

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLE CARROCK PRIMARY SCHOOL

BRAMPTON

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112422

Headteacher: Mrs M Stevenson

Reporting inspector: Colin Smith
25211

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd March 2000

Inspection number: 187898

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Castle Carrock
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs M J Knight

Date of previous inspection: 22nd – 25th April 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Colin Smith	Registered inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Music Physical education Equal opportunities	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school. The school's results and pupils' achievements. Teaching and learning.
Lillian Brock	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. Pupils' welfare, health and safety. Partnership with parents and carers.
Linda Spooner	Team inspector	English Religious Education Art History	Quality and range of opportunities for learning.
Paula Allison	Team inspector	Science Information technology Geography Under fives Special educational needs	Leadership and management.

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	5
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	8
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	10
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	13
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	14
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	16
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	17
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	20

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Castle Carrock is a rural primary school serving a community of villages and scattered farms. It is small in size. Although there is a low turnover of families moving into or out of the area, pupil numbers have gradually crept up from 61 to 82 in five years. The 50 boys and 32 girls are taught in four classes with two age groups in each class. At the time of the last inspection there were only three classes made up of three age groups. There has been an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs and the current figure of 21 is close to the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. Only two pupils have free school meals, which places the school below the national average. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and none of the pupils speak English as a second language. Pupils' attainment on entry into the school is broadly average. Since the last inspection, the school has changed status and is now a Foundation school. However, under its former Grant Maintained status, the school benefited from a new hall, kitchen, office, computer suite and re modelled classrooms.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. By the time pupils reach the age of eleven they achieve average standards in English and mathematics, but high standards in science, information technology, design and technology, music and geography. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and in Year 5/6 but pupils underachieve in Year 3/4. The school provides a caring ethos that benefits all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, and pupils' attitudes to learning are good. The headteacher provides caring and purposeful leadership, but teaches a class for almost all of the time and is not able to monitor the work of the school effectively. As a result, some weaknesses go undetected. Overall, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

What the school does well

- Standards are above average in science.
- Pupils' achievements are good in information technology, design and technology, music, geography and elements of physical education such as swimming and dance.
- Teaching of the under fives is good and teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and in Year 5/6. In these classes, pupils achieve well.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs, including the two gifted pupils, is good and they make good progress.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, they behave well and respond very positively to the encouragement to take some responsibility for their own learning.
- The school provides a good curriculum, which caters very well for pupils' personal development.

What could be improved

- Pupils under achieve in Year 3/4 because lessons are not always well planned and organised.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is not carefully checked on and weaknesses are not identified and eliminated.
- Parents are insufficiently involved in the work of the school

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection. The good standards in science, information technology, design and technology, music and geography

at both key stages have been maintained. Teaching continues to be good overall, although it was better at the time of the last inspection when it was judged to be consistently good. Improvements have been made to the way pupils are grouped. Grouping according to ability is benefiting all pupils, particularly the higher attainers. The last inspection called for better procedures for monitoring pupils' achievements. This has significantly improved because pupils are now assessed at regular intervals and the results are used to target the weaker areas and raise their performance. However, monitoring of the work of the school has not improved. The headteacher continues to have a heavy teaching commitment and there are no co-ordinators to ensure that each subject is well provided for. Consequently, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is not systematically checked on and weaknesses go unnoticed.

STANDARDS

Very often there are only six or seven pupils in each year group. Such small numbers taking national tests, at the ages of seven and eleven, make comparisons with national results and those of similar schools unreliable. However, over a four-year period, standards at Key Stage 1 have been average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics and science. The attainment of the current Year 2 pupils is above average in all core subjects. The improvement largely reflects better teaching, but classes now contain only two ages of pupils, not three, and this has helped. Standards at Key Stage 2, over the four years, have been average in English and mathematics, but much higher in science, as they are now. In Years 1/2 and 5/6 pupils achieve well in most subjects. However, in Year 3/4 pupils do not achieve their potential and standards are not high enough because their work is not sufficiently well planned and organised. Standards have kept pace with national trends since the last inspection.

Overall, pupils of all levels of ability achieve well and make good progress in information technology, design and technology, geography and swimming. Pupils achieve very well in music. Children under the age of five make good progress in all areas of learning and reach the standards expected by the age of five. All pupils are assessed regularly and the end of year results are fed into the computer for analysis. The results are used well to allocate pupils to booster classes and this is raising attainment further. However, the targets reflect the school's forecasts of what pupils are likely to achieve, rather than goals to work towards. In this respect, the targets are not high enough.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall; pupils are eager to answer questions and keen to learn, but do not always sustain their concentration during group work in Years 3/4.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; pupils are polite and helpful and they behave well in lessons and around school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: relationships are a strength of the school and pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and achieve a measure of independence in learning.
Attendance	Average; families taking children on holiday during term time are spoiling the school's good record.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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

Teaching is good of children under the age of five, in Key Stage 1 and in Years 5/6. Direct teaching of the whole class is effective, but the teaching of groups is sometimes unsatisfactory in Year 3/4. Lesson planning is not sufficiently detailed and pupils are unsure what they are expected to do. Of the lessons seen, 21 per cent were satisfactory, 42 per cent were good and a further 32 per cent were very good. Teaching in five percent was unsatisfactory. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy, science, information technology, design and technology, geography is good in Key Stage 1 and in Years 5/6. Music is very well taught by a specialist teacher. The teaching of children with special educational needs is also of good quality. Particular teaching strengths include interesting teaching methods and imaginative use of resources. In most classes, pupils are well managed, questioning is used effectively to make pupils think and most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. These factors ensure that pupils work hard, at a good pace and acquire new skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a rich and interesting curriculum. Although English and mathematics have central importance, practical subjects such as science, art and design and technology are well catered for.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: Pupils with special educational needs receive suitably matched work in lessons and adequate support. On specific occasions they are withdrawn and taught by a specialist teacher. This helps them to improve their reading and writing and make good progress
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good in all areas and very good in social education. School assemblies are of high quality and often organised and presented by pupils. The school has clear rules, which are consistently promoted. There are many rich opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture and others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for and their academic progress in the core subjects is carefully assessed. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good, partly because pupils are fully involved in setting their own targets and keeping records of their achievements.

The school's links with parents are satisfactory. The quality of information provided about school events, the curriculum and children's progress is good. Homework enables parents who want to be involved to work with their children at home. Very few parents help in school, although many express the wish to be more involved. The school does not actively reach out to enlist the support available.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall: the headteacher has a clear vision and the energy to drive the school forward. She teaches every day and has very little time to carry out management tasks. Consequently, the work of the school is not sufficiently monitored and weaknesses in Year 3/4 go undetected.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Many of the governors have recently been appointed. They are committed to the best interests of the school and discharge their responsibilities appropriately through meetings and visits.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Assessments of pupils' test scores are carefully analysed, targets are set and action is taken to improve performance. However, there are no subject co-ordinators and, because of the headteacher's workload, teaching and learning is not monitored as it takes place in the classroom and weaknesses are not rooted out.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and grants have been used purposefully to provide extensive improvements to the school building. However, there are no measures in place to ensure that the school is cost effective.

The school has sufficient teachers and non-teaching staff who are well qualified, experienced and work together effectively as a team. Resources are adequate, of good quality, carefully stored and labelled and easily accessible. The accommodation has been brought up to standard in recent years.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • Children make good progress • Behaviour is good • The teaching is good • The school is well managed • Children are expected to try their best • The school helps children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework – too much rather than too little • Information about children's progress • Relationships with parents and a more welcoming atmosphere • Extra-curricular activities

