

INSPECTION REPORT

Grasslot Infant School

Maryport

LEA area : Cumbria

Unique Reference Number : 112132

Headteacher : Ms F B Branch

Reporting inspector : Mr B Loizou
T12581

Dates of inspection : 22 - 25 November, 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707114

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Infant
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	3 to 7
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Main Road Maryport Cumbria CA15 8BT
Telephone number :	01900 812268
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Appropriate authority :	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mrs P McCracken
Date of previous inspection :	23 January, 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr B Loizou Registered Inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Information technology Music Under fives	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mrs A Longfield Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Partnership with parents and the community
Mr C Scola Team Inspector	English Art Geography History Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	The curriculum and assessment Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The pupils make good progress because the quality of the teaching is consistently good and often very good. Lessons are well prepared and are relevant to all the pupils.
- The provision for children under five in the nursery and in the reception class is very good. This enables all the children to make good progress.
- The curriculum throughout the school is very well planned and this enables teachers to prepare relevant and challenging tasks to pupils of all abilities, including those pupils who have special educational needs.
- The pupils have very good attitudes to school and to learning. They are very well behaved, polite and considerate. Relationships are constructive and the pupils show respect for others in a group or in their class.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good along with the school's involvement in the local *Raising Achievement Project* which targets support for lower attaining pupils.
- There is good leadership in the school with governors and staff working well as a team. The headteacher provides excellent and inspirational leadership. She is very well respected by the pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. The social, moral and cultural development of the pupils is very good. There are excellent links with parents, local business and the community that the school serves.
- Financial planning is good. The school provides good value for money.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Attainment in science does not adequately reflect the good progress and the well organised teaching that is provided for all the pupils. The school is not providing enough open-ended investigative tasks and projects in science.
- Governors do not sufficiently monitor the curriculum. Minutes of curriculum meetings are not kept and the formal visits made by governors to the school lack a specific focus on standards and the curriculum.

The strengths of the school far outweigh its weaknesses. The weaknesses identified will form the basis for the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies* have been introduced successfully and, although last year's national tests show a disappointing fall in standards, this is not typical of the level of attainment normally seen across the school. Last year's cohort of pupils in the final year of the school has an extraordinarily high proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register who were identified with learning difficulties. This has prompted the school to join the local *Raising Achievement Project* and inspectors judged the provision for lower attaining pupils to be very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the staff work very well as a team. The governors have addressed the key issues from the last inspection in that they

have established more formal procedures to manage the school's finances. They now need to apply the same procedures to the oversight of the curriculum to enable them to monitor how the school is raising standards further. The school is now well placed to make further improvements and to meet its targets.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
			<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E
Reading	E	E		
Writing	E	E		
Mathematics	E	E		

These results relate to the pupils who took the tests last summer. At that time there was an untypical and significant composition of pupils identified as having special educational needs. 26 pupils took the tests in the last school year (1999) and eight of these (31%) had identified learning difficulties and were not expected to reach the expected standards for their age in the tests but all had made good progress. For example, two of these pupils reached the expected standards in mathematics. Taken at face value the results are disappointing as they show that in reading, writing and mathematics standards were well below average compared with all schools and also when compared with similar schools. Given the high composition of pupils identified with special educational needs (well above average compared with all schools of this type), inspection findings show that the test results do not reflect the apparent drop in standards shown in last year's national tests.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years
English	Very good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science		Good
Information technology		Satisfactory
Religious education		Good
Other subjects	Good	Good

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Overall, the teaching throughout the school is consistently good. In 97 per cent of the lessons seen, the teaching was good or very good. It was very good in 33 per cent and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. This high standard of teaching is having a positive effect on the progress that all pupils make. There is also a high standard of support provided by the nursery nurse and classroom assistants who teach the pupils with special educational needs as well as the school's involvement in the local *Raising Achievement Project (RAPS)*.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good overall. This includes the nursery and is consistent across the whole school.
Attendance	Good, attendance is above average and this has improved since the last inspection.
Ethos*	The pupils are keen to participate in lessons and class discussions and they try hard. The headteacher, staff and governors are very committed to raising standards.
Leadership and management	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and this is demonstrated in her clear direction and commitment to the pupils. Governors provide effective leadership in all areas and now need to formalise the way they monitor the curriculum.
Curriculum	Very good. It is broad, balanced and provides relevant, practical activities for all pupils. The school has made a very good start introducing the literacy and numeracy strategies.
Pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They receive very good support which is very well matched to their individual learning needs.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good overall. The pupils' spiritual development is excellent.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The school is well staffed and the governors have made very good improvements to classrooms and areas around the school. There is a very good range of learning resources which are accessible to pupils and staff, including computers. The under-fives do not have a secure outdoor play area of their own.
Value for money	The quality of education and the teaching are good with many very good features. The headteacher and staff are committed to raising standards. The school gives good value for money.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school keeps them well informed. • They are very pleased with the progress their children make. • Parents find it very easy to approach the staff. • They are encouraged to participate in the work of the school. • The attitudes and values promoted by the school. 	

The parents had no complaints about any aspect of the school and feel that it is doing extremely good work for their children. Inspection judgements support parents' positive views in all the key areas mentioned above.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve further the quality of education provided and to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

Raise attainment in science by:

- providing pupils with more opportunities to organise their own investigations;
- providing more open-ended tasks which challenge the pupils' thinking;
- improving the pupils' scientific vocabulary in order that they tackle written tasks more competently.

(Paragraphs 78 - 83)

Establish more formal procedures to enable governors to monitor the curriculum and the progress that pupils make across the school by:

- recording minutes at curriculum committee meetings and then feeding these back to all governors at formal meetings;
- arranging more precise targets for governors' formal monitoring visits to classrooms so that it is clear what is being observed and why the visits are taking place.

(Paragraphs 41 - 44)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important areas for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

By building on the successful introduction of the parent/school reading partnership, the school should broaden the range of reading material taken home by pupils to raise standards in reading and to help parents support their children's reading at home.

(Paragraphs 37; 68)

Provide a secure outdoor play area for children under-five which can be used daily in order that children can explore large spaces, climb and use wheeled toys as part of their physical and gross motor skills development.

(Paragraphs 47; 60)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Grasslot Infant School has 69 pupils currently on roll between the ages of 4 and 7 years. By national standards it is a small school which serves part of the town of Maryport in Cumbria known as the Ewenrigg estate and Grasslot. Children are admitted to the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they reach the age of five. At the time of the inspection almost all of the children in the reception year were under five. The school has a nursery class which provides 30 part-time morning places for three to four-year olds, most of whom attend for three terms prior to joining the reception class. The nursery and reception classes share the same area in the school.

2. The school occupies a site located near to the centre of the town and one classroom (a wooden annex) is located on a separate site near to the main building. The building is Victorian and there has been considerable refurbishment recently in the reception and nursery areas of the school. The immediate neighbourhood is mainly comprised of Local Authority housing. The number of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals (41%) is well above the national average. A high proportion of pupils have special educational needs, most of these are identified as having moderate learning difficulties. All the pupils come from homes where English is the main language.

