

INSPECTION REPORT

EXMINSTER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Exminster, Exeter

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113201

Headteacher: Mr R Foale

Lead inspector: Mr Peter Sandall

Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th June 2004

Inspection number: 256088

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: 4-11

GENDER OF PUPILS: MIXED

NUMBER ON ROLL: 277

SCHOOL ADDRESS: MAIN ROAD

EXMINSTER

EXETER

DEVON

POSTCODE: EX6 8AJ

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APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY: THE GOVERNING BODY

NAME OF CHAIR OF GOVERNORS: MR JAMES CROSS

DATE OF PREVIOUS INSPECTION: 18TH MAY 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large primary school serving the village of Exminster close to Exeter. Most pupils come from the surrounding area, although a number travel some distance to the school, particularly pupils with special educational needs. Parents and governors regard the school as being important to the local community. There are more boys than girls in its 277 pupils, most noticeably in Key Stage 1. Nearly all the pupils are of white British descent. Currently six pupils speak a language other than English at home, and two are at an early stage of learning to use English. There are also several pupils who rely almost entirely on sign language to communicate. While there is a wide range, pupils

generally come from above average socio-economic backgrounds. For example, only five per cent of pupils are entitled to a free school meal. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is well above average, being the highest for any primary school in Devon, where there is no specific provision. The school has more than trebled in size over the last ten years and is continuing to expand. As a result, a majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 started their primary education elsewhere and there is very high pupil mobility. The school received an achievement award from the Department for Education and Skills in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25771	Mr Peter Sandall	Lead inspector	Music Physical education
19664	Mr John Bayliss	Lay inspector	
27369	Mrs Carolyn Sandall	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum Science Geography History
27240	Mr Tony Hooper	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Religious education English as an additional language
20846	Mr Alan Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics Personal, social and health education Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

6-7

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

8-11

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

12-17

TEACHING AND LEARNING

THE CURRICULUM

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

18-19

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

AND SUBJECTS

20-31

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Exminster provides a good education for its pupils and gives good value for money. There is a positive, shared ethos and the school places great importance on valuing all its pupils. Teaching and learning are good overall. The headteacher's good leadership is supported by a very effective group of governors and a committed staff. Pupils' achievement is good overall and they attain average standards, despite very high pupil mobility and a very high percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses¹ are:

- The school is well led and very well managed.
- The governing body is very well informed and contributes to the very good management.
- There is a very good emphasis on valuing all pupils which supports their achievement.
- Teaching is good overall and particularly good in Years 3 to 6.
- Insufficient opportunities for children to learn independently and inaccuracies in assessment affect provision for children in the Foundation Stage².
- Pupils have very good relationships, good attitudes to school and they behave well.
- Progress in mathematics for some pupils is limited by a narrow curriculum and a lack of challenge.
- The organisation of the school day does not make the best use of the time available.

The school has maintained good standards overall since the previous inspection, in spite of increasing numbers of special needs pupils. The issues from the previous inspection have all been addressed and very successfully in relation to provision for special educational needs. Many pupils who have been in the school for a length of time achieve well. The school has made good improvement overall.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Pupils' achievement is good. Children make sound progress in the Foundation Stage, with most achieving the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year, although some more able children are capable of more than this. This progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2, and pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2; in each of the past three years they have attained above average standards. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well, due to consistently good teaching. They attain average standards in English and science by Year 6, while standards in mathematics are slightly below average. Achievement is good for many pupils because there is a very high percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs in Years 3 to 6, and because most pupils have joined the school at a later stage. The attainment of many pupils at Year 6 is better than that suggested by the standard they reached in Year 2.

Pupils display good personal qualities, and their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is also good. Pupils have very good relationships with adults and other pupils and

¹ The strengths and weaknesses are listed in order of significance.

² The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

behave well, contributing to a positive ethos and a successful learning environment. Attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good standard of education and teaching is good overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, with examples of good and, on one occasion, excellent teaching, but it is not strong enough, over time, to accelerate children's learning. Assessment is not used effectively to meet children's needs consistently. Teaching was satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection; results over time suggest that it is often better than this, and pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. In Years 3 to 6, nearly all teaching seen was good, with some very good teaching as well. This consistent good quality teaching has a positive impact on pupils' achievement, especially in the core subjects of English and science, and in information and communication technology. The use of support staff, good throughout the school, is particularly effective with older pupils, and makes a strong contribution to the progress of lower-attaining pupils as well as those with special educational needs. Good use of assessment from Years 1 to 6 ensures that work is matched well to pupils' understanding; however, individual learning targets are not yet used consistently to enable pupils to know what they must do to improve. All teachers have a positive attitude and offer pupils a good level of encouragement, and, as a result, pupils are usually engaged well in their learning. Short periods at the start of the day and between main lessons are not always used to best effect.

The school offers a broad curriculum and places great emphasis on ensuring all pupils are included in all aspects of primary education. There are very good opportunities to learn new skills outside the school day. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. All pupils are supported well, and good attention is paid to their health and welfare. The school works hard to maintain good links with its parents and the local community. All this has a positive effect on achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and provides good leadership. He has developed a united and supportive staff team who work hard in the pupils' interests, with a real commitment to valuing all pupils whatever their needs. Management is very good in all aspects. The governing body has a very good understanding of the school's needs and acts very effectively as a critical friend. Statutory requirements are met. Financial management is very good and supports the school's educational priorities well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally positive about the school, shown through the response at the pre-inspection meeting and from the questionnaires returned. While a quarter of parents returning the questionnaire felt that the school did not seek parents' views; inspection evidence indicates a good partnership with parents. Pupils, too, like their school and think it a very good one. They are particularly positive about their relationships with younger pupils and those with disabilities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure children in the Foundation Stage are appropriately challenged to make the progress of which they are capable;
- Raise standards in mathematics by evaluating curriculum coverage and encouraging enquiry skills;
- Review the timetable to ensure that best use is made of teaching time.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good overall, although there are inconsistencies within this. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily. Achievement is good by Year 2, and pupils attain above average standards. While standards are not as high by Year 6, pupils achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils who receive most of their primary education in the school achieve well.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics tests at the end of Year 2, over the past three years, have been either above or well above average.
- The trend in standards at Key Stage 1³ is above the national trend.
- More able children in the Foundation Stage do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage enter school with attainment which is broadly average, although there is a significant number in the current group who are of above average ability. Most children make sound progress and achieve the expected goals in the six areas of learning, but some higher-attaining children do not achieve as well as they could, for example in mathematical development. There are two issues which affect progress at different times. One is that teachers' assessment sometimes lacks precision, so that the next step is not always appropriately challenging. There is an acceptance that children will attain the expected levels, but less emphasis on able children exceeding these; for example, currently no children in the reception class are targeted to achieve the higher Level 3 in the tests by the time they reach Year 2. There is also too little focus on independent learning, which limits the progress of all children, but particularly of the more able.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores⁴ in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.1 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	17.0 (15.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.0 (17.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average. Over the past three years, standards have been consistently above average, and in some subjects and years well above, and the trend of improvement over time is better than the national trend. Inspection evidence is that the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1, while satisfactory overall, is strongest for pupils in the Year 1 class. However, pupils in Year 2 in the 2004 national tests met the targets predicted from their attainment in Year 1 in reading, and exceeded them in both writing and mathematics, indicating at least satisfactory achievement. Despite this, standards overall are not as high as in previous years. The available evidence indicates that this is because this year group is not as strong as in previous years.

