

INSPECTION REPORT

MARLAND SCHOOL

Peters Marland, Great Torrington

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 131552

Headteacher: Mr A J M Bates

Reporting inspector: Mr D McCarthy
23886

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th November 2000

Inspection number: 223616

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Peters Marland Great Torrington North Devon
Postcode:	EX38 8QQ
Telephone number:	01805 601324
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr W Brook
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23886	Mr D McCarthy	Registered inspector	Mathematics Religious education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
9999	Ms R Orme	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
30142	Mr J Morris	Team inspector	English Music Religious education Special educational needs	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
32055	Mr G Davies	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Equal opportunities	
4989	Mr L Lewis	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History Modern foreign languages	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a boys' community special school providing full-time termly boarding for pupils aged 11 to 16 with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are 32 pupils on roll, most of whom come from Devon and Cornwall. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and their attainment on entry is lower than national averages for all pupils. A number of pupils have additional special educational needs including moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties or speech and language difficulties. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was a Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) approved independent school but it was taken over by Devon Local Education Authority (LEA) in September 1998. A new headteacher has been in post since February 1999. The school was undergoing extensive building improvements and alterations at the time of the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Marland School is a very effective school. Pupils achieve very well as a result of very good quality teaching and excellent care. Leadership and management are very good, creating a positive ethos where pupils develop very good attitudes to learning and make very good progress. The school provides excellent value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve very highly and leave school with a wide range of GCSEs and Certificates of Achievement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and personal development are very good.
- The school provides excellent care for its pupils: personal, social and health education and the residential provision are strengths of the school.
- Teaching is very good, particularly the teaching of literacy across the curriculum.
- Very good leadership and management ensure that the school continues to improve.
- The curriculum is very good in a number of subjects and a wide range of residential activities is provided for pupils.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

What could be improved

- In the information they provide in relation to special educational needs, governors do not meet statutory requirements fully in the school prospectus or the annual report to parents.
- Governors have not agreed a sex education policy for the school.
- The requirement to teach a modern foreign language at Key Stage 4 is not currently met.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since it was last inspected in November 1997. Standards of attainment have risen, particularly with the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Examination courses have been introduced in information and communication technology (ICT) and in religious education, and the curriculum has improved. The quality of teaching is higher with significant improvements in the teaching of English, mathematics, science, design and technology and art. Homework is now set for all pupils. There is now very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Residential accommodation and that used for teaching have improved so that there are more single, high quality bedrooms and two separate classrooms for mathematics and ICT. The

very good leadership of the new headteacher is much more focused on raising standards and developing the school. The new governing body is already monitoring the school's performance.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 16	Key	
speaking and listening	A	very good	A
Reading	A	good	B
Writing	A	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	A	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A		

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

At both key stages, pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment, and the school's examination results are high in comparison with national results achieved by schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. By age 14, pupils' attainment is well above that of pupils in similar schools. By age 16, examination results demonstrate very high achievement when compared with the results of similar schools. In 2000, all pupils in Year 11 were entered for GCSE in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, design and technology, art, geography and history. Pupils gained at least three GCSE passes at grades A* to G. Two pupils achieved seven GCSE passes, including four at A* to C, showing that the school does very well by its higher attaining pupils. The school was equally successful with Certificates of Achievement where all pupils were awarded at least two distinctions and most pupils achieved merits or distinctions in at least four subjects. Pupils make very good progress in personal, health and social education and in religious education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good and they make excellent progress in their behaviour during their time at the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are making very good progress in their personal development and excellent relationships are a strong feature of the school.
Attendance	The attendance rate is high.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14	aged 14-16
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching at both key stages is very good. During the inspection, all teaching was at least satisfactory, 95 per cent was good or better, 62 per cent was at least very good and 12 per cent was excellent. Teaching is very good in science, art, design and technology, information and communication technology, personal and social education, physical education and religious education at both key stages, and in English at Key Stage 4 and mathematics at Key Stage 3. In English at Key Stage 3 and mathematics at Key Stage 4, history, geography and French teaching was good. Literacy is very well taught in all subjects, and numeracy is also promoted very well in science, information and communication technology and religious education. The planned residential activities significantly enhance pupils' achievement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A very good range of learning opportunities is provided. The 24-hour curriculum, religious education and personal, social and health education are excellent and are strengths of the school. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in the majority of subjects but not fully in modern foreign languages or music.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Provision for moral and social development is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides excellent care for its pupils.

Religious education is a strength of the school, but the statutory requirement to teach a modern foreign language at Key Stage 4 is not currently met. The school works well in partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and management of the school. He is well supported in his drive to raise standards and improve the school further by a dedicated team of senior managers.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The new governing body fulfils an effective role in supporting the school but some statutory requirements are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation are extremely well developed: they make an excellent impact on the quality of provision and in raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its resources, particularly new technologies. It works very hard to ensure that all spending decisions are cost effective.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are pleased about the very good behaviour of the pupils. • They believe their children are making good progress. • They feel that the school provides a high standard of care. • They consider that curriculum opportunities are very good and that teaching is very good. • They value the leadership of the headteacher. 	

Inspectors' findings confirm parents' positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, make comparisons between this school and other schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and gives examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to achievement also take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews.
2. At both key stages, pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment which is low on entry when compared to national averages. During discussion at free time, pupils spoke confidently and with pride of the progress they are making at the school. The school's examination results are high in comparison with national results achieved by schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school's National Curriculum test results at age 14 are well above those of similar schools. In 2000, many pupils achieved Level 4 and one pupil achieved Level 6 in English, mathematics and science. At Key Stage 4, external examination results also demonstrate very high achievement when compared with the results of similar schools. In 2000, all pupils in Year 11 were entered for GCSE in a range of subjects including English, mathematics, science, design and technology, art, geography and history. Pupils gained at least three GCSE passes at grades A* to G. Two pupils achieved seven GCSE passes, including four at A* to C, demonstrating attainment in line with national standards for all pupils and showing that the school does very well by its higher attaining pupils. The school was equally successful with Certificates of Achievement, where all pupils were awarded at least two distinctions and most pupils achieved merits or distinctions in at least four subjects. In English and physical education, all pupils entered for the Certificate of Achievement gained distinctions, and in art and information and communication technology, nearly all pupils were awarded distinctions. Examination results have improved further since the last inspection as there has been a consistent pattern of success and high achievement in public examinations over the past three years. Pupils with additional special educational needs are also making very good progress in lessons and towards the targets on their individual plans.
3. Achievement in English is very good and shows improvement since the last inspection. Most pupils gained Level 4 in National Curriculum tests at 14 in 2000, and one pupil reached Level 6. At age 16, all pupils achieved A* to G grades at GCSE, with a third of pupils gaining grades in the A* to C range. Additionally, those entered all achieved distinctions in their Certificate of Achievement examinations. Pupils are making very good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. By the time they are 16, pupils are confident in speaking both in class and to wider audiences. They answer questions competently and engage in meaningful discussions with each other and with staff. Pupils also achieve very well in reading. Younger pupils use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and by the age of 14, pupils read with good expression. At 16, pupils read fiction and non-fiction books for pleasure and higher attaining pupils who are studying for GCSE English Literature produce personal and critical responses to a range of texts. Younger pupils are achieving well in writing. For example, pupils in Year 8 are producing a school magazine which includes headlines, a contents page and a range of articles. At age 14, pupils' written work is well presented. There are good examples of poetry and imaginative pieces that pupils have written. Older pupils achieve very well in writing. They edit and re-draft their own work with due regard to punctuation and use an extensive range of vocabulary in their written work. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop their literacy skills within the 24-hour curriculum.

4. From age 11 to 14, pupils achieve very well in mathematics. In 2000, most pupils gained Levels 3 or 4 in National Curriculum tests and one pupil achieved Level 6. These results are significantly above those of similar schools. Pupils are making very good progress in developing numeracy skills and using multiplication for calculation; in measuring and identifying the properties of shapes; and in using graphs and charts to record and interpret data. From age 14 to 16, pupils' achievements are good and Year 11 pupils who were entered for GCSE achieved passes in the range A* to G. They can calculate mathematical problems to two decimal places, produce scale drawings of shapes using reflective symmetry, carry out long multiplication and division and conduct surveys using the computer to record and analyse the results.
5. Pupils achieve very well in science. At age 14, most pupils in 2000 achieved Levels 3, 4 or 5 and one pupil achieved Level 6 in National Curriculum tests. Pupils carry out simple investigations and know what constitutes a fair test. At age 16, all pupils achieved grades A* to G at GCSE and half of them achieved either a grade C or D which is higher than results in similar schools. They make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of living things; of energy, including electricity and fossil fuels, light and the environment; and they have a good understanding of the effects of pollution on the environment.
6. In other subjects, pupils achieve very well. In 2000, pupils aged 16 gained a number of GCSE passes at grades A* to G in art, design and technology, geography and history. They also gained Certificate of Achievement merits or distinctions in these subjects and in information and communication technology. In art, younger pupils make very good progress in observational drawing, and progress in art from the age of 14 to 16 is very good. In design and technology, pupils make very good progress at both key stages, designing and making small items of furniture and a garden trowel using a variety of materials and processes. In geography, pupils make good progress in their knowledge of rocks and landscape. In history, pupils develop a good knowledge of complex historical issues and data. In information and communication technology, pupils at both key stages make very good progress in accessing the Internet, retrieving text and photographic images to support individual topics and in using the computer to scan, organise and communicate information for a variety of purposes. In modern foreign languages, pupils aged 11 to 14 make good progress in pronunciation, and in reading and writing French in lessons. Older pupils make good progress speaking Spanish within the 24-hour curriculum. In music, pupils listen to a range of musical styles, sing with confidence during assemblies and learn the guitar during evening activities. In physical education, pupils make very good progress in team games, gymnastics and in weight lifting. In religious education, pupils make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of different beliefs, festivals and worship.
7. The school has set challenging targets for pupils' achievement and pupils make very good progress towards their individual targets. They are also making very good progress in personal and social education through opportunities to sit the Associated Examining Board (AEB) accredited courses in Health, Hygiene and Safety, and in Life Skills. The high quality provision for care and the personal support provided by care staff within the 24-hour residential provision contributes to this achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. As a result of the work of the school, pupils develop very good attitudes. Many recognise that the school offers them a second chance and an opportunity to catch up with their work. They greet teaching staff with warmth at the beginning of the teaching day and talk to visitors with enthusiasm about school activities. These positive attitudes make a significant contribution to the progress made in lessons. Rare lapses in concentration or lack of perseverance do not restrict progress as teachers work well to change such behaviour.