The inspection team broadly agrees with the parents' positive views, although the monitoring aspects of management could be improved. The amount of homework is about right and helps to prepare pupils for secondary education. The school supplies parents with a good flow of information about children's progress, but the headteacher is very busy teaching and has little time to speak to parents before, during or after the school day. Many children are transported home by bus at the end of the school day. This limits the scope for extra curricular activities, which are reasonable under the circumstances. The school does not reach out sufficiently to welcome parents and involve them in the life of the school. This is unfortunate because where parental help is used there are positive benefits for children's learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards in Key Stage 1 are currently above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in Key Stage 2 are broadly average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Very often only small numbers of pupils take the national tests for seven and eleven year olds. In 1999, for example, there were only eight Year 2 pupils and six Year 6 pupils. Such small numbers make comparisons with national averages and similar schools unreliable. However, taking the results over the last four years together, standards at Key Stage 1 have been close to the national average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. In Key Stage 2, results over the four year period indicate average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science. Given the difficulties of interpretation, standards appear to be improving along with national trends at Key Stage 2. However, standards are improving faster at Key Stage 1 because the teaching is better and classes now contain two year groups instead of three. The proportion of pupils reaching higher than average levels vary from year to year but is broadly similar to the national picture.
2. Children start school with very different levels of knowledge and understanding, but their attainment is broadly average. For example, baseline assessments show that some children have a good understanding of letters, words or numbers, whereas others are less confident. The school's own private nursery has recently opened and this is beginning to have marked effect on the skills children have acquired by the time they begin their reception year. During their time in reception, children benefit from good teaching and good additional classroom support. They make good progress and by the age of five, they achieve the learning outcomes expected in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical and personal and social development. In the reception class they effectively learn the basic skills. For example, they are beginning to blend letter sounds to make simple words and write them down and are able to handle numbers to ten. Purposeful and well structured learning activities, such as creative art work and computer tasks, are provided. The class teacher and nursery nurse prompt children's thinking and develop their use of language very effectively. Children are encouraged to choose for themselves and persevere with their own explorations. As a result, pupils develop the capacity to learn independently.
3. Pupils, from the age of seven, are formally assessed at the end of each school year. Using information technology, their results are carefully plotted on a progress chart. Patterns of individual and whole class progress are then analysed and future results are predicted. These procedures are beginning to improve pupils' achievements. For example, pupils whose performance falters are immediately identified and booster classes are provided. During the inspection, pupils allocated to the mathematics booster group were benefiting from good teaching and reaching the expected level in work on decimal fractions. The targets set for English and mathematics in 1999 were exceeded by 9 per cent. Targets set for 2000 represent the school's realistic forecast of what pupils might be expected to achieve. However, they are not high enough because they are forecasts rather than demands for higher achievement.

4. Standards in information technology are above average and pupils achieve well at both key stages. Teachers' good subject knowledge combined with the new computer suite ensures that pupils achieve well in almost all areas. For example Year 5/6 pupils create their own folders, type and modify text and import graphics from clipart files to design their own tourist brochure. Standards in religious education are higher at Key Stage 1, but in line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus at Key Stage 2. Key Stage 1 pupils achieve well and learn from stories, such as 'the lost sheep', why Christians believe that everyone is special to God. Throughout the school, pupils develop a secure understanding of Christianity and other religions. Pupils' achievements in history and physical education are broadly typical for pupils aged seven and eleven, although pupils in Year 1/2 achieve well in dance and all pupils achieve well in swimming. Pupils achieve very well in all aspects of music. Pupils also achieve well in design and technology and geography because these subjects have a high profile in the school and are well taught. In art, pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1 and satisfactorily in Key Stage 2.
5. Work seen during the inspection shows that pupils are achieving good standards in reading in Key Stage 1. They enjoy reading and use their knowledge of letter sounds effectively to work out unfamiliar words. Reading standards in Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. Most pupils are fluent, accurate readers. They read with a secure understanding of the text, but seldom read expressively. The well organised reading passport programme gives pupils good opportunities to practise the skills they have learnt in school. However, pupils' library skills are weaker because the library itself is not well stocked or organised to help pupils to find information for themselves. Writing, including spelling and punctuation skills are good in Key Stage 1. The teacher emphasises the importance of care in punctuation, spelling and joined handwriting, but pupils are also stimulated to write imaginatively and expressively. Standards of writing in Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. In Year 3/4, too many worksheets are used and pupils have fewer opportunities to write creatively. Consequently, achievement in both expressive writing and presentation slips back. In Year 5/6, pupils achieve well because they are expected to write accurately and imaginatively for a wide range of purposes and redraft their work using information technology. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are satisfactory in both key stages. Most pupils listen attentively and follow instructions correctly and talk about their experiences confidently, but they are less confident in discussing, debating and questioning opinions. Teachers have good subject knowledge, enjoy teaching English and have implemented the literacy hour effectively. These factors result in good achievement in most classes.
6. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve good standards in mathematics and develop competence in the basic skills of numeracy. The teacher places a strong emphasis on mental mathematics and improves pupils' capacity to develop strategies for solving problems. For example, Year 2 pupils can interchange signs and numbers to complete number sentences correctly. In Key Stage 2, pupils underachieve in Year 3/4, because, they are not always sure what they are expected to do in lessons and their worksheets are bundled into folders without being carefully checked. Pupils achieve well in Year 5/6 because their work is systematically organised, carefully marked and pupils are expected to take some responsibility for their own learning. Pupils' motivation improves and standards begin to rise enabling pupils to reach satisfactory standards by the age of eleven.
7. Almost all pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve good standards in science. In particular their skills of investigation, such as making careful observations and using charts to

record their findings, develop well. At Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well in their knowledge and understanding across all areas of science and in their skills of experimenting.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Identified pupils are carefully assessed and provided with appropriate targets in individual learning plans. They make good progress towards these targets. Although they also make good progress within classes alongside their peers, pupils withdrawn from class for focused learning make particularly good progress in developing and consolidating skills. Boys have attained higher results than girls over recent years, but the small number of pupils in each year group can distort the picture. During inspection boys and girls were achieving equally. The school has two gifted pupils who have been assigned higher groups for English and mathematics. This ensures that they receive suitably demanding work and make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The school has maintained high standards in these aspects since the previous inspection and parents are rightly confident that most children behave, work and develop well in the school.
10. Children under five have very positive attitudes to their learning and their behaviour is good. They confidently choose activities and records of achievement show that they can also write about what their favourite activity is. They learn to take turns in class, work together harmoniously and share equipment.
11. Almost all pupils in both key stages have good attitudes to their work. They apply themselves well, concentrating, persevering and remaining on task. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and are not afraid to ask questions to check their understanding. For example in the Year 6 booster class in mathematics, there was good discussion between pupils and teacher and pupils made good progress in revising decimals, fractions and percentages. Reception children demonstrated good speaking and listening skills when explaining what their drawings of a dream meant. Pupils have an inquisitive interest in their learning and show pride in their work. Classroom relationships are very good and pupils co-operate very well with each other and their teachers.
12. Behaviour is generally good both in lessons and around the school. Playground behaviour is good, most pupils are polite and helpful to each other. Occasionally in Year 3/4, the behaviour of a small group of pupils deteriorates when they are not clear about the purpose of their work. Most pupils respond well to the school rules and show respect for conventions as seen in the behaviour during assemblies and in the dining hall. There have been no recent exclusions. All pupils have a clear sense of right from wrong and know that the way they behave has an effect on others. The school is an orderly community and visitors are made very welcome.
13. Relationships around the school are very good and this contributes to the caring ethos. It enables pupils to work together productively and to seek help or advice when it is needed. Relationships between pupils and adults are developed effectively through the organisation of visits out of school and through the residential for older pupils. Very good examples of older pupils taking care of younger can be seen in the dining hall. Each table has a mixture of age groups and older pupils serve food to others, ensuring in a caring and sensitive way that

younger pupils are encouraged to eat their food. As pupils progress through the school, they become more confident in discussing their feelings and expressing their opinions.

14. Pupils have very good opportunities to take on responsibilities for daily tasks in classrooms and around the school. These responsibilities are taken seriously and carried out conscientiously.
15. Attendance at the school is at the national average for primary schools. A small number of parents take their children on holiday during term time, which causes attendance rates to fall. Other children achieve a hundred per cent attendance and this helps to maintain satisfactory attendance overall. Most pupils are punctual to school, parents confirm that their children like school and enjoy attending.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Much of the teaching is good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Although there are weaknesses that were not identified at the time of the last inspection, there have also been some improvements. For example, pupils now have more opportunities for problem solving and frequently ask their own questions, which shows that they are taking more responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are now more often taught in ability groups in English and mathematics and the level of challenge is higher. However, there are weaknesses in the supervision and organisation of lessons in Year 3/4.
17. Ninety five percent of lessons observed were satisfactory or better, of which 42 per cent were good and 32 per cent were very good. In reception and Key Stage 1, all of the teaching was good or better. In Key Stage 2, approximately half of the teaching was good and half was satisfactory. Almost all of the good teaching occurred in Year 5/6. The unsatisfactory teaching in Year 3/4 happened when lessons were not carefully planned and pupils were unsure of what they were expected to do. A specialist teacher teaches music to each class. The quality of this teaching is always very good and pupils achieve well and reach high standards. The teaching of English, mathematics, religious education, art, and physical education is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2, although often good in Years 5 and 6. Science, information technology, design and technology and geography are taught well in both key stages. The teaching of history is satisfactory.
18. Teaching of children under the age of five is consistently good and very good in about one third of the lessons. The teacher and the nursery nurse understand the needs of the children well. They have a secure grasp of the early years' curriculum and high expectations of the children's capacity to learn at a quick rate. Planning is thorough and lessons are carefully structured and packed with worthwhile activities. In one mathematics lesson, for example, children counted in twos, wore head bands with different numbers to play putting number in order games, set the movable fingers on teaching clocks, sorted pictures of day and night and sang 'Five little speckled frogs' to reinforce their understanding of counting. Children are swept along and make good gains in learning because their interest is successfully engaged. Good open questioning is used to check that children understand. For example, the teacher asks, 'What else can you see besides numbers on the clock face?' The children reply, 'I can see long and short hands.' These approaches work well and help children to improve their use of language and number and their understanding of the world around them. A very good working partnership has been

forged between the teacher and the nursery nurse. They have similar approaches and foster very good relationships with the children. This ensures that a relaxed, but fruitful learning atmosphere is created. When the teacher takes the whole class, the nursery nurse supports those children who need individual help or lack confidence. Once group activities begin, the teacher and nursery nurse work closely with the children in small groups. Under these circumstances, pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress, particularly those with special educational needs.

19. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is also consistently good and very good in over one third of the lessons. Pupils are very well managed and, as a result, they settle to work quickly and no time is wasted. Lesson planning is detailed and the match of work to pupils' needs and different abilities is a strong feature. This ensures that pupils are challenged sufficiently and have to think for themselves. In mathematics, for example, all pupils are expected to add amounts of money mentally and work out which coins are needed to buy different items. Pupils of average attainment calculate with sums up to 20p whereas amounts for higher attaining pupils are over £1. In both English and mathematics basic skills are taught well and this enables pupils to become proficient in word building, using punctuation correctly and handling numbers confidently. The teacher has a secure knowledge of how to teach the different subjects and selects different teaching methods effectively to suit the purpose of the lesson. In science, for example, practical work is used to good effect and pupils are given valuable opportunities to observe and explain what they see. This helps them to acquire the important scientific ideas, such as understanding how heat changes clay when it is fired. Very little additional classroom support is available, but on the rare occasions when a parent helps, very good learning takes place. In art and in design and technology, for example, a parent takes groups in rotation leaving the teacher to concentrate on other activities. The smaller teaching groups enable every pupil to receive individual help and this significantly improves the rate at which they learn new skills, such as designing, sewing and shaping clay. Resources are used effectively to stimulate pupils' interests. In geography, by examining photographs and artefacts, pupils are able to understand differences between their own locality and an African village. The teacher uses assessment purposefully to identify what pupils know and move them on. Most lessons begin with a check on previous learning and end of lesson discussion sessions and marking of pupils' work provide valuable information on which the teacher bases the next lesson.
20. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is not consistently good, particularly in the group activity parts of lessons. However the quality of whole class teaching is at least satisfactory and often good or very good in Year 5/6. Teachers have imaginative ideas and encourage pupils to think for themselves. For example, in science in Year 3/4, the teacher challenged pupils to work out for themselves how to mark the position of shadows in the playground. In Year 5/6, the teacher suggested that pupils design a tourist leaflet on the computer that would attract visitors to Castle Carrock. Pupils find these first hand learning experiences interesting and relevant to their lives which, in turn, helps them to sustain their concentration and become involved in their work. In Year 3/4 and in Year 5/6, teachers make effective use of resources. For example in Year 3/4, pupils are given artefacts to examine to help them to deduce features about the Buddhist religion. Such approaches require pupils to work co-operatively, make their own decisions and develop independence in learning. In Year 5/6, there is a sense of urgency about the teaching and a high expectation that pupils will work hard and complete their work to a high standard. To achieve this, the teacher sets time targets. She stops pupils to draw their attention

to common mistakes and sets time targets for the work to be completed. During the lesson, she visits every group to check on their progress, making comments such as, 'What have you learnt?' or 'Your work can be better than that.' This keeps pupils on their toes and shows that the teacher is concerned about standards. In Year 3/4, these qualities are much less pronounced. For example, instructions are less well explained to each group. Consequently, pupils are unsure about what they are expected to do and their progress is sometimes left unchecked. Sometimes the teacher does not ensure that pupils listen. Their folders of completed work are disorganised and untidy. This makes the assessment of their progress much more difficult than in Year 5/6 where pupils are actively involved in assessing their own progress. Elements of teaching in Year 3/4 are unsatisfactory and this causes pupils to lose motivation. Their attitude to work slips and underachievement sets in.

21. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for within classes. They have tasks appropriate to their needs, which help them to make progress. The mixed age and ability teaching, in such subjects as science and geography, is particularly effective, as it provides some pupils with opportunities to take part in activities which they might otherwise find difficult because of problems with aspects such as recording. They are well supported in these lessons and make good progress. Teaching in withdrawal groups is consistently good; lessons are focused, time is used well and pupils are encouraged to achieve. This has a positive impact on pupils' motivation, on the amount of effort they are prepared to put in, and on the progress they make in gaining basic skills. Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils are grouped for literacy and numeracy according to their level of attainment. This caters well for boys and girls of all abilities, in both key stages, but in Year 3/4 the match of work is not always sufficiently precise. The very few gifted and talented pupils are able to work with older pupils more closely matching their level of attainment.
22. The use of homework is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2 because it increases as pupils move up the school. Home reading is well organised and has a significant influence on pupils' achievements.

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

23. The quality of the curriculum is good as it was at the time of the last inspection. It fully reflects the aims of the school, promotes pupils' intellectual, physical, social and personal education and prepares them well for the next stage of education. The school demonstrates a particular strength in its promotion and development of information technology. Statutory requirements are met in the delivery of the National Curriculum and religious education. Appropriate emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy. Planning is good in providing coverage of all aspects of the Desirable Learning Outcomes in the areas of learning for children under five, although provision for physical development is limited by the lack of dedicated outdoor play facilities for this age group. Useful policies are in place for sex education and personal, social and health education and these are taught effectively through science, religious education, assemblies and circle times.
24. All teachers take account of the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy in planning the literacy curriculum and the daily literacy hour. The school teaches the guided reading element of the strategy outside of the literacy hour to provide a specific focus on this aspect. In Year 3/4 insufficient opportunities are provided for

extended writing. Planned opportunities for pupils in Year 5/6 to take part in organised debate and to extend their speaking skills are limited, but there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills.

25. The National Numeracy Strategy was introduced at the beginning of the school year. This is now well established in both key stages and is having a positive impact on the development of pupils' oral and mental mathematics skills.
26. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects and this is an improvement on the last inspection. Appropriate account is taken of the National Curriculum programmes of study and in many subjects the school also integrates the most recent national guidelines. Short-term planning for literacy and numeracy is good. In other subjects, teachers use the medium term planning as lesson planning. This does not provide a secure base to ensure that work is consistently matched to the abilities of pupils in Year 3/4.
27. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to an appropriate curriculum. Although there is no additional adult support for such pupils in class, teachers are aware of individual need and provide activities that meet these needs. The breadth of the curriculum, and the emphasis on practical activity and mixed ability teaching in such subjects as science, provide all pupils with opportunities to take a full part in the curriculum. The ethos of the school, with its emphasis on helping each other and valuing individuals, supports pupils with special educational needs well. Work in withdrawal groups is well focused and linked to individual learning plans. Provision for pupils with statements is well implemented.
28. Good provision is made for all pupils to make progress and to have equal access to all aspects of school life. Extra-curricular provision is limited to a chess club and inter-schools football. However, it is satisfactory for a small school serving a relatively widely scattered population where many pupils have to be transported home immediately at the end of the school day.
29. There are good links with the community through a range of activities and a close link with the church. The school has worked with the local community to help with the pond planting and the locality is used well for field trips in history and geography. Visitors to the school provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider aspects of citizenship; for example, visits by the police and railway police. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that Year 6 pupils make a smooth transition to their secondary schools.
30. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for social development is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. No pupils are withdrawn from collective worship and the school complies fully with statutory requirements.
31. Through stories, prayer and quiet times, assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual aspects of life. During the weekly celebration assembly and in classes, pupils are given commendations for their endeavour and good work; this provides good opportunities for them to gain insights into their own personal worth. The school's assembly planning file makes good provision for spiritual development. In a Key Stage 1 religious education lesson pupils expressed an understanding of the implications of being lost. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 demonstrated an appreciation of the meaning of prayer in their study of Buddhism.

Spiritual development is promoted through circle time when pupils are encouraged to listen to and value the feelings and beliefs of others.

