mathematical language is reinforced when children build and construct or take part in creative activities. Children are encouraged to count in many situations. For example, the early morning activity, during which children compare the number of children in the class having a school dinner and those having packed lunches, gives children the opportunity to count, look at number patterns and develop mathematical language such as 'more than' and 'less than'. They count the number of days to the end of the month and to their school trip.
47. Most children count to ten or beyond, and they are learning to order numbers to ten and to write the numbers correctly. More able pupils attempt simple addition problems. The children compare the different ways they come to school and represent their findings as a block graph. A wide range of activities, including the use of programs on the computer, is offered to develop their understanding and recognition of numbers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of interesting experiences for the children.
- Good questioning skills develop children's knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

48. Most children achieve well despite their lack of knowledge in this area of learning when they start school. The quality of teaching is good and often very good. All adults use effective questioning skills to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world and to ensure that they achieve well. For example, when encouraging pupils to think about suitable clothing to wear and food to take for their forthcoming trip, the teacher challenged children's thinking well through a stimulating question, answer and discussion session. Children are developing a clear understanding of what foods to eat for healthy living.
49. Despite the wide range of experiences the curriculum offers to expand their knowledge of the world around them, only a small number will reach the expected standards for children of this age by the time they enter Year 1. Activities are well planned to enable children to explore aspects of the environment and to relate the work to their own experiences. Many children are confident users of computers. For example, they operate a mouse successfully, clicking and dragging to move objects and colour in pictures. The children learn about different cultures and take a full part in Christian festivals with the rest of the school.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for developing manipulative skills are good.
- Children move with growing confidence and awareness of space.
- The area for outdoor activities is too small.

Commentary

50. Children achieve well and, by the end of the reception year, most are likely to attain all the expected standards. The quality of teaching and learning is good and teachers' planning is effective. The class uses the hall for gymnastics and dance lessons. In a very good lesson observed during the inspection, the children were developing a good awareness of space. They moved around the hall in different ways, running, walking, hopping and crawling and changing direction effectively. Many children hop on one leg and show imagination in producing group balances, indicating good attainment. A good range of practical activities in the classrooms encourages children to use puzzles, play-dough, pencils, tools and small building equipment and helps them to develop their manipulative dexterity well. However, the outside area for children's outdoor activities, although improved since the last inspection, is still too small for the children to ride on large wheeled vehicles or use other large apparatus to improve their physical, personal and social development and imaginative play further. Children with special educational needs are guided towards success by the skilful intervention of the support staff.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have experience of a wide range of materials and media.

Commentary

51. Most children achieve well, although overall standards are lower than expected by the end of reception. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and teachers and support staff work together well to provide a range of experiences to further children's development. Children experiment with colour and paint and use other materials such as wool, tissue paper, shiny paper and cellophane to create colourful pictures and collages. They listen to pieces of music and are beginning to recognise the different moods they portray; for example, 'it is gentle like a lullaby'. They pick out a range of seaside sounds in another piece of music and many display a sense of rhythm. Most enjoyed joining in with the singing. Role-play activities are used well to develop pupils' creativity. They are particularly successful when guided by the teacher, for example, when having a picnic, because children's limited language skills and general experiences tend to hinder their progress when they play together in the role-play areas.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement in the school's provision for English since the previous inspection.
- Pupils of all capabilities make good progress, often from a very low starting point, and achieve well.
- High-quality planning and very good teaching is evident in some classes, but the quality of teaching and learning is not consistent across the school.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support, especially for pupils with special educational needs, but this sometimes hinders the development of pupils' independent learning skills.
- In a few classes, the work is not challenging enough and pupils are given too many worksheets to complete.
- When their work is marked, pupils are not given a clear enough indication of what they need to do to improve.
- The work of the language support centre helps pupils to develop their communication skills and has provided training in new techniques for the school's staff.
- The subject leader provides a very good role model for other staff.
- Not enough use is made of opportunities to use and develop pupils' language and literacy skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

52. Although standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and well below average at the end of Year 6, pupils nevertheless make good progress in English and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Standards vary significantly from one class to the next, reflecting the wide variations in the composition of each year group of pupils, which are commented on in more detail earlier in the report. That pupils make as much progress as they do, in many cases overcoming significant obstacles to learning, is due to very good leadership, good-quality teaching and the high levels of additional support provided. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, reflected most clearly in the improvements in the school's results at the end of Year 6, the high-quality work of the language support centre and the support and ideas provided by the leadership team for English.