³ Key Stage 1, sometimes referred to as the infants, caters for pupils aged between 5 and 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

⁴ **Average Point Scores.** The average point scores table compares the school's performance with the national results. The calculations are arrived at by using the total of all test scores gained by pupils, and dividing the total by the number of pupils with a test result. This calculation is carried out for each subject tested.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (27.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.2 (25.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.2 (31.1)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. By Year 6, standards are average in English and science, and below average in mathematics. This is a similar picture to the results in the national test results, over the past three years, and the school's improvement trend is similar to that found nationally. Standards in mathematics, through the school, are limited by insufficient opportunities in some classes and lessons for pupils to develop enquiry skills and attempt to solve problems independently. At times, teachers place too much emphasis on repeated practice of basic skills at the expense of challenging pupils to think mathematically.
4. Achievement in Key Stage 2⁵ is often good, even although attainment is average, and there are two reasons for this. One is that in Key Stage 2 classes, in particular, there is a very high proportion of pupils either with a statement of special educational needs or with specific learning difficulties. These pupils are well supported and, as a result, make good and sometimes very good progress, but still do not always attain the nationally expected Level 4. The attainment of boys in mathematics is better than that of girls, but there is no inspection evidence to explain this, nor have the school's own investigations produced an answer. Boys and girls attain similar standards in English and science.
5. The other factor affecting attainment is pupil mobility, and, in particular, the number of pupils who join the school at other than the normal starting point. In 2003, for example, 60 per cent of pupils in Key Stage 2 had started their primary education in other schools. Of the 32 pupils in the current Year 6 class, 24 joined the school later than usual and another 12 had left. This makes it difficult for the school to measure the value it is adding to pupils' attainment over a period of time. However, analysis of the progress made by the previous Year 6 class, measured against their attainment in the Year 2 tests, shows that overall progress was slightly better than average, even though some of them had not been in the school very long. Pupils who spend the whole of their primary education at Exminster achieve well overall.
6. Pupils for whom English is an additional language represent just over three per cent of the school population. They attain results that are similar to those of other pupils and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
7. Resources for information and communication technology have improved, and this is allied to training for teachers, leading to improved skills and confidence. However, standards remain satisfactory, and pupils' further progress is limited by a lack of planned opportunities to use information and communication technology in different areas of the curriculum. Standards in religious education are satisfactory overall, although the understanding and perception of older pupils is rather better than their knowledge of other faiths.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Behaviour is good. Pupils' personal development is good overall, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is very good, and punctuality is satisfactory.

⁵ Key Stage 2, sometimes referred to as the juniors, caters for pupils aged between 7 and 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to come to school, enjoy it, are interested and try hard to do their best.
- Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of behaviour. The good behaviour that results contributes significantly to the quality of learning.
- The school is very successful in the promotion of pupils' social and moral development. Pupils have a very good understanding of what constitutes good conduct and a very good awareness of right and wrong.
- Pupils work and play well together and care for each other. Relationships are very good. There is no evidence of bullying, racism or other forms of harassment.
- Attendance is well above the national average. The school promotes attendance well and receives good support from parents.

Commentary

8. When inspected previously, pupils' attitudes were a strong feature, as they are now. The pupils' good attitudes to school contribute significantly to the way in which they achieve. Boys and girls are equally enthusiastic about school activities, showing good interest in what they are asked to do, trying hard and endeavouring to do their best. When talking to inspectors, pupils in Year 6 and members of the School Council displayed good attitudes to work, finding very little they did not like. They value being expected to work hard and are very positive about the school's commitment to including pupils with significant disabilities, seeing this as a privilege. Teachers and learning support assistants have high expectations of the participation of pupils with special educational needs in all activities, and this has a positive impact on their confidence and attitudes to work. When given the chance to be responsible or display initiative, most pupils happily volunteer, undertaking the activities diligently and with enthusiasm. They relate easily to adults, although never in a disrespectful way. They show respect for each other, adults and school property. Children in the reception classes generally meet or exceed many of the expected goals in their social and emotional development, are confident, and have very good relationships. However, their personal development is limited by too few opportunities to learn independently.
9. The pupils are taught to be polite to visitors and to show an awareness of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves, for example when they involve themselves in charitable activities. The great majority listen carefully and courteously to teachers, almost all willingly participating in question-and-answer sessions, doing so in a sensible and mature way. Pupils who find it difficult to concentrate, and there are a number in each class, are very well supported and, as a result, play a full part and enjoy most of the activities provided for them. There is a keenness to collect rewards for good behaviour and effort. Inspectors confirm the view of parents that, through its strong social development programme, the school raises the pupils' confidence and self-esteem so that they are successfully helped to become mature and responsible members of the school, and wider, community.
10. When the school was inspected in 1998, behaviour was judged to be 'generally good'. The picture is the same now. The school has high expectations about how its pupils should behave and, with very few exceptions, and these are pupils with recognised behavioural difficulties, the pupils rise to meet them. All staff are good at helping pupils to distinguish right from wrong. Some minor unsatisfactory behaviour was observed during the inspection, involving pupils with recognised behavioural difficulties, but on each occasion it was dealt with sensitively and effectively by trained support staff so that disruption to the learning of others was minimised. This clear moral code provides a firm basis for the ethos of good behaviour that is reflected in the pupils' behaviour in classrooms, in the playground or when moving about the school, which is rarely less than good and, on occasions, is very good. Break times are pleasant, social occasions when the pupils behave very well; boys and girls of all ages play happily together. Rewards and sanctions are understood well and accepted as fair by the pupils. When speaking to inspectors during the inspection, pupils had no concerns about the behaviour of their classmates, showing a very good understanding of the difficulties some of them face. The school, however, recognises the importance of being very sensitive to the needs of all pupils and being seen to be fair and so, very reluctantly, it was necessary as a last resort, having exhausted all other options, to exclude a boy for a fixed period during the past year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	203	1	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	63	0	0

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

11. Pupils' attendance is very good. It is well above the national average as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The school has good procedures for maintaining high levels of attendance and its efforts are well supported by the very large majority of parents who understand the importance of regular attendance. Records of attendance are properly maintained and comply with statutory requirements. Registration is efficient. There is no evidence of truancy. There is some lateness in the mornings, usually due to transport delays, but, overall, punctuality is satisfactory.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.5	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest reporting year for which comparisons are available.

12. The school's arrangements for spiritual development, including collective worship, whilst, satisfactory, are not as good as they were judged to be when the school was inspected previously, when they were good. Statutory requirements for a daily act of worship are met though, on occasions, insufficient time is allowed for prayer and for pupils to reflect on what has been learnt and how it impacts on their daily life. Overall, however, through assemblies and elsewhere, the pupils are taught to reflect on their own actions and those of others, show consideration for others, listen to others and learn to respect their views. There is a very strong commitment to social inclusion within the school and harmonious relationships exist throughout the school community. The pupils work well on their own, or in groups, readily taking turns and offering to help to each other.
13. Pupils gain a satisfactory insight into their own and other cultural traditions through work in religious education lessons, art and design, music, history and geography lessons, but too few opportunities are provided for first-hand experiences of cultures other than their own and there is little display material to excite pupils' interest. The good provision reported previously has not been maintained.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are well supported by the school's good ethos, its shared commitment to improvement and the overall good quality of leadership and management. Pupils are given a good level of support and guidance.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are sound in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and good in Key Stage 2. Assessment procedures are good and used well, except in the Foundation Stage, where they are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is usually good in Key Stage 2, and there is good teaching in all areas of the school.
- Assessment in the Foundation Stage is not sufficiently specific to match work to children's needs.
- The setting of pupils by ability contributes to the learning of all.
- Teaching assistants are fully involved and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those pupils with special educational needs.
- Tasks at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions lack a clear focus.
- Good tracking systems give the school a clear view of the progress of both individuals and groups of pupils and are used effectively to set challenging targets for achievement.
- Individual learning targets are not yet effective in helping pupils to know what they need to do to get better.