3. The stated aims of the school include: raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics; ensuring that all children are well-mannered and well-behaved; fostering close links with the local community and parents, for example a project is being developed to help parents read with their children at home; and improving the environment around the school.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	18	8	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	11	8	13
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	16	13	18
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	62 (87)	50 (57)	69 (83)
	National	81 (77)	83 (81)	86 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	11	13	10
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	16	18	15
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	62 (87)	69 (83)	58 (78)
	National	83 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.1
	National comparative data	5.3
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	0.1

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

¹

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	33
Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

4. Attainment on entry to the reception class is below average. The under fives in both the nursery and reception classes make good progress and this is sustained through the school in English and mathematics, so that by the time the pupils reach the age of 7 years, the proportion achieving the standards expected for their age is in line with national averages. The pupils make good progress in science but standards are below average by the end of Key Stage 1 when the pupils leave the school.

4. Benchmark data and the most recent national tests (1999) at the age of 7 years indicate that the performance of the pupils in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average in 1999. These results were not typical and can be explained by the fact that 8 out of 26 pupils taking the tests last year (31%) were identified with special educational needs and all of them were not expected to reach the standards expected for their age. This also affected the school's results when compared with similar schools so that by the time the pupils left the school at the end of Year 2 tests results indicated that standards were well below average compared with all schools and when compared with similar schools.

5. Evidence of the work carried out in the nursery and reception class also indicates that the majority of children under-five are likely to meet the desirable learning outcomes for children entering compulsory education in their personal and social development, physical and creative development. Children under-five make good progress in all the areas of learning but the majority are not likely to reach the desirable learning outcomes by the time they are five in language, literacy, mathematics and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The under-fives do not have access to a secure outdoor play area so that they benefit from daily physical play which could improve further the impact this has on other areas of learning.

6. Inspection evidence in the rest of the school shows that standards are significantly better than last year's test results. Reading, writing and mathematics are well taught so that the pupils make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are reading and writing to standards expected for their age and they have developed a good understanding of number, shape, space and measures. The successful introduction of the *Literacy and Numeracy Strategies* and the good quality of the planning and the teaching ensures that all the pupils make good progress which is consistent across the school. In science, the teaching is well organised and resources are well deployed to ensure that all the pupils experience practical investigations. The pupils make good progress in their science lessons but they do not have enough opportunities to plan their own investigations or to organise the resources available. This has the effect of limiting the way that the pupils comprehend written investigations or experiments which causes them to fall short of the expected standards for their age.

7. When the pupils are admitted to the school they have very limited speaking and listening skills. This limits their progress in the early years with reading and writing. The skilful intervention of the teaching and support staff focuses on improving speaking and listening techniques and this is having a significant effect on the progress the pupils make through the

school. The curriculum is well planned to provide the pupils with early reading and writing experiences which are built upon systematically using very good literacy resources and commercial reading schemes. The excellent home/school reading partnership is helping both the pupils and their parents to read at home. The school now needs to extend this further by enabling the pupils to take home a broader range of reading to improve further their vocabulary and reading experiences.

8. The pupils make good progress in information technology and their level of attainment overall is in line with the standards expected. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The increased resources and the well organised training for all the staff has helped to improve the provision for information and communication technology across the school. The pupils make good progress in religious education and by the time they leave the school their level of attainment meets the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. In all other subjects the pupils make good progress and this is very much related to the high standard of teaching and planning.

9. The pupils with special educational needs receive very good targeted support and this helps them to make good progress in all subjects. The teaching and support staff ensure that they have individual support in lessons and at the same time some targeted support is provided for some pupils with specific learning difficulties as part of the school's involvement in the local *Raising Achievement Project(RAPs)*.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

10. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good and their personal development is good.

11. In classes for the under fives children make good progress in personal and social development. They select appropriate activities and concentrate for long periods in tasks they have chosen such as building train tracks and discovering how far different trucks can roll down the slope. They all make good progress in understanding the routine of the day and the reception children sit quietly and attentively during school assemblies.

12. Attitudes to learning across the school are very good. Most pupils show interest in their work and stay on task. They show their interest and enjoyment of lessons by eagerly answering questions. They concentrate well and sustain interest with the help of the support staff. The pupils take great pride in their completed work.

13. The behaviour of the pupils in and round the school is very good. They are thoughtful of others and listen carefully to one another as well as to their teachers and support staff. During breaks and at lunchtimes the pupils are co-operative. They show respect for the building and equipment, for example in a mathematics lesson when using 'real' money.

14. Positive behaviour is encouraged and all staff acts as good role models. The whole school draws up the school rules at the beginning of each school year and these are well displayed in the hall.

15. The pupils make good use of the appropriate materials to support their learning when it is necessary to do so. They are particularly enthusiastic when tasks are challenging which they often are. They make thoughtful contributions in class discussions and answer questions knowledgeably.

They are very supportive of each other's efforts. In a Year 2 English lesson they all contributed to the instructions for making a cup of tea and were pleased when the teacher, followed the pupils' written instructions successfully. The pupils are friendly, polite and have very good relationships with the staff as well as showing show kindness to other pupils.

16. The personal development of pupils is good. When given the opportunity to take responsibility, for example taking the dinner numbers to the office and in classroom responsibilities. The pupils also value the opportunity to volunteer to lead the prayers in assembly. The personal development is significantly enhanced by the staff who treat the pupils with care and respect.

Attendance

17. The pupils' attendance continues to be good and is usually above the national average. The rates of authorised and unauthorised absence are usually below those of most schools of this type. The high rate of absence at the time of the inspection was due to genuine illness. The marking of registers now complies with statutory requirements and registration periods provide a calm start to the school day. Lateness is not a problem and lessons start and finish punctually.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

18. The overall quality of teaching is good and this includes the teaching in the nursery and reception class. During the inspection, teaching was good or better in ninety-seven per cent of lessons. One in three lessons were very good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. This high standard of teaching is having a positive effect on the progress that all the pupils make. The teaching is consistently good across all classes so that the pupils' good progress is sustained across the school.

19. The under-fives receive well organised and effective teaching. In a very short space of time the children under-five have gained in confidence and can select tasks and materials independently. Language and literacy is very well taught in the nursery and reception class and in all other areas of learning the quality of teaching is consistently good and often very good. The national *Literacy and Numeracy Strategies* in the rest of the school have been implemented very effectively. Lessons are very well planned as the teachers take into account the needs of all abilities in their lessons. The work is challenging and usually matched to the pupils' abilities and very good use is made of support staff, especially for pupils with special educational needs. Resources are well used and organised so that they are accessible to all the pupils. Classrooms are very well organised and the teachers use a range of techniques and methods to engage the pupils in meaningful tasks and discussions. The teachers keep accurate records of the pupils' progress and this enables them to plan future lessons according to the progress that each ability group makes.

20. The way that teachers plan their lessons is a strength of the school. The school's curriculum is very closely linked to the key skills of literacy and numeracy with a broad range of topics and themes that help the teachers plan relevant and effective lessons. The pupils are provided with tasks which are related to their own experience and for this reason the teaching is most effective as it enables all the pupils to engage in practical activities which are relevant to their

ages and needs. Good use is made of time and resources and nearly all lessons have a challenging pace with clearly defined tasks that aim to raise standards and levels of achievement across the school. The teachers have high expectations and they use good techniques to get the pupils to listen to others and to be involved in discussion. All the teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects being taught and they are very experienced with the age ranges across the school. Very good use is made of visiting speakers and specialists and the teachers make effective use of educational visits to enhance their lessons and broaden the pupils' understanding of the topics being taught.