9. Pupils make excellent progress in their behaviour during their time at Marland School so that standards of behaviour are very good throughout the day. Pupils show respect to the staff, visitors and others. This represents significant and sustained progress by all boys since arriving at the school and reflects the excellent procedures for promoting good behaviour and the caring, committed work by all staff. Parents report that they also see improved behaviour at home. Four pupils have been excluded in the past year, two for fixed term exclusions.
10. Behaviour in lessons is always at least satisfactory, usually good and often very good, and this supports the good learning that takes place. Occasional acts of bullying do occur but the boys say that staff deal with them effectively and they do not detract from the positive atmosphere in the school. Behaviour is particularly good at mealtimes when a warm family feeling is evident. Pupils share food sensibly, show good table manners and converse amiably with staff and visitors. Mealtimes are a delight.
11. Pupils' personal development is very good. They understand the impact of their actions on other people and they can distinguish right from wrong. They respect the effort the other boys are making to achieve higher standards of behaviour and applaud their achievements; this is a notable strength. Pupils show marked improvements in their self-esteem, in their personal relationships, in team work and in independence skills.
12. Of particular significance is the enthusiasm of pupils in the school assemblies. They participate willingly, joining in the practice of Christmas carols and enjoying themselves. Different classes are responsible for leading the assembly and pupils read prose and poems competently.
13. Pupils learn to exercise personal responsibility very well. This is particularly evident in the way they learn to manage their own behaviour. During the inspection, pupils used their initiative and looked after visitors with courtesy. Excellent relationships are a feature of the school. Pupils make first-rate progress in learning to relate positively to adults and other pupils.
14. The attendance rate is high in comparison with other schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning and their standards of achievement. Most absence in the inspection term is explained by the long-term sick leave of one pupil, a family holiday, two fixed-term exclusions and by two pupils who failed to return to school on time from home. This level of attendance represents considerable improvement on the boys' attendance records before arriving at Marland. Pupils arrive punctually for lessons, assemblies, meals and leisure activities.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching throughout the school is very good and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are nearly always at least good and there is a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection and 95 per cent of teaching was good or better, 62 per cent was at least very good and 12 per cent was excellent. Evidence from lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and discussion with staff, parents, pupils and governors, clearly demonstrates that teaching in nearly all subjects is mostly very good. In English, teaching is very good at Key Stage 4 and good at Key Stage 3. Teaching in mathematics is very good at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. In science, teaching is excellent at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Teaching in art, design and technology, information and communication technology, personal, social and health education and physical education is very good at both key stages. In religious

education, teaching is very good at Key Stage 3 and excellent at Key Stage 4. In geography, history and French, teaching is good at both key stages.

16. The very good improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are attributed to the very effective leadership of the headteacher who has developed very good systems of monitoring the quality of teaching through lesson observation and giving feedback to teachers. Curriculum improvements, such as the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, the introduction of elements of the National Numeracy Strategy at Key Stage 3 and the greater use of computers in lessons to ensure access to learning, have also led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The high quality support of the care staff within the 24-hour curriculum and of learning support assistants in lessons also enhances the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils.
17. The particular strengths of teaching are the high levels of expectation, the very good management of the pupils and the systematic use of assessment to inform lesson planning. These factors have a significant impact on the pupils' levels of concentration and motivation and the very good progress they make.
18. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects and use very effective teaching methods which ensure that pupils understand what is being taught, complete their work while taking care of its presentation and achieve to the best of their ability. This was seen in nearly all lessons, for example in English at Key Stage 3, where lessons had clear objectives and expectations which enabled pupils to identify key vocabulary in order to develop their speaking and listening skills. Another example was seen in a design and technology lesson where pupils were taught to use basic drawing instruments and to use basic electronic skills so that they could design and build a product in wood.
19. Teachers are very effective in teaching basic skills, particularly literacy, ensuring that pupils can develop their skills in many subject areas. For example, in an art lesson, the teacher defined and reinforced the term 'scale' and asked questions such as, 'Is that too big or is it too small?' to develop pupils' mathematical thinking. In a geography lesson, the teacher wrote new words on a whiteboard and these were supplemented over time with printed charts. Care staff also promote the development of literacy very effectively when, for example, by providing a range of books for pupils to read at bedtime and using the Devon library service to promote reading for pleasure.
20. Teaching is often inspirational and many teachers challenge pupils in order to widen their knowledge and understanding. For example, in history where expectations in one lesson were very high, pupils were interested in learning about the expansion of Victorian London and showed a high degree of concentration. In a geography lesson, the teacher's use of open-ended questions not only promoted the development of speaking and listening, it ensured that pupils reflected thoughtfully on their learning before responding to questions.
21. Although there are some very good examples of very high quality lesson planning, such as in religious education, overall, teachers' planning is good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Teachers' plans do not always indicate details of how the particular special educational needs of pupils will be accommodated and how learning support will be provided in the lessons. Despite these shortcomings in documenting their intentions, teachers accommodate the particular needs of individual pupils well through targeted support during lessons. The monitoring of pupils' progress through individual education plan (IEP) targets and cross-curricular planning has improved significantly and is now very effective. IEPs are available in all classrooms. Teachers target the needs of each individual by providing curricular opportunities in which pupils can succeed and progress. For those pupils who have been unsuccessful learners in

previous schools or who have additional difficulties, additional support is provided in small group teaching and by learning support assistants.

22. Teachers make very good use of lesson time which ensures that pupils also work productively and at a very good pace. In a French lesson where the pace was very brisk, pupils enjoyed the challenge presented to them and responded well by extending their French vocabulary and showing an eagerness to speak in French. Support staff are used well in lessons and teachers also make good use of learning resources. In a mathematics lesson, the support assistant used a very well chosen computer software package with pupils to consolidate their understanding of number and new mathematical ideas, while the teacher provided intensive support for individual pupils. This resulted in very effective teamwork which enabled all pupils to make rapid progress in the lesson. In religious education lessons, teachers use published and home produced video material very effectively to illustrate the creation story and pupils role playing the Eight Fold Path of Buddhism.
23. Homework is set for all pupils and this represents good improvement since the last inspection. Most parents are happy with the amount of work their children are expected to do at home and some parents say that their children bring work home with them to complete during vacations.

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

24. Pupils are offered a very good range of learning opportunities within both the taught and 24-hour curriculum, which clearly reflect the aims of the school. Overall, the provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is very good. The curriculum offered is particularly relevant to the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who, in the vast majority of cases, have experienced limited positive outcomes within previous schools and frequently lack confidence in their ability. In its prospectus, the school states that one of its aims is 'to provide the highest quality school curriculum to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study'. The taught curriculum meets statutory requirements in the majority of subjects, including religious education, but pupils are not all receiving the curriculum time to which they are entitled in French and music. Although provision for sex education is in place, the governors have yet to approve the policy. This is unsatisfactory but the school is aware of these limitations and is positively addressing the situation.
25. At the time of the last inspection, it was noted that the length of the school day was below levels recommended, there was insufficient use of information and communication technology to extend opportunities for learning in science and design and technology, there was no effective system in place to monitor the learning experience of pupils across the range of subjects offered and many of the subjects were planned in isolation from one another. The school has addressed these issues well. The curriculum offered in terms of quality, range and relevance to meet the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties at both key stages is now very good. There have been significant improvements in extending opportunities for taught time, particularly in information and communication technology. There are computers in all classrooms, in the newly refurbished library and in the three residential lounges. In addition, one pupil has built his own computer. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were developing skills to use the Internet and made very good progress with support from the teacher. Pupils also learn how to use a still and video camera. There is clear evidence that staff, with training and support, are gaining the confidence and skills to use information and communication technology across the curriculum.
26. The teachers meet every Tuesday to discuss cross-curricular planning and there is clear evidence in all subjects that teachers know what is going on in other departments.

The curriculum co-ordinator is aware that on occasions, the links are incidental rather than planned on a termly or cross-curricular project basis, but this is being reviewed. Policies have been written for all subjects and teachers base their planning on the Programmes of Study in the National Curriculum and the targets within each pupil's individual education plan.

27. English and mathematics are linked closely to the requirements of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. The literacy strategy co-ordinator has made very good progress in raising awareness and implementing strategies to teach literacy skills. Good progress is currently being made in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Additional support is offered within the residential setting by care staff and there are homework clubs on a Wednesday evening and occasionally on a Sunday morning. Religious education is based on the Devon Locally Agreed Syllabus and meets statutory requirements. The successes achieved in literacy, numeracy and external accreditation across the curriculum available, show clearly the progress that individual pupils make at the school.
28. The quality and range of the 24-hour curriculum and the teamwork of staff which are excellent, are features in the success of the school and contribute to pupils' learning outcomes and to the improvements in pupils' behaviour. There is a relaxed atmosphere within the total school environment and excellent relationships are clearly evident. The headteacher and head of care discuss the scores of pupils in relation to their targets, using it as an opportunity to share in their delight at the success of pupils.
29. The provision made for extra-curricular activities is very good, it adds significantly to the learning opportunities for pupils and is a strength of the school. There is a good mix between fixed activity options and nightly choices. Opportunities on site include football, basketball, motorbike proficiency, cycling, cookery, aromatherapy, computers, art work, playing the guitar and listening to music. Three pupils attended a course on playing the guitar, three others attended an evening course in Spanish at the local community high school and one pupil attended training with a local football side. Two of the boys studying Spanish were intending to carry on after their initial eight-week course to do an accredited course. Off site, pupils also go swimming, take part in five-a-side football, fencing, ice-skating, outdoor activities, including climbing and canoeing and use the school-owned woods for adventure activities. In addition to extending personal development, these activities enrich the physical education curriculum.
30. The dark nights and foul weather during the period of the inspection restricted full use of the school grounds for activities. However, the use of fixed and portable floodlights enabled effective use to be made of the school hard surface areas. In addition to the evening activities, pupils are also involved in weekend activities and visits. There are visits arranged to support pupils' learning, including a theatre trip to Torrington to see the play Macbeth, cultural visits and reward visits. Examples of visits are pictorially displayed in the school and have included visits to London and the Millennium Dome and to Alton Towers. Key factors for the effective motivation of pupils to participate in activities are the enthusiasm of staff, recognition of pupils' success and the very good organisation. Equality of access and opportunity to participate in all aspects of the 24-hour curriculum is excellent.
31. The provision and emphasis upon personal, social and health education within the school overall are excellent. The opportunities offered within the total curriculum enhance pupils' social skills and their self-esteem. This self-esteem is evident in their confidence to communicate with visitors, sing carols in large and small groups and in the way they participated positively in a display by a member of the Devon fire service and his dogs.