53. The school's national test results at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were well below the national average in reading and below average in writing. When compared with similar schools, they were average. These results were very similar to those pertaining at the time of the previous inspection, but were lower than those obtained in most of the intervening years, reflecting the exceptional nature of this particular year group. Provisional results from the most recent tests, for which national comparisons are not yet available, are significantly better than those obtained in 2004 and, although likely to be below average, fall not far short of the previous year's average mark range. Results have fluctuated considerably in the last six years, but the general trend is upward, at a similar rate to other schools. Overall, the inspection findings indicate that standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are below average. However, given the complex range of needs of many of the pupils, this represents good achievement, as pupils of all capabilities are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
54. Although there have been wide variations in the school's results at the end of Year 6, they have improved much more than in most schools since the previous inspection. The results in 2004 were below the national average and the average for similar schools but, because of the make-up of this particular group of pupils, they were not as good as those in 2003 when, for the first time, results were just above the national average. The inspection findings indicate that the attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is well below average in all aspects of English and that results in 2005 are likely to be below those achieved in 2004. This judgement reflects the fact that the current cohort contains a very large proportion of pupils with particular learning difficulties and a large number of pupils who have joined Estover part-way through their primary education. Scrutiny of the work of pupils in Year 6 for the current year, as for the work of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5, shows that pupils of all capabilities are making good progress in relation to their different starting points and that they are achieving well.
55. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, but it does vary from class to class, ranging from very good in some classes to satisfactory in others. The best teaching occurs in those classes which reflect most closely the very good lead provided by the members of the English leadership team. In her detailed and imaginative planning of units of work for English, the subject leader provides an excellent model for other members of staff of how to bring greater creativity and interest into the teaching of the subject. Well-planned opportunities for speaking and listening, the use of drama and the careful structuring of written work which are all helping to improve pupils' grasp of English. Throughout the school, there is generally a good awareness of pupils' differing needs, and the teaching and tasks provided are carefully adapted to meet these needs. The large number of pupils with learning difficulties are provided with well-targeted help, generally administered by the large band of well-qualified, patient and hard-working teaching assistants. Sometimes, however, the pupils are given too much help and direction, and this hinders their ability to learn how to work independently. The school has yet to solve how to develop pupils' independent learning skills whilst at the same time providing the level of support which so many pupils need in order to make progress. The staff relate very well to the pupils and are skilful at maintaining well-disciplined classes, often under quite challenging circumstances.
56. In the few classes where the teaching does not match the high quality found elsewhere, the tasks given to pupils are less interesting, more mundane and often not as challenging as they could be, especially for the more able pupils. Too much time is spent completing undemanding worksheets or copying handwriting exercises. Occasionally, all pupils in the class are given the same work to complete. In Year 1, the weekly planning is imbalanced and does not provide pupils with enough stimulation on some days of the week, especially when they spend whole lessons on word-level work. In the transition from reception to Years 1 and 2, the school has been unduly influenced by prescriptive approaches to teaching which do not give sufficient recognition to the differing rates at which children develop. Many children entering Year 1 have developed a willingness to have a go at writing, even though the standard of writing is not yet at the level expected for the end of their reception year. An over-emphasis on correctness and formality has a tendency to stifle the desire of some of these pupils to write and slows their potential progress.