Commentary

14. The school is a purposeful and well-ordered learning community in which teachers, teaching assistants and pupils play a positive part. Lessons are, for the most part, well planned and prepared, and both teachers and learning support assistants are adept at encouraging and involving pupils in their learning. The importance of good behaviour is emphasised by teachers and responded to by pupils, resulting in time being spent on learning, rather than managing behaviour.
15. There is an appropriate focus on the skills of literacy and numeracy, particularly in the lessons devoted specifically to these subjects. These skills are used and applied in other subjects, too, being planned for in science, geography and history, for example. There is less evidence of pupils having the opportunity to use and practise their information and communication technology skills in meaningful contexts, and this is an area for future development.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	3 (9%)	19 (56%)	11 (32%)	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.

16. As is evident in the table above, all teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory, and over two thirds was good or better. This is a positive picture which indicates that the school is well placed to raise standards further. Good teaching takes place in all key stages, but is most consistent in Key Stage 2, where 85 per cent of lessons were graded as good or better. The excellent lesson took place in the Foundation Stage, where the teacher's expertise in telling the biblical parable of the paralysed man had the children completely enthralled. So much so that, when his friends brought the stretcher up onto the roof and the teacher asked how they could get him to see Jesus, a boy cried out 'Throw him down!' without realising the possible consequences.

17. The school groups pupils by ability for English, mathematics and science. This works well, and ensures that pupils are taught at an appropriate level. It is particularly effective in Years 3 and 4, where there are three classes with mixed-age groups. The school reviews the organisation of teaching groups regularly and is prepared to change them as necessary, indicating purposeful leadership.
18. The school has made a conscious decision to employ a good number of teaching assistants, although the majority are attached to pupils with special educational needs. These staff make a good contribution to the learning of both specific pupils and other less able pupils who also benefit from their help and advice. In Key Stage 2, in particular, their skills are used very well, and their relationships with pupils make their support very effective.
19. Teachers identify pupils with special educational needs at an early stage, establish detailed individual education plans and provide focused support for pupils who need it, and this has a positive impact on achievement. Additionally, they work closely with teaching assistants and the special educational needs coordinator to plan activities for pupils with specific and complex needs to make sure that they are fully included in all lessons. Preparation sometimes goes to the extent of providing individual lesson plans for some pupils. This reflects significant improvement since the last inspection when the quality of individual education plans was judged as unsatisfactory.
20. The school has good links with the ethnic minority achievement services of the local education authority. These provide some support for those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Two members of the teaching staff have also been trained to support pupils whose home language is not English, so that some expertise is available within the school.
21. While lessons themselves are usually sharp and well focused, there are times at the beginning of sessions which are used for reading, or to settle pupils down, where there is no specific task or challenge to engage pupils, and little learning takes place. More thoughtful planning, either of the way the timetable is organised or of the best use of these time slots, is needed to ensure the best use is made of the time available.
22. The school has good assessment procedures and uses them effectively. Planning and assessment are closely linked, and the school collects a lot of evidence to check progress over time, both for individuals and groups of pupils. This is used to set both expected and aspirational targets for individual pupils. Pupils' answers to tests are analysed to isolate weak areas and action to improve these is then incorporated into future planning. The common planning format for non-core⁶ subjects, and the way teachers plan in teams, both contribute to effective assessment, as do the involvement and understanding of subject co-ordinators. Pupils have individual targets in English and mathematics throughout the school, and in science at Key Stage 2, but these are not yet having an effect on individual progress, and there is little evidence of them being referred to in teachers' marking.
23. The use of assessment in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. Procedures are not sufficiently focused on the short-term achievement of individual children, which means that the next step in learning is not always appropriate in terms of challenge and expectation. Some assessed pieces of work lack accuracy, which means that the information given to the Year 1 teacher is not as helpful as it should be.

⁶ The non-core subjects are those other than English, mathematics and science.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum, well supported by a very good range of enrichment and after-school activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables them to achieve well.
- All pupils are very well encouraged to access all aspects of the curriculum.
- There is a strong team of teaching and non-teaching staff who are dedicated to providing interesting and exciting activities for pupils of all abilities during and beyond the school day.
- There are very good opportunities to take part in sports.
- The organisation of the school day leads to some loss of teaching time.

Commentary

24. The school has maintained the quality of the curriculum reported in the previous inspection and has successfully addressed any key issues raised. In addition, the coordinator is developing a strategy for imaginatively linking the various subjects which, whilst in the early stages of development, is providing a good basis for future innovation in curricular planning. During its rapid growth in recent years, the school has quite deservedly earned an excellent reputation for the successful inclusion of pupils with a wide range of range of special educational needs into mainstream education. This has an extremely positive impact, not only on the self-esteem of those particular pupils, but on the attitudes and personal development of their classmates, who develop a strong sense of care and respect for the needs of others.
25. The notion of the school as a community is embedded in day-to-day practice, most strongly reflected in the very good range of clubs and sports which teachers generously provide in their own time, and through an effective programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship. There is a collective determination, shared and practised by all teaching and non-teaching staff, to ensure that all pupils are enabled to achieve to their full potential. This is successfully achieved in every aspect of school life and in the vast majority of lessons. There is a very small number of instances when, despite the best efforts of all concerned, the attention of teachers and learning support assistants has to be focused on the welfare of pupils with special educational needs and this slows the overall pace of teaching and learning for a short time.
26. An area in need of development is the way in which the school day is organised. In its current form the timetable, particularly after morning and afternoon registration and after morning play, creates discretionary time which teachers use variously for activities, such as reading, or simply to enable pupils to settle in before lessons start. This leads to some lessons, especially in English and mathematics, becoming unnecessarily long, and the accumulated time lost could be better used for more sharply focused teaching in specific areas of the curriculum. Another area for improvement is a more balanced approach to mathematics curriculum, which has too great a bias towards number at present at the expense of other areas of mathematical knowledge and understanding.
27. During the rapid growth of recent years, the school has successfully managed the recruitment and retention of suitably experienced and qualified teachers who are well matched to their roles and subject responsibilities and provide stability and continuity to the curriculum. Similarly, the school has invested very generously to provide a team of teaching assistants who support day-to-day teaching and learning and help pupils with special educational needs. They are highly valued, individually and collectively, by teachers and pupils alike and with good reason. They are committed to their work, strive tirelessly to provide good care for all pupils and form very good working relationships with teaching colleagues and the special educational needs coordinator. Due both to the training provided by the school and through their own initiative, they have become very well qualified to carry out the work they do.

28. There are plans, matched by appropriate funding, to provide specialist accommodation for pupils with specific additional needs. There is a need to put these in place as soon as possible so that there are proper facilities to meet the various medical and therapeutic needs. As the school has grown, the demands on school budget reserves have been considerable, and governors have managed to ensure that resources for all areas of the curriculum have been satisfactorily maintained. On the other hand, the resources in many areas are only just adequate and the current arrangements for allocating funds to coordinators for their subjects do not ensure that areas of need are addressed strictly according to priority.

Care, guidance and support

The way in which the school provides for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is good. It offers its pupils good support, advice and guidance to look after their needs and help them learn. There is good involvement of pupils in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school meets its obligations for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare well.
- The school provides a warm, orderly and caring environment that allows pupils to work in secure and happy surroundings.
- Teachers' knowledge of the pupils as individuals is used well to provide good access to support, advice and guidance.
- Very trusting relationships exist between pupils and adults, and pupils' views are valued.
- Very good provision meets the requirements of pupils with special academic or physical needs.
- Good induction arrangements ensure that children starting school settle into their school life quickly and happily.