32. Residential care staff make an excellent contribution to the 24-hour curriculum. Their team and individual skills enable them to extend the personal development and health education of pupils through drugs education and sex education. Counselling is undertaken by the key support workers as and when required and adds to the work done within the personal, health and social education (PSHE) and science curriculum. It is clearly evident that pupils are being made aware of the facts on all aspects of health education and encouraged to see and experience the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. The cross-curricular work on PSHE is a key aspect in the success of the school. The lunch period in the dining hall is a good example, with the teaching and support staff involved, eating with the pupils and encouraging good habits. The development of personal and social skills is particularly evident at meal times. Pupils share out the meals, take turns in clearing up and wait their turn before starting to eat. It was a pleasure to be in the dining rooms at all sessions to observe how courteous the pupils were. The manners and attitudes of all the boys are a credit to themselves and all the staff. A key factor is that the staff present good role models and encourage the development of good personal skills. In the main, pupils want to be involved in activities and are keen to talk about their experiences. For instance, two boys had been on a residential drama 'murder mystery weekend' as helpers with a recently appointed care worker, organised by the charity CLIC for children with cancer and leukaemia. They were very keen to talk about their experiences and be involved again, underlining the success of the 24-hour programme for personal and social development.
33. Provision for careers and vocational education is good and has a positive effect on pupils' career choices. Careers support is provided by the local careers service in conjunction with the PSHE co-ordinator. Advisers from the careers service visit the school for interviews with pupils and they develop excellent careers guidance action plans. This enables pupils to make very informed decisions about future careers. There is also help from the local rotary club in organising 'mock' job interviews. Vocational education is based on the PSHE programme; there are opportunities for pupils to do work experience for a two-week block or two one-week placements either in the locality of the school or in their home base. The school works closely with the Devon Business Partnership with reference to health and safety checks. This year, one pupil undertook an on-site work experience, helping around the school grounds. There is currently no school mini-enterprise scheme or business project. Vocational courses are on offer at the North Devon College but currently no pupils have opted for college courses. In previous years, pupils have followed courses in mechanics, catering, construction and sports studies. There is evidence that of last year's leavers, five out of seven were placed on college-based courses.
34. The school has good links with the local community and this contributes well to pupils' learning. Opportunities to explore the local area and undertake visits are used well in a number of subject areas including history, geography and physical education. During the course of the inspection, there was a visit from the Devon fire service to support and extend the PHSE programme. The school has its own area of woods that is used for camping and other outdoor activities. The school is located in a small rural village so opportunities for the immediate community to contribute to pupils' learning are limited. However, the school uses the local church for an annual carol concert and there are plans to develop a garden project on waste ground. The use of local facilities to extend the physical education and recreation programme on offer is very good. During discussion, pupils stated that they would welcome opportunities to visit the local youth club.
35. Links with partner institutions are very good. Links for professional development of staff are being forged with a local community school and include liaison with heads of subject departments and observation of lessons in mainstream classes. With another community school, a pupil has been successfully integrated into the school from Marland. The head of education at Marland has built positive links with the mainstream

school's special educational needs co-ordinator. The learning support assistant from Marland, in supporting the pupil in mainstream school, has broadened her experience of integration and support within a mainstream setting.

36. The place of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fundamental to the school's vision and is clearly identified within each subject. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good, that for moral and social is excellent and that for cultural development is good. This is an improvement on the position at the time of the previous inspection.
37. The school offers many opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness. The daily school assemblies provide an opportunity to reflect. They have a theme, for example the danger of associating a person too much with how she/he looks. To reinforce this, a short poem by Robert Burns was distributed and discussed. The religious education lessons provide a time for meditation and reflection and in this way, enhance the pupils' spiritual understanding. During these lessons, pupils are taught about other religions besides Christianity. Pupils attend the local church on special occasions and participate in such services as the carol service at Christmas. Lunch gives the pupils another opportunity to reflect when each dining area will say prayers before the meal. Grace before and after meals is said everyday by pupils and staff together. The school's atmosphere aims at enhancing pupils' spiritual awareness and as a result, the provision is very good.
38. The whole-school assembly has a moral theme and this is explored and reinforced in many lessons, in play and activities during the day and as part of 24-hour curriculum. Staff take every opportunity to reinforce the concepts introduced in these themes and to remind the pupils of the consequences of their behaviour and actions. Stress is placed on what constitutes an appropriate attitude towards one other and relationships between all the staff and pupils are good, with the staff providing good role models. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong and have a sense of fairness. When pupils do forget and sometimes treat others unkindly, they are frequently very remorseful afterwards and will often apologise without prompting from their teacher. Formal PSHE lessons allow pupils to discuss moral aspects related to personal relationships and sensitivity. Religious education makes a valuable contribution to moral education, for example discussing homelessness and kindness to animals.
39. The school's provision for social development is excellent and very closely linked to the exemplary relationships within the school community. Pupils respond very well to the positive atmosphere that allows them to develop in confidence and self worth, becoming happy and assured. Pupils are encouraged to care for each other and show real concern if other pupils are unwell or feel sad, trying to make them feel better with a kind word and a smile. They delight in sharing the achievement of others as was seen in the Wednesday assembly when pupils who had achieved something the previous week were presented with certificates or in certain cases, medals. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to interact with the local community, for example in the church services or using the local recreational facilities.
40. The promotion of pupils' cultural development is good. Opportunities for pupils to enhance their cultural awareness pervade the whole curriculum. Many visits are organised to local museums and places of interest. The whole school was involved in the art project for the Tarka Trail sponsored by the Sustained Transport as part of the National Cycle Network. A two-day trip to London and the Millennium Dome extended pupils' awareness, and other residential outdoor pursuits courses give them an opportunity to widen their cultural horizons. Other areas of the curriculum contribute to an awareness of non-western culture, for example, through the study of North American Indians in art. In religious education, visits have been organised to some churches and these show the diversity of religious places of worship and in religious education

lessons, pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding and tolerance of different religions and cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school has a very positive, warm and caring environment and makes excellent arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety and child protection. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly and many staff are qualified in first aid.
42. The school is extremely successful at improving the attendance rate of pupils. It has excellent procedures for promoting good behaviour and arrangements for discouraging bullying and oppressive behaviour are very good. The detailed behaviour management system is well understood by pupils, staff and parents and enables pupils to focus on improving small aspects of their behaviour in turn. Good work and effort are appropriately rewarded by the awarding of points and the Wednesday assembly is devoted to celebrating those pupils who have won awards during the week. Pupils make considerable progress in improving their behaviour during their time in the school and staff monitor these improvements extremely well.
43. There are cases of breakdowns of behaviour and in some cases, these have led to a temporary or permanent exclusion. Procedures are, however, in operation to deal with these incidents. The school has experienced staff skilled in tackling these problems as and when they occur and all incidents are properly recorded.
44. The school has excellent procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. All staff, both teachers and care workers, know the pupils extremely well and give pupils every encouragement to meet their weekly social targets and to develop their personal responsibility. The high standards of behaviour and the progress pupils make demonstrate the success of the school's provision. The school keeps extremely good records relating to pupils' welfare with due regard for confidentiality.
45. The school receives very good support from the Devon local education authority educational psychology team. One member of the team oversees all Devon pupils at the school and a very good collaborative approach has been established. For pupils with additional needs, there is good support available when requested. One pupil has been seen by the Devon hearing impaired service. For those pupils on drug therapy, good links have been established with the medical and psychiatric services in all areas. A number of pupils are in foster care or 'looked after' by the local authority and very good, close links have been established with social work teams. The school is in the process of providing a base on the Marland site for a counsellor from the Devon family therapy centre based in Barnstaple. A member of the team will work with pupils on one half day each week.
46. The school's assessment systems have improved since the previous inspection and as a result, staff are able to more effectively monitor pupils' academic performance and progress. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and their personal development are good and based on regular ongoing assessments of their work and teachers' thorough knowledge of their pupils.
47. All pupils arrive in the school with a statement of special educational needs. Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is very good. Considerable progress has been made since the previous inspection to improve the quality of target setting and to identify realistic learning outcomes. Targets are currently set for a six-month period. The annual review procedures are carefully co-ordinated to ensure that all participants, including parents and external agencies, are properly prepared. The reviews themselves are very comprehensive. All teachers contribute in their own subject to

writing the individual education plans for each pupil and targets are reviewed every six months

48. Individual education plan reviews and teachers' planning for pupils with additional special educational needs show that very good provision is made, by joint planning and small group support, to ensure that pupils' previous learning and self-esteem is built on in a positive manner. The pupil review documents are well written and there are opportunities for all staff, the pupil and parents/carers to contribute. In one review report on a pupil with additional needs, it was evident that key factors in enabling him to gain in confidence to achieve his targets were the small classes which provide a nurturing, caring and consistent learning environment combined with the support of care staff to develop appropriate behaviour.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Parents express great satisfaction with the work of the school and admiration for the care staff in particular.
50. The school provides very good information for parents and carers. Parents are fully involved in the decision to admit boys to the school and procedures for managing behaviour, for providing the different aspects of the care plans and for ensuring academic progress are carefully explained to them.
51. The school also provides parents with very good information about the academic and social progress that their sons have made. The quality of reporting on academic progress and pupils' achievements has particularly improved since the last inspection. Parents are particularly pleased about their involvement in the six-monthly reviews. They are encouraged to contribute to the review process and most take up this invitation. Behaviour and social reports are excellent and academic reports are very good although there is some variation between subjects. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents contain much valuable information but do not fulfil all statutory requirements.
52. Overall, the school promotes effective links with parents and carers and is successful in involving them in the work of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The headteacher provides very purposeful leadership for the school with a very strong drive for raising standards and school improvement. He manages the school effectively and is ably supported by his senior management team who carry out their delegated responsibilities for managing education and care very well. In the relatively short period of time that the headteacher has been in post, he has managed the very difficult period of transition from an independent school to a local authority controlled school very effectively and with great courage and conviction. He has overseen major improvements to the accommodation and has ensured that the school's aims for raising standards and providing high quality care for pupils are truly reflected in the many areas of improvements in the curriculum and residential provision.
54. The headteacher has established a highly effective system for monitoring all aspects of the school's provision, particularly teaching and learning. He has developed a range of excellent targets for raising pupils' achievements. The headteacher has also very effectively implemented an excellent plan for developing and improving the school which is firmly rooted in raising standards of achievement. The school's priorities for development are extremely well chosen and should ensure that the school continues to be successful in its work in the future. For example, the headteacher has rightly considered the re-structuring of the senior management team in the future to ensure

greater efficiency and effectiveness, particularly in the oversight of all aspects of the curriculum.