57. The speaking and listening skills of many pupils when they start school, either in the reception class or at a later stage, are poor and, in some cases, very poor. Although they make good progress, standards are still below average by the time pupils leave the school, and many still find difficulty in articulating their views, responding with short phrases or one-word answers, rather than well-formed sentences. The school places a high priority on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills and has developed specific targets for speaking and listening, progress towards which is then assessed by teachers. In most classes, teachers demonstrate good strategies to develop these skills, such as the use of well-directed questions, paired and group discussions. However, well-planned activities are sometimes not as effective as they could be because supervising adults are not insistent enough on pupils using their initiative and sticking to the intended aims. In Year 4, for example, pupils were divided into groups of six, with one person given the role of chair, to discuss the impact of advertisements. In most cases, adults eventually ended up taking the role of chair rather than helping the designated pupil to carry out the task. In some classes, there is very successful use of drama, but this good practice is not disseminated sufficiently to all classes. The language support centre has a significant impact on the development of the communication skills of the pupils who attend the centre, but its work also has a positive effect on the teaching of speaking and listening throughout the school, as teachers have learnt new techniques from the training provided by the staff of the centre.
58. Considerable emphasis is given to the development of pupils' reading skills. The school's assessments show that almost all pupils who have spent the whole of their primary education at Estover make good progress. Many of the pupils who enter the school after the reception year, however, have significant problems with reading, and their performance has a detrimental effect on the overall standards achieved. As in other aspects of the subject, the subject leader has had a significant impact on improving the school's provision for reading. New and more attractive reading areas have been created in each classroom, and there has been a big drive to improve the standard of reading and to help pupils to enjoy reading. Many pupils come from homes where there is little additional support and parents do not listen to their children reading. The school has endeavoured to tackle this problem by providing family literacy workshops, which have been successful in the past, but for which little interest was shown by parents this year. Reading sessions, in which pupils from Year 4 are paired with pupils from Year 1, have proved to be a successful initiative in the school's drive to raise standards.
59. Although writing is the least well developed of the four key skills, good, albeit at times slow, progress is nevertheless evident in most classes. Greatest progress is made in the classes where teachers devote a number of lessons to producing one major piece of writing, with an emphasis on quality rather than quantity. Least progress is evident in the few classes where the main writing activities involve the completion of worksheets or a succession of grammar-based exercises. Despite the extensive handwriting practice given in many classes, the quality of pupils' presentation and handwriting is unsatisfactory. Throughout the school, not enough use is made of information and communication technology as a tool to help pupils develop their writing skills and to improve their spelling. Whilst teachers mark pupils' work regularly, they do not give pupils a clear enough indication of what they have done well or, more importantly, what they need to do to improve, and insufficient time is built into the teaching schedule to allow pupils to go back over their work and learn from their mistakes.
60. The subject leader, and the English leadership team since the start of the school year, provides very good leadership. She has a very clear idea as to how pupils' English skills can best be developed, has delivered training and support for other staff, and provides a very good role-model to others in her own practice and the thoroughness of her planning. She also has a very good awareness of what needs to be developed and of the effectiveness of the teaching in each class. Many initiatives have been undertaken in recent years, all of which have helped to strengthen the school's provision for this crucial subject. The management of the subject is good, but not quite as effective as the leadership, as not all staff are fully following the guidance given and approaches advocated by the subject leader. Lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and regular assessments provide the leadership team with a clear picture of what is happening in the subject throughout the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. There are some good examples in a few classes of the use and development of pupils' language and literacy skills across the curriculum. In Year 6, for example, the geography topic of rivers suffuses pupils' work in many other subjects and offers good opportunities for writing and the development of pupils' language skills. The work of the language support centre provides other staff with a very good example of the way language skills can be developed through any subject. Overall, however, the development of literacy skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Pupils undertake little written work for other subjects, such as history, design and technology and science and, when they do, little attention is paid to the quality of their writing, mistakes are left uncorrected and the skills which are taught so painstakingly in English lessons are not applied consistently or well enough in cross-curricular contexts. As a result, opportunities are missed to consolidate the good teaching and learning which takes place in most English lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well in the subject throughout the school.
- Teachers plan successfully to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Subject leaders make good use of assessment information to plan the curriculum.
- Pupils are not given a clear enough indication through the marking of their work or the setting of targets of what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

