

INSPECTION REPORT

ST BRIDGET'S CE SCHOOL

Parton, Whitehaven

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112296

Headteacher: Mrs E Highton

Reporting inspector: Mr. A. D. Boot
OFSTED Inspector No: 19132

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th January 2001

Inspection number: 191165

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: primary

School category: voluntary controlled

Age range of children: 5 - 11

Gender of children: mixed

School address: Main Street
Parton
Whitehaven
Cumbria

Postcode: CA28 6NY

Telephone number: 01946 852654

Fax number:

Appropriate authority: governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev A Edwards

Date of previous inspection: January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19132	Mr. A. D. Boot	Registered inspector	mathematics; information and communication technology art and design design and technology physical education science equal opportunities special educational needs	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and children's achievements Children's attitudes, values and personal behaviour How well are children taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13450	Mrs J. Madden	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18344	Mr D. Earley	Team inspector	English geography history music religious education foundation stage curriculum	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6 - 9
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	
Children' 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?	10 - 12
The school's results and achievements	
Children' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?	12 - 13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO CHILDREN?	13 - 16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?	16 - 17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17 - 18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18 - 19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20 - 22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23 - 35

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Bridget's CE Primary School is situated in the formerly industrial village of Parton near Whitehaven. There are currently 55 children on roll, which is lower than at the time of the last inspection in January 1997 and much lower than average for primary schools. The children are organised sensibly into three mixed age classes – Reception and Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4; Years 5 and 6. Children join the mixed reception and infant class in the September after their fourth birthday and most transfer to Whitehaven School at the age of 11. All the children come from nearby, many children come from homes where parents are not currently in employment and 46 per cent are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average. The number of children in each year group is very small, ranging from only three children in the smallest year group to 12 in the largest. A consequence of this is that the average attainment of the year groups varies very widely. However, while attainment on entry varies widely, on average, over a period of several years, it is below the national average. This is reflected in the percentage of children who have special educational needs, which, at 36 per cent, is above the national average, as is the number of these children who have statements. There are very few children from minority ethnic groups and no children speak English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school with many good features. Standards are mostly at the expected levels, with good work in using information and communication technology (ICT). The school does a lot to encourage children to behave well and make them keen to learn. Overall, teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is very good, it is enriched very well in a variety of interesting ways and all children are very well included. Children's spiritual development is very good, and their moral, social and cultural development is also good overall. The school takes particularly good care of its children, it works very well with parents and keeps them well informed about their child's progress. The school is rightly central in the community; it is led well by the headteacher, who works very closely with all the staff. They form an effective team. The school has made a good improvement since its last inspection and it now provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children achieve good standards in ICT.
- The school provides a very wide ranging and interesting curriculum with many first-hand experiences; all children are included very well in everything that the school provides.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and direction for the school and she is well supported by a hard working staff.
- The school takes consistently good care of children; relationships throughout are very good.
- The school provides very well for the spiritual development of the children and for their development in understanding their own culture; it provides well for children's development morally and socially and in understanding the multi-cultural nature of society.
- The school is a central part of the community; it is rightly well supported locally and has very effective links with parents.

What could be improved

- The presentation, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary in children's independent, extended writing and the consistency of children's recording of their work in the junior classes.
- The speed and accuracy of children's mental arithmetic.
- The provision for the physical development of children in the reception year.
- The monitoring of the work of the school by the very supportive governing body to enable it to properly fulfil its role as "critical friend" and informed decision maker.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made a good improvement. The issues identified in the last inspection have been well addressed and the school's results have broadly kept pace with the national rate of improvement. It is well placed to achieve its targets for further improvement. Teaching has improved overall; there has been a very

good improvement in planning, the long-term plans are now very good and the teachers' day-to-day plans show very clearly what children need to learn. There has been a very good improvement also in provision for preparing children to live in a multi-cultural society and indeed, this is now one of the school's strengths. The school has implemented a good range of initiatives to improve attainment in writing but it still needs to improve further the quality of children's independent, extended writing.