21. Computers are being used effectively in classrooms and this is significantly since the last inspection. Teachers are gaining in confidence as well as expertise in integrating computers into most lessons and subjects. Every class base has at least one computer and some have CD-ROM machines. The headteacher has ensured that all staff are being trained to use computers and this is clearly having a beneficial effect on the quality of the school's information technology curriculum.

22. The teachers encourage the pupils to take reading books home and the parents are invited to help their children read by coming into the class every morning to hear their own child read in class for a few minutes. These morning sessions are very successful as they enable parents to talk to teachers about their child's progress in reading. The school plans to build on this reading partnership by broadening the range of reading material that the pupils take home with them.

The curriculum and assessment

23. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum apart from outdoor play for children under five, where resources are unsatisfactory.

24. The curriculum reflects and supports the aims of the school. It includes all of the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Health education, personal and social education and sex education are also included. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' intellectual and physical development and makes very good provision for their personal development. The cross-curricular work across all areas of the curriculum is a great strength of the school. The headteacher monitors the timetables and ensures that all subjects in the curriculum are covered and receive an appropriate amount of time. All the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The additional resources for *Literacy* and the implementation of the *Literacy Hour*, as well as the school's current good work in *Numeracy*, have led to a considerable improvement in these subjects.

25. The overall quality of planning is very good. Planning is directly linked to the schemes of work, which are comprehensive and detailed. These effective schemes of work ensure that lessons are clearly focused and that the delivery of the curriculum is well planned. Both medium and short-term plans are based on schemes of work, and particular emphasis is given to planning for literacy and numeracy. All teachers plan co-operatively to ensure continuity and progression in learning and this has a positive impact on the standards achieved. The School Development Plan is a very effective document that systematically identifies areas of the curriculum for development, setting targets and priorities. Monitoring of these results is carried out through evaluation and detailed analysis.

26. The school ensures equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils. Procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are good. Once identified, pupils follow a closely monitored programme in reading and writing and they make good progress.

The special needs co-ordinator plans individual detailed work programmes which are well used by the class teachers and special needs assistants.

27. The teachers know their pupils well and they generally make good use of their day-to-day assessments to set appropriate targets for their pupils' future learning. The pupils' work is marked conscientiously. Most of the comments on the pupils' work are positive and the teachers' verbal feedback provides pupils with clear guidance on how their work might be improved. The headteacher has a clear view of standards in each year group and as a result is able to monitor standards from year to year. This contributes to the good progress the school has made in raising standards.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

28. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

29. The school makes excellent provision for the spiritual development of pupils. Well planned, purposeful lessons stimulate the pupils' interest and create moments of excitement. The teachers receive and value the pupils' ideas and through skilful questioning lead them to think seriously about other peoples' ideas and beliefs. The high profile of music, art and strong community links all contribute to the school's considerable ethos and deliver a broad curriculum. All pupils join with prayers and hymns. Time for reflection and contemplation is built into school assemblies. Particularly impressive is the way in which pupils eagerly volunteer to compose and confidently say a prayer relevant to that day's assembly theme. Main festivals of the year are formally celebrated. The school makes excellent use of cross-curricular links to extend the pupils' sense of awe and wonder at the world in which they live and develop their spirituality.

30. Pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils are taught how to distinguish right from wrong and their behaviour in and around the school reflects the very high standard of moral development promoted. At the beginning of the school year all pupils decide the school rules for the year. Their rules are very relevant and are patently followed. Opportunities are provided at weekly assemblies to celebrate pupils' successes.

31. The social development of pupils is very good. Pupils contribute actively to the life of the school. All the pupils are individually given tasks and responsibilities from an early age and their help and collaboration ensures that classroom and school routines are very smooth. Year 2 pupils often take responsibility for younger ones during playtimes and breaks. There are very good links with the local community through concerts, school events, student placements and topic work.

32. The cultural development of pupils is very good. The pupils' appreciation of their own and other cultures is furthered by lessons in art, music, history and geography. The school takes every opportunity to extend the pupils' appreciation and to provide them with an insight into the richness and diversity of other cultures and religions. Over the school year the school receives a wide range of visits including dance, drama and theatre groups. The school makes very good use of local amenities and museums to support topic work. The study of other world religions such as *Islam* is an important part of the religious education curriculum and helps to deepen pupils' understanding and appreciation of a multi-cultural society.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

33. The school is a caring community where the good provision for support and guidance of the pupils is having a positive impact on the quality of their learning. Class teachers and the headteacher monitor the personal development of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, very carefully. The nursery nurse who has undertaken special training to increase her skills, teaches and carries out the activities required in the *Raising Achievement Project* very effectively, targeting certain pupils to achieve higher standards. Several parents, including some parent governors, regularly help in the classroom, and the Chair of the governors is frequently in school supporting its work.

34. The school's behaviour policy is very effective. There is a positive approach to discipline and standards of behaviour are very high, both in the classroom and at playtimes. Pupils are praised regularly for good work, behaviour and caring attitudes in the celebration assemblies. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are very comprehensive and are efficiently followed by the school. The pupils' reports are detailed and well written and accurately inform parents of their child's progress and identify areas for improvement. Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are very good and are well supported by the *Education Welfare Officer*.

35. Staff are very aware of the *Child Protection Procedures*. There is regular training and the school has good links with outside agencies. The school makes good provision for the health, safety and well being of the pupils. Fire drills are held regularly and evacuation instructions are posted appropriately throughout the school.

Partnership with parents and the community

36. The parents receive a good variety of information about the work of the school. Newsletters keep parents well informed about school activities. The Governors annual report provides a useful summary of school affairs. The school prospectus is well presented and a useful document that provides a clear description of the schools' provision. Parents and children about to join the nursery receive their own special booklet. The parents are given detailed and helpful information about their children's attainment and progress at the consultation meeting held during the day after the issue of the annual report. The annual reports on pupils' progress meet statutory requirements. Parents of children with special educational needs are involved in the planning of their individual educational plans. Parents appreciate the fact that the head teacher and staff are very approachable and they confirmed this at the formal pre-inspection meeting.

37. The parents' involvement in their children's learning is very good and the school encourages parents to work at home with their children. Parents support their children through the school's *home reading scheme*.

38. The parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. There is a very active *Friends Association* that organises social and fund raising events. Several parents help in school on a regular basis in the classroom, and on educational visits. They are well briefed and provide valuable support.

39. The school has excellent relationships with the local businesses and the community. Festive services are held and pupils sing at *Harvest Time* and *Christmas* at the local home for the

elderly. The pupils take presents for the residents. In connection with topic work pupils have visited the local *fish and chip shop* and held meetings in the *Mayor's office* as part of a role play exercise.

40. Local business and residents have supported the school very well and contributed to the school making their environmental *Senses Garden*. There are very good links with the local junior schools.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

41. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is well supported by her staff and governors. The parents think very highly of her commitment to their children and to the school as a whole. As a very small infant school the headteacher leads by example and teaches for a considerable part of each day. The very high standard of her teaching and planning has gained the respect and admiration of the pupils, staff, governors and parents. Since the last inspection the staff and governors have worked hard to address the issues raised at the time and have successfully devised schemes of work and planning procedures.

42. The governors have also addressed the key issues related to the way they monitor the school's finances and standards. They have formed committees with appropriate terms of reference to enable them to manage and monitor the work of the school more effectively. The curriculum committee meets every term but they do not keep formal minutes in the same way that the finance committee does. This could prove to be ineffective in the future especially when organising formal monitoring visits to classrooms when the governors need to focus on particular curriculum issues or to monitor standards in a subject.