32. The provision for moral development is good and for social development is very good. It takes place within a clear framework of values within the school. School rules are promoted. Adults are very good role models, treating all pupils with fairness and consideration whilst reinforcing their understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils' social development benefits from the opportunities provided for them to take responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils are responsible for their tables at lunchtime and organise the children's assemblies without the need for staff intervention. The practice of giving pupils responsibilities begins in the early years when children are expected to care for each other, their classroom and resources. Older pupils also benefit from the opportunity to take part in a residential visit.
33. Provision for cultural development is good. Work in a range of subjects focuses on the pupils' own culture and those of others across the world. In history, pupils learn about the Anglo-Saxons and life in the Potteries during the last century. In geography, pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing a secure understanding of many aspects of life in an African village and this is extended into their literacy studies. Pupils study Christianity and three other major world faiths in religious education. The school's collection of books and artefacts reflects its commitment to providing a broad cultural and multicultural vision for its pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. A strength of the school is its caring and supportive ethos. The quality of support and guidance for pupils is good and the level of concern for their welfare is high. This is better than the quality of provision noted at the time of the previous inspection. Good examples of the school caring for its pupils are the provision of the Early Morning Club and after-school care through the Kid's Club. Parents can confidently leave their children in the care of the school
35. Procedures to promote pupils' well-being, health and safety are good overall. They are given top priority in the daily life of the school. However, the health and safety policy is now six years old and needs updating. This was also noted at the time of the previous inspection. Two members of the governing body have conducted a recent risk assessment of the school. The findings were documented and passed to the resources committee of the governing body for action according to urgency or as finance permits. All staff are vigilant regarding pupils' personal safety and pupils asked said that they felt safe, secure and confident whilst in the school. Child protection procedures are good and seven members of staff have received recent training in the early identification of concerns.
36. The school's procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are applied consistently by staff. The behaviour policy, though brief, promotes respect and tolerance for the whole school community. There is almost unanimous agreement from parents that the school works hard to promote good behaviour and that most pupils are polite and well mannered. This was endorsed during most lesson observations. There is a policy to prevent bullying and pupils confirm that any incidents would be dealt with quickly by teachers. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. The school is aware of the large amount of absence

due to holidays taken in term time and urges parents to ensure their children attend school regularly. There are signs of recent improvements in attendance.

37. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' achievements are good in English, mathematics and science. Baseline assessment in the reception class and the statutory end of key stage assessments in all three subjects are fully in place. The school has introduced end of year tests for all pupils in Key Stage 2 using the recommended materials. Termly assessments are also used to monitor pupils' attainment and progress when units of work or topics have been completed. Teachers in the reception class, Key Stage 1 and Years 5 and 6 keep good records in a range of other subjects through maintaining well-organised portfolios of samples of pupils' work. These are valuable records of progress. However, this system is not well developed in lower Key Stage 2. The school is piloting a system of rigorous assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in a range of subjects in Years 5 and 6. This is in the early stages of development and has not yet had time to have a measurable impact on standards. Records of achievement are very well organised and presented, and ensure that pupils are involved in their own learning through setting their own targets for development and appraising the quality of their work.
38. Satisfactory use is made of assessment to plan lessons. Assessment information is used well to track individual pupils' progress, identify weaknesses in curriculum provision and to identify pupils who would benefit from inclusion in literacy and numeracy booster groups.
39. The special educational needs arrangements are well supported by the co-ordinator. Termly staff meetings are used to discuss provision for individuals. This ensures that all staff are involved and are fully aware of the needs of the pupils and the progress they are making. Assessment procedures are good. Early identification of pupils having difficulties and carefully constructed individual education plans enable pupils to make good progress.
40. Personal progress is well-monitored and there is a comprehensive personal and social education policy. A good example of this can be seen in pupils' records of achievement. Circle Time gives pupils the opportunity to share ideas and consider and respect the beliefs, feelings and values of others. The comments on personal and social development in pupils' annual reports to parents show that that teachers are well aware of what pupils need to do to improve and pupils themselves set their own targets for future development. Sex education within the context of family relationships is delivered sensitively to older pupils and through science and religious education for younger pupils. The headteacher holds a drug awareness day for pupils. Equal opportunities are ensured for all pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The quality of the school's partnership with parents is satisfactory overall. Most parents at the meeting prior to the inspection agreed that they would feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems but the responses to the parental questionnaire do not fully endorse this view. Parents agree almost unanimously that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately informed about the progress of their children as they move through the Code of Practice stages.

42. The quantity and quality of information for parents is good overall. Letters to parents are numbered to help to ensure their delivery. Newsletters are informative and give good information on pupils' achievements and of events in the school, as well as other items of interest to parents. The school prospectus is clearly set out with information on the curriculum but would benefit from a statement to parents on the school's child protection procedures.
43. There are two parents' evenings each year in addition to an open day. The school makes it clear that parents are welcome to make an appointment with teachers if they have a concern. Workshops have been held to inform parents about the literacy and numeracy strategies. The annual reports to parents are specific about progress made in individual subjects. The class teacher summarises achievements and gives advice on what pupils need to do to improve. Parents and pupils can make comments on the reports and parents at the meeting prior to the inspection confirmed their approval of the reports. Of the parents who responded to the questionnaire, twenty seven per cent said that they would like more information on how their children are getting on in school. Inspection findings are that parents receive an adequate amount of information and also that the school is happy to provide more on request.
44. Parental involvement is satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses. Only two or three parents help in school though more have expressed a willingness to do so. Parents have been consulted about the Home/School agreement and the reception teacher works with parents to complete the Home/School profile when children enter school. The school sets up a dialogue with parents through the reading record and the homework diary. A good example of the school working with parents is the Cumbria Credits Scheme where parents learn computer skills using the school facilities and equipment. The Parent Teacher Association is successful in raising funds to supplement the school's tight budget. Despite these features, the school does not actively encourage parental involvement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The headteacher is a positive and energetic leader. She has a broad vision for the school and provides clear educational direction for its work. She fully involves the staff in all day to day and longer term decision making. This enables teachers and support staff to work together towards the same aim of providing a high quality of education for pupils in the school.
46. The school's positive aims and values are apparent through all aspects of its work. For example, the value placed on the individual is evident in the way assemblies are conducted, allowing everyone to play a part and recognising individual achievement. This has a positive impact on pupils' motivation and achievement. There is a strong ethos based on teamwork and good relationships. This is evident in the way in which teachers have managed change together; for example they effectively trained for and implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies as a team.
47. The school was left with three key issues after the last inspection. Since then satisfactory improvements have been made and the school has also picked up on other areas, such as providing schemes of work. Two of the issues related to improving the way that pupils were grouped. Since the last inspection, the number

of classes has been increased from three to four and the school has discontinued the practice of teaching younger infants with older juniors. In English and mathematics, pupils are now grouped according to ability. These measures are effective in helping to raise standards. The third issue related to the workload of the headteacher and the implications for monitoring pupils' performance and the work of the school. An effective system to assess and monitor pupils' progress and set targets for improvement has been implemented. However, the headteacher teaches almost full time and there are no subject co-ordinators. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, in planning and in the organisation and presentation of pupils' work. These have not been identified, as the headteacher is not in a position to be able to monitor what is going on in classrooms. Consequently, the monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning continues to be unsatisfactory.

48. The school development planning process is satisfactory but parents are seldom consulted. Appropriate priorities are identified and action is planned. This can be very effective, for example when staff identified weaknesses in reading and a process of reading intervention was put in place. The school has begun a system of self review and this is effective because all members of staff take part in the process. There are good systems in place for the support of teachers new to the school. The school is an effective provider of initial teacher training.
49. In some ways the emphasis on whole school shared responsibility is a strength of the school. Teachers share in the decision making and common goals are identified. This strengthens relationships and strong commitment of staff. For example, policies are shared and there is full commitment to them. However, there are limitations to this, particularly in the area of curriculum development. With no one teacher taking responsibility for a curriculum area, development can be slow and inefficient, opportunities for teachers to show initiative and develop their interests are restricted, and opportunities for monitoring learning within subjects are missed.
50. Governors are loyal and committed to the school and its community. They support the aims and values of the school, for example the emphasis on a broad curriculum and the personal development of pupils. They have worked hard and very effectively in support of the development of the school building, and this has resulted in a much enhanced working environment and more opportunities for pupils to achieve. They manage their work well and make every effort to meet statutory requirements. Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, often acquired by direct involvement in its work, and they share the headteacher's vision for its future. However, they are not sufficiently involved in planning improvements to teaching and learning or in monitoring the school's performance.
51. The provision for special educational needs is managed effectively. The school follows the Code of Practice conscientiously by employing a part time teacher to take on the role of special educational needs co-ordinator. She carries out her work to good effect.
52. The creation of a school hall, remodelling of classroom areas and the tastefully furnished computer suite represent significant achievements in recent years. School accommodation has been brought up to standard and greatly improved since the last inspection. Careful maintenance and imaginative displays of pupils' work create an attractive learning environment. Financial self-sufficiency has resulted in good

financial management. This was noted in the school's most recent financial audit. The school development plan is fully costed and the bursar administrates the school's finances very efficiently. The use of information technology has had a significant impact on school management. For example, much of the information relating to pupil, finances, assessment and planning is now efficiently managed using information technology. Specific grants are well used. Governors play a central part in financial decision making and are kept fully informed of patterns of expenditure. This is necessary since the school now has to readjust to a tighter budget. Prudent financial management over recent years has enabled the school to obtain good quality resources, apart from a shortage in history. Governors are rightly proud of their achievements, but have yet to devise a means of assessing to what extent their financial decisions are cost effective and to what extent the school gives best value.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. Whilst the school has many good features, pupils under-achieve in Year 3/4. Monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are unsatisfactory and parents are not sufficiently involved in the life of the school. The school needs to remedy these weaknesses and the headteacher and governors should include the following issues in their action plan.