Commentary

29. Overall, the school undertakes its responsibility for ensuring that its pupils work in healthy and safe surroundings well. Some instances of lack of supervision as pupils arrived at school in the mornings were drawn to the attention of staff, and appropriate action was taken immediately. The strong features identified in the previous inspection have been retained, and the issue of the need to improve its child protection arrangements has been successfully addressed by providing staff training. Procedures for child protection are now good. Links with external support agencies are secure, and staff are fully aware of their responsibilities. They are attentive and conscientious in their approach to the proper support of the pupils in their charge. Throughout the school, there is a consistency of approach by staff that results in a well-ordered, stimulating and pleasant atmosphere in which pupils have the opportunity to learn effectively.
30. Regular risk assessments and effective supervision, in class and at playtimes, ensure that statutory requirements are met and the physical wellbeing of all is protected. All pupils are treated fairly and their learning is helped by the way in which their welfare needs are met whatever their age, sex, background or special physical or other needs. The pupils are happy at school and confidently turn to adults, including the pastoral co-ordinator, when they want help or advice, knowing that they will be listened to sensitively and with respect. The extent to which each pupil has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school is a very strong feature of what it provides for them. Pupils' views, formally communicated through the work of the School Council, are respected and taken notice of. Pupils expressing opinions to inspectors are proud of their school that they think is a good one. All think it is a friendly school with teachers treating everyone fairly and making lessons fun. This is recognised and appreciated by parents.
31. The school is successful in including everyone, and harmonious and caring relationships exist both in and out of the classroom. Learning support assistants are very caring and conscientious in fulfilling their role. There is good support during lunchtimes that has a positive effect on behaviour and safety. First-aid arrangements, including a well-equipped medical

room, are very good, and the school's procedures for dealing with minor accidents are well organised. Pupils with physical disabilities are very well looked after.

32. A particular strength of the school is the way teachers and support staff know their pupils well as individuals. The headteacher places a high priority on meeting parents to understand pupils' individual needs, the better to ensure that they are met. All staff respond sensitively and positively to these individual needs. Formal arrangements, including the maintenance of individual portfolios and, more particularly, informal exchanges of information between parents, teachers and support staff, ensure that there is a very good understanding of what is needed to provide properly for pupils' needs whatever they may be. The resulting high quality of assessment information, both academic and personal, means that there is very good recognition of how well pupils are doing and what support is appropriate. This ensures that pupils have ready access to well-informed support, advice and guidance to help them achieve their best. The school successfully helps the pupils mature into well-rounded individuals as they progress through their school life.
33. There is good support for children joining the school, whether part of the way through their primary education or when starting their school life. The latter benefit from the school's good induction arrangements that include very close liaison with the co-located pre-school group, the opportunity through the Cygnets classes for part-time attendance prior to formally joining the school, home visits by members of staff and sensitive discussions with parents so that the transition is as smooth as possible. The success of this strategy is seen in the happy way in which those joining the school settle quickly into their new surroundings, quickly making friends.
34. The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good, particularly for those identified as having specific learning difficulties. Teaching assistants make sure they are familiar with the individual education plans for the pupils in their care and make good use of time and equipment in helping pupils to reach the targets that teachers have set for them. Their professional development has involved many aspects of supporting pupils with special educational needs. This is clearly reflected in their sensitivity to individual needs and equally in their high expectations of the pupils' full participation in the activities which they have planned for them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and with the community are good. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are supportive of what the school is doing. They think it is a good one.
- Parents support the work of the school well by their involvement in school activities and at home.
- Good links with the local community enrich the curriculum.
- The way in which the school deals with parental concerns or complaints is good.

Commentary

35. The school seeks to actively involve parents and others in meeting the academic and spiritual needs of the children and in this it is largely successful. There is recognition of the importance of good relationships with parents, and the school works hard to promote its partnership with them. Parents feel that the school is a good one and have few significant concerns about what the school provides for their children. They are happy approaching the school with questions and any problems, which, they think, are dealt with rapidly, openly and effectively. They are very happy about the school's arrangements for settling their children into school life.
36. A small number of parents expressed some unhappiness to inspectors, in particular about two aspects of the school's provision for their children; the cost of the school's support for its pupils with special needs and the introduction of mixed-age classes. The special needs issue

results from a possible misunderstanding of how the school has to allocate its special needs funding, and a letter explaining this was sent to parents during the inspection. No evidence was seen to suggest that the decision to introduce mixed-age classes is inappropriate, given the professional judgement of the school's managers and the financial circumstances of the school.

37. The school's partnership with its parents is good, as it was when inspected previously. It reaches out to its parents, encouraging them to be involved in the work of the school, valuing their views and involving them in its planning. Those able to help make a positive contribution to the work of the school. All governors are parents of pupils at the school, as well as fully representing the local community either by living or working in it. Parents appreciate the guidance they are given about how they can support the work of the school at home. Parents and other helpers are always made welcome, whether visiting the school seeking information and guidance or to support the school by offering to help in its day-to-day activities. There is a supportive school association that fosters relationships between home and school. Its activities provide opportunities for parents, staff and pupils to socialise and raise funds that provide much-welcomed additional financial support to the school.
38. The school's links with the local and wider community are good. Educational visits, close liaison with the parish council, community use of school facilities, and a variety of visitors to talk of their experience of the world of work are examples of how community links enrich the curriculum by extending pupils' knowledge and appreciation of the world outside school. There is a constructive relationship with a range of educational partners. Transfer arrangements for pupils to move to the next stage of their education are as they should be.
39. The overall quality of information provided formally to parents is satisfactory. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents have improved since the school was last inspected and now meet statutory requirements. The prospectus is an informative document written in a user-friendly style, accessible to parents. The governors' annual report provides an appropriate review of school activities, but it is weak in properly reporting the results of statutory assessment testing, and there is little reporting of how teachers' professional development impacts on teaching and learning. Newsletters, advice surgeries, parent interviews, curriculum letters, reports, informal feedback meetings before and after school, test results and yearly questionnaires appropriately provide parents with information about school activities and how their children are progressing. There is no reason for parents to feel ill informed about any aspect of their children's or the school's activities and achievements providing they take advantage of the opportunities presented to them.
40. Parents are informed of their children's progress and development at consultation evenings throughout the year and, annually, through a written report, which parents like. The quality, though still only satisfactory, is better than when the school was inspected in 1998. Parents are presented with reports that give them a generally good view of what their children know and can do, although some subject reporting is quite brief and the information provided on how attainment matches that expected is inconsistent. There is good use of a general progress section with well-focused and objective comment, and indications of areas for development, both academically and personally, which is clearly the result of teachers taking time and trouble to make the reports individual. Parents are kept fully informed about the progress of pupils with special educational needs and attendance is high at progress review meetings.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The school is well led and very well managed by the headteacher, well supported by key staff. Governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, is committed to making it work and has built very effective teams which contribute to this.
- The school is highly inclusive and gives all its pupils opportunities to learn effectively.
- Governors are very involved and have a very good understanding of the school.
- Very good management systems are effective in supporting all aspects of the school's work.
- Very good use is made of the school's finances.
- The school monitors its performance well and challenges itself effectively to do better.

Commentary

41. The main barrier to learning in the school is the high mobility of pupils, which has made it difficult to plan for the longer term and affects the school's ability to assess the value it adds to the attainment of both individuals and groups of pupils. The school's increase in size over the past ten years has meant continuous change in buildings and organisation. The leadership and management of the school have addressed these issues effectively and professionally, and have built a highly inclusive school which enables the needs of a variety of pupils to be met well.
42. The school has a strong sense of common purpose. Over a period of time, the headteacher, very well supported by the governing body, has built a team which shares the same vision. The very good management structures ensure that all who work in the school have a voice and are valued, resulting in very good teamwork and relationships. There is a clear commitment to providing a high quality of education for pupils of all abilities within a society which accepts and celebrates difference. The school's planning for the children in the Foundation Stage and for the needs of able and talented pupils indicate an awareness of areas where provision is not as strong.
43. The leadership of subjects is good overall as a result of the team approach initiated by the headteacher. There is a clear sense of purpose in the development of the curriculum in order to promote higher levels of achievement while at the same time retaining a breadth of learning in its widest sense. The headteacher and senior staff have good data analysis skills. This is helpful in supporting the shared commitment towards improvement in pupils' achievement. However, the use of individual targets for pupils in the core subjects, while in place, is not yet having an impact on attainment, because pupils are not sufficiently aware of just what they need to do to improve.
44. Opportunities for professional development are very good and organised very well. They apply to all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and are clearly linked to both personal and school improvement. Everyone who works in the school is encouraged and supported to improve their knowledge and understanding for the benefit of the pupils and responds accordingly. This positive ethos is a powerful tool to support the school's ambitions.
45. Development planning is another example of the team approach which characterises the school. Governors and staff have a joint responsibility for arriving at a realistic plan for school improvement. This is very much a working document and is frequently reviewed and progress evaluated. All subject leaders also have their own action plans which are generally useful documents with clear intentions based on raising standards.
46. The governing body is knowledgeable and committed to the school. Governors are fully involved in strategic planning and in the policies brought forward by staff. They are well informed, both through formal meetings and through their individual links with the school and subject leaders. They show good awareness of the issues facing the school and seek

explanations where necessary. For example, the recent policy for supporting able and talented pupils was subject to rigorous debate before being eventually approved. Statutory requirements are fully met.