43. All staff have responsibilities for managing a curriculum subject or area including special educational needs. These responsibilities are carried efficiently and given the little time available to the staff the headteacher has managed to provide all staff with monitoring and planning time every term. The relationship between the governors and the staff is very good.

44. The school development plan and curriculum action plans set out the main priorities for the school each year. These have been prepared by all staff and governors. This helps both the staff and governors to monitor the progress in each area and to keep up to date with new initiatives and curriculum changes, for example, the successful introduction of the national *Literacy and Numeracy Strategies*. Meetings are planned every week covering all aspects of the school and its work and governors meet regularly. The governors carry out and fulfil their statutory obligations effectively and efficiently. The staff and governors are clearly committed to raising achievement as well as providing equal opportunities for all the pupils.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

45. The match of the number of staff, their qualifications and experience to the demands of the curriculum for both teaching and support staff is good. The arrangements for the professional development of staff are good. The curriculum co-ordinators have opportunities to monitor pupils' progress and standards in their respective subjects or areas.

46. The school has a headteacher who teaches every morning in the nursery together with three full-time teachers. The part-time teacher is based in the nursery as the school teaches up to 30 part-time children under-five in the mornings. There is a full-time nursery nurse who is time-tabled in the mornings in the nursery and provides additional classroom support particularly for pupils on the register of special educational needs (SEN) in the afternoons. Additional informal support is also provided by a number of adults, parents and governors.

47. The school's accommodation is good in terms of its adequacy for the effective delivery of the curriculum. The under-fives do not have access to their own secure outdoor play area. The nursery makes good use of the additional "*quiet room*" and the governors have successfully refurbished the teaching areas in the reception class and nursery.

48. The school building is very old and is very well maintained so that all teaching areas and the school's assembly hall are bright and well decorated. The classrooms are spacious and very well arranged into relevant work areas. The school hall is adequate for indoor physical education. The school playground is easy to supervise and is an appropriate size for the number of pupils.

49. The school is very well stocked with a range of resources, equipment and materials. These support all subject areas and since the last inspection the school has improved the number and quality of computers. Resources are clearly labelled and stored to make them accessible to staff and pupils. The pupils are taught to look after resources and the staff make very efficient use of materials and tools to support their lessons.

The efficiency of the school

50. The resources made available to the school are managed very well. The school's budget is very well managed by the governors and headteacher. The Local Authority has helped to resolve the problems caused by recent falling rolls by allowing the school to plan for a deficit budget in the short-term. Financial management is good and the secretary, who works part-time, provides very effective and efficient organisation which enables the headteacher to allocate resources according to the curriculum needs of the school.

51. The headteacher prepares the annual budget with the assistance of the Local Education Authority and this is then subject to detailed examination by the finance committee of the Governing Body. The headteacher and her staff are very adept at finding external sponsorship and additional support from local businesses to purchase equipment and materials. The Governing Body also provide valuable support to the headteacher in their regular visits to the school. The staff make very good use of the school's resources with a very practical and relevant curriculum for all the pupils.

52. The day-to-day financial control of the school is good and a number of issues highlighted in the latest financial audit of the school have been addressed. Taking into account the pupils' attainment on entry to the reception class, the high standard of the teaching, the pupils' positive attitudes and the good progress they make throughout their time at the school, the school provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

53. Children under five are taught in the nursery and reception classes. The nursery has 31 part-time children who all attend in the mornings. They are taught by a part-time teacher and a trained nursery nurse. The headteacher is also time-tabled in the nursery in the mornings and this enables the organisation of groups and activities to benefit from good staffing ratios. At the time of the inspection all of the children in the reception class were under five. They are taught by a full-time class teacher and part-time support is also time-tabled during the day. Children usually start nursery in the September after their third birthday and they transfer to the reception class after three terms, in the September following their fourth birthday.

54. Provision for children under five is very good in both the nursery and the reception class. All the required areas of learning are taught effectively and there are especially good arrangements made for children with special educational needs. The nursery and reception class are based together in a large area especially designated and equipped for early years provision. The nursery area also has a *quiet room* which serves a collection and meeting point for parents and children in the mornings and at the end of the morning session. There is also ample storage space and resources are plentiful and well maintained. The reception class is spacious and well organised. Both the nursery and reception areas have clearly designated spaces which are clearly labelled. For example, *The Greengrocer*, *The hairdressers*, *A Victorian classroom*, *Water and sand areas* and more. The majority of children under five are likely to achieve the desirable learning outcomes for children entering compulsory education in their personal and social development and their physical and creative development. They do not meet the learning outcomes in language, literacy, mathematics and their knowledge and understanding of the world. All the children under five make very good progress in their personal and social development and good progress in all other areas of learning.

Personal and social development

55. Progress in personal and social development is very good because the teaching and the curriculum are specifically focussed on improving children's individual and co-operative skills. The children are taught to use simple routines and to make choices by collecting their own planning sheets and following simple instructions to move from one activity to another. The children respond by organising their own work in each area of the nursery and co-operating with others in small groups. In their groups they engage in conversation and role play, happily sharing tools and materials and then work together when tidying up and finishing their work. In the morning when they first come into nursery with their parents they recognise their own name tag and hang it in its place as a simple method of self registration. In a very short space of time the children have learned to settle into these routines and this is having a very positive effect on other areas of learning as they make good progress throughout their time in the nursery.

56. The children in the reception class also have their own planning sheets which have been slightly adapted to help the children and the teacher record which activities they have been doing during the week. They also make very good progress. The children know their way around the class, they put away their work and equipment and often collaborate in group activities. There is a good balance of teacher-directed work in the morning session which includes more formal literacy and numeracy work and, in the afternoons, there is a very well organised activity time enabling all

the children to explore using the computer, role play areas, writing equipment, including some *Victorian artefacts* in the *writing area*. All the children in both the nursery and reception class participate in group discussions and they wait their turn when sharing the computer or waiting to use the sand and water trays.

Language and literacy

57. Most of the children enter the nursery with very limited language skills, especially in speaking and listening. A significant proportion have speech difficulties and some find it difficult to listen to others in a group. The main focus in both the nursery and the reception class is to improve the children's language development through talking and listening activities. The staff have rightly focused on specific techniques that enable the children to look at each other when speaking and then waiting their turn during conversation to reply or answer a question. Most of the children speak in short punctuated sentences or phrases. Many are unable to communicate clearly and some lower attaining children find it very difficult to focus during group discussions. The staff teach the children very effective communication techniques, for example, "*Watch my nose when I speak*" or "*Look at her eyes when she speaks to you*" or "*Shake his hand and say thank you for playing with me*". The children are also introduced to a wide range of books. They regularly take books home to share with their parents and guardians. Both the nursery and reception class have successfully forged effective links with parents who are encouraged to come into school with their child to share in their reading experiences. Every morning a short reading session is organised throughout the school when parents and children can read together. This is very good practice. In both the nursery and reception class the children can handle books, distinguish print from illustration and some are able to predict and use a range of prompts to describe familiar words or characters in a picture. In the writing areas children engage in realistic role play involving writing activities. They can hold a pencil or crayon and are beginning to print letters. Some children in the nursery are already beginning to distinguish letters in their name and can find similar letters around the room or in a book. Reception class children have begun to use a good quality commercial reading scheme and are beginning to familiarise themselves with the characters and the themes in the stories. A small number are able to read in line with the standards expected for five year olds. All the children under five make good progress in language and literacy but the majority do not reach the standard expected for their age by the time they are five.