(1) Raise pupils' achievements in Year 3 and 4 by:

- planning lessons carefully and ensuring that pupils know exactly what they are expected to do;
- improving pupil management so that pupils can work in a quiet, purposeful atmosphere;
- organising pupils' completed work into a clear record so that pupils can see the improvements in their work and the progress they are making.

Paragraphs 5, 6, 17, 20, 65, 70, 72, 76, 78, 88, 106, 112, 121 and 127

(2) Improve monitoring and evaluating the work of the school by:

- ensuring that the headteacher has time to observe teaching and learning;
- giving more responsibility to teachers for subject leadership
- implementing a system to evaluate effectively the quality of planning, teaching and learning;
- involving the governors more fully in monitoring the school's performance, the effects of change and in planning for improvement.

Paragraphs 47, 49, 50, 52, 73, 79 and 88.

(3) Actively encourage parents to participate in the day-to-day life of the school by:

- extending the valuable input one or two parents already have in the classroom;
- consulting parents to find out their views on working together more closely.

Paragraphs 44 and 48

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

38

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	32	42	21	5		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		82
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		17

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	71
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	20.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	172,236
Total expenditure	163,979
Expenditure per pupil	2,216
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,737
Balance carried forward to next year	9,994

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	82
Number of questionnaires returned	66

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	52	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	42	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	36	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	44	20	2	2
The teaching is good.	56	35	5	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	33	24	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	23	17	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	39	17	5	6
The school is well led and managed.	56	35	6	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	42	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	29	30	6	6

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

54. At the time of the inspection there were ten reception age children in the reception class, six of whom were still under five. They work alongside children attending the newly established nursery, sharing the accommodation and resources. The class teacher and nursery nurse work closely together to provide for all the children in the group. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with what might be expected for children of this age. Children display strengths in speaking and listening, creative development and in their general independence; this is confirmed by the results of assessments made as children enter the reception class. The accommodation is of good quality, but is currently too small for the number of children. This poses organisational problems and limits the range of activities that can be offered. A forthcoming extension will allow the quality of provision to be improved.
55. The reception class offers a curriculum which fully meets the needs of the under fives. It is carefully planned across all areas of learning. The quality of teaching is consistently good, and very good in a third of lessons. The two adults work together as a team, the nursery nurse making a valuable contribution to the quality of the provision for all children. A wide range of activities and experiences are provided. Planning is thorough and shows a secure understanding of the needs of the under fives. Activities are well organised. There are high expectations and good provision for children's social learning. These factors enable children to achieve well in reception in all areas of learning.
56. Provision for children under five in the last inspection was judged to be good, although at that time there was no permanent nursery and reception children were taught alongside Year 1 pupils. The provision has been greatly enhanced since, by the addition of the reception class. The newly appointed teacher has organised the class well. Almost all children are on course to achieve the expected outcomes in all areas of learning by the age of five.
57. Provision for children's personal and social development is good. Children are happy and gain confidence because of the caring atmosphere. They relate well to adults and form effective relationships with each other. They know why it is important to share and take turns. Teaching in this area is good. An interesting range of carefully structured activities is provided and children are encouraged to choose. As a result, children are keen to explore new learning and are achieving independence in their learning. Behaviour is good. High standards are set and consistently adhered to by the adults. Children know what is expected of them and they respond well to this positive approach. Children are on course to achieve the expected outcomes in this area and to enter the next class confidently.
58. Provision for language and literacy is good, and children are on course to achieve the outcomes in this area. There are many opportunities during the day for children to develop their speaking and listening skills, such as discussions about stories. Teaching is good. Adults are skilled at involving children in talking about what they are doing, helping them to develop their language and extend their vocabulary. Most children talk confidently about their experiences, often using quite complex sentence structures and a wide vocabulary. A few are more reticent, but the secure

environment gives them the confidence to take part in conversations. Children enjoy class sessions of stories and rhymes; they respond well and join in confidently.

59. The teacher has put in place a daily literacy session, adapted appropriately from the literacy strategy. In these sessions children make good progress with the development of literacy skills. Phonics is carefully taught and children are beginning to use these skills in their reading and writing. Children make a good start with reading. They know how books are organised and they recognise familiar words. Children are well supported at home with their reading and this has a positive impact on their progress. Most children can write their name, helped by the practice provided by the 'signing in' procedure at the beginning of each day. Some children are beginning to write independently, using their phonic knowledge to help them spell words. Writing is mostly legible but often letters are not correctly formed.
60. Teaching of mathematics is very good. Mathematics is used naturally in many activities and children become confident with using mathematical vocabulary, such as 'bigger than', 'smaller than', 'fast', 'slow' in the context of playing with construction toys and talking about stories. More formal teaching is carefully planned in a daily numeracy session, in which children make good progress in developing their skills. They are on course to achieve the expected outcomes in this area. Children count to ten and recognise numbers to twenty. They are familiar with counting rhymes and songs. They match and sequence patterns, and place hands correctly on a clock to mark the time in hours.
61. Children have a wide range of knowledge and understanding of the world as they enter the reception class. Some talk confidently of places they have been and experiences they have had. Others have had a more limited experience of the world. The teacher is aware of this and in class and group discussions she sensitively enables all children to offer what they can. For example, in a discussion about nocturnal animals children shared their own experiences. A broad range of activities is provided, carefully planned around relevant themes. Pupils develop skills, such as cutting, sticking, tracing. They use a computer confidently and are well aware of how their actions can control events on screen. Teaching is good and most children are on course to achieve the expected outcomes in this area.
62. Children are confident with creative skills, and as they enter the reception year are already willing to experiment with materials and techniques. There is a suitable balance between more structured, teacher directed activities and opportunities for children to explore freely and independently. For example, in one session the nursery nurse taught children to use printing techniques to create a sky picture, on the next table she provided an opportunity for children to explore play dough independently. Children are well on course to achieve the expected outcomes in this area. Limited space restricts the range of opportunities for creative development, although good teaching and careful use of what is available limits the impact of this.
63. In the context of a very well structured and well taught physical education lesson, children demonstrated confident movement. They have a good awareness of space and others around them; for example when changing direction. They show good control of small apparatus such as balls, throwing and rolling them with considerable accuracy. They have made good progress in this with the careful encouragement of their teacher. Outside these lessons, opportunities to develop physical skills are presently limited by the lack of an accessible outdoor play area.

This is to be rectified by the facilities being planned with the extension to the classroom.

ENGLISH

64. Standards in English are currently above average for pupils aged seven and in line with the national average for pupils aged eleven. Small numbers of pupils cause results to fluctuate and makes comparisons with national averages and similar schools unreliable. In 1999 for example, only eight pupils took the tests for seven year olds and only six took the tests for eleven year olds. Results for seven year olds, over the last four years, in reading and writing have been close to the national average. Results for eleven year olds, over the same period, indicate a high average. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels also varies from year to year, but higher achieving pupils reach their potential. Standards are improving at Key Stage 1 because the teaching is better and classes now contain Year 1 and 2 pupils only and not Year 3 pupils, as they did formerly. This helps the teacher to more specifically target pupil's learning needs.
65. In Key Stage 1, pupils achieve well and make good progress. Achievement in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. There is under achievement in Year 3/4 and good achievement in Year 5/6. In both key stages, there is no difference between boys' and girls' achievements. Pupils with special educational needs, including gifted children, make good progress throughout their time in school. They benefit from good support in class and in withdrawal groups.
66. At Key Stage 1, by the age of seven, standards in listening and speaking are satisfactory. Most pupils listen carefully to explanations and instructions and respond well. Many are articulate and confident when recounting, explaining or answering questions, and cope well in oral situations in all subjects. By the age of eleven, standards in speaking and listening are average. Most pupils talk confidently about what they are learning and can clearly express their ideas. However, their ability to discuss and to question opinions and ideas is not well developed.
67. Standards in reading are good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. By the age of seven, most enjoy reading. They are confident readers. Almost all pupils read accurately and fluently and are able to work out more difficult words and meanings. Most understand how to use the contents and index pages in non-fiction books.
68. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils read from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books through the use of the school's reading passport scheme. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils cope well with stories, poems, biographical work and non-fiction. Most can explain the reasons for their choice of books. They can discuss aspects of characterisation and are able to explain why and how events in a story or piece of non-fiction occurred. The large majority can locate key information quickly and efficiently. When reading aloud, most are accurate and fluent but they do not read expressively. The school library is small and not systematically organised and does not contribute to the development of pupils' library skills.

69. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop good writing skills. They write in a variety of forms including story and descriptive writing. Their work is well organised and clear with higher ability pupils demonstrating good levels of imagination and expression. Discussions with pupils and completed work indicate a good understanding and use of the more formal aspects of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Spelling standards are good. Pupils have little difficulty in spelling common words and they make sensible attempts at less familiar ones. Handwriting skills are developing well with most pupils by the age of seven producing a joined, legible script. Pupils are developing good, independent skills in the use of word processing to write and present their work for others to read.
70. By the end of Key Stage 2 writing is average. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a satisfactory understanding of the use of grammar and punctuation and are developing an early ability to search text for specific information. However, there is not enough creative writing or writing for a range of purposes. Most of the work produced is through the completion of commercially produced worksheets. Although spelling skills are at an acceptable level, the overall presentation of work is not of a satisfactory standard. Most pupils achieve well throughout Years 5 and 6 and by the age of eleven, reach a satisfactory standard. They write for a range of reasons including poetry, reporting, stories and letters. Completed work demonstrates well-established spelling skills and an appropriate use of grammar and punctuation. Pupils demonstrate secure skills of drafting and redrafting, and make good use of information technology to improve the finished product. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
71. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Teaching is much stronger in Year 5/6 than it is in Year 3/4. In Years 1/2 and 5/6 teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and plan their lessons in detail. Lessons have clear aims and this enables pupils to acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the National Literacy Strategy effectively. The work given to pupils is well-matched to their learning needs. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and to a good standard, which they do. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to learning and they are able to work independently. The assessment of pupils' work is rigorous and used well to provide information on what pupils need to do next. Throughout Key Stage 2, teachers employ a good range of methods to engage pupils' interests and resources are used effectively.
72. In Years 3 and 4, however, pupils' progress slows down. Lessons are not rigorously planned to ensure that key teaching points are clearly identified and opportunities are missed to check pupils' level of understanding. The range of writing opportunities for pupils in this part of the key stage is limited and expectations of handwriting are not high enough. Pupils' completed work is poorly organised and this makes the task of monitoring their progress very difficult. This affects their attitude to learning, which is less positive than it is in other classes.
73. Target setting is well developed and pupils set their own targets for improvement. This motivates them to try harder and reach higher standards. Teachers train and plan the curriculum and assessment together and this has led to the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. However, there is no co-ordinator for English and there are no strategies for monitoring the quality of planning, teaching and record keeping. This results in weaknesses not being recognised and dealt with.

MATHEMATICS

74. Standards in mathematics are currently above average for pupils aged seven and in line with the national average for pupils aged eleven. Results in mathematics cannot be used to make comparisons with other schools because of the small numbers of pupils. However, when the results over the last four years are averaged out, the school's performance at Key Stage 1 is above average and it is average at Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels also varies from year to year, but more able pupils in the school broadly reach their potential.
75. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes. They achieve well in Key Stage 1 because the work is challenging and well matched to their different abilities. They have daily opportunities to practise their mental mathematics skills. The teacher encourages them to work out answers in their heads and only use counters as a last resort. This is a good strategy and pupils are improving in both competence and confidence. For example, Year 2 pupils mentally calculate quite complex numbers involving 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1p coins to find the total. Higher attaining pupils are proficient even when the quantities run into pounds. All areas of mathematics are well planned and carefully taught. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced and pupils are beginning to use their skills to help them to solve problems. For example, they know which sign or number to insert to complete number sentences such as, $? - 4 = 7$ and $8 ? 6 = 2$, correctly. These strategies are effectively improving their ability to solve mathematical problems.
76. In Key Stage 2, most pupils achieve well in Year 5/6, but they underachieve in Year 3/4. There are two reasons for this. In lessons, the Year 3/4 teacher splits the class into ability groups and teaches each group in turn. This caters well for pupils of different abilities and the work given is quite challenging. However, pupils are often unsure what to do because the teacher is too busy with one group and has not explained what the others should do. Although the direct teaching is satisfactory, the management of the pupils and lessons is unsatisfactory and pupils do not make sufficient gains in their learning. The second reason why pupils underachieve is because they are given too many worksheets to complete and at the end of the lesson they put them into folders mixed in with worksheets for all other subjects. The worksheets are not all finished or always marked and become a disorganised jumble. Neither the teacher nor the pupils themselves can see the pattern of progress and pupils are not inspired to take pride in the presentation of their work. Although the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced in spirit and pupils are improving their mental mathematical skills, their progress in other respects loses momentum.
77. By contrast, in Year 5/6, pupils' work is carefully marked and systematically organised into plastic wallets, as it is in Key Stage 1. Pupils take increasing responsibility for their own work and, with the teacher's help, they set their own targets. This gives pupils a feeling of pride in their work and a stronger motivation to improve. The pace picks up in Years 5/6 and there is a distinct push and sense of urgency injected in to the work. For example, pupils tackle demanding tasks such as converting decimals and fractions to percentages, finding averages and adding and subtracting two place decimals. Higher attaining pupils benefit the most and achieve well, but sometimes at the expense of lower attaining pupils who try to keep up but make errors. Pupils with special educational needs, however, are given work

at the right level and good support. This helps them to make good progress, not only in Year 5/6 but throughout the school. Pupils' mental mathematics skills continue to improve at a good rate. The strong emphasis on pupils thinking for themselves, begun in Key Stage 1, continues but now more is expected of their readiness to share their ideas. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to try out different methods to arrive at the correct answer. They are encouraged to explain and demonstrate their methods to the whole class. These approaches embody the message in the National Numeracy Strategy and are having a positive effect on pupils' confidence and ability to solve mathematical problems.

78. The teaching of mathematics is good in Key Stage 1. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2 because it is good in Years 5 and 6, but unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. The good teaching is based on good relationships between teacher and pupils, good discipline and high expectations of both behaviour and achievement. This creates a positive working climate where pupils concentrate, try to work accurately and present their work in an orderly way. In Year 3/4 the teacher does not have such high expectations and does not demand enough from the pupils. This is reflected in some pupils' casual attitudes to presentation and accuracy, although other pupils, often the higher attainers, work steadily and achieve creditable results. In all classes, the actual work provided is challenging and closely matched to pupils' different abilities. Teachers often design their own worksheets and produce them professionally on computers. However, in Year 3/4 textbooks pages or commercially produced worksheets are used less selectively. All teachers are good communicators and explain instructions and new ideas well to the whole class. Teachers use questioning well to gauge the pupils' level of understanding and to encourage them to try out their own strategies. An effective technique used in Year 5/6, is to ask pupils to come out to the whiteboard to demonstrate their methods. If pupils are unsure or make mistakes they are very sensitively handled and the contributions are always valued. In Year 1/2 and 5/6 teachers are also good organisers. In these classes, the preparation of resources and tasks is 'spot on' and pupils are clear about their work. This helps them to work well, even when not directly supervised and achieve a good measure of independence and self-reliance.
79. During the last inspection too few opportunities were provided for pupils to solve problems and the work provided was sometimes too easy for higher attaining pupils. These weaknesses have been eradicated because the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced. The benefits are already apparent in pupils' mental mathematics and their capacity to tackle problems from different perspectives. This has largely been achieved because the whole staff has undertaken numeracy training and effective assessment procedures have been introduced to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Teaching is not as consistently good as it was judged to be at the time of the last inspection. However, no teacher has overall responsibility for evaluating how well the subject is being taught or how well pupils are learning in different classes. Monitoring and evaluating of mathematics throughout school is therefore unsatisfactory because weaknesses are not identified and remedied.

SCIENCE

80. Standards in science are above average. The school makes good provision for the subject; teaching is usually good and the curriculum offers a wide range of experiences. Pupils enjoy their work and achieve well. The last inspection reported good standards in science, and these have been maintained.
81. Results of end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments show standards have been consistently above average for the last few years. Most pupils achieve the expected level in science and a higher than average percentage achieves higher than this. Key Stage 2 results in both tests and teacher assessments show well above average standards over the last few years. However, the results of any single year are unreliable because of the small numbers of pupils in the year group.
82. All pupils in Year 2 and most pupils in Year 6 are working at expected levels, and at least twenty per cent of pupils in each year show levels of skills, knowledge and understanding above this. Attainment in investigative skills is particularly good, and reflects the school's emphasis on this aspect. Pupils observe and talk about what happens. For example, they try to explain why water disappears in one pot and not another. Year 2 pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties. For example, they describe ways in which clay can be changed by processes such as stretching and squeezing, and by heating. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to recognise that some changes, such as the baking of clay, cannot be reversed.
83. Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of physical processes. For example they know how to vary the current in a circuit to make a bulb brighter or dimmer. Higher attaining pupils apply these ideas to their own investigations. Pupils are confident at investigations. For example, they demonstrate an understanding of the importance of changing one factor whilst keeping other factors the same, in the context of investigating the brightness of bulbs. Higher attainers devise and use competently their own recording systems, appropriate to the investigations they carry out.
84. Pupils' achievements are good. They are always sufficiently challenged in Key Stage 1, and usually so in Key Stage 2. They develop confident investigative skills. For example, Year 1 pupils can observe and make comparisons and by Year 5, pupils can explain the results of their investigations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress alongside their peers. They are often particularly well supported in the mixed ability grouping that teachers use in science. In these lessons they have the support of their peers to help them do the things they find difficult, such as reading and recording, and thus they have access to a full curriculum. However, in the same lessons, particularly in Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils can be held back through providing the support for others and can find themselves not sufficiently challenged at their own level.
85. Pupils throughout the school use literacy skills well in describing their observations recording their findings. They use numeracy skills well when measuring and using tables and graphs. Pupils are beginning to use information technology in science, for example for recording their findings in investigation, but this aspect is not yet sufficiently developed within the science curriculum.
86. The teaching of science is good, but is better in Key Stage 1 and in the Year 5/6 class than it is in the Year 3/4 class. Teachers have a good level of subject knowledge and understanding, which is demonstrated in most classes in the quality

of planning. The clear learning objectives result in well focused lessons. Where teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding, they conduct class discussions which challenge all pupils. For example, in the Year 5/6 class the teacher skilfully guided a discussion about circuits to enable all pupils to put forward their ideas and develop their scientific understanding.