55. The headteacher has also ensured that governors have a thorough understanding of the work of the school and the governing body has developed its role well in supporting the school and overseeing development. The effective structure of governors' sub-committees and regular full governing body meetings ensure that governors are always kept well informed. However, the school is aware that the current policy on special educational needs, the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus need reviewing to ensure that legal requirements are met fully and more appropriate references are made to special educational needs. The school has made a good start in this direction as the special educational needs policy is currently in the process of being reviewed.
56. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. The school is well staffed to teach the curriculum currently offered. The management team has taken positive steps to offer music by appointing a music teacher. All the teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced to teach the subjects they offer. The transfer of the school from private ownership to the control of the local education authority has resulted in some problems relating to employment rights. The headteacher, in consultation with representatives of the local education authority, has already resolved most of the issues successfully.
57. Staff development is good and although many are not subject specialists, teachers have taken opportunities to improve their knowledge and understanding by attending a range of in-service training courses. Learning support assistants (LSAs) are well deployed and there is an agreed system for the re-deployment of classroom support should it not be needed. This generally works well although there are times when teachers do not make the most efficient use of LSAs. The current demands placed upon the information and communication technology (ICT) technician's time in maintaining the hardware in the ICT suite is heavy and with the increased use of ICT in subject areas, the time allocation for this valuable resource will have to be reconsidered. Other resources are used well across the school.
58. The monitoring of teaching by senior managers and the involvement of staff in cross-curricular and professional development training are having a positive impact on learning. There is a good number of well-qualified classroom and care support staff, who are successfully extending the curriculum and social options available for pupils. The excellent teamwork between staff and the positive role models presented, encourage pupils to improve their self-esteem and self-confidence. Opportunities for professional training for all staff are very good. There is a comprehensive induction pack for new care staff co-ordinated by the heads of care, and most care staff have completed the appropriate NVQ Level 3 training. One learning support assistant has attended a Devon local education authority accredited course for LSAs and all other LSAs are following a preliminary Devon module. All teaching staff are involved in literacy strategy training and developing skills in information and communication technology, and other opportunities for professional development are well co-ordinated. The headteacher's strong commitment to appraisal and professional development is having a positive impact on provision and standards, particularly in literacy and information and communication technology. The school is extremely well placed to ensure that performance management is implemented effectively.
59. Resources for learning are improving and are now good. In cases where there have been weaknesses, such as in information and communication technology, problems are being addressed by the purchase of additional equipment and effective use of the expertise of the teacher and information and communication technology technician. The on-site indoor facilities for physical education and recreation are inadequate to match

the positive involvement and enthusiasm of pupils and staff. The school management team is aware of the question of economic efficiency, in terms of time and cost, by the use of off-site indoor facilities for physical recreation.

60. Overall, the school's accommodation is good with many improvements since the last inspection. The accommodation is cleaned and maintained to a very high standard. During the inspection, the school was undergoing major building work to replace the main roof. The noise caused by gale force winds against the plastic protective sheeting was immense but staff and especially the pupils, managed to keep to their usual routines very well.
61. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory. Some subject rooms are small with limited storage and space for display. The lack of display space for French restricts opportunities for learning. There are limited on-site facilities for physical education but the school makes good use of facilities in the community. The shed, previously used as a gymnasium, is unsatisfactory because the floor is unsafe when dampened and this is no longer being used.
62. The residential accommodation is very good. The standard of the refurbished areas is excellent. Larger bedrooms are being converted to single and double bedrooms and this is a significant improvement. The lounges and dining rooms are attractive and in a good state of decoration.
63. The headteacher is very effective in providing opportunities for both teaching and care staff to develop relevant educational and social experiences for pupils which are linked directly to an excellent school development plan. He takes the lead role in promoting the excellent use of new technology across the school which is beginning to have a major impact on raising standards. During the inspection, there was some excellent use of information and communication technology in subjects such as art and geography. There is an increasing awareness of the potential information and communication technology has for individual subject areas and the headteacher, a qualified trainer, is currently leading a training course for all staff to increase their capabilities and confidence in using the medium.
64. The governors' finance committee is effective in monitoring spending. Figures suggest that the current budget will show an underspend but this will be within the recommended retention figure. Currently, there is no chair of the finance committee although a member of the group came into school to be interviewed during the inspection week. It is only recently that the software support for finance has been fully operative. During this period, the school administrator has been well supported by the local education authority. Good use is made of grants and additional funds. The use of fixed-term contracts, as in the case of introducing the literacy strategy, has been a success. In the school development plan, numeracy has been identified to benefit and it will be the turn of information and communication technology next year. Governors come into school, have attended reviews and one of them has monitored how the literacy funding has been used and reported back to the full governing body.
65. The day-to-day management of income and expenditure by the school administrator is excellent. Principles of best value are applied very well to school catering purchases, cleaning and the buying of educational equipment. There is a clear charging policy in place covering voluntary contributions, breakages/damage and charging in kind. Although governors rely on the headteacher to obtain the best value for expenditure, the governors' finance committee is effective in monitoring spending.
66. Since the last inspection, the school has moved from private ownership to the local education authority and is to be officially audited by them next term. The last inspection report was very positive and at that time, the school was providing very good value for

money. The school now uses the resources made available to it much more effectively and pupils make much better progress in their learning and social development. The cost of termly boarding is very reasonable. There have been very good improvements in a number of areas and there are many examples of excellent practice. Pupils achieve very well, make excellent progress in their behaviour and maintain excellent relationships with others. The school provides excellent value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to further improve the quality of education, the headteacher, senior managers and governors should:

- Make further improvements in leadership by ensuring that:
 - governors' statutory duties in relation to special educational needs are fully met in the information provided within the school prospectus and the annual report to parents;
 - governors agree and implement a sex education policy for the school.
- Make further improvements in the curriculum by ensuring that a short course in modern foreign languages is available to pupils at Key Stage 4.

RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

67. The quality of the boarding provision is very good. That part of the accommodation which has undergone extensive refurbishment during the term is excellent. The rooms awaiting refurbishment are in good condition and each has bedside lamps and televisions. At the time of the inspection, there were 27 boys aged 11 to 16 in residence. The heads of care place a strong emphasis on providing an environment in keeping with a home rather than an institution. Many of the boys speak of the 'family' atmosphere within the provision. The head of care and senior care staff have decorated the refurbished rooms with good support from premises staff. Each room is carpeted and has curtains of matching colours. Pin boards have been made in the school's design and technology room and these will be used for display by the occupants of the new rooms.
68. There are sufficient wash basins, baths, showers and lavatories which provide very good privacy. The doors to lavatories have functional bolts.
69. In the social services report of April 2000, there were two recommendations made for minor repairs to cracked floor tiles in a bathroom area and that window opening restrictors should be fitted. Both of these had been addressed by the school indicating its determination to safeguard pupils' welfare and to protect them from harm in the residential setting.
70. There is very good liaison between teaching and care staff. Should a problem occur during lesson time, there is a very efficient process whereby teachers are able to remove pupils from classes to be supervised by care staff. During the inspection, there was one such incident which followed the agreed procedure and was properly recorded by the head of care. Should there be a major problem during the school day, teachers are able to contact the care staff on duty by using radio handsets. Judging by the school recording book, such incidents are rare occurrences. If a pupil wishes to make a phone call, he is allowed to do so in privacy. The various Child Line numbers are posted adjacent to the pupils' telephone box.
71. There is an impressive range of activities after lessons within the residential provision. Some of these build into the National Curriculum subjects taught such as physical education activities, guitar tuition and Spanish. When pupils have completed the school

day, they change from uniform to more casual clothing. Following tea, they can opt from a range of activities during the evening and at weekends. Visits have been made to Wookey Hole, a theatre, an aquarium, Exmoor and Paignton Zoos and the Devon and Exeter and the Cornwall agricultural shows. In addition, there is an extensive list of sporting and cultural activities which can be undertaken nearer to the school. The head of care has a definitive budget to meet the running costs of activities and pupils' pocket money with additional money linked to the behaviour system. He keeps meticulous records of his activity budget. At any time, one is able to see the allocated budget, what has been spent and what remains. He gives the same detail to the boys' pocket money account, which is made up on a weekly basis. Costings for the termly boarding are very reasonable, which allied to the pupils' very positive attitudes, the excellent progress they make in their behaviour and personal development and the excellent ethos within the school mean that the residential provision provides excellent value for money.

72. The school provides an excellent range of nutritious meals. Boys are courteous, helpful and eager to engage visitors in conversation. They behave very responsibly when serving the meals and everyone has sufficient to eat. Lunch is the main meal of the day, comprising a main course and a sweet. Tea offers choices which may be beans on toast or scrambled egg and always followed by delicious freshly-made teacakes. Boys are keen to help lay the tables and to do general jobs about the kitchen and dining areas. At lunchtime, a pupil says 'grace' and does so in complete silence, followed by a chorus of 'Amen's'.
73. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the very high standards set and with the refurbishment of the sleeping accommodation, which is underway, will provide improved facilities and additional space. Both the last report and the most recent one prepared by the social services confirm the very high standards of the provision which is a strength of the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12%	50%	33%	5%	0%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

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

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.4	School data	3.6

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	31
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	8	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3.3
Average class size	4

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	111

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	907,665
Total expenditure	856,509
Expenditure per pupil	23,792
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	51,156

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	32
Number of questionnaires returned	9

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	11	78	0	11	0
My child is making good progress in school.	78	22	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	56	0	0	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	33	11	0	33
The teaching is good.	67	22	0	0	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	89	11	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	11	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	89	11	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	78	22	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	89	11	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	89	11	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	78	22	0	0	0

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Most parents are pleased with the school and with the progress their sons are making. Only one parent believed that pupils were not well behaved and another parent thought that more homework should be set for her son. The parents of three new pupils do not yet know whether the right amount of homework is set for pupils.

Other issues raised by parents

There were no other issues raised by parents.