Mathematics

58. In the nursery the children make good progress because they are usually required to use shapes, numbers and objects in a variety of activities. Most of the children enjoy sorting objects in role play, for example, in the *Greengrocer's shop* they sort and match vegetables when putting out and tidying away. In other areas of the nursery the children handle simple plane shapes, thread beads and match jig saw shapes into templates. One group was observed playing a simple colour and shape recognition game. The focus was on language skills and the children were required to count using a simple dice and then match up the colours to those on the game board. The children also estimate measures and spaces during practical and physical play. They estimate '*short*' and '*long*', '*round*' or '*square*' using a range of construction toys and equipment. In a very well planned session the nursery children shared a "*Big Book*" about "*Two Babies*" to focus on the number "2", most could relate the number to their own experiences and some were able to match the number to familiar numbers around the room. In the reception class the children make good progress because they can relate numbers to five to their actual value in relation to other numbers. Some children are confident counting up to 10 and beyond. They can record numbers to five and match these to the number of objects in a set. Children under five make good progress but the

majority do not reach the expected standard for this area of learning by the age of five.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. The children in both the nursery and reception class make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They can use the computer to draw pictures, control the mouse (a pointing device) and also use the direction keys to move a cursor on the screen. In the reception class the children dress up as Victorian pupils in the *Victorian Classroom* area. They know that in the past children used different tools and materials to those used today. In the nursery there are many role play areas which relate to the children's home environment. These include *shops* and *the hairdressers*. Most of the work related to this area of learning is relevant to the children in both the nursery and reception class. The staff provide many opportunities for the children to explore through role play, construction and hands on activities with an emphasis on real situations that are familiar to the children's local environment. The children are encouraged to make observations of changes, for example, in the reception class the children have placed flowers in coloured water and then observe any changes to the colours of the petals. The children find it difficult at times to explain what they see as they have a very limited vocabulary. Although they make good progress in this area of learning most children will not achieve the expected level of understanding within the desirable learning outcomes by the time they start formal education at the age of five.

Physical development

60. The children make good progress in their physical development throughout the nursery and reception class. The nursery children are time-tabled to use the school hall once a week when all the large apparatus is put out for the whole school to use. There are also daily opportunities to play outside when the children share the infant playground. There is no secure play area outside for nursery children so that they have daily and regular opportunities to explore spaces, used wheeled toys or to climb small apparatus. This limits the school's capacity to ensure that the youngest children experience regular physical activity to further develop their gross motor skills and co-ordination. The reception are time-tabled to have a range of physical education, music and movement lessons and they also benefit from the weekly hall session when the large apparatus is put out for the day. All the children under five make good progress learning fine motor skills when using pencils, scissors, brushes and construction equipment. By the age of five most have achieved the expected standard in the desirable learning outcome for physical development.

Creative development

61. There are many good opportunities for the children to develop creative skills throughout the nursery and reception class. The staff provide a broad range of experiences and the quality of teaching is usually very good in this area of learning. Good use is made of the extensive materials and tools, including activities that involve painting, collage, shaping and moulding, cutting and also in musical activities when the children are offered opportunities to play simple tuned and untuned percussion instruments. The children in the reception class join in the singing during assembly times and they are making good progress learning a range of songs, hymns and prayers in assemblies. The nursery children enjoy mixing and matching coloured paints and they have made good prints using different shaped templates and moulds. By the time the children reach the age of five the majority have achieved the desirable learning outcomes set out for their creative development.

62. The quality of teaching is never less than good and is often very good throughout the nursery and reception class. This is consistent with all areas of learning for children under five. Teachers and support staff plan their work carefully and they make good use of their assessments of the children's progress. The classrooms and quiet area are structured effectively to ensure that equipment and materials are readily available to the children. The staff ensure that there is a focus on developing the children's language skills through talking and listening activities and this is clearly helping all the children to make good progress in all areas of learning. Routines are clearly structured and are already familiar to both parents and children. There is a strong partnership with parents in both the nursery and reception class and this is clearly helping the school to develop effective links with parents so that they can help their children at home with reading, writing and other aspects of the under-fives curriculum. The headteacher and staff work well as a team to provide a very effective curriculum for the under-fives. By building on the successful home-reading partnership the school is now well placed to broaden the range of reading materials that children experience at home.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

63. Results of the 1999 end-of-key stage tests for seven-year-olds show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was well below the national average. However, since one third of these pupils had special educational needs, these results do not give a true reflection of standards within the school. Observation during the inspection and a scrutiny of their work suggests that the majority of the pupils currently in Year 2 are likely to achieve the expected standard of level 2 with a small minority reaching the higher level. In previous years, results in reading have been around the national average while those in writing have remained consistently below. The school has identified the need to concentrate on pupils' writing skills and the work they are doing is already having a significant impact.

64. Many of the younger pupils enter the school with well below average speaking and listening skills. The teachers take every opportunity to provide activities, which stimulate the pupils' imagination and require them to listen carefully to each other and to adults and then to respond appropriately. For example, during a discussion of "*Billy Duck*" in a story book many pupils were having great difficulty articulating responses to questions about the illustrations and correctly ordering the events in the *Big Book* story. The teacher's carefully targeted patient questioning, use of several adults supporting the groups and imaginative follow-up work for each group, ensured good progress in speaking and listening skills. Throughout the school class discussions are an important part of the *Literacy Hour* and are used very effectively to develop the pupils' vocabulary and self-confidence.

65. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment in reading is satisfactory and they make good progress. Phonic skills are taught systematically and the pupils begin to recognise letters and the sounds they make. The youngest children recognise the early flashcards in their reading scheme and are able to pick out familiar sight words. Older pupils in the key stage realise when they have made an error in their reading and use picture and context clues to self-correct. A small minority of pupils are able to express preferences for certain books and authors. The school has given the teaching of reading a very high priority. The support and involvement of parents and carers, a significant number of whom, hear their children read at home and come into the school to participate in the "shared reading" is having a positive impact on raising standards in reading.

Throughout the school reading books are carefully coded to provide appropriate challenge at every level and very detailed records are kept.

66. Pupils' standards in writing are in line with those expected for their age. The early skills of writing are systematically taught. Younger pupils are given practice in copying shapes and patterns, learn to form their letters correctly and observe correct spacing. Many are able to sequence words in simple sentences using the basic punctuation of full stops and capital letters. By the end of Year 2 a wide variety of writing experiences have been covered including factual accounts, poetry, letters, reports, stories and book reviews. A very significant strength of the school is the links with other areas of the curriculum. In writing every opportunity is taken to exploit this. For example a "senses walk" leads to explanatory writing; a visit to a museum is followed up by descriptive and investigative work on the origin of Paddington Bear or the development of perambulators.

67. The standard of handwriting and presentation is good throughout the school. More able pupils are developing a confident joining script, while there is an appropriate emphasis on letter formation and consistency for less able pupils. Marking is appropriate and supports the pupils individually. The pupils regularly take home their own spellings to learn and the standards of spelling are good.

68. Pupils begin school with below average levels of attainment in literacy. This is especially evident in speaking and listening, which then affects early development in reading. The school has rightly identified these areas as needing development. The *Raising Achievement Project*, the reading partnership between parents and school and the successful implementation of the *Literacy Hour* are already raising standards but further development is required to broaden the pupils' range of reading and develop wider literacy skills. This will, in turn raise standards in writing. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, the work they do is always appropriate and they make good progress in their English work.