STANDARDS

A table showing the school's standards in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests has been omitted as there were fewer than ten children in each year group. Reporting results in that way exaggerates the performance of very small groups as well as making it possible to identify the achievements of individual children. The school has produced targets which are appropriate but, with the very small year groups, the school finds it more useful to trace the progress of individuals. Hence, the targets are sensibly based on predictions for individual children but with appropriate improvement included.

At the end of Key Stage 2, overall results in National Curriculum tests in English show a similar trend to the national trend of improvement, apart from those in 2000. The findings from the last inspection and from this inspection judge standards to be broadly in line with the expected level. The 2000 results were very low, however. Again, the size of year groups accounts for some of this difference and there were more children in the 2000 Year 6 with special educational needs. However, this inspection continues to highlight a weakness in children's writing of which the school is well aware. In mathematics, National Curriculum test results have been either average or above. The standard was good at the last inspection and it is judged to be average overall now but the school has not kept pace with the national improvement in mental arithmetic. In science, performance in National Curriculum tests has improved overall in line with the national improvement, with well above average results in 1999 but below average results in 2000. Currently, standards are judged to be in line with the national expectations, a picture which the school has maintained since its last inspection. When compared with similar schools in 2000, results in English were very low, they were average in science and above average in mathematics. The school fared much better in comparison with similar schools in 1999 and it expects to do so again in 2001.

In other subjects, attainment is in line with national expectations and the school has maintained this since its last inspection. There is one exception to this, which is ICT, where standards are high and have improved well since the previous inspection. This is as a result of very good teaching and plenty of access to the very good level of equipment. Overall, children achieve well in the reception year and Key Stage 1 and soundly in Key Stage 2.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall. This has been maintained from the previous inspection.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good and often very good. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare and the school deals effectively with the isolated incidents
Personal development and relationships	Very good. This is achieved despite the large proportion of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties
Attendance	Satisfactory

Children have good attitudes to their learning overall and this has been maintained from the previous inspection. They mostly enjoy participating in questions and discussion, listen carefully to instructions and generally try hard when faced with a task. However, some children prefer to "take a back seat" during some parts of lessons and rely on others' very good efforts instead of trying hard themselves. Overall, the behaviour of children is good and it is often very good. This good behaviour in lessons extends to playtimes and lunchtimes, when children get on very well together and with the lunchtime supervisors.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching has improved from the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. Teaching and learning are now good, overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection, indeed, teaching was satisfactory in 24 per cent of lessons, it was good in 48 per cent and it was very good in 28 percent. Occasionally, although the quality of teaching is sound or even good, the quality of learning is unsatisfactory because the teachers do not have appropriate facilities for physical development. While the quality of teaching is good overall, very good teaching is an important feature of all three classes, although the quality of teaching is slightly better in the reception and infant class than in the junior classes. In the reception and infant class, teaching was sound in 14 per cent of lessons, it was good in 57 per cent and it was very good in 29 per cent. In the junior classes, teaching was sound in 36 per cent of lessons, it was good in 36 per cent and it was very good in 27 per cent.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a very broad range of very well planned and interesting opportunities for learning, which enrich the curriculum.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good; they are well supported and the school makes every effort to include them.
Provision for children' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Provision for spiritual development is very good.
How well the school cares for its children	Consistently good. Each child is well known to all the adults working in the school who work as a close and effective team.

The school is particularly successful in ensuring that all children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum with equal opportunities to succeed. The school makes particularly good use of the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in planning its curriculum. It meets all statutory requirements in teaching all the subjects of the National Curriculum which are compulsory for this age, along with religious education according to the syllabus which has been agreed locally. The school makes the curriculum more interesting by using visits and visitors well. Overall, the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good with notably very good provision for spiritual development. Children work hard and the supportive environment contributes to this and to their academic and personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and manage-ment by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear educational direction for the school. She is ably supported in this by the whole staff, who work very closely together as a team in this very small school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Although the governing body is effective in fulfilling its statutory duties and in financial monitoring, it is not effective enough in shaping the direction of the school's development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound; the headteacher has a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve further and she is well supported by the staff.
The strategic use of	Good; teaching staff are well deployed and accommodation and resources are