62. The national test results at the end of Year 2 in mathematics in 2004 were well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. Although standards fell last year, they were nevertheless higher than those pertaining at the time of the school's previous inspection. Preliminary results from the 2005 national tests, for which comparative data are not yet available, indicate a significant improvement to a level which is close to the national average for the previous year. Inspection findings indicate that standards for the current cohort of pupils in Year 2 are average and that pupils are making good progress and achieving well.
63. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were well below the national average and below average for similar schools. These results were not as good as those obtained in 2003 which were just above the national average. These bald statistics mask the fact that the school's results have improved significantly since the last inspection, more than in most schools, and that pupils of all capabilities are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. Inspection findings indicate that the standards attained by pupils currently in Year 6 are below average, but that they are nevertheless achieving well. The strengths in achievement apply equally to all elements of the subject, because the school analyses carefully where pupils need the greatest help, and teachers plan accordingly.
64. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and has a positive effect on the achievement of boys and girls of all abilities. The school has rigorous systems for keeping track of each pupil's progress. Class teachers use this information and their knowledge of pupils well to plan carefully to meet the diverse needs of the different groups of pupils in their class. In a very skilful lesson seen during the inspection, for example, the class teacher ran two different challenges simultaneously throughout the introductory mental warm up and, as a result, all pupils were enthused and stretched their 'halving' and 'doubling' skills very effectively. However, there are occasions when, although otherwise satisfactory, the teaching does not enable all pupils to sustain such a brisk pace, and not all groups are equally challenged throughout the lesson. The experienced and skilled group of teaching assistants also know pupils very well and have very good relationships with them. They are very well briefed and make an invaluable contribution to enabling pupils to feel secure and

increasing their readiness to learn. At times, however, they do too much for the pupils and this diminishes pupils' ability to learn independently.

65. The relatively new subject co-ordination team leads and manages the subject well. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, seen clearly in the pupils' progress and the initiatives introduced by the school in order to improve provision in mathematics. The team uses detailed assessment information to keep an eye on whether or not pupils are achieving as well as they should, and takes remedial action when necessary. The subject leaders discuss with teachers which pupils need extra help and in what form. Consequently, there are flexible changes to how pupils are grouped and to the focus in the curriculum. Teaching assistants are used very well to help with some of the resulting initiatives. For instance, they provide a weekly mathematical games session for those pupils most likely to benefit from this approach. The school also makes good use of its community links by sending groups of pupils to Plymouth University for mathematics enrichment courses.
66. The headteacher and subject leaders rightly recognise that there are missed opportunities to use their in-depth knowledge to further empower pupils. In spite of the close analysis of pupils' learning, clear and achievable individual targets are not shared with pupils for use on a daily basis. Teachers' marking, while encouraging and supportive, does not usually indicate clearly what pupils need to do next.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. The use of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory overall. For example, pupils use their mathematical skills suitably in science when they measure the growth of bean plants and transfer the information onto block graphs. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 link mathematical and information and communication technology skills suitably when they produce computer generated graphs recording the rate of decay in bread. Nevertheless, pupils do not have readily accessible mathematics targets to take with them to lessons such as science and design and technology to help them use and apply their mathematical skills in other contexts.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good balance between teaching factual knowledge and providing opportunities for investigative work.
- The work provided for pupils is not always challenging enough and does not help them to develop independent learning skills.
- Assessment procedures are good.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

68. The teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment in science at the end of Year 2 in 2004 was well below the national average. Assessment of the current group of pupils in Year 2 is significantly better, and coincides with the inspection findings that standards in science at the end of Year 2 are below average and that pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
69. The school's national test results improved dramatically, and much more than in most schools, in the years following the previous inspection from very low to just above the national average in 2003. The results in 2004 were not as good, being well below the national average and below the average for similar schools, but were nevertheless significantly better than those pertaining at the time of the previous inspection. Inspection findings indicate that standards in the current Year 6 are still well below average, but that pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