69. Attitudes to learning are consistently very good. Pupils are interested in their work, enthusiastic and respond to their teachers very well. They co-operate very well together and are very supportive of each other. Standards of behaviour in class are very high and the way pupils remain on task and work independently is very impressive.

70. The overall quality of the teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations and plan lessons very thoroughly. Work is well matched to the pupils' abilities. The English scheme of work is very well structured and lays down clear guidelines for teachers, who find it to be a very useful tool to support their planning. Resources are very well organised and relationships are very good. A strength of the teaching is the use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and give them confidence to express their views. Particularly effective is the contribution of support staff and parent voluntary helpers, who are always well briefed and have a significant impact on the progress of pupils. The quality of the teaching is having a positive impact on the rising standards now being achieved by many of the pupils.

71. The English co-ordinator and the head-teacher monitor teachers' planning. They also monitor teaching and give useful feedback to teachers. Assessment is used very effectively and ensures that all pupils work at an appropriate level. Samples of work are used to ensure secure National Curriculum levels.

72. The English co-ordinator has received training for the Literacy Hour. She has led

appropriate staff training and all have worked very hard to ensure the smooth implementation of the Literacy Hour. The headteacher has also organised a *Literacy Day* to inform parents. The Literacy Hour is well resourced with a good selection of books for shared reading.

Mathematics

73. The results of national tests over the past three years indicate that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in mathematics is below the national average. Their performance in last summer's tests (1999) was greatly influenced by the high percentage (31%) of pupils identified with special educational needs. When compared with similar schools tests results in the past have been in line with the average but last summer's results were untypically well below average for the first time over the last three years. Inspection findings indicate that pupils are making good progress throughout Key Stage 1 and that the proportion of pupils likely to achieve the expected standards are in line with the national average. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and are making good progress towards their attainment targets.

74. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils have gained a secure understanding of numbers and the value of each digit in larger numbers up to 100. Pupils in Year 2 are using good counting techniques to order and match numbers up to 100 and beyond. They have also built up a good working knowledge of simple number facts which they use to calculate simple number operations. In Year 1 the pupils can handle real money to calculate totals and how much change is left when amounts up to 10 pence and 50 pence are spent. In both Year 1 and Year 2 the majority of pupils are beginning to secure an understanding of *odd and even numbers* and how these relate to useful techniques for calculating simple operations such as *halving and doubling*. All pupils, including those identified with special educational needs, are making good progress in mathematics. This also includes their knowledge and understanding of shapes and measures as well as using simple pictorial representations of data, for example, block graphs and simple tables and charts.

75. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. They co-operate in pairs and small groups and happily share resources or wait their turn. Behaviour is usually very good and the pupils respond to the *quick-fire mental arithmetic sessions* at the start of their *numeracy lessons* with enthusiasm. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated in all lessons and they participate in class or group discussions with increasing confidence.

76. The quality of teaching is usually good and often very good. The school has adapted to the requirements set out in the *National Numeracy Strategy* very well. The teachers use good techniques to point out particular methods when calculating number problems. They have a secure understanding of the needs of all the pupils in their class. Every lesson is clearly planned to take account of the needs of pupils across the ability range. This is a particular strength of the teaching because lessons move from whole class activities and discussion to more focused number work which is challenging and particularly relevant to all ability groups. This is having a very positive impact on standards in mathematics and the school has rightly focused most of the teaching on improving numeracy skills. Support staff make a significant contribution to mathematics lessons. Pupils with special educational needs have relevant and targeted support to ensure that the work is matched to their specific learning needs. There is a good balance of practical investigations involving practical resources such as number squares, flash cards, real money, plane and solid regular shapes and number charts. Classrooms have stimulating visual aids to provide pupils with mental models of numbers, shapes and measures.

77. The mathematics curriculum is very well planned and the school has made a very good start implementing the requirements of the *National Numeracy Strategy*. There is a clear emphasis

on developing pupils' numeracy skills using mental arithmetic and quick-recall techniques at the beginning of every lesson. The mathematics co-ordinator has opportunities to look at pupils work and to visit classrooms to monitor the progress that pupils are making. She is clear about the need to raise standards and to focus on specific targets for each pupil so that they all make good progress. This has had a significant impact on the way that lessons are planned so that pupils are grouped according to their ability. Very good assessments have been made to enable all staff to gather sufficient information about the potential of each pupil. Resources are plentiful and are well maintained. Every class has a broad range of equipment and supporting materials to help the pupils develop a greater understanding of numbers, shapes and measures. The school is now well placed to make significant improvements to standards in mathematics.

Science

78. Teachers' assessments of the pupils' level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age is below the national average. Inspection findings confirm this as attainment is below average although the pupils are making good progress.

79. Year 2 pupils are beginning to understand that electricity requires a power source and that in order to make a bulb light you need to link up a complete circuit. The majority of Year 2 pupils understand the basic requirements of a fair test and that electricity could be hazardous in the wrong environment or circumstances. In Year 1 the pupils are able to use mirrors to investigate the effects caused by the reflection of light. They record their results using simple diagrams. Throughout Key Stage 1 the pupils are developing an increasing understanding of physical processes and are learning to focus their observations of changes in the natural environment. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils have gained sufficient knowledge and experience to organise an experiment or investigation but they rely heavily on the direction of a teacher or adult to organise their thinking and to make reasonable conclusions from their observations.

80. The pupils enjoy their science work very much. They are attentive and well behaved in lessons and they handle equipment and resources carefully. The pupils work collaboratively and they co-operate with each other when required to investigate. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson the pupils discussed how they could make a bulb light up given the resources set out for them on the table. More capable pupils helped others on their table to sort out the wires and to arrange the battery in the right sequence to complete their circuit.

81. The teaching is good throughout the school. It is well planned and resources are made accessible to all the pupils. The science lessons observed during the inspection allowed some degree of investigation with a large element of teacher directed tasks and organisation. Teachers ask relevant and appropriate questions to tease out possible lines of enquiry but most of the questioning leads to a narrow solution to the investigation. This is not helping the pupils to organise their own resources and experiments so that they arrive at different points which can be thoroughly explored by others in the class during discussion. The teaching makes good use of the outcomes of each lesson to adapt future lessons and in this respect there is very good use made of teacher assessments to establish how much the pupils have learned in previous lessons. When given open-ended tasks or when asked more open questions the pupils struggle to apply their knowledge and understanding and for this reason they tend to under-achieve when given formal science assessments at the end of the key stage. The pupils' limited vocabulary also hinders them when faced with written tasks. In the Year 2 science lesson, very good use was made of scientific

vocabulary and this helped the pupils' to think through the problem of constructing simple electric circuits. More opportunities like this across the school could improve the way that pupils approach their investigations and tasks.

82. The subject is well managed and there are very good plans in place to raise the level of attainment further. The co-ordinator is fully aware of the needs of all the pupils across the school and the organisation of the science curriculum helps class teachers to plan a series of related lessons that have good development. This is helping all the pupils to make good progress in their basic understanding of scientific principles. The school now needs to raise the overall level of attainment by enabling all the pupils to organise investigations and experiments and to apply their knowledge and understanding to a range of open-ended lines of enquiry. For example, having introduced the basic principles of reflection or an electric circuit, teachers tend to prepare a structured and well resourced lesson. This limits the scope for wider investigation if the resources are already set out for the pupils. More time needs to be given to investigating and organising the resources with more open-ended tasks provided to tease out a range of suggestions from the pupils which can then be refined during the course of a series of related lessons.