47. The governance of special educational needs and the leadership provided by the coordinator are excellent. The school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum has successfully been managed during a period of rapid change and growth in recent years. This has been achieved by ensuring that all members of the continually growing team of support staff are fully confident in their roles and receive excellent advice and direction from their coordinator, who meets with them regularly and is readily available whenever they have questions or concerns. The success also owes a great deal to the commitment and cooperation of teachers who competently manage the varying needs in their classes.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	725,209	Balance from previous year	(23,405)
Total expenditure	735,804	Balance carried forward to the next	(34,000)
Expenditure per pupil	2,662		

48. As when inspected in 1998 the school has very good procedures for ensuring that the financial resources available to it, which are somewhat lower than those enjoyed by many similar schools nationally, properly support the educational needs of its pupils. Governors, especially those directly involved in financial matters, have a very good understanding of their responsibilities in respect of the school's financial management and feel ownership of the budget. There is a clear cycle of financial planning, linked to the school's improvement plan, and the monitoring of expenditure is secure. There is some very good use of computerised financial modelling that allows the school to test 'what if' options. This has been very successful in enabling the school to determine how best to use the resources available to it during a period of considerable change. Administrative staff are conscientious, undertaking their duties in a quietly efficient manner that contributes significantly to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. The latest external financial audit found nothing that left the school's systems open to significant error or abuse.
49. The amount of money the school holds in reserve to protect it against unexpected happenings has been much less than recommended practice in recent years. The school's expenditure has been higher than income, as it consolidates its development from a very small school, to one that now has more pupils than the average primary school, whilst retaining its strong commitment to social inclusion. There has been very close liaison with the local authority and spending decisions have been properly agreed within them. Planning for the present year is for an under spend to recover the negative balance by the end of the year and at this stage there is no reason to suppose this will not be achieved, while, at the same time, ensuring that, as far as possible, the school's finances will be sufficient to ensure the continuation of its present strategies.
50. The use of the funds that the school receives over and above its basic budget, particularly the significant amounts that the school receives to help pupils with their special educational, emotional or physical needs, is well focused. It has a positive impact on the quality of learning provided for the pupils who are supported.
51. There is a good awareness of the need to apply best value principles when deciding how to make use of the financial resources available, to balance the needs of staffing, accommodation and resource provision. Governors play a very effective role as 'critical friends'. They question the school's performance, using a wide range of statistical and other evidence to inform them about how it compares with what is expected and what is achieved elsewhere. They know the importance of obtaining best value in purchasing services and resources and have good procedures to ensure this happens.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. Provision in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**. The children enter school with levels of attainment that are average for those of a similar age, but there is a significant number of children who achieve above this level on entry. Most children make satisfactory progress and, by the time they reach Year 1, they achieve average standards overall. However, some more able children do not make the progress of which they are capable.
53. The children receive a high level of care and respond well to the family atmosphere promoted by the school, resulting in very good relationships in the two reception classrooms. Children transfer from a number of pre-school settings, including the nearby pre-school playgroup with which there are very good links. Discussions are taking place to find ways of improving the continuity of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the assessment of children. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good and these children make good progress throughout their reception year.
54. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Relationships are very good and many ideas are used to stimulate children's interest. Questions are asked to extend their thinking and children are encouraged to contribute in whole-class sessions. There are good expectations of children's behaviour by both the teacher and the support staff, and instructions are clear. Where the teaching is less successful, insufficient emphasis is placed on the teaching of basic skills and on the development of children's independence, and there are insufficient opportunities for children to make choices in their learning. The school is aware of the need to provide these opportunities within a structured curriculum.
55. The assessment of children is unsatisfactory as it is not used sufficiently well to ensure that all children are taught according to their individual needs, and some assessments of examples of work are inaccurate. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory; however, many resources in the Foundation Stage are 'tired' and insufficiently well organised, and teaching areas untidy. Since the previous inspection, an outdoor area has been created specifically for children in reception, although this is not yet used to provide an appropriate outdoor curriculum, an area which the school has identified as one requiring improvement. There will be a change to the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage at the end of the academic year, and the new co-ordinator has appropriate action plans which address the key areas for improvement.
56. The evidence seen during the inspection concerning teaching and learning in **knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development** was insufficient to make definitive judgements about provision. In **knowledge and understanding of the world**, planning shows that children are investigating electrical appliances to see why things happen and how they work. They use their senses to investigate materials and objects, developing their knowledge by looking at buildings in the locality. Religious education is taught through a planned programme of work. Children compare their own houses with those in Biblical times and enjoy stories about Jesus.
57. In **creative development**, children use their imagination and act out stories such as 'The three little pigs', making models and pictures of houses. They explore media such as straw, sand and water in a creative way. However, painting activities were not readily available throughout the day. Opportunities to be creative in communication, language and literacy or mathematical development are limited because of way planned activities are structured and over directed.
58. In **physical development**, children have access to the hall and use the outdoor area with staff. There is a small fenced area where children use resources during lessons, but the school is aware that this is an aspect which needs further development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's social interaction and attitudes are good.
- Relationships are very good.
- Opportunities for children to plan, make choices in their learning and think for themselves are too few.
- Children have a good level of confidence and self esteem.

Commentary

59. Reception staff welcome the children into school on arrival and chat to parents and carers. Children know their routines and sit together happily for registration, although the lack of a prompt start frequently loses valuable time. The sound teaching, overall, ensures that most children behave well, although when lessons are not sufficiently thought through, the focus drifts and some children become inattentive. In contrast, when children are motivated and captivated by creative teaching, they achieve very well. Many children have already developed a good level of confidence and self esteem which is seen in their very good relationships and willingness to join in class discussions. However, children are not offered sufficient opportunities to promote their independence, such as 'self-registration', or in 'planning' with their teacher at the beginning of the day. There are too few opportunities for children to make choices and think for themselves. As a result, achievement is satisfactory overall and children are on target to meet, and some to exceed, most of the expected levels by the end of the reception year, but not in aspects of their personal development.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's speaking and listening skills are good.
- Teaching at its best is both imaginative and creative, although lack of accurate assessment means teaching is not always at a suitable level.
- Insufficient emphasis is given to the teaching of basic skills, particularly writing.
- Too few opportunities are provided for independent activities.
- Children enjoy stories in a large group.

Commentary

60. Children's communication skills are well developed when they enter the school. Writing and reading skills are less well developed. Overall, children make satisfactory progress and achieve the expected goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. Teaching is satisfactory overall. However, although some more able children achieve well others do not, as there is insufficient challenge in their lessons.

61. Children listen well and answer their teachers confidently. Children talk informally in small groups while completing activities. One group was overheard confidently sharing their views concerning 'Where does God live?' However, there are not enough opportunities involving regular role-play and other forms of creative activity during the day for children to talk together, act out situations or make choices in their learning.