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

74. Pupils of all ages achieve very well in English. Most pupils enter the school with limited literacy skills, and their emotional and behavioural difficulties mean that many have communication difficulties, but they make very good progress in speaking and listening and in reading and writing during their time at the school. In 2000, the school's results in National Curriculum tests at age 14 were above those of similar schools in reading and in writing. At GCSE, all pupils gained A* to G grades and one pupil achieved a pass at A* to C. All the six pupils taking the Certificate of Achievement passed with distinctions. These results are well above those of schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties nationally.
75. Pupils make very good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills by being encouraged to listen carefully both to adults and to one another. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils responded with confidence when the teacher questioned them about the set book, 'Brother in the Land', and listened carefully when others read aloud or answered questions. They develop confidence in speaking not only in class but to wider audiences. In an assembly, pupils responded well to the headteacher when he asked about their weekend activities, and during the visit by a representative of the Devon Fire Service, their answers to questions were clear and showed a good command of vocabulary. On both occasions, it was obvious that they had made very good progress in communication, since they interacted with enthusiasm, politeness and awareness of others. Good support is given to the development of speaking and listening skills across the 24-hour curriculum.
76. Achievement in reading across both stages is very good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress because their reading is heard frequently and detailed records are kept of progress. Class reading is encouraged and in all classes, those pupils who are not reading aloud listen to other pupils reading. There is evidence of good individual support by teachers and learning support assistants. In Year 7, pupils are learning to use a range of strategies in reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning as they read Dickens's novel, 'A Christmas Carol'. They are gaining in their understanding of how language changes over time by looking at the use of words and phrases which have fallen out of fashion, for example, examining phrases such as 'he stiffened his gait'. In Year 8, pupils read well with expression and show good levels of fluency, developing their skills of comprehension. By Year 9, pupils read with good expression to convey meaning and observe punctuation. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 respond to a range of texts. Higher attaining pupils in Year 10 can give a good account of what has happened in their set book, 'Brother in the Land'. One pupil in Year 11, who is studying for GCSE in English literature, is able to give a personal and critical response to a range of texts. Pupils read for pleasure both fiction and non-fiction books and by the age of 16, all pupils have gained in confidence and have the necessary skills to tackle a wide range of literature.
77. Pupils make very good progress in writing in a variety of styles and forms. In Year 7, pupils write on a range of topics and gain skills necessary for writing reports and letter writing. In Year 8, pupils make progress in imaginative writing, increasing their understanding of grammar. They are involved in a group project on the production of a school magazine and this is enabling them to learn about the structure of a magazine. In Year 9, pupils gain in their knowledge of poetry and creative writing, and some of their work in English is linked to historical topics. Pupils make good improvements in their handwriting and in spelling. Their work is well presented and legible, and pupils of all ages use computers effectively to improve presentation. By Year 10, higher attaining pupils use a more extensive range of vocabulary and punctuation. Lower attaining pupils are making very good progress towards individual literacy targets, for instance, learning

to spell the days of the week. All pupils are developing skills of setting work out appropriately, using a good range of grammar and vocabulary and developing their own ideas. Work is well presented and all pupils are well motivated to improve. By Year 11, pupils' writing includes accounts of their own experiences, for example on their work experience placements, and they are learning to select and present information, for instance in designing a leaflet on 'drink driving'. Writing skills are extended effectively by work on reviewing videos.

78. Pupils are given opportunities to develop and use their literacy skills in a wide range of subjects. This was clearly evident in a religious education lesson where younger pupils explored the use of appropriate words such as 'extraordinary' to describe a Hindu temple. Literacy skills are also promoted in the 24-hour curriculum. Very good support is provided within the residential area where a wide variety of books and magazines are available in bedrooms and lounge areas. Pupils enjoy reading at bedtime, and one boy talked with enthusiasm about the way he also reads the newspaper in the library and the monthly magazines the school buys on football and motorbikes. Visits to the theatre provide opportunities for pupils to experience live drama. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 went to the theatre and pupils in Year 11 studying for GCSE and the Certificate of Achievement have been to see 'An Inspector Calls' and the Cornish version of 'Macbeth'.
79. A range of standardised tests is used annually to establish reading, comprehension and spelling levels, demonstrating best practice. These results clearly indicate the very good progress pupils are making as well as motivating them to aim for further success. Individual statements and bi-annual reports give detailed information regarding progress over time in reading, spelling and comprehension and again, indicate very good achievement.
80. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is very good overall. Teaching is a little better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. The best lessons are well planned with clear objectives and expectations are shared with the pupils. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations to which pupils respond well. Key vocabulary is identified and explained to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and the white board is used well to promote spelling lists. Opportunities are given for pupils to read aloud and good relationships are established with pupils. Pupils' behaviour is managed very well, largely through a central focus on working hard and achieving as much as possible in the time available. Praise and encouragement are used well to reinforce learning and to motivate pupils to stay on task. Set tasks are interesting and present English as an exciting subject. Work is well marked with clear guidelines and pupils are given feedback on how to improve. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and the progress they have made. At the end, teachers include a review of the lesson to enable pupils to reflect on what they have learnt. The key factors at both key stages in pupils' very good achievement are their positive attitudes to improving their literacy skills, the small size of class groups together with the enthusiastic efforts of teachers and support staff in supporting and motivating pupils to make progress.
81. On those occasions where teaching is only satisfactory, pupils make less progress for a number of reasons. Teachers do not involve pupils in reading, no time is set aside at the end of the lesson to encourage pupils to talk about the work they have been doing and the teacher does not reinforce pupils' individual targets within the overall structure of the lesson. Teachers and support assistants offer good individual support to lower attaining pupils but on occasions, learning support assistants are not clear as to their role in the learning process.
82. The literacy co-ordinator, learning support and care staff have worked to revitalise the library. There is a good selection of books, many of which have been provided on long-

term loan by the Devon Library Service. The school is encouraging independent access to the library throughout the 24-hour curriculum and this is effectively supporting the development of reading. At various times during the inspection, pupils were observed reading newspapers, magazines and books. There is a computer in the library but with pupils' developing skills in word processing and other aspects of information and communication technology, the English department would benefit from a second computer in each English classroom to promote further learning.

83. The leadership, management and co-ordination of English are very good. Development planning is clear, the three teachers are appropriately qualified, experienced and enthusiastic and work well as a team. As a result, there have been very good improvements since the last inspection when pupils were making at least satisfactory progress in English. A key factor in the improvement is the very good progress made in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.
84. The literacy co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and an excellent promoter of good practice. The literacy action plan has been well written and staff consulted regarding a range of issues. The co-ordinator has provided training for other teachers on implementing the school's handwriting policy and on developing handwriting skills, and has produced spelling and vocabulary lists. She has piloted a literacy profile on each pupil to go to each teacher in order to raise awareness of strengths and areas for development. She is currently developing a writing policy to develop individual writing skills. Staff have responded well to the National Literacy Strategy; it has effectively raised teachers' awareness and this has led to a more consistent approach to literacy across the curriculum. Rightly, more work needs to be done to ensure that teachers in all subjects support literacy development. All pupils have spelling books with pages for each subject teacher to denote key words, however, to date not all staff are completing the lists as required.

MATHEMATICS

85. Pupils of all ages achieve very well in mathematics. In 2000, the school's results in National Curriculum tests at age 14 were well above the results of similar schools and one pupil achieved Level 6. This very high achievement is due to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. By the time they are 14, pupils know their multiplication tables and can apply them to multiplication and division. They identify the properties of two-dimensional shapes and recognise three-dimensional shapes. Most pupils record data on bar charts and pie charts. Lower attaining pupils add and subtract in hundreds, tens and units and know that rectangles, squares and some triangles all have right angles. Higher attaining pupils calculate factors from multiples, identify square numbers and know the differences between a cone, a sphere and a cylinder.
86. Six pupils were entered for GCSE in 2000, and all pupils achieved passes at A* to G. Two pupils gained D grades, narrowly missing the A* to C category. Four pupils were also entered for the Certificate of Achievement in mathematics. Three were awarded merits and one pupil gained a distinction. Although these results are good, they are not as good as those for information and communication technology, English or physical education. This is because teaching is not always sufficiently focused on whole-class or group investigative work where mathematics is applied to everyday situations. Pupils therefore have limited opportunities to learn from each other in solving mathematical problems. Pupils add and subtract money and measurements of length to two decimal points and are increasing their understanding of place value. Higher attaining pupils use their increasing knowledge of tables to carry out long division and multiplication. Lower attaining pupils carry out surveys and record and analyse data on the computer. Pupils know how to draw irregular flat shapes to scale, using reflective symmetry.

87. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is at least very good and sometimes excellent. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is at least satisfactory, mostly good and sometimes very good. Where teaching is excellent, the lesson is very lively, the teacher uses a variety of strategies, including 'quick-fire' mental mathematics, whole-class teaching, discussion and individualised work. This includes very good teamwork with the learning support assistant who uses a computer to consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding of key mathematical ideas. The teacher also uses a wide range of mathematical resources to demonstrate new mathematical ideas and introduce pupils to new language. As a result, pupils learn to their maximum potential as they remain totally absorbed and interested in the lesson. They try their hardest and work at a very good pace. Their behaviour is excellent and they take a great pride in their work and achievements and make very good progress during the lesson. Where teaching is very good, lessons also proceed at a brisk pace, there are high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour, the teacher makes very good use of ongoing assessment in the lesson to clarify pupils' misunderstandings and there is very good teamwork with the learning support assistant. In these lessons, pupils behave very well, try very hard to complete their work and concentrate to the best of their ability.
88. Where teaching is good, the teacher does not always plan for whole-class or group investigative work and instead there is too narrow a focus on the use of textbooks or worksheets. Pupils eventually become bored and disinterested in their learning. However, the very good management of behaviour and targeted teaching for individuals ensure that pupils still remain focused, try hard and behave well. When teaching is satisfactory, lesson plans do not contain learning objectives or any indication of resources that should be used to meet the particular needs of individual pupils. This leads to some slippage of time at the beginning of the lesson where pupils become restless and take too long to settle. However, the very good management of behaviour ensures that pupils concentrate on their work and complete the tasks set for them.
89. The high quality teaching and learning has been enhanced with the effective introduction of particular elements from the National Numeracy Strategy and the use and application of mathematics to real life situations. This is more evident at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. Improvements to teaching and learning have also been achieved by improvements to the curriculum, assessment and weekly target setting in small steps for individual pupils. This ensures that teachers know precisely at what stage pupils are in their learning so that teachers can then plan activities to bridge gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, enabling them to make rapid progress in a short space of time.
90. Leadership of the subject is very good and the head of education has already assumed responsibility for developing numeracy across the curriculum. This has resulted in the promotion of numeracy within other subjects such as religious education, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, geography, history and physical education. Numeracy is also very well promoted by residential care staff, for example, when pupils are given opportunities to spend their pocket money or calculate their merits earned or lost for good or bad behaviour.