83. The science curriculum is very well resourced with every class having access to the full range of materials, tools and equipment that covers every aspect of the subject. Year 2 also makes very good use of the computer to enhance pupils scientific knowledge. Very good use is made of educational visits in the local area. These help the pupils to see how local industry relates to simple scientific processes, for example, when Year 1 visited a local garage to see how a car was being fixed.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

84. It was not possible to observe art being taught during the week of the inspection. However, evidence gained from interviews with both staff and pupils, a thorough scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' individual work and displays of art work in the classroom and around the school, indicate that art has a very secure place in the school's curriculum.

85. In the reception class the children draw and paint and are encouraged in the skills of colour mixing in their work on autumn colours. This together with their work on "*A world without colour*" reveals good progress in mixing skills. The school has a very strong cross-curricular approach so that geography work, for example, carried out during a visit to the local beach links to sand and symbolic stone pictures and observational drawings in the style of *Van Gogh*. A look at cave paintings results in pupils creating their own pictures from natural materials where pupils make good progress in developing shades and tones. Art skills are developed further as pupils progress through the school and continue to have strong cross-curricular links. In Year 1, for instance there are some very good observational drawings of Victorian household implements. In Year 2 pupils further develop their colour mixing skills and reproduce pictures in one colour styled on *Picasso's "blue period."* Printing, collage, tie and die, wax resist weaving, fabric printing and felt making are just some of the techniques that the pupils will have experienced. By the time they

leave the key stage they have made good progress in building up their knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of media and techniques.

86. The response of the pupils is very good. They are very eager to show and discuss work they have done. Older pupils are able to apply constructive criticism to pieces of artwork they have done.

87. The art co-ordinator monitors the subject by classroom visits and offering advice and support if necessary. The scheme of work is very well structured, develops skills systematically and has very strong links across the rest of the curriculum. Resources are good and appropriately deployed in each classroom. The pupils' artwork is well displayed to celebrate achievement and makes a very contribution to the ethos of the school.

Design and technology

88. No lessons were observed during the inspection but evidence is drawn from displays, photographic evidence and pupils' previous work. The pupils make good progress in design and technology. The subject is well organised and lessons are usually related to a topic or theme.

89. In Year 1 the pupils have made "*Ginger Bread Men*" in food technology. They have also visited the local *Fish and Chip Shop* to see the whole process of food preparation. The class have kept a good catalogue of photographic evidence which includes a collection of *Street Furniture Rubbings* and visits to a local garage and the *Sheepskin Centre*. In Year 2 the class have created a *McDonald's Restaurant* role play area with the pupils making menus, opening and closing times, price lists and other related items. Throughout Key Stage 1 the pupils have access to construction equipment and a range of materials including dough, paper, card, glues and paints. All of this amounts to a substantial range of design and technology experiences that enable all the pupils to improve their skills through a comprehensive programme of relevant activities and tasks.

90. Evidence from discussions with pupils shows that they thoroughly enjoy their design and technology lessons and experiences. They are motivated and as they progress through the school they are given increasing responsibilities to organise their own tools and materials.

91. From the planning and the extensive range of examples collected by teachers of the pupils' work, the quality of teaching is consistently good. There are very high expectations set across the school for the pupils to think about their designs and then apply a range of skills when making their products. Very good use is made of the extensive range of resources available to the pupils. The topics and themes are very relevant to the pupils' own experiences and very good use is made of local visits to shops and businesses. The subject is well managed and the planning ensures that all teachers integrate the subject into their topics.

Geography and history

92. Only one history lesson was observed. Evidence from samples of work, displays and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that history and geography have a very secure place in the school's curriculum and that the pupils make good progress.

93. In geography, pupils in the reception class and in Year 1 use their visits in the local area to

develop their knowledge of the locality and learn mapping skills. Through cross-curricular work other places and areas in the country are compared. In Year 2 these skills are further developed. Majorca, Cyprus, China and France, and many other countries are visited by *Barnaby Bear* (a soft toy used as a role model). Maps and displays are used to locate features that relate to the post cards *Barnaby* sends back to the class. The similarities and differences between *Maryport* and *Kaptlamwa*, a village in *Kenya*, are explored to compare the world beyond the pupils' own locality.

94. In history, pupils extend their understanding of how change occurs over time. In the reception class a visit to the local shop leads to comparisons of how people used to shop. In Year 1, work on the *Great Fire of London* is followed by a visit to a modern fire station to study the history of fire fighting. In Year 2 a visit to the *Toy Museum* is followed by research into the development of toys. By the end of the key stage the pupils' knowledge and understanding of history and historical events is very good. They are able to talk confidently about work they have done in history.

95. In the lesson observed the quality of teaching was good. Interesting and appropriate resources were used to sustain the pupils' interest and the teacher's questioning was used very effectively to challenge the pupils' thinking. Research into the topic was organised so that all pupils worked at an appropriate level.

96. The pupils' response was very good. They were attentive, sustained their concentration, made thoughtful contributions in class discussions and answered questions knowledgeably. In groups they worked very well together and listened to each other's ideas. They showed a pride in their work and the standard of presentation was high.

97. These subjects are taught as part of the school's programme of topics and very effective links are made to all other areas of the curriculum. A significant strength of the school is the way in which it uses the local area and exploits every opportunity to take the pupils out of school to study their local environment. The subject co-ordinators provide effective, experienced leadership in both subjects. The schemes of work clearly show what is to be taught in each term and there is a progressive structure of skills and knowledge. Pupils are given a wide range of relevant and stimulating first-hand experiences. The work is enjoyed by pupils and it does a great deal to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and use of language.

Information technology

98. Attainment is in line with the standards expected for pupils at the age of 7 years. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The pupils make good progress, including those identified with special educational needs. Every teaching area and classroom has at least one computer and the pupils have access to these on a regular basis. In Year 2 the computer is used during group work to supplement the main body of work across a range of subjects. During the inspection, very good use was made of a science program to reinforce the pupils' understanding of the hazards of electricity in the home and local environment.

99. Pupils in the Reception class and in Year 1 are able to use the mouse (a pointing device) to control the cursor on the computer screen. They can read simple menus and change options by clicking on the mouse and then pointing to different parts of the screen. Evidence from the pupils' printed work shows that they have used simple word processing skills to write and print a piece of text. The pupils also use the computer to help with their mathematics work as there is a range of

programs designed to help the pupils practise number skills. Discussions with the older pupils also demonstrates that the pupils have had some experience of using the *Roamer*, a simple programmable robotic toy, as part of their introduction to *Turtle Graphics*.

100. Computers have become a natural part of the pupils' daily experiences. Lessons are planned so that the pupils take it in turns to experience a good range of information and communication technology. In the lessons observed, the pupils enjoyed these experiences and they worked sensibly with a partner, sharing responsibilities and co-operating to ensure that the tasks were accomplished successfully. The pupils have been taught to switch on the computer, use the compact disk properly and to go through the proper routines when changing menus or when switching off. Older pupils are taught to save their work on disk to return to work they wish to edit or complete at another time.