87. A strength of the teaching in the school is the emphasis on a practical approach. This motivates pupils, encourages them to concentrate and has a positive impact on the effort they make. For example, in the Year 1/2 class the teacher effectively organised a practical lesson based on comparing clay before and after firing. Pupils were interested, they tried hard throughout the lesson and made good progress in developing their understanding. Teachers usually plan such lessons very carefully and ensure that resources are organised and activities are timed well. They usually manage pupils well and insist on high standards of behaviour so all pupils can concentrate on what they are doing. This is particularly so in the Year 5/6 class, where space for practical work is limited and pupils have to co-operate in order to carry out their tasks successfully. Teachers use recording methods imaginatively so that pupils develop recording skills, but do not spend a long time laboriously recording what they have done.
88. There are weaknesses in the teaching in the Year 3/4 class. The same practical approach does not work as well here as the planning and organisation are not of the same high standard as they are in the rest of the school. Lessons, whilst being based on good ideas, lack a clear focus and often become confused. This hinders pupils' progress and has a negative effect on their response in class. These weaknesses have not been picked up because teaching is not monitored sufficiently.

ART

89. Pupils' achieve well in art in Key Stage 1 and satisfactorily at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part and make good progress. In response to a key issue identified at the previous inspection, the school has improved the organisation of art lessons by discontinuing the previous practice of teaching pupils of infant and junior ages together in mixed groups.
90. At Key Stage 1, pupils use the computer competently to produce patterns. In the lesson observed, they demonstrated good skills in handling clay and could confidently explain the process of drying and firing to produce a finished product.
91. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 use chalk and charcoal to good effect to produce the contrast of light and shadow. Many are developing skills of appraising their own work and that of others. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 link art and geography to produce weather pictures. In the lesson observed, they made thumb, coil and slab pots as part of their study of the pottery industry in Stoke-on-Trent. Most pupils show satisfactory skills in handling the material and using modelling tools.
92. On the basis of lessons seen and pupils' work, teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Where teaching was most successful, the lesson was well planned and organised and purposeful. The skilful partnership between the teacher and a parent resulted in a very productive lesson where pupils were highly motivated and confident. In the lessons seen at Key Stage 2, teachers' planning

identified what was to be achieved, explanations to pupils were clear and pupils were provided with appropriate support to help them to acquire skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. Evidence from displays and records of pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils indicates that the good standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils are given many worthwhile opportunities to design and make a variety of products. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well throughout the school.
94. Reception age pupils use construction kits to acquire a good understanding of how components fit together. They apply this knowledge to good effect when they use everyday materials such as plastic and card, to make wheeled vehicles that move along. By Year1/2, pupils have learnt how to plan ahead. When asked why designs, including a list of materials, is needed pupils confidently reply 'Otherwise you would not know what your model should look like or what you need to make it.' More is expected of Year 2 pupils, for example they write out step by step instructions to make fruit salads and banana flavoured milkshakes. Pupils benefit from being given choices of materials to use and acquire skills in handling them. They become competent in cutting, attaching and decorating paper and card, and stitching or glueing felt to make puppets.
95. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to achieve well because design and technology projects are woven into other subjects and the level of challenge increases. By Year 4, pupils draw labelled diagrams to show how their burglar alarms will work and they become familiar with the need to evaluate the quality of their designs and models. By Year 6, pupils' capabilities are good and they have developed a range of techniques to incorporate movement into their work, for example, pop up mechanisms, electric motors and air power to make their windmills, submarines and boats work. Their designs show the model to be made from different perspectives and the good quality slippers and electronic games made illustrate their good achievements
96. On the basis of all of the work seen, teaching at Key Stage 1 is good and, although no lessons were seen at Key Stage 2, pupils' knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject indicates that teachers' subject knowledge is strong throughout. In Year 1/2, a parent was seen to teach pottery to different groups very effectively. This gave the teacher quality time to concentrate on the pupils making felt puppets. Lessons are very well planned, thoroughly prepared and well organised. Pupils' are given clear instructions and encouraged to select from a range of materials; for example, to decorate their puppets. Skills are carefully taught and practised so that pupils will be able to use them in making products. In Year 1/2, for example, pupils practise different types of stitching to enable them to hem the edges of their felt puppets.

GEOGRAPHY

97. Pupils make good progress in geography, particularly in knowledge and understanding of places. Lessons seen during the inspection were very good, the expertise and enthusiasm of the teachers inspiring pupils to achieve well. Good standards highlighted in the last inspection have been maintained.

98. Pupils achieve well in both key stages, including those with special educational needs. Year 2 pupils describe and make comparisons between places. For example, they use photographs to find out about an African village and talk knowledgeably about similarities and differences between places.
99. Year 6 pupils show a good understanding of places and how settlements differ. For example, they talk about the comparative advantages and disadvantages of living in a rural community and a city. They are developing confident geographical skills. For example, they use sources such as maps, photographs and brochures to help them to understand the differences between places. They check the validity of information, organise it and present it in different formats.
100. Pupils like geography and this makes them keen to learn. They confidently link previous learning to what they are currently studying and thus develop their understanding. For example, Year 2 pupils used knowledge about life in an African village to help them interpret what was happening in a photograph. Year 6 pupils used their knowledge of industrial history to help them decide on what might be important features of a town. Pupils work co-operatively and support each other. They complete tasks given to them with a high level of effort and concentration.
101. Taking account of pupils' work and the lessons seen, teaching is good and often very good. Teachers are enthusiastic and have a depth of knowledge of what they are teaching. Thus they conduct discussions which enable all pupils to take part at their own level and which develop their understanding. Lessons are well planned and have a good pace, keeping pupils interested and involved.
102. Teachers use resources, such as photographs, extremely well. The school has a valuable link with countries in Africa, and has exploited this very well to promote pupils' awareness of places and an understanding of how people live. Most impressive is the sensitive way in which other cultures are discussed. This helps pupils to understand and respect their beliefs and ideas.

HISTORY

103. No lessons were observed in history in Key Stage 1 and two lessons in Key Stage 2. A check on pupils' previous work, lesson observations and discussions with them indicate that pupils' work and achievements are typical of those seen in most schools. Pupils with special educational needs are given extra help with reading and writing about history to enable them to make steady progress.
104. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop an understanding of the difference between the past and the present. They learn about how the way of life has changed over time. By looking at books and photographs and through visits, they compare life now and in the past. For example, following a visit to Tullie House, they wrote about toys from Victorian times. Year 2 pupils know that Florence Nightingale worked to improve conditions for soldiers injured in the Crimean War. They develop a satisfactory understanding of how to make fair assumptions from given historical facts.
105. Key Stage 2 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of different periods. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have acquired a satisfactory understanding of some aspects of life in the time of Boudicca, they know the basic facts about the story of Romulus and Remus. During the inspection the majority demonstrated satisfactory skills in investigation using photographs of Anglo-Saxon artefacts. However, most

pupils of this age, when asked, did not have a good understanding of chronology, for example the approximate date of the Anglo-Saxon era. Work by Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of a range of social aspects of life in Victorian times, with higher ability pupils producing some more extended pieces of writing. They show a good understanding of the history of their own area, for example, how changes in the law affect industry and peoples' lives.