SCIENCE

91. There has been significant improvement in science since the last inspection. Pupils' progress in science is very good and the highest attaining pupils achieve very good standards. Pupils with additional special educational needs also make very good progress in lessons. In 2000, the school's results in National Curriculum tests at age 14 were well above the results of similar schools with one pupil achieving Level 6. Pupils make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world around them and they develop a deeper understanding of the need to care for the environment by limiting the degree of pollution. By age fourteen, pupils know and investigate the

properties of different materials. They have a better understanding of the investigative processes of science due to the increased opportunities for carrying out experiments since the last inspection. They set up simple investigations when guided by their teachers. They are also adept at applying the prior knowledge in solving rudimentary problems. Pupils demonstrate through discussion, an understanding of some concepts of science and they know what constitutes a fair test.

92. By age 16, pupils continue to make very good progress. All pupils at Key Stage 4 follow the syllabus for either the GCSE or the Certificate of Achievement. Examination results in the past two years have been very good and in 2000, six pupils were entered for GCSE. They all gained passes in the range A* to G. Two pupils gained a D grade and one pupil was awarded a C grade. Pupils design experiments, make predictions and record them by drawing or by writing and the most able demonstrate that they understand the concept of a fair test. Pupils are increasing their knowledge and understanding of their body maintenance, materials and their uses, electricity at home and work, plants, fuels, energy, earth and atmosphere, light, living systems as well as the environment. Pupils understand that changing temperatures and climatic conditions will affect the planting and harvesting of crops. They know the importance of sun, air and water to sustain life. In Year 11, pupils are introduced at length to our environment referring to previous information given which is reinforced and they understand the concepts of composition and pollution. The higher attaining pupils understand the difference between soluble and insoluble materials and carry out experiments to investigate solubility.
93. The quality of teaching is excellent at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. All the lessons are carefully planned with a variety of strategies and approaches which fully extend the pupils and ensure that they develop very good attitudes to learning. A wide range of readily available resources is used that enables the pupils to develop their work independently to a high quality. When pupils with learning difficulties struggle to gain an appropriate awareness of many of the scientific concepts, the teacher matches lesson tasks to their abilities very well so that their misunderstandings are clarified.
94. The school has a comprehensive scheme of work for both key stages which now includes more investigative work and ensures that statutory requirements are fully met. At Key Stage 3 there are 35 units with five modules at Key Stage 4. Each unit and module contains the learning objective, the relevant Attainment Targets, the National Curriculum reference, suggested learning objectives, resources, homework tasks, cross-curricular aspects and the places of interest to visit to broaden the pupils' learning experience. There is a policy and a scheme of work for the subject drawn up by the co-ordinator. Close links with other areas of the curriculum are identified, for example in personal and social development. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are reinforced in these areas, particularly in terms of promoting healthy life-styles. The subject also makes a valuable contribution in developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
95. Resources are adequate with a suitable laboratory for the current programme. Pupils are able to store their experiments, make observations and document changes that occur from one lesson to another. There is a computer available with some science programs.

ART AND DESIGN

96. There has been a marked improvement in art since the previous inspection. By age 14, pupils' achievements are good. They draw lines of different quality, use collage to explore tones within a particular colour and practise colour mixing. They create surreal rooms using collage and then make three-dimensional versions using a range of materials including mod roc, cardboard, paint and textiles. They can suggest several solutions to a problem and some make changes when dissatisfied with their work.

97. At Key Stage 4, achievements are very good. In GCSE examinations for 2000, three pupils gained passes in the A* to G category. In the Certificate of Achievement examination, five pupils were awarded distinctions and one achieved a merit. This represents high achievement when compared to similar schools nationally. Pupils' observational drawing skills are generally very good. Pupils explain line, texture, tone and colour. They understand the different qualities of a range of media and use sketchbooks well to develop these ideas. Pupils use various resources, including reference books and information and communication technology, to find ideas. Attainment in Year 10 is in line with national expectations for all pupils.
98. Progress at both Key Stages 3 and 4 is very good. Many pupils develop independent working habits. They experiment with a range of tools and materials and learn which tools are more appropriate for a particular task. Pupils learn how to use a computer and use a range of programs to extend their understanding of the concepts in art. Pupils used a computer in the portrait module in their study for the Certificate of Achievement. They also increase their knowledge of a range of artists, for example Van Gogh.
99. Teaching is very good in all the lessons observed. Planning is thorough and learning objectives are clear. Teachers' expectations are very high. Activities such as making masks include cross-curricular studies of North American Indians extending the pupils' cultural awareness and at the same time engage the pupils' interest. Progression is very good, for example by Years 10 and 11, the scrutiny of work shows clearly the new confidence in their drawing and other projects. The display of pupils' work is used well to point out technique and approaches. Subject vocabulary such as 'scale' is reinforced and defined to aid understanding. Teachers assess and ask questions such as 'Is that too big or is it too small?' or 'Is that green all the same colour of green?' This develops the pupils' observational skills. Good use of plenary sessions links work to learning objectives and focuses pupils on their next step of learning. Lessons promote independence and raise pupils' self-esteem. Health and safety awareness is very good. The learning support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils' attitude and response to the teaching are very good at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils settle quickly to work and show both an interest and pride in their work. They listen carefully to explanations and their sketchbooks are neatly presented. They find the materials and the tools for their projects and use them sensibly. They willingly tidy up at the end of the lessons. The atmosphere in the classroom motivates the pupils and as a result, their concentration is sustained throughout the lesson.
100. The curriculum is broad and balanced and pupils have a wide range of experiences including print making and three-dimensional work. This experience is further enriched by the installation of the recently purchased kiln. The subject makes a very good contribution to the social, moral and cultural education of the pupils, for example, the study of the work of artists, visiting museums and their involvement in local arts projects. In this respect, the school was one of three local schools chosen by Sustrans to participate in developing on of a series of mosaic seats in the Peters Marland area which reflect the clay works and the Tarka story. The scheme of work is very detailed and is regularly reviewed in the light of progress made through careful assessment.
101. The co-ordination of the subject is very good and the enthusiasm of the teacher encourages and motivates the pupils to experiment and try various drawings and projects with very good results. Pupils are proud of their work and willingly exhibit it to strangers visiting the class. Resources are good overall.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Pupils make very good progress at both Key Stages 3 and 4. The school has developed a policy for the subject with the ultimate objective to enable the pupils to undertake GCSE or Certificate of Achievement courses at Year 11. The results of these examinations demonstrate very high achievement. Of the four pupils who were entered for GCSE in 2000, one pupil gained an E grade, two gained C grades and one gained a D grade. This shows attainment in line with national averages. In the Certificate of Achievement examination, one pupil gained a pass, another pupil was awarded a merit and the third pupil gained a distinction. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection and is due to the extensive programme of practical work involved during Key Stages 3 and 4 which is planned for the pupils to develop the necessary skills to successfully follow these courses and prepare for work after they leave school.
103. At Key Stage 3, pupils are increasing their skills in using basic drawing instruments, basic electronic skills and designing and building a wood project; for example a model bridge. By age 14, pupils make a vanity cupboard, showing the very good progress they have made. Pupils use instruments carefully to draw plans and with the support of the teacher, are able to construct the above articles using these plans. They take careful account of all design elements in order to arrive at an appropriate solution. Pupils also discover the different properties and qualities of wood and metals that they use in their projects. In electronics, they learn about conduction and circuits and are able to build small transistor radios. Pupils record their findings very carefully and work well in pairs to carry out their investigations.
104. At Key Stage 4, pupils plan and construct a 'superior stool' as part of their GCSE project and use a traditional mortice and tenon construction method. They investigate comfortable sitting heights relative to the tables they use as well as the stability of stools. They also construct a garden trowel using stainless steel sheet, mild steel square rod and fixings rivets. Pupils' use of a number of tools is impressive. They know how to use an electric and manual drill and observe health and safety rules, for example wearing goggles. They observe these rules without the teacher's prompting.
105. The quality of teaching is never less than good and in over half the lessons it is very good. The teacher knows the pupils well and uses this knowledge in lessons to carefully plan and take account of pupils' individual difficulties. Where teaching is most successful, the teacher uses a wide variety of strategies to make sure that pupils of all abilities stay on task. Teaching is always brisk and lively enabling pupils to learn more effectively by working at a good pace and staying on task. The teacher ensures that resources are good and easily available without any loss of time during the lessons. Close links with other areas of the curriculum are identified, for example, in personal and social development. Pupils' confidence and behaviour are enhanced as they acquire new skills and this is a valuable contribution to their self-esteem. Other areas of the curriculum are also enhanced, for example, literacy, mathematics, science and art.
106. The school has developed a very good scheme of work that reflects the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and this is highly relevant to the needs of the pupils. Food technology is taught as part of the personal, social and health curriculum and pupils have opportunities to prepare meals within the residential provision. Leadership of the subject is very good.

GEOGRAPHY

107. Progress in the subject is at least good at both key stages and at times it is excellent. At Key Stage 3, there is insufficient work to make a judgement on progression over time so progress here is based on lesson observation. Similarly at Key Stage 4, judgements on progress are based on lesson observation and the encouraging GCSE results obtained in last summer's examination. Four pupils gained passes in the A* to G range with two pupils gaining D grades.
108. Teaching in geography is good overall and excellent in occasional lessons. The teacher's subject knowledge is good, whilst his teaching of basic subject and literacy skills is very good. The routine for introducing specialist vocabulary is very good with clear coverage of new words on a whiteboard, supplemented by printed charts. There is a planned approach to the promotion of investigative skills which is very good, using information and communication technology. In one Year 8 lesson seen, where teaching was excellent, pupils were engrossed in the subject matter and concentration was excellent throughout. The task set was to access the Internet and to glean information on coastal erosion by scrolling a virtual field trip to the Kent coast. Pupils were able to select text and extract from it the information they wished to use in their projects. The teacher's continuous assessment of performance allowed him to move from station to station to encourage and support individual learning. Where teaching was least effective, too much time was spent on overly long introductions resulting in a hurried conclusion which failed to provide an evaluation of what had been achieved. A Year 10 lesson on rocks and landscape began with granite, the most prevalent rock in Cornwall and Devon. Pupils were given two samples of granite to comment on. One pupil observed that the size of the crystals in one was larger than those in the other. The teacher skilfully led the class to the conclusion that the size of crystals in the magma depends on the rate at which it cools. Where teaching is best, the lessons are very well planned and the strategies for ensuring that all pupils have access to the learning are excellent. Open-ended questions ensure that pupils are challenged and their thoughtful responses show clear understanding and high quality learning. Pupil responses to most of the lessons are good. They show considered and thoughtful replies to high quality questioning and are able to concentrate for extended periods of time. This aspect of their learning is most evident when the teacher has captured their imagination with clear and stimulating lesson objectives. Behaviour in lessons is very good.
109. The geography teacher has been in post for three weeks and has started to make a detailed appraisal of the subject. He has made an impressive beginning and has used his information and communication technology (ICT) skills to great effect. He is currently upgrading the scheme of work to ensure that it meets examination requirements at Key Stage 4 and that there are clear pathways of learning to complement progression from Key Stage 3. There are adequate resources although the subject would benefit from further video and CD-ROM to support some ambitious topics. The accommodation is good but display space is restricted in the main to the front and rear of the classroom, which is also shared by another subject.
110. Since the last inspection, the subject has changed little with both progress and teaching still being good. There has been little opportunity for the newly appointed teacher to do more than begin an appraisal of the subject. He has already identified the need to update the schemes of work and to review the assessment and recording procedures.