70. Because most science lessons are taught at the end of the week, it was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection. This lesson, together with evidence from pupils' books, discussions with pupils and progress charts of attainment, indicates that teaching is satisfactory overall. In the one lesson observed, the teaching was satisfactory. The teacher posed some good questions to develop pupils' thinking and to draw on their previous knowledge and experiences and made good use of the interactive whiteboard³ to make the lesson interesting. However, the investigative work the teacher had planned for the pupils was not challenging enough as many pupils had a good idea of the outcome before they started. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
71. The work in pupils' books shows that, in most classes, all areas of the science curriculum are taught satisfactorily, and that there is a good balance between extending pupils' knowledge and understanding and investigative work. However, although there are many examples of pupils being encouraged to predict possible outcomes and present their findings, in too many cases it is clear that there is a high level of direction by the teacher, and pupils do not have enough opportunity to work independently or draw their own conclusions. The use of commercial worksheets, often the same one used for all pupils in the class, limits progression and achievement, especially for the more able pupils. In some, but not all, classes, there is good development of language specific to science. The quality of teachers' marking is variable; in the best cases, teachers make points for improving and developing work, as well as giving pupils praise. Too often, however, pupils are not given a clear enough indication as to where they have made mistakes or how they can improve their work. Some opportunities are provided for the reinforcement of pupils' literacy skills through the recording of results, and there are occasional opportunities to develop and use their mathematical skills by recording their findings in the form of tables, charts and graphs. However, teachers do not develop these basic skills systematically enough in science. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to use their computer skills to present the results of their investigations
72. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but there are also good aspects to the leadership, seen in some of the recent improvements. The school has developed good systems to record what pupils know, understand and can do. The results of assessments are used effectively to track pupils' progress through the school. The curriculum is enriched through activities such as 'Science Week', when the whole school takes part in scientific activities. More able pupils have the opportunities to visit Callington Space Centre for extension work. The main co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has an action plan which outlines a range of appropriate initiatives to bring improvement. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, seen especially in the improved standards at the end of Year 6.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attention to developing the school's provision in information and communication technology has led to significant improvements since the previous inspection.
- Improved resources allow pupils and staff better access to new technology.
- The overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory, but there are areas for development which would make the teaching of skills more relevant and help move pupils' learning on more quickly.
- The leadership team has a good understanding of what areas need further development.

³ Large touch-sensitive screen on which images are displayed by a projector linked to a computer, as an alternative to a conventional monitor. By touching the screen, teacher or pupils can control events instead of using a keyboard or mouse.

- Information and communication technology is not yet used widely enough as a tool for learning in all subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