resources	used well.
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The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear educational direction for the school. The whole staff work very closely together as an effective team in this very small school and provide good support to the headteacher. There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection and leadership and management have improved overall. Although the governing body is very supportive and receives good information from the headteacher, it is not effective enough in shaping the direction of the school's development. The governing body is effective in fulfilling its statutory duties and in its financial monitoring but it relies too heavily on the headteacher and does not have satisfactory systems to enable it to monitor the work of the school well enough. Overall, the school applies the principles of best value soundly.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. • Children like school and are expected to work hard and achieve their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four parents tended to disagree about the homework given. • One parent disagreed that behaviour is good.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school, especially concerning the very interesting range of activities both in and out of lessons. One parent felt that the provision for children with special educational needs is good and inspectors agree with this also. Inspectors found behaviour to be good. The homework given is similar to what is provided by most primary schools and it is making a sound contribution to children's learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When the school's performance is measured, for each year group of children, in National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, the results are converted into percentages or average point scores for comparison with other schools. These results show large swings, as the measures are exaggerated because of the very small number of children taking the tests each year. For example, in the current Year 2, there are only three children so each one will count for 33.3 per cent. It is important, therefore, to look at trends over time and the performance of individual children as well as year group results. While attainment on entry varies widely, on average, over a period of several years, it is below the national average. This is reflected in the percentage of children who have special educational needs, which is above the national average, as is the number of these children who have statements. When they join the school, children's attainment on average is low, particularly in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and personal, emotional and social development. This is reflected in the early assessments made by the school and confirmed by other data collected and analysed by the school. Although children make good progress during their first year in school, and the quality of teaching is consistently good and occasionally very good, the attainment of many is still below that typically expected in communication, language, and literature, mathematical and creative development, physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In personal, social and emotional development, children are on target to attain the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1.
2. At the end of Key Stage 1, reading results over a period of years have been around the national average and writing results have improved to just below the national average. This is similar to the judgements made both in the previous inspection and in this inspection. The school has improved at a similar rate to other schools. In mathematics, results have been above average in the last two years but they were below average before that. Currently, standards are judged to meet the national expectation. This represents a slight reduction from the time of the last inspection when attainment was judged to be good: that is accounted for by the differences between year groups and especially in the small number of children in the present Year 2. When compared with schools having a similar percentage of children eligible for free school meals the school's results in 2000 were average in reading, above average in writing and well above average in mathematics.
3. At the end of Key Stage 2, overall results in National Curriculum tests in English show a similar trend to the national trend of improvement, apart from those in 2000. The findings from the last inspection and from this inspection judge standards to be broadly in line with the expected level across the full range of children's work. The 2000 results were very low however. Again, the size of year groups accounts for some of this difference and there were more children in the 2000 Year 6 with special educational needs. However, this inspection continues to highlight a weakness in children's writing of which the school is well aware. In mathematics, National Curriculum test results have been either average or above. The standard was good at the last inspection and it is judged to be average overall now but the school has not kept pace with the national improvement in mental arithmetic. In science, performance in National Curriculum tests has improved overall in line with the national improvement, with well above average results in 1999 but below average results in 2000. Currently, standards are judged to be in line with the national expectations, a picture which the school has maintained since its last inspection. When

compared with similar schools in 2000, results in English were very low, average in science and above average in mathematics. However, the school fared much better in comparison with similar schools in 1999 and it expects to do so again in 2001.

4. Children achieve well and make good progress overall in literacy and numeracy from starting school to the end of Key Stage 1. Although they do not achieve quite so well in Key Stage 2, achievement is still sound and children make satisfactory progress. Children with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans throughout the school. Although attainment of boys and girls varies significantly with the small year groups, over a period of time there are no significant variations from the national picture to be noted.
5. The school has produced targets which are appropriate but, with the very small year groups, the school finds it more useful to trace the progress of individuals. Hence, the targets are sensibly based on predictions for individual children but with appropriate improvement included.
6. In other subjects, attainment is in line with national expectations and the school has maintained this since its last inspection. There is one exception to this, which is ICT, where standards are high and have improved well since the previous inspection. This is as a result of very good teaching and plenty of access to the very good level of equipment.