HISTORY

111. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in lessons and over time. The scrutiny of pupils' work in the subject at Key Stage 3 gives a clear indication that they are gaining a good understanding of complex historical issues and data. At Key Stage 4, the presentation of work is of a good standard and shows how well skills are being

developed. This is borne out by some encouraging results in the most recent GCSE examinations.

112. Teaching in the subject is good. Lessons are well planned and often begin with a thought-provoking task. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were asked to consider the relationship between the Slave Trade, new eating and drinking habits and the Industrial Revolution. Some practical work and very good teacher questioning, focused on meeting the needs of individual pupils, brought the lesson to a successful conclusion. Resources for learning are used very well. In a Year 10 lesson, the balance between text and video, 'The Big Stink', kept pupils engrossed by the problems posed by the rapid expansion of Victorian London. The teacher's knowledge of the subject is very good as is his teaching of basic skills. Expectations of both pupils' behaviour and academic capabilities are very high and work is planned to meet the individual learning needs of each pupil. In all lessons, pupils are interested and show a high degree of concentration. They are motivated by challenging subject matter and possess the confidence to try and answer difficult questions. Pupils enjoy their lessons, behaviour is good, pupils work well together and show consideration for the opinions of others.
113. The history teacher is an enthusiastic and effective manager of the subject. There is a clear focus on improving the range of opportunities in the subject by developing the use of information and communication technology and further opportunities for local studies. Very good use is made of museums such as Torrington, which specialises in Civil War actions fought in the area. The Cobbarton Combat Museum is a great favourite with pupils, allowing them an opportunity to clamber into military vehicles of the twentieth century. Visits are also made to the living museum at Morwellan Quay to sample life as it might have been over a century ago. The history room is small and display space is limited and there is inadequate storage space. This impacts on the quality and range of experiences which can be offered in history lessons.
114. Since the last inspection, the history teacher has made extensive improvements in the use of the assessment system which is now a more precise tool for identifying the next learning objective and helps inform the recording system and educational advice for the twice yearly reviews and individual education plans.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. At both key stages pupils make very good progress in information and communication technology (ICT). At Key Stage 3, pupils are able to access the Internet, scroll down and retrieve information from photographic diagrams and written information to support their individual topics. Pupils' work over time included very good examples of scanning, organising, communicating and handling information for a variety of purposes. At age 16, five pupils were entered for the Certificate of Achievement examination in 2000. Four achieved distinctions and one pupil achieved a merit. At Key Stage 4, there were examples of pupils working independently with ICT. The weaker aspect, recognised by the school, is the progression in control, measuring and modelling. Across the curriculum, some excellent progress in the use of ICT was seen in geography at Key Stage 3 and in art at Key Stage 4. The geography lesson required pupils to access the Internet and retrieve photographs, diagrams and text to support individual topics on coastal erosion. The art pupils at Key Stage 4 made excellent and extensive use of ICT in the portrait unit for the examination taken in the summer.
116. The quality of teaching is very good across both key stages. The two subject teachers have very good subject knowledge and are able to convey this to both staff and pupils. At Key Stage 3, they respond quickly to individual needs to ensure that learning is not hampered by frustration. Teacher circulation and their ability to assess the learning needs of each pupil are central to their success. At Key Stage 4, most pupils are well advanced in their ICT communication and understand how computers can be used to

organise, develop and present ideas in a variety of forms. Teachers' records give clear indications of the progress each pupil is making and this informs future lesson planning. The targets set in planning are short term and measurable. The day-to-day assessments are excellent and make a clear link with the broader targets in the individual education plans (IEPs). In all of the lessons observed, pupils show a high degree of interest and are able to concentrate for long periods. This was very noticeable when lessons are timetabled at the end of the school day. Behaviour during lessons is excellent with no evidence of disruptive behaviour in any of those observed.

117. The school is equipped with reasonably modern computers and a continuing increase in the skills and confidence of subject teachers to use the ICT suite and computers in their classrooms. The headteacher and a senior colleague give the subject a very high profile with the former a qualified teacher trainer in the use of ICT. Staff, including the learning support assistants (LSAs), are currently receiving appropriate training to increase their knowledge, understanding and confidence in using the facility. There is considerable expertise in subject areas such as art, geography and mathematics, where excellent use is made. The subject policy is undergoing further development and is being rewritten. A specialist room has helped the promotion of the subject and increased the opportunities and the quality and standard of the learning. A major strength of the resources is the expertise of the ICT technician who, with a subject teacher, keeps the system running. With the increasing use of ICT, the demands on technician time are very heavy. Resources for the subject are good but there are weaknesses in data-logging and remote sensing equipment. Longer-term subject planning has identified control equipment, pulse monitors and the upgrading of commercial software as areas for development.
118. Since the last inspection, pupil progress has improved significantly and is now very good. The quality of teaching is consistently very good whereas it was good in only a third of lessons. There has been an excellent improvement in the degree of challenge evident in the lessons. There is no evidence to suggest that the highest attaining pupils are not challenged nor is there evidence of pupils following mundane tasks to improve keyboarding skills. Since the last inspection, the school has addressed the lack of a technician for the maintenance of machines and the network.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

119. Pupils at Key Stage 3 make good progress in French. They are keen to learn to speak the language like the French do. There is an insistence that accent is stressed and pupils enjoy the challenge of responding to questions with good quality pronunciation. A perusal of pupils' work in the subject shows very neat exercise books with a column of French vocabulary and another for its English equivalent. There are many worksheets which are neatly presented. Care has been taken with colouring and the writing of sentences in the target language. Missing from the worksheets are any comments that would help the pupils to improve the quality of their learning.
120. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is consistently good and it can be very good. Lessons concentrate on the oral aspects of the subject where fluency and pace are a major focus. There are many good aspects in the teaching with an insistence on correct pronunciation which is well received by the pupils. However, there is a need to use more of the target language to support learning. For example, there is no attempt made to greet pupils in French or to bid them farewell when they leave. Having observed some high quality dialogue being practised, the pupils are ready to proceed to greater use of instruction in the target language. Teaching recognises the cultural differences in asking questions or making requests in England and in France but, as yet, this is not being supported sufficiently for this protocol to be automatic in pupil

responses. The pace of lessons is very good and pupils enjoy the challenges presented to them. Pupils' response to lessons is good. They are eager to speak in the target language and are developing the range of their vocabulary. Behaviour in lessons is good with pupils concentrating on responding to questions as the French would do.

121. The French teacher assumed responsibility for teaching the subject at the beginning of the current term. She is French and gives to the subject teaching vitality, flair and an insistence on high standards. Teaching this year is confined to Key Stage 3 and currently there is no short course being offered at Key Stage 4. Resources for the subject are unsatisfactory with much of the material inherited not being age appropriate. There is a lack of information and communication technology (ICT) resources such as video and CD-ROM. French shares a room with geography and there is little available display space for the subject to help create an atmosphere of France. It is early days for the new teacher, who has made a positive start to re-organising the subject by reviewing current resources and getting rid of those which are not appropriate. She has also recognised that the current subject policy and the scheme of work are in need of modification. She recognises the need to further develop record keeping.
122. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and progress. Both of these are now consistently good and can be very good. There is no French teaching at Key Stage 4 and this is being addressed by the school. The French teacher has made an encouraging start and has concentrated the planned changes to the subject in a logical and progressive sequence.

MUSIC

123. It is difficult to comment upon the progress and achievements of pupils in music in terms of National Curriculum guidelines since the subject is not currently taught at either of the key stages. However, during the period of the inspection, the whole school was involved in a music lesson to prepare for the school carol concert. This lesson underlined the enthusiasm of the pupils to be involved and their potential to perform both as a whole school and in small groups.
124. The quality of the teaching seen in this lesson was very good. The teacher was very enthusiastic and his rich Welsh tenor voice, allied to the very good piano skills of a member of the support staff, provided the encouragement for all the pupils to be active participants. A good number of the pupils sing tunefully and the teacher, in a humorous style, encouraged and developed singing with expression. The self-esteem of the pupils was evident when a selected quartet of volunteer pupils, who had been practising previously with the teacher, sang on stage in front of the whole school. The response of all present further underlined the very good, positive ethos within the school.
125. Within the 24-hour curriculum, three pupils go to Bideford for guitar lessons with a private tutor, and the newly appointed music teacher has started lunch time sessions of 'music enjoyment'. In these sessions, he plays the piano and teaches pupils to strum basic chords on the guitar. Even in the short period, the response has been good due to his enthusiasm and musical knowledge.
126. On occasions, music is played within assemblies enabling boys to develop an awareness of sound. Undoubtedly the further development of music as a background when pupils enter the assembly hall would extend the therapeutic quality music provides as a positive experience.
127. There is currently no policy for music. The new teacher has not taught music before but is keen to develop music within the school using traditional forms and new technology. He is hoping to visit the music department in a local community school to develop curriculum links. The former music adviser from Devon Local Education Authority has