73. There has been good improvement in the school's provision for information and communication technology since the previous inspection, when it was identified as an area for improvement. New resources, the installation of a computer suite, training for staff and better curricular planning have helped to improve the quality of the teaching and enabled pupils to have better access to new technology. There are still some areas for improvement in this rapidly changing subject, but pupils of all capabilities are now making satisfactory progress throughout the school. Standards are still below those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. In the case of pupils in Year 2, this is because of the low level of attainment with which many children start school. In the case of pupils in Year 6, it is because of the legacy of the school's previously unsatisfactory provision. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
74. Pupils' skills are strongest in the areas of 'exchanging and sharing information' and 'finding things out'. They are weakest in the areas of 'developing ideas and making things happen' and 'reviewing, modifying and evaluating their work', which require pupils to use their skills from other subject areas or to apply their knowledge and understanding in different contexts. Pupils are competent in finding out information from the Internet, and gradually develop their skills in using a word processor to set out text and graphics as they move through the school. By Year 6, for example, pupils have the necessary skill to put together a rudimentary multimedia presentation, but have not yet developed the discernment needed to know when and where to use the available features to best effect.
75. The quality of teaching and standards of learning are satisfactory. In half of the lessons observed during the inspection, the teaching was satisfactory; in the other half, it was good. Pupils are now receiving regular teaching, often only half a class at a time, which allows them to use a computer on their own and enables the teacher or teaching assistant to give pupils greater individual attention than in a whole-class situation. In most classes, teachers are still too reliant on following the set scheme of work, rather than evaluating what skills pupils already have and how they might integrate the teaching of new skills more effectively into work being undertaken in other subjects. Although they help pupils to develop new skills in using the computer, some of the tasks pupils are asked to complete lack relevance to other work, and there are few examples of ongoing projects which provide pupils with the opportunity to review, modify and evaluate their work. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject, but they are very quick to give up when they encounter a problem, and they do not yet have the level of independence or confidence which allows them to explore and try things out for themselves. The school does not yet provide any opportunity for pupils to access computers outside normal lesson times.
76. The subject has been led and managed well. Those responsible for the subject have overseen many of the improvements, which have occurred since the last inspection. Most teachers have now been provided with laptop computers, which has helped to improve their skills. Usage of information and communication technology within the classroom has been extended through the installation of interactive whiteboards in most classes. Good attention is given to health and safety, and appropriate steps have been taken to avoid obvious dangers when using the Internet. The school has good arrangements for technical support and makes effective use of the expertise of a teaching assistant to carry out routine tasks and to assist with the teaching of the subject. The school has identified pertinent areas for development for the future. The regular procedures for assessment are satisfactory, but do not enable staff to readily identify how they are going to provide sufficient challenge for those pupils who are more proficient than others in using computers. A good new initiative is the use of an Internet-based assessment program which provides detailed analysis of pupils' attainment in different areas of the curriculum. The results of these assessments have been used by the local authority to provide targeted support for the school in areas of identified weakness.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Overall, the use of information and communication technology and the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum are satisfactory, but there are great variations in usage from class to class, and there is much room for further development in the purposeful use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning in other subjects. In a few classes, the teaching of new skills in information and communication technology is undertaken within the context of work in other subjects. In Year 3, for example, pupils were learning how to use a music composition program to compose a sequence of music for a dance routine which linked to work they were undertaking in English. Some teachers are making increasingly good use of the interactive whiteboards, which are now installed in most classrooms, to enhance their own teaching and to demonstrate how new technology can be used as an effective tool for learning. However, the regular use of information and communication technology is not yet fully embedded in all subjects. Co-ordinators of individual subjects have not yet taken on the responsibility of identifying and determining how and when information and communication technology should be used in their subjects.

HUMANITIES

78. Neither **geography** nor **history** was a main focus for this inspection. Work in both subjects was sampled, but no judgements have been made on overall provision, standards, pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching and learning. No complete lessons were observed in either subject. A discussion was held with the subject co-ordination team for humanities, and pupils' work was scrutinised.
79. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for both geography and history, using national guidance as a basis for planning in both subjects. In all classes, both subjects are taught as discrete subjects in alternate terms. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the coverage of both subjects varies from class to class, being significantly better in the few classes which use a cross-curricular approach to teaching the subjects, such as in Year 6, where the topic on rivers has been used as the basis for developing skills in art and design, information and communication technology, mathematics and English. Where such links are not made, pupils' work lacks depth.
80. The subjects are led and managed soundly by the team of co-ordinators for the humanities. This style of leadership is in its infancy, but the team sees that working together on subjects is much more beneficial than working in isolation. The school offers a good programme of visits and fieldwork that enables pupils to broaden their knowledge of historical and geographical topics. In geography, there are visits to local sites for work on specific projects, as well as trips further afield. In history, there are also visits to local museums and historic sites. Links with a school in Uganda not only help pupils to understand how people live in another country but also develops their cultural awareness. Although pupils use the Internet and CD-ROMs for research purposes, little further use is made of information and communication technology as a tool for learning in these subjects.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for religious education has improved since the previous inspection.
- Although there is some good teaching in religious education, pupils find it hard to remember what has been taught.

Commentary

81. There has been satisfactory improvement in the school's provision for religious education, which was highlighted in the previous inspection as a key issue for improvement. Teachers are more knowledgeable about the subject, the quality of teaching has improved and more time is devoted to the subject than before. There is, however, still very little recorded work in

the subject in most classes, indicating that teachers do not make enough use of the subject to develop pupils' literacy skills or to consolidate pupils' learning.