101. The teaching is significantly better than the last time the school was inspected. The school has undertaken a substantial programme of in-service training and the staff have developed their own confidence and competence to teach information technology to the whole age range. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and is improving as all the teachers learn to use new programs and include these with their curriculum topics.

102. The headteacher has ensured that the issues raised in the last inspection regarding the quality of information technology have been addressed. She is aware that the staff need more in-service training now that computers have been allocated to all parts of the school. The staff are very committed to raising standards further and have proved to be very adaptable to the needs of the information technology curriculum. This is clearly an indication of their confidence as good teachers and also their willingness to embrace new technology.

Music

103. Only one lesson was observed in Year 1 during the inspection together with a dance lesson that used a taped broadcast. The evidence from this lesson and from the singing in assembly, as well as the planning for music across the school, indicates that the large majority of pupils are making good progress. In the observed lesson the majority of pupils were making very good progress and this was largely related to the high standard of the teaching and the well organised use of a range of musical instruments.

104. All of the teachers plan a music lesson as well as use taped broadcasts as the basis for teaching singing and introducing new songs. The music co-ordinator plays the piano in assemblies and has a very good knowledge of music. Music lessons include a good range of musical instruments which comprise of woodwind (recorders), and both tuned and untuned percussion instruments. In the observed lesson the pupils could use clapping rhythms and, using percussion instruments, they could follow simple notation to keep time and to change pitch. Two pupils successfully played *Twinkle twinkle little star* as a duet on a glockenspiel and xylophone. The whole class were very adept at listening and accompanying and they very much appreciated the compositions of others in their group.

105. The pupils know and sing a range of songs in school assemblies. They can clap out simple rhythms and the majority sing tunefully and in time with the piano accompaniment. All of the songs are sung from memory and the pupils enjoy participating in these sessions. They are learning to appreciate music from a variety of cultures, this includes a recent visit from a

peripatetic African-Caribbean percussionist. The Year 1 pupils can name a broad range of percussion instruments as well as hold them correctly and they use the correct techniques to beat or pluck the instruments.

106. Pupils of all ages enjoy music very much. They work in groups and small ensembles co-operatively and they appreciate the music played by others. They are attentive and well behaved in lessons and in assemblies. They sing and play instruments with enthusiasm and are very motivated.

107. The quality of observed teaching was very good and indications, from the planning and organisation of music across the school, are that the teaching is good overall. Resources are very well managed and clearly labelled in every classroom. Instruments and visual aids are kept centrally in the school hall making them accessible to all pupils and staff. There is an interesting collection of *Indian drums* and *Chinese bells* which add a multi-cultural flavour to the school's approach to music. There is a good balance of planned music lessons, song practises and music lessons that use a taped broadcast.

108. The co-ordinator has organised the music curriculum, its resources and the planning very well. This is having a very positive effect on the progress that pupils make and the quality of teaching across the school.

Physical education

109. By the end of Key Stage 1 and leave the school, the pupils demonstrate above average standards of skill and knowledge in physical education and they make good progress. The school makes good provision for the physical education of its pupils and the curriculum includes gymnastics, dance and games.

110. Pupils in Year 1 demonstrate good control and co-ordination of their movements in gymnastics. They catch and throw a ball accurately over short distances. They make effective use of space on the floor and show a good level of control and flexibility. In Year 2 the pupils respond very imaginatively to music improving their interpretation of rhythm and ability to move in time to the music. They understand the importance of warming up and have a good bank of warm-up routines.

111. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic to take part in physical education activities. In all lessons observed their behaviour was very good. They listen carefully to instructions and consider how they can improve their performance. They appreciate the need for safety when carrying equipment or working with others. Pupils are always suitably dressed for physical activity. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into lessons and make good progress.

112. In the lessons observed teaching was at least good and often very good. Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives and high expectations. Teachers manage lessons very well and high levels of discipline are maintained. Care and attention is given to pupils' safety. Effective use is made of pupils' performance to demonstrate good practice.

113. There is a policy and a very effective scheme of work, which is structured to fit into the school's topic themes. The school's multi-purpose hall is used for physical education and efficient time-tabling ensures all areas of the physical education curriculum for Key Stage 1 are covered.

There is a grassed area alongside the school and a good range of small and large apparatus.

Religious education

114. The attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with the standards expected in the *Locally Agreed Syllabus* for religious education by the end of the key stage and they are making good progress.

115. In the reception class the pupils learn about the main *Christian* festivals and ceremonies through stories and visits to the local church. As they progress through the school they learn more about the *New Testament* and the life of *Jesus*, the life of *Muhammad*, details of *Muslim* worship and religion as well as a more detailed study of *Christianity*. By the end of the key stage, through the themes of special buildings, celebration of life, sacred books and care for others, their learning is further developed.

116. Progress throughout the school is good. Work is based on a well-structured scheme of work, which promotes a progressive understanding of the breadth of religions and a more sophisticated level of reflection and response at each stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their religious education lessons.

117. Pupils respond very well to the subject. They have a very good attitude to religious education and respond well to their teacher. Work in their books and displays around the classroom are well presented.

118. In the lesson observed during the inspection the quality of teaching was good. Planning is very good throughout. Great care is taken with selection and presentation of resources and artefacts and the pupils' work is displayed imaginatively and effectively in the classrooms.

119. The co-ordinator's role is well developed. The comprehensive and detailed scheme of work supports and develops pupils' learning and meets the requirements of the *Locally Agreed Syllabus*. Planning is very good and ensures that there is a fine balance in the pupils' acquisition of knowledge and understanding, evaluation of religious and moral issues and reflecting and responding. There are good links with the local church and their clergy and the pupils' work has been displayed in *Carlisle Cathedral*. There is a good range of resources and artefacts to match curriculum demands.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

120. The inspection was carried out by a team of two inspectors who spent four days in the school. A third inspector (lay) joined the team for one day. The total number of inspection days was nine days.

33 lessons or parts of lessons were observed;

35 hours were spent observing lessons, inspecting pupils' work and on discussions with staff, governors and pupils;

pupils were heard read and questioned about their mathematical knowledge and understanding;

policy documents and the school development plan were analysed;

samples of pupils' work were inspected and judgements about attainment, standards and progress were made;

attendance registers, pupils' records and teachers' planning were inspected;

the school's budget was examined;

discussions were held with parents, the headteacher, staff and governors;

the registered inspector held a formal parents' meeting to listen to parental views before the start of the inspection;

parents' questionnaires were analysed and parents' views taken account of during the inspection of the school.

DATA AND INDICATORS

121. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meal
YR - Y2	69	1	17	28
Nursery	15	0	0	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y2)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

4

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

17

Education support staff (YR - Y2)

Total number of education support staff

1

Total aggregate hours worked each week

10

Qualified teachers (Nursery)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

0.5

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

30

Education support staff (Nursery)

Total number of education support staff

1

Total aggregate hours worked each week

22.5

Average class size:

23

Financial data

Financial year:

1999/2000

	£
Total Income	186,485
Total Expenditure	181,858
Expenditure per pupil	2,636
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,223
Balance carried forward to next year	15,850

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

69

Number of questionnaires returned:

30

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	70.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	80.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
The school handles complaints from parents well	70.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	73.3	26.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	90.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	93.3	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	70.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	75.9	24.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	86.7	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	80.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
My child(ren) like(s) school	83.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0

Other issues raised by parents

All the parents seen in the school during the inspection believe this to be a very good school and they were especially complimentary about the commitment of the staff towards their children.