visited the school to offer advice. The new teacher is enthusiastic and has clear ideas as how to develop the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Pupils' achievements in physical education overall are very good. By the ages of 14 and 16 the progress made is very good. The range of activities offered in the 24-hour curriculum results in pupils being able to access more time to engage in physical activities in contrast to pupils in mainstream schools. The options available, together with the quality of teaching, result in pupils making very good progress when compared with attainment levels in schools of a similar type. In some aspects of the programmes offered, where performance is measured in terms of national or regional accreditation, pupils are performing in line with national expectations.
129. Pupils at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are learning a range of physical activities which include individual and team sports. Up to the age of 14, the areas of activity are invasion games including football and basketball; net/wall games including table tennis and badminton; swimming; outdoor and adventurous activities including camp craft, cycling, canoeing, walking, orienteering and archery; gymnastics; athletic activities including weightlifting and cross-country running. Between the ages of 14 and 16, pupils are given the opportunity to improve and develop their personal experiences and performance levels. Pupils in Year 11 participate in the Certificate of Achievement accreditation in physical education. In the last academic year, six pupils passed the course with distinctions. This was an excellent achievement. Year 11 pupils are also encouraged to complete the Royal Life Saving Society bronze medallion award. Other opportunities are offered for external accreditation in swimming, canoeing, orienteering and weightlifting. Achievements in weightlifting are very good. Two pupils were winners at the British schools National Clean and Jerk in 1999-2000 and five boys won south-west titles in the British strongest student competition. There is currently no accreditation linked to gymnastics, football or athletics national bodies skills/performance awards.
130. The organisation of the teaching time and opportunities for pupils in small classes to gauge their performance against that of others has been greatly improved since the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection it was noted that 'the overall progress of the subject is impeded by the small size of some teaching groups. Pupils are unable to gauge their own performance against that of others because of their narrow range'. Since that date, the organisation of the teaching of physical education has been restructured within the overall timetable and this is now good. With the exception of the Certificate of Achievement Year 11 course work on a Thursday afternoon, all physical education during school time is organised on a Friday afternoon with one group taking personal, social and health education on a rota basis. The planning and policy have been drawn up by the physical education co-ordinator. Pupils are allocated into groups for activities lasting for five or six weeks. Pupils in years in close proximity, where numbers are low, join together for certain activities. For instance, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 join together for football. During the period of the inspection, the aggregate total of pupils in these three classes was seven.
131. The quality of teaching ranges from good to very good and overall is very good. When teaching is very good, pupils are aware of warm-up and cool-down routines. The pace of the lesson is good with appropriate challenges to improve skill and confidence and a variety of tasks. Teachers pay good attention to safety issues, for example when teaching weightlifting. Staff set high expectations so that pupils make very good progress in skills, perseverance and personal development. During a badminton warm-up when pupils did not respond positively, the teacher immediately recalled the group and re-emphasised his expectations in terms of skills and behaviour. There was a positive group response. Techniques of good performance are emphasised. The skill

levels expected are appropriate both to challenge individuals and develop the self-esteem of the less able. There is good and sensitive coaching of pupils at all levels to encourage them to improve performance and clear evidence of progress by pupils in knowledge and skills. All pupils changed into kit for all physical activities. A feature of the teaching by all teachers is the good relationship built on humour, high expectations and positive encouragement between the coach and pupils.

132. The teaching of the wide range of activities is undertaken by the physical education co-ordinator and other staff who are accredited as coaches by national sports bodies. Qualified staff include a swimming teacher and coaches for football, weightlifting, canoeing, badminton and basketball. The co-ordinator organises regular in-service training and links with national coaching foundation courses. Physical education is an important area of the taught curriculum and the 24-hour extended curriculum. The options offered make a positive contribution to pupils' skills and personal development. Pupils of all ages and abilities are encouraged to participate in a positive learning environment. Outdoor and adventurous activities play a major part in developing individual self-esteem, co-operation and team work. The school has its own woods about a mile and a half from the school site and makes good use of the facility.
133. Facilities on site are extensive in area with two outdoor play areas for football, basketball, training and general activities. The small indoor area for weightlifting has recently been refurbished by staff at the school. Facilities can be used at night with the support of fixed and portable floodlighting. However, the indoor facilities on site to meet the demands of the programme are limited. The school uses facilities at Torrington for swimming, Penstowe Manor sports hall, Skern Lodge for climbing and the facilities at Merton for indoor badminton and 5-a-side football on the outdoor artificial surface. The shed on site requires upgrading to meet the needs of the pupils. The multi-gym facilities require modernising to further promote personal fitness. The school runs an all-age football team and organises fixtures with a nearby independent school. The geographical location of the school and the relatively small number of pupils restrict team sports, although the pupils are enthusiastic.
134. The co-ordinator for physical education is very enthusiastic, well qualified and keen to take the department forward. He has given direction to the activities within the total curriculum. He is encouraging staff to link all activities to National Curriculum guidelines based on assessment. Examples seen for swimming, basketball and badminton give very good guidance to staff and promote self-review by pupils. All pupils are monitored regarding performance and very good records are kept. He is supported well by other staff to promote physical education within the 24-hour curriculum. The policy for physical education has recently been updated to include details of the current options available to pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Pupils' achievements throughout the school are very good and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils at both key stages are making very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of world religions due to the very high quality teaching, a much improved curriculum and the excellent leadership for the subject.
136. By age 14, pupils learn about festivals, worship and beliefs of the six major world religions and that God has a particular meaning for different faiths. Pupils compare the Christian and Islamic stories of creation and they know that Brahma is the Hindu God of creation. Lower attaining pupils understand that Hinduism has its roots in India, that Judaism originates from Israel and that the homeland of Islam is Saudi Arabia. Higher attaining pupils know that Hindus have many gods, that the holy book of Hinduism is the Vedas and that the proper name for a Hindu temple is a madir. By age 16, pupils are

preparing for their Certificate of Achievement and are learning about the Buddhist faith and the Christian perspectives of contemporary issues. Pupils know about the Right View Point of Buddhism through the Eight Fold Path. They understand that Right Thought is the opposite of greed or selfishness, that Right Effort means that you do things well and that Right Action means that you do not commit crime. Lower attaining pupils know that the Middle Way is when you do not do things to the extreme. Higher attaining pupils understand that Nirvana is when you reach enlightenment and can describe their knowledge of this aspect.

137. Teaching is at least very good and at Key Stage 4 it is excellent. This leads to very high achievement as pupils learn very effectively in all lessons. All teaching is very lively so that pupils work very productively at a very good pace. Teachers have very high expectations for learning and behaviour and challenge pupils' thinking. As a result, pupils always try their hardest, remain focused on their activities and are very well behaved. When teaching is very good, the teacher uses a variety of well-chosen activities which include reading, writing, discussion and the use of video to further pupils' understanding of religious events such as the creation story. Teachers also promote the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills very well when, for example, pupils sequenced the events of the Christian story of creation and were encouraged to use words such as 'extraordinary' to describe a Hindu temple. Excellent teaching included the superb use of home-produced video material of pupils' role- playing the Eight Fold Path. This captivated their imagination and raised their self-esteem when they saw the high quality of their individual performances, and sustained total concentration and enjoyment of the lesson. Excellent use is made of ongoing assessment during the lesson when, for example, a pupil's pen would not work. The teacher challenged the pupil to think about the conduction of heat in science so that the pupil quickly realised that if he warmed the pen in his hand, it would work and he was then able to complete his word search on Buddhism. The teacher also provided an excellent opportunity for reflection in the lesson so that the spirituality of Buddhism came to life as pupils gained a deeper sense of meaning in their own lives.
138. The curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is now very well planned with a new opportunity for Year 11 pupils to sit a Certificate of Achievement in Religious Studies. It also makes a major contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through periods of quiet reflection, the consideration of thinking of others and leading a good life, increased opportunities for group work and the study of different world religions. These improvements have been brought about by the excellent leadership of the headteacher who is very well supported by the Key Stage 3 teacher. In their quest for improving the subject, they have made very good links with the religious education department of a local secondary school and developed a curriculum which is not only highly relevant to pupils' personal development, but systematically builds on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school. The subject is well resourced with good quality text books and the headteacher now plans to develop a range of religious artefacts to further enhance teaching and learning. Very good assessment systems are in place for the subject and pupils' progress is regularly recorded and reported to parents. Religious education is a strength of the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

139. Overall provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is excellent and is a strength of the school. Although personal and social education is firmly embedded in the 24-hour curriculum, the development of PHSE as a taught subject across the age groups is a relatively new project. The school, through its Programmes of Study, reinforces and supports the overall ethos of a caring community. Key features include the quality of relationships, opportunities for team building, self-awareness, restoring self-esteem and acquiring learning skills for independent living.

140. The subject co-ordinators have co-operated well to develop an extended programme for all pupils at the school. Pupils in Year 10 currently take the twelve-month Associated Examining Board accredited course in health, hygiene and safety. During the course of the inspection, a representative from the Devon fire service gave a talk on fire prevention and detection of arson, using his labrador sniffer dogs to detect flammable material. In addition, Year 10 pupils take the AEB life skills course, which links well with the vocational programmes, covering issues dealing with gender, the work place, wages, consumer rights, the benefits system, accommodation and safety issues. The course links closely to citizenship and is based on representatives from a wide range of organisations visiting the school to discuss issues with pupils and answering their queries. Visitors planned include representatives from the Benefits Agency and a local building society to open bank accounts for the pupils.
141. The co-ordinators have developed very good six-week programmes for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. The course for pupils in Years 7 and 8 will look at issues such as school rules, health education, eating and hygiene, self-image and bullying. This course is at the developmental stage. The co-ordinator has produced very good detailed plans, including areas of differentiation. Year 9 pupils will take a practical based course including shopping, budgeting, cooking, general DIY and safety in the home. In both courses, there will be other staff working alongside the co-ordinator.
142. Year 9 pupils are currently following the 'Real Life Game' for one lesson each week. The course has developed from the links between Canada's National Life Work Centre and the DfEE. The pupils are very enthusiastic and the work in their folders shows evidence of very good progress. The course gives pupils practical experience of dealing with day-to-day personal situations. Pupils develop skills and awareness with regard to quality of life, making a living, choices and other issues. The game provides opportunities for cross-curricular links, for example, making business cards in information and communication technology. In addition to these courses, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, in their separate groups, learn basic cooking skills which they can use as part of independent living courses. These activities link with evening projects when the head of care cooks a meal with three or four boys in the flat's kitchen.
143. Teaching seen during the inspection was very good. The teachers stressed the needs for hygiene in cookery and health and safety in the motorbike skills course. Aspects of very good teaching included high expectations of behaviour and performance of tasks, teachers encouraging pupils to follow instructions carefully and excellent prior preparation of materials. The response by pupils was very good. In order to be allowed to ride the motorbikes, pupils had to produce their 'Steady Eddie' driving licences which they received for achieving over 60 per cent in a test on basic skills of riding and knowledge of road signs. This is an excellent scheme which links learning to real life situations. The pupils were actively involved, encouraging and helping others. The visit by the Devon fire officer was a very good example of how well the pupils respond in speaking and listening situations. During the lunch time, the officer put on a display of dog handling which provided further evidence of pupils' learning.
144. The co-ordinators are well qualified to teach the PSHE courses. Above all, they are enthusiastic to develop courses based on good practice and to promote learning in real life situations. The preliminary co-ordination work is very good. The new policies introduced reflect closely the excellent overall policy for PSHE within the school. The co-ordinator has produced a scheme of work with detailed lesson plans. It is already apparent that the practical nature of the course linked to very good teaching is resulting in improved learning of practical skills and achievement.