62. Children read together in planned reading groups with support and enjoy whole-group story sessions using the 'big books'. They listen with rapt attention when their teachers skilfully read or tell stories. Although children look at books at defined times each day and take books home, there is insufficient time during the day for them to enjoy a book, to develop a love of reading

individually or with their friends. Children are familiar with a good number of letter sounds and blends, and some children use them in their reading and writing but many still do not understand the relationship between printed letters and the sounds they represent.

63. Practising the basic skills of writing is fairly formal, and there are too few opportunities to practise and develop these skills, experiment with sounds and words in regular planned play situations. Some children do not make the progress they could because of the over-directed programme of work and insufficient opportunities to plan and make choices in their learning. Examples of work are not always precisely assessed, resulting in some inaccuracies in the information transferred to Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is insufficient emphasis placed on the teaching of basic skills for some children.
- Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but is not consistent across the two classes.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information to ensure that children are taught what they need to know in order to improve.
- Relationships are very good and so children work well together.

Commentary

64. Children are at the expected level in mathematics when they begin their reception year, and some children are above this level. Achievement is satisfactory overall and children reach levels expected by the end of the reception year, with some children achieving above this in their understanding of number. Although there are very good relationships, some children do not achieve as well as they should. There is a difference in the approach to mathematics between the two reception classes, resulting in some children making better progress than others.
65. Teaching overall is satisfactory, but for some children insufficient emphasis is placed on basic skills. For example, where children are asked to write numbers on a whiteboard in response to their teacher, some children do not know the number or write it incorrectly. Children are not corrected and, therefore, consolidate incorrect learning. For other children, high expectations and good encouragement ensure a good range of mathematical opportunities.
66. Although teachers know their children well, assessment procedures are not specific enough to ensure that all children move forward in their mathematical understanding and knowledge. This is particularly the case for one group of more able children.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are above average in Key Stage 1 over time.
- Assessment shows that pupils in Key Stage 2 make better than average progress.
- Teaching is good in Key Stage 2.
- Good support enables pupils with special educational needs to achieve well.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the moral and social development of pupils.
- The setting of pupils by ability contributes to the achievement of all.
- The library has too few suitable non-fiction books.

- Very few pupils in Year 2 use joined handwriting.

Commentary

67. During the inspection, the standards seen in Year 2 matched national expectations. National test results have been consistently better than this for the last three years, with reading being above average and writing well above. The pupils currently in Year 2 are of average ability, overall, and are making sound progress. The current picture in Year 6 is similar, but there are more pupils in this group likely to attain higher levels. Results in national tests at Year 6 have also been average over time. Apparent trends in results have to be treated with caution, as so many pupils enter this school in Years 3 to 6. Often, only a small proportion in Year 6 will have been in the school since Year 2. The achievement of pupils is good overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in both key stages as a result of the high quality support that the school provides.
68. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and is good in Key Stage 2. Pupils concentrate well and work hard in most lessons; the difference in teaching is due mainly to a more imaginative approach in Key Stage 2 which grips pupils' attention. Teachers use questions well to develop pupils' skills in speaking and listening. As a result of the good development of these skills, pupils talk confidently to visitors and can explain their work in other subjects clearly. For instance, in a very good lesson in Year 5 on writing 'rap' poems, the teacher maintained a lively pace and insisted on high standards. All pupils, including the higher achievers, were suitably challenged. Pupils worked productively, and turned out work of which they were proud. They co-operated well in small groups and composed couplets such as 'Our teachers are so valuable; But sometimes they are gullible!' In a lesson in Year 6, the teacher encouraged pupils to reflect on the feelings of families during a bombing raid during the Second World War. This made a very effective contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral awareness. This was reinforced by composing a diary from the viewpoint of a child during the Second World War, and pupils showed real empathy and understanding.
69. The practice of setting pupils by ability, in groups across different classes, makes a good contribution to the progress of pupils of all abilities. Within each ability set, work is planned at different levels so that pupils are, for the most part, suitably challenged. Regular assessment and tracking of progress is regularly used to review pupils' capabilities.
70. The standards in reading in Year 2 are average. Some pupils read expressively, often as a result of good teaching. Most pupils in this age group use their knowledge of letter combinations and recognition of simple words to help them read. However, fewer pupils than usual are clear about terms such as 'fiction' and 'illustrator'. Pupils in Year 6 read competently, although not always fluently. Their attainment in reading is at the national average. Pupils in this age range are developing preferences for the work of different authors. Philip Pullman, Jacqueline Wilson and Roald Dahl are firm favourites. These older pupils have secure library skills and know how to find books and information by using alphabetical order.
71. Standards in writing are average at the end of both key stages. However, the proportion of pupils in Year 2 who use joined handwriting is much lower than usual, which has implications for the acquisition of a swift and legible style later on. The written work covers all the areas required by the National Curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to be imaginative in their use of language and pupils in Year 4 produced some striking images in their poems, for example 'the rabbit in the summery breeze with its brown fluffy hair'. Despite good teaching and good achievement, standards are no better than average in reading and writing at Year 6 because of the very high mobility of pupils, together with the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs; both of which affect pupils' overall attainment.
72. There are attractive displays to celebrate pupils' work in classrooms and other areas of the school. Some of these are word-processed and illustrate pupils' ability to use different fonts and layouts. However, some of the word-processing that pupils do is merely copying work that they have already written out by hand. Although there is some use of information and communication technology in the subject, it is not used consistently to draft and edit writing. Teachers sometimes give useful advice in their marking that helps pupils improve their work, and pupils are given individual targets to guide their progress. However, this good practice is not consistent.

73. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over this responsibility and has not yet had time to make an impact on the subject. However, she has a clear grasp of what needs to be done to improve standards and is developing a practical improvement plan. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Resources for the subject are sufficient for teaching the subject effectively and there are enough reading books in classes for all pupils. The library is centrally situated but is rather small and the stock of non-fiction books is inadequate for the number of pupils in the school. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

74. The school has identified the need for pupils to develop their literacy skills in all subjects. In some classes and subject areas this is happening as a matter of course, and pupils write instructions in design and technology, and narrative accounts in history. Pupils' speaking skills are well developed, due to teachers' good expectations, the opportunities offered in lessons and elsewhere, and the ethos which values the opinions of all. The school recognises that there are other areas that can be developed and is working to build on the foundations already established.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the subject is good.
- In many individual lessons in Years 3 to 6, teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Setting for mathematics helps pupils of differing abilities to achieve well.
- Not all aspects of the mathematics curriculum are given sufficient weight.

Commentary

75. Results in national tests for pupils in Year 2 have been above average in recent years. The inspection findings are that standards are now similar to those found in most schools. This is mainly because this year's group of pupils is slightly weaker than those of recent years and this is confirmed by reliable statistics provided by the school. Pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily, reflecting the overall quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2.
76. Results in national tests for pupils in Year 6 in recent years, up to and including 2003, have been consistently below average. Current standards in Year 6 are below average. This reflects an apparently significant decline in standards since the last inspection, when they were judged as well above average. However, this comparison is unreliable given the rapid growth of the school and the significant changes in the nature of the school population in recent years. First, full commitment to inclusion, for which the school has earned an excellent reputation, has meant an increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and this invariably skews test results. Second, a significant number of pupils join the school late, illustrated by the fact that only half of those currently in Year 6 were on the school roll in Year 2.
77. A more reliable way of judging how well the school is doing in this case is to measure pupils' progress against their previous attainment. Since many came into Year 3 with below average ability, achievement by Year 6 is satisfactory over time and pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 often achieve well in lessons. Since his relatively recent appointment, the coordinator has carefully analysed test data, identified weaknesses in the teaching of number and has successfully addressed this issue to the extent that more pupils are now achieving above the expected standards in this aspect of the subject. Standards by Year 6 remain slightly below average taking all aspects of the subject into consideration; although the quality of work seen in Year 5 suggests that the upward trend is set to continue. Because of these issues, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