82. Despite the improvements, standards in religious education by the end of Years 2 and 6 are below those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Given the low base from which they start, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but pupils' progress is hindered by the difficulty many of them have in recalling what has been taught in previous lessons. For example, discussions with pupils in Year 2 revealed that they had a good idea of the Christmas story, but had little understanding of the significance of Easter, and only a more able pupil could recall the main points about the parable of The Prodigal Son, which they had studied earlier in the week. The picture at the end of Year 6 is similar. Pupils have a smattering of factual knowledge about different world faiths and know they have been studying Islam recently, but they remember very little about what they have studied. They have little insight into why religious education is taught or why people believe in a religion.
83. The overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory, as is pupils' learning within lessons, but pupils find it difficult to retain what they have learnt. In the three lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was good. In a lesson in Year 2, in which pupils were learning about parables, and in particular The Prodigal Son, the teacher used questioning effectively to develop pupils' ideas about the feelings of the characters and to draw out their thoughts on the message in the story. In Year 3, the pupils were relating the idea of symbols to their own experiences and creating a box of their own special memories. By the end of the lesson, the pupils were developing a good understanding of the meaning and value of symbols. In the lesson observed in Year 4, the pupils were looking at how different religions are practised. The teacher had good subject knowledge and the lesson was very well planned, and the teacher had gone to great lengths to ensure that there was a range of different information sheets on each religion to match the differing reading abilities of the pupils.
84. The leadership and management of religious education by the humanities leadership group are satisfactory. The statutory requirements for religious education are met, and the programme is properly based on the locally Agreed Syllabus. Sound assessment procedures have been developed. Each term, pupils record a piece of written work in a book started in Year 1 which is used to monitor coverage of the subject. There are good links with the church, which are used well to promote knowledge and understanding of Christianity.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. This area of the curriculum comprises **art and design, design and technology, music and physical education**. The organisation of the timetable during the week of the inspection provided little opportunity to observe direct teaching in any of the subjects in this curriculum area, and no judgement has been made about the overall provision in these subjects. Discussions were held with staff and pupils, and a limited amount of available work was looked at.
86. There are some common features in these subjects. The school has a strong commitment to using them to enhance pupils' social experiences and, as a result, they all contribute to very good enrichment of the curriculum through special events. Pupils enjoy the practical and physical activities of this area of the curriculum, but weaknesses in their speaking skills constrain those elements of the subjects that require them to voice their opinions and evaluate their work. **Art and design** and **music** are subjects where some teachers lack confidence, but the headteacher is well aware of this and takes care to compensate for it wherever possible.
87. Much of the **art and design** work on display is of a standard expected for pupils of their age and indicates interesting links between art and other subjects. This is exemplified by work produced by pupils in Year 2. They recorded a trip to Calstock by producing paintings or pastel-and-crayon landscapes which included a viaduct with a train. They had looked at the style of Monet before embarking on this project in order to allow it to influence their work. They produced confident and lively individual work, and there were examples of mature work

with a developing sense of perspective from some pupils, including those with special educational needs. Similarly, pupils in Year 3 had contributed to an attractive display of work related to a stimulating project about the environment. In this case, they produced sculptures using natural materials with age appropriate skills, which was connected to geographical and literacy work. Older pupils in Year 6 looked at the abstract work of Mark Rothko before using similar designs to communicate feelings and so made useful links between art and personal, social and emotional development. More conventional work for these pupils involved honing their observational skills in conjunction with developing historical research skills, by drawing details from historic artefacts. The drawings on display covered an expected range of skill. Pupils benefit from working with artists-in-residence, which last year meant working with a specialist in Chinese-style watercolours. In projects such as these, the subject enhances pupils' social and cultural development very well.