106. Teaching in the lessons seen in Key Stage 2 was satisfactory. The best features were the provision in both classes of interesting resources that encourage pupils' interest. In Years 5 and 6 the teacher understands the subject well and teaches it effectively. In Years 3 and 4, commercial worksheets are used too often. This limits the opportunities for pupils to produce more independent, extended work produced in their own style. Pupils are well managed in upper Key Stage 2. This is less successful in the lower part of the key stage where pupils are allowed to call out rather than wait their turn and listen to what others are saying.
107. Little progress has been made since the previous inspection with regard to the inadequacy of resources. Although the school makes good use of the local museums it continues to depend too much on teachers' personal contributions.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

108. Pupils achieve high standards in information technology. They are well taught by competent, enthusiastic teachers who effectively exploit the potential of an impressive range of computers. Pupils have very good attitudes, respond well to the good teaching and make good progress. High standards highlighted in the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils achieve particularly high standards in communicating and handling information, in text, graphics or data, but they are also making rapid progress in other aspects.
109. Pupils' achievements are good in both key stages. Year 2 pupils use computers confidently for communicating and handling information. They produce text and then amend their ideas by using colours, fonts and borders. They use design software to create pictures and patterns. They use information technology to sort and classify information; for example when making graphs of favourite toys. They have learned to control equipment, such as programmable toys, by giving instructions.
110. Year 6 pupils confidently combine print and graphics, for example to present an attractive leaflet aimed to interest the reader. They refine and present information in different forms for a specific purpose, for example when creating a brochure about the local area. They use information technology to handle data and to organise and analyse information, for example when using spreadsheets in a survey of the price of crisps. They access information through the Internet, selecting the information they need and checking for suitability for their purpose. For example, when finding information about weather they know that some sites are more useful and reliable than others. Control, monitoring and modelling are less well developed aspects of information technology, but pupils are confident with creating, testing and storing sequences of instructions to control movement, for example with 'logo' software.
111. Progress is good, particularly in Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are interested and keen to learn. They make the most of every opportunity they are offered to develop their skills. The level of co-operation displayed by pupils as they

work is impressive. They support each other and learn from each other. This helps all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, to achieve well.

112. Teaching is usually good and often very good. Teachers have a high level of competence and are enthusiastic about the subject. They use computers confidently themselves and this encourages pupils to achieve well. When lessons are well planned, resources well used and expectations are high, pupils make very good progress. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson the teacher linked information technology with geography and asked pupils to design a brochure for the local area. The lesson was very carefully planned and organised and the available computers were used to the best advantage. Pupils were inspired to make a concentrated effort; the quality of learning was very good. When lessons are not well planned and organised, as in a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils try hard but get confused and do not make the progress they could.
113. The administrative secretary of the school also has a high level of expertise in information technology and often effectively supports pupils' learning. For example, she supported a group of Year 1 pupils in data handling and they learnt how to create graphs of different kinds. She makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The school makes extremely good use of the computer suite they have had installed and this is making a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Computers in classrooms are less well used, but some of these are out dated and due to be replaced. The Year 5/6 classroom has limited space for a computer to be in use and pupils tend to use the computer suite independently instead.
114. Information technology is used effectively to support the whole curriculum. For example in English much of the pupils' written work is planned and redrafted using information technology.

MUSIC

115. Standards are high, just as they were at the time of the last inspection. The specialist music teacher has prepared a very well structured and interesting curriculum and teaches all classes, apart from reception. This ensures that pupils enjoy the subject, systematically build up their skills and develop an understanding and appreciation of music from year to year. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve consistently well throughout the school.
116. Pupils soon learn to use musical language correctly. For example, in Year 1/2, they use the terms 'staccato' and 'legato' to describe sudden and smooth sounds. When the teacher plays the sounds in different combinations, pupils make sharp twisting movements of their bodies or slow arm movements very effectively. These activities not only improve their appreciation of sound, but also their capacity to express their ideas through dance. By the age of seven, pupils have developed good listening skills and a good understanding of how to beat, shake and scrape percussion instruments to compose many different types and patterns of sound. These good achievements are the direct result of very good teaching.
117. High achievement continues in Year 3/4. Pupils learn to read a sequence of symbols and play instruments correctly to interpret their meaning. By Year 5/6 pupils can read music and follow the notes precisely. For example, using sounds such as tapping their feet, whistling and clicking their fingers, they perform four part arrangements very competently. All pupils learn the language of music by playing

the recorder. Those with advanced skills read music and play arrangements such as 'Tallis' Canon' in four parts, expertly. Singing is good. Pupils sing in tune and with feeling, even when unaccompanied. Music is a central part of the life of the school and provides a very good link with the secondary through the teaching of woodwind.

118. Teaching is very good with some outstanding features. Planning and preparation of lessons is meticulous. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and lessons are packed with interesting activities. The teacher has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their capacity to learn. Pupils are fully engaged in each lesson because the teacher frequently asks questions to involve them, such as 'How will we keep together?' Pupils reply with ideas such as, 'I could play a triangle at the beginning of each bar.' Throughout the lessons, the teacher's enthusiasm and expressive use of language strongly influences pupils' responses and ensures they perform to a high standard.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. High standards in swimming have been maintained since the last inspection, largely because all pupils have regular weekly lessons. By Year 6 almost all pupils are proficient swimmers and have gained water survival awards. The school now has a hall with fixed apparatus. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
120. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in dance because music lessons often contain elements of expressive movement and pupils incorporate this into their physical education lessons. In Year 1/2, pupils demonstrate good co-ordination and control, and use space well. For example, they skip, stride, march and tiptoe the outlines of imaginary patterns, pretending to have wet paint on their feet. They pretend to be animals changing their skins and higher achieving pupils use facial expressions and body language very effectively to convey the feeling of the skin being tight and difficult to get into.
121. In Key Stage 2, pupils' achievements are broadly typical for their age in gymnastics, and they acquire a secure understanding of how to work safely. In Year 3/4 pupils are given plans to show how to set out the apparatus. This is good because they have the responsibility to set the equipment out for themselves, but can follow a safe layout. However, they do not always achieve as well as they might because lessons become noisy and not all pupils give of their best. In Year 5/6, pupils work in a much quieter atmosphere and they concentrate better on trying to improve. This is helped by the teacher's effective control and use of pupils to demonstrate their skills so that others can watch. Pupils are encouraged to practise balanced shapes at floor level and then use apparatus to develop their balancing skills on narrower or higher surfaces. This works well because the level of challenge continues to increase.
122. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Good teaching gets the best out of the pupils by recognising and praising their good work. In these lessons, instructions are clear and the teacher frequently questions pupils to check their level of understanding. Good use is made of radio broadcasts because the materials are used selectively. For example, the tape is stopped at regular intervals so the teacher can concentrate on the development of each component of the lesson. There are good features in the teaching at Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 5/6 when demanding activities are introduced, such as balancing on three points on a piece of apparatus and linking two or three balances together in a sequence. Most

pupils make a considerable physical effort to hold a balanced shape on an elevated surface or hang from a horizontal bar. The teaching of physical education benefits from the use of a published scheme in which each lesson is carefully explained. This guides teachers into ensuring that pupils build on previous learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve higher standards than those set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. This indicates an improvement since the previous inspection when standards at both key stages were judged to be sound. At Key Stage 2, pupils meet the standards of the Agreed Syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective support and make good progress throughout both key stages.
124. By the end of the Key Stage 1, pupils have developed a good understanding of some of the stories from the Bible. They can link the story of, for example, 'The Good Samaritan', to moral behaviour. During the lesson observed, they were able to demonstrate understanding of the concept of being lost and could relate the 'Parable of the Lost Sheep' to people being lost and returning to the fold.
125. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop a secure understanding of the Buddhist religion. They know the meanings of some of the stories, and have a basic knowledge of Buddhist practices and an understanding of their beliefs. For example, they consider the difference between selfishness and selflessness when talking about the prayer wheel and write their own prayers. In upper Key Stage 2, pupils develop a sound understanding of Judaism as part of their studies of Christianity and the major world faiths. They know that the Old Testament in the Bible is partly a history of the Jewish nation. In the lesson observed, after listening to the story of Esther, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the link between the story and the Jewish festival of Purim. They also have a satisfactory understanding of the main Christian festivals. Although pupils' work indicates an understanding of feelings and morality, their ability to raise questions about religion or make a deeper and more reflective response to religious ideas is not well developed.
126. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well. Higher ability pupils in Year 2 demonstrate thoughtful and mature responses to moral questions. For example, they understand that what might be important to one person might be insignificant to another. Pupils engage in thoughtful discussion with their teacher as to why a shepherd might risk the lives of ninety-nine sheep to save one. In Key Stage 2, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are beginning to develop ideas on morality; for example, when considering whether it is a good thing to have everything you want. However, in the lesson observed, opportunities to extend their thoughts were limited. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 respond positively to the subject, particularly when they are involved in acting out stories.
127. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory with some good features. Teaching is most effective where lesson objectives are well thought out, discussion engages all pupils, teachers listen to and value pupils' contributions, and provision is made for pupils to express, share and explore their thoughts and feelings. Where aspects of teaching are less successful, pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to respond to the subject and develop their ideas through discussion and personal research. In Years 3 and 4, time is lost and the flow of the lesson is disrupted because the teacher has to keep reminding pupils to pay attention.