78. Most pupils in Year 2 have a reasonable grasp of mathematical concepts, such as 'lighter' and 'heavier', and competently use a set of scales to balance classroom objects using pine cones or plastic cubes. Some more able pupils accurately add sums of money in real-life situations, such as shopping and calculate the change from a five pound note, which is above the expected level for their age, while a minority at this stage still need support from an adult to help them to write numbers and add to 20. By Year 6, the more able pupils accurately rotate, translate or reflect shapes and plot the relationship between speed and distance on a graph, reflecting above average standards for their age. Most pupils have at least average skills in applying their knowledge of number in a variety of situations. Less able pupils, on the other hand, and many from the higher ability groups, are less independent than they need to be when faced with new problems across the range of aspects of mathematics covered by the National Curriculum.
79. Taking full account of pupils' previous work and the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The teaching in the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 during the inspection was good. Teachers throughout the school plan interesting lessons set at different levels of difficulty for the groups within their class and work closely with learning support assistants to provide help for those who need it. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils are comfortable with the work they are doing and have positive attitudes to learning.
80. There are two main reasons for the overall judgement that current provision is no better than satisfactory. Firstly, there is inconsistency across the school in the coverage of the four main aspects of learning, particularly shape, space and measures, which results in an uneven rate of achievement from year to year and class to class. Second, there is a tendency to try to develop pupils' mathematical competence by repetitive practice of the skills they already have, rather than by teaching them strategies from an early age to tackle new problems independently. However, there are encouraging signs for the future, reflected in the good teaching grades given for individual lessons, that some teachers are successfully teaching these skills. The strength of these lessons was that teachers provided open-ended tasks that allowed pupils to work at their own level and discuss the strategies they were using, which clearly developed their confidence and independence. It also gave the teacher the opportunity to assess how well individual pupils were doing and set a new challenge, rather than simply ask them to complete several examples of the same process.
81. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator has a clear view of the future development in the subject, has achieved a positive ethos for learning among colleagues and has created a solid platform for improvement. He is aware that an area for future development in the subject is the quality and use of target setting throughout the school. The practice of setting targets of a general nature is already in place, but these need to be much more closely related to specific goals across the four aspects of mathematics. This would bring two main benefits. First, it would help teachers across the school to make better use day-to-day marking of work as a means of showing pupils how they can improve their work. Second, it would enable both the coordinator and individual teachers to ensure thorough coverage of all areas of the National Curriculum.

Mathematics across the curriculum

82. The promotion of numeracy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers are asked to include in their medium-term planning opportunities to develop mathematics. Typical examples of this were the use of mapping skills in geography and temperature graphs in science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall.
- The leadership and monitoring of science are good.
- Assessment procedures at the end of Year 2 require attention.
- The marking of pupils' work rarely contributes to better understanding.
- The continuity of science units and the assessment of pupils ensure that older pupils are taught at the right level, but this is not always the case for younger pupils.
- The recording of investigations in some classes requires improvement.

Commentary

83. Standards in science are average by the end of Years 2 and 6. These judgements do not reflect the results of the teachers' assessments in 2003 for pupils in Year 2, as these assessments were too low. Teachers' assessments identified few pupils capable of attaining the higher Level 3, although there is a fair proportion of more able pupils in the year group. Science was also weaker in national tests at Year 6 in 2003, although it has been above average over the last three years, and the evidence indicates that this was due to a less able group of pupils. Pupils' achievement is sound over time in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Year 2 successfully recognise the way in which living things grow and most can illustrate a life cycle, but more able pupils are not challenged to extend and develop their understanding further. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of a fair test and are able to use scientific terms accurately.
84. Achievement is satisfactory overall, although in many of the lessons seen teaching was good. This apparent contradiction reflects the very high mobility, which results in different pupils having had varying experiences and levels of knowledge and understanding. Teachers work hard to deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of most pupils. Pupils' books are monitored to ensure that the curriculum is being taught consistently and the coordinator talks to pupils to identify any gaps in their scientific knowledge. Concept maps are completed at the beginning and end of each unit in the juniors, providing good evidence of progress and showing any difficulties that may have been encountered. The subject is well organised, led and managed, and aspects requiring improvement have been identified in the action plan.
85. Teaching is good overall; good lessons were seen for both younger and older pupils. Teachers are confident and have a good level of expertise, and they are well supported by teaching assistants. In the better lessons, pupils are challenged to think in scientific terms and all pupils, including those with a special educational need, are included in the discussions and evaluations. In lessons where the unexpected happens, for example during an experiment, teachers use the outcome to promote scientific thinking effectively. Pupils are tracked to ensure that aspects of science are built systematically through the units of work, and any weaker areas quickly identified. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support and the practically based units of work. However, teachers' assessments carried out at the end of Year 2 are neither specific nor rigorous, and there is too little expectation of the more able pupils in this year group being able to achieve the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6.
86. Investigations in pupils' books show little evidence of information and communication technology being used to display information, but there are mathematical elements in pupils' calculations and recording of results. The presentation of work in pupils' books requires attention in the way investigations are recorded and work presented. A lack of clarity makes it difficult for pupils to draw useful conclusions from their discoveries. The marking of pupils work is good in some classes but offers little help to pupils' understanding in others. In Years 3 and 4 the standard of presentation of work in pupils' books is better, as is the balance and content of work. The good practice of linking the learning objectives to teachers' marking, in order to

involve pupils in their learning and show them how to improve, is one to be shared. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been an improvement in resources and staff expertise.
- Specialised equipment and good support by staff enable pupils with special educational needs to achieve well.
- There is a very clear system of recording the progress of pupils.
- Information and communication technology is not used consistently to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

87. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' information and communication technology skills meet national expectations. Since the last inspection, resources for the subject have improved. Training has increased staff confidence and expertise. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.
88. Teaching of the subject is satisfactory. In some of the lessons seen, good teaching enabled pupils to achieve well. In a lesson for pupils in Year 5, the teacher's own specialist subject knowledge was used effectively to give clear succinct explanations and demonstrations, using the digital projector and whiteboard. However, the computer suite does not have enough machines for whole-class work. This means that there are some pupils who have to wait their turn. In some sessions, this was done by splitting the class between two teachers and rotating the groups. However, this is not always possible, and sometimes the pupils who were not using computers undertake other appropriate tasks. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils, as a result of the good support they receive. There are specialised keyboards available for these pupils to record their work, before transferring it to a computer.
89. Displays and work in pupils' books show that they are confident in presenting text and displaying data in various charts and graphs as well as using art programs. They use the Internet for research and older pupils use email. The school has appropriate safeguards to prevent pupils accessing unsuitable sites. Pupils are enthusiastic about the use of information and communication technology and talk knowledgeably about the advantages and disadvantages of the use of computers in various contexts.
90. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and the management of the subject is satisfactory. Another teacher supports him in this role, and, together, they provide effective guidance for colleagues who have less expertise. Assessment procedures have been revised and the new recording system gives a clear picture of the progress that individual pupils and classes make. This is particularly important in view of the large number of pupils joining the school part way through their primary education, enabling the school to assess their knowledge and understanding and target work at an appropriate level. The school has enough computers to meet the current recommended ratio of pupils to computers, but many of the classroom computers are rather old and will need replacement in the near future.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

91. During the inspection, little use was seen of information and communication technology outside the direct teaching sessions. In some subjects, pupils use the Internet for research, and word process their work, but there are missed opportunities in other areas of the curriculum. All classrooms have computers, but during the inspection pupils made little use of

these for their work in other subjects. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum needs more structured planning, and is currently unsatisfactory.