88. The evidence available for **design and technology** during the inspection indicates that pupils have a satisfactory range of learning experiences in this subject. Adults have satisfactory, rather than high, expectations of pupils' work. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoy sawing and gluing pieces of wood together to make a 'lorry' and learn a reasonable amount in the process about the materials and how to make a construction strong. However, pupils do not experience the additional challenge of fixing wheels to these constructions. Discussions with pupils indicate that, while they are expected to plan their constructions, they do not always produce a written evaluation of the finished product. This appears to be a missed opportunity for pupils to write about a subject of interest to them. Similarly, while there are displays of models with moving parts that older pupils have made, the plans and evaluations are not presented alongside the model. Nevertheless, there are sound, planned opportunities for younger pupils to speak about their work, and so develop their speaking skills while evaluating the finished product. The new subject co-ordinator does not have a clear overview of the standard of pupils' work, but is satisfied that current planning focuses appropriately on gradually increasing pupils' skills. She is keen to develop the subject suitably in conjunction with the whole-school development of the creative curriculum and links between subjects.
89. In the previous inspection report, while standards in **music** and the quality of the curriculum were judged to be satisfactory throughout the school, an over-dependence on radio programmes was noted. Since the previous inspection, the school has benefited from having a music specialist on the teaching staff who ensured that the full curriculum was in place and increased its interest value by freeing up staff and pupils from this dependence upon so many radio programmes. However, this member of staff recently left the school, and the headteacher is currently ensuring that pupils continue to have reasonable access to music. Instrumental tuition is available during the week from visiting specialist teachers and several pupils now learn to play an instrument, such as brass, recorder, clarinet or keyboard. The school has a valuable tradition of regular musical performances, the most recent being, 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat'. These are devised to enhance pupils' social skills and self-esteem as well as their experience of drama and music. Staff report enormous success in these ventures, which serve as a significant enrichment to the curriculum for pupils.
90. All of the indications are that pupils continue to achieve age-expected standards in most elements of **physical education**. However, the subject leadership team recognises that, because so many pupils have co-ordination difficulties, standards in gymnastics are likely to be below expected levels of skill at the end of Year 6. The leadership team works well together, conscientiously and enthusiastically developing the subject. This is evident because, in the recent past, teaching of the subject has been monitored and teachers received feedback; the current leadership team is considering a new computerised assessment system; the school is currently identifying talented pupils and planning to extend their skills. Pupils have many opportunities to compete with other schools, for example, in football matches, netball tournaments and athletics fixtures. These events are celebrated with interesting photographic displays. Pupils benefit from the expertise of one member of staff in dance. Between 20 and 40 pupils regularly attend a dance club and a few pupils have developed this interest out of school. This element of the subject is enhanced in the annual school production. The teaching assistants contribute significantly to the number of physical

activities on offer and to the very good enrichment of the curriculum through clubs such as 'Tag Rugby' and 'Kwik Cricket'. Residential visits also provide older pupils with the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities and adventurous water sports.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong whole-school commitment to developing this aspect of pupils' education and a strong sense of school community.
- There are very good relationships between adults and pupils.
- Most pupils have a clear understanding of the impact of their actions on others.

Commentary

91. This aspect of pupils' education is given a high priority by the headteacher and staff, and there is clear evidence of the success of this provision in the good attitudes and behaviour observed throughout the school during the inspection. Adults provide a secure and happy environment where all are valued. They treat pupils with respect and set a very good example, to which the pupils respond positively. Through this, pupils learn to respect each other and accept that some pupils need special support. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is both formal, through 'circle time'⁴ and class assembly discussions which allow pupils to deal with their emotions and feelings, and informal, by means of the very good relationships and day-to-day interactions between pupils and adults. The school is inclusive in all its policies and practices which aim to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity. Good use is made of visits and visitors to the school during the year to support pupils' personal development. These opportunities, together with the linked themes of whole-school and other assemblies, make a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development. The school council is a way through which pupils can express their views. A good range of charities is supported which fosters pupils' social and moral development.

⁴ During 'Circle Time' pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and, therefore, pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

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	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	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	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	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).*