HUMANITIES

92. **History and geography** were not a focus for the inspection and no lessons were seen in either subject. No definitive judgement can, therefore, be made about provision. However, pupils' work was sampled, and the co-ordinators provided information about how the school manages these subjects. History and geography are timetabled in two alternate blocks for each year group, but the school's intention is for the subjects to complement each other in line with the new 'primary strategy'. Assessment opportunities are built in to teachers' planning.
93. In both history and geography, there is a good emphasis on using the local environment, such as visits to Dawlish and Dawlish Warren and a visit to Exeter and local museums. Brochures were made by the school following a visit to Dawlish when looking at a contrasting locality. These were then displayed in the local library. In history, the school celebrates a 'famous people day' and involves local people and theatre groups in their curriculum planning.
94. The leadership of both history and geography is good and the co-ordinators monitor the subjects effectively through talking to pupils and teachers, looking at displays and pupils' work and monitoring curricular planning.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching of religious education is good with a positive focus on understanding how beliefs influence actions.
- Pupils are unsure about some of the main features of world faiths.
- There is a good system of assessment, which makes it easy to see how pupils are progressing.

Commentary

95. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. During the inspection, younger pupils were learning about the various features of churches and had visited some in the immediate locality to gain first-hand experience. Older pupils have been taught about a range of world faiths. The school regards this as a valuable part of the subject, especially as there is so little chance for pupils to meet members of other faith communities in the local area. However, few pupils have a secure grasp of the main features. They were unsure about the names of places where Muslims and Jews worship and the sacred texts of these religions. Some of the higher-attaining pupils talked confidently about how the codes of various religions form a basis for everyday morality. The planning for the subject follows the local education authority's scheme of work. This enables teachers with no specialist knowledge to teach the subject confidently.
96. All the teaching seen during the inspection was good. However, discussions with pupils indicate that achievement over time is broadly satisfactory, despite pupils achieving well in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates, as a result of the good support they receive in lessons. Assessment systems are good, and should help teachers to redress the gaps in pupils' knowledge. There are good quality resources so that pupils experience some of the artefacts used in various religions. Teachers make good use of these in lessons to illustrate religious practices, and there is an appropriate emphasis on treating these with respect.
97. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and the co-ordinator is keen to raise the profile of the subject within the school. She has developed a straightforward and

clear system of recording how successfully units of work have been taught, and how well pupils have understood them.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

ART AND DESIGN, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY AND MUSIC WERE NOT A FOCUS FOR THIS INSPECTION, THEREFORE, NO SUBSTANTIVE JUDGEMENTS CAN BE MADE ABOUT PROVISION IN THESE SUBJECTS. IN **ART AND DESIGN**, IT WAS ONLY POSSIBLE TO SEE ONE LESSON DURING THE INSPECTION, AND TWO LESSONS IN MUSIC. NO LESSONS WERE SEEN IN **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**, BUT WORK WAS EXAMINED IN PUPILS' BOOKS AND IN CLASSROOMS. DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD WITH PUPILS AND RELEVANT STAFF.

98. In **art and design**, available evidence showed that pupils experience a full range of materials to produce both two and three-dimensional work. They have used a variety of two-dimensional media as well as clay, successfully glazing and firing pots and dishes in the school kiln. There are some attractive displays of pupils' work around the school, but few representations of work by famous artists. Resources for the subject are satisfactory in both quantity and quality. The annual 'art week' helps to raise the profile of the subject and creates a good link with the local community. Pupils use various computer programs to create pictures and patterns and this develops their information and communication technology skills. A clear and manageable assessment system gives teachers a clear picture of the progress pupils are making.
99. In **design and technology**, the work seen in books and classrooms indicates that pupils experience an appropriate range of materials and techniques. Pupils in Year 2 have designed and created puppets and evaluated their work in simple terms. In Year 6, pupils evaluated and tested various materials. They had used the Internet to find out about shelters as part of a project on life in the Second World War. There is an effective assessment system, which enables teachers to chart the progress made by groups and individuals. The scheme of work covers the National Curriculum. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and are kept in a central, accessible location. However, some weeding out of tools that are not appropriate would create some space. Projects needing accurate measurement develop the numeracy skills of pupils and the evaluation of work helps to foster literacy.
100. In **music** two lessons were observed. In a Year 3/4 class, pupils responded well to singing exercises, joining in with enthusiasm, but were less involved when asked to create their own 'chants' to accompany a skipping game. Pupils in Year 6 made satisfactory progress, but were working from a low standard; for example, the warm-up involved singing notes lower or higher in pitch than a previous note, work associated with much younger pupils. The ability to use basic notation as a basis for performing in small groups was similarly limited for many pupils, and only a minority were able to work together effectively, taking turns and sharing ideas. Talking to pupils in Year 6 confirms that, while standards in some areas of the music curriculum are broadly in line with expectations, there are weaknesses in areas such as musical vocabulary and opportunities to compose and perform pieces on a regular basis.
101. The music co-ordinator is supported well by a link governor who is also a learning support assistant. The quality of singing in assemblies is good, and there are opportunities for pupils to develop their talents through instrumental clubs and a choir. A music group for pupils with special educational needs and their friends makes a positive contribution to their confidence and ability to co-operate. While planning for progression in musical skills and knowledge is in place, evidence indicates that this is still to be experienced consistently throughout the school. The co-ordinator's action plan addresses some of the key points for improvement, and documentation indicates analysis of the current position and a good grasp of priorities.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator is well informed and leads by example.
- Planning is thorough and helpful.
- Resources are good.
- There is a useful action plan but this lacks clear success criteria.

Commentary

102. Three lessons were seen during the course of the inspection. Teaching was never less than satisfactory and was good overall, with one example of very good teaching by the subject co-ordinator. Pupils are well involved and active, and there is an appropriate focus on skills and teamwork. Health and safety are carefully considered and lessons all start with an opportunity to 'warm up' which pupils are clearly used to; the warm-up before a gymnastics lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 was of very high quality. Pupils are occupied and on the go and so they usually make good progress in the course of a lesson. Both teachers and learning support assistants have good relationships with the pupils and are generally successful in keeping them on task. On this evidence, standards are broadly in line at the end of both key stages.
103. The very good quality of learning in the lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 was due to the teacher's very good subject knowledge, planning and high expectations. The way in which the pupils applied and developed previously learned techniques, working in pairs with concentration and imagination, indicated good teaching over time. Throughout the lesson, from the warm up onwards, the emphasis was on poise and control, with pupils encouraged to 'move like a gymnast'. As a result, standards were high and pupils were able to appraise their own work, and that of others, with some insight.
104. There are a number of well supported after-school sporting clubs, taken by both staff and parents. The school also makes good use of external coaches to teach specific skills. Resources have been built up and are now good. Subject leadership is good, with evidence of a consistent approach being maintained despite a change in personnel. Comprehensive planning in all areas of physical education offers good support to teachers and ensures a clear progression of relevant skills. The co-ordinator's current action plan focuses on the quality of teaching and learning in gymnastics. While it targets appropriate areas, the lack of clear and measurable success criteria make it difficult to evaluate its effectiveness in raising standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This area of the curriculum is led well and is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and personal development.

Commentary

105. Personal, social and health education plays a very successful role in the school's aim to raise pupils' achievement by building confidence and self-esteem and has a positive impact on pupils' personal development overall. The three coordinators have carried out a thorough review of the scheme of work and are in the early stages of integrating citizenship into

teachers' planning. 'Circle time'⁷ enables pupils to explore moral and social issues such as friendship, resolving conflict, bullying and drugs awareness. The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about issues concerning sex and relationships as they get older.

106. As a means of strengthening awareness in these crucial areas of personal development, the coordinators have made good use of members of the immediate and wider community such as the school nurse, caretaker, cook, crossing patrol warden and representatives from a variety of professional backgrounds in Exminster. The notion of citizenship has been successfully introduced through initiatives such as a talk on village matters with a local councillor and participation in a youth parliament. There is a school council, whose developing status as a genuine platform for change was underlined when members interviewed a candidate for a teaching post at their school.

⁷ 'Circle time' is a session provided for pupils to discuss a wide range of personal issues as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

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

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