Children' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Children have good attitudes to their learning, overall, and this has been maintained from the previous inspection. They are mostly keen and eager to come to school and are quick to start work in the classroom once they arrive. They enjoy participating in questions and discussion, listen carefully to instructions and generally try hard when faced with a task. However, some children prefer to "take a back seat" during some parts of lessons and rely on others' very good efforts. This is a feature of some work involving mental arithmetic with which children are not confident enough.
8. Overall, the behaviour of children is good and it is often very good. This good behaviour in lessons extends to playtimes and lunchtimes, when children get on very well together and with the lunchtime supervisors. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare and the school deals effectively with the isolated incidents. Exclusion of children for serious incidents is used rarely but appropriately. Children get on very well with the teachers and other adults in the school. They are polite and confident with them and mutual respect is shown. Children use resources sensibly, especially the computers, which they use sensibly and efficiently. Children are encouraged and respond very well to showing respect for the feelings and beliefs of others and this is very well reinforced through good teaching in religious education lessons.
9. Children' personal development and relationships are very good. This is achieved despite the large proportion of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school works very hard to include these children fully and to provide them with appropriate support. The non-teaching assistants work very closely with these children and the teamwork between the teaching and non-teaching staff is very effective. Personal, social and emotional development is rightly given a particularly high priority in the reception and infant class and there are many opportunities created for this; the older children in this class very caringly help to include the younger ones in songs and games. This gives them a sense of responsibility as well as helping the younger children to understand the routines of school life.

10. Children with special educational needs have good attitudes to school. They generally behave well and join in all areas of the curriculum, although those with emotional and behavioural difficulties often find this very hard to do. As a result of the good support provided they work well alongside and with their peers.
11. Attendance and authorised absence rates are around the national average with no unauthorized absence.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?

12. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and has improved from the last inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory. In lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory in 24 per cent, good in 48 per cent and very good in 28 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. This masks some differences, however. Occasionally, the quality of teaching is sound or even good but the quality of learning is unsatisfactory because the teachers do not have appropriate facilities; for example, the quality of learning in the physical development of children in the reception year is unsatisfactory because there is no suitable, large equipment for them to use. While the quality of teaching is good overall, very good teaching is a notable feature of all three classes, although the quality of teaching is slightly better in the mixed reception and Key Stage 1 class than in the junior classes. For the children in the reception year and in Key Stage 1, teaching was sound in 14 per cent of lessons, it was good in 57 per cent and it was very good in 29 per cent. In Key Stage 2, teaching was sound in 36 per cent of lessons, it was good in 36 per cent and it was very good in 27 per cent.
13. There are several particular strengths of the teaching and learning. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they are teaching and how children learn. Many examples of this were seen in the reception and infant class, where the teacher is very skilled in ensuring that all the children make a valuable contribution to the lesson; for example, when the class were discussing the science they had learnt about different types of materials, a boy in Year 1 was encouraged to tell the others that an elastic band would stretch as well as bend. This helped him to consolidate what he had learnt as well as telling others something that they did not already know. The teachers have specialised in the subjects at which they are best and this has helped to improve both teaching and learning. For example, learning is often very good in ICT as a result of the teacher's own knowledge and of her very high expectations. The children are challenged to solve difficult problems and they try very hard to do so. This was seen when Year 5 and 6 children had to write sequences of instructions to switch traffic lights on and off, one girl in Year 6 was determined to solve the problem even though she said to her friend that it "is doing my head in!" This example shows that children learn very well as a result of the very good teaching as they concentrate very hard in order to understand important ideas by using their developing ability to solve new problems. Throughout the school the teaching of literacy is good with a particular strength in how the teachers mark work in order to encourage children and to help them to improve it even further. This rectifies a weakness noted in the last inspection and helps to improve children's learning. Teachers regularly assess what children have learnt and the information that this provides is then used well; for example, in literacy it is used to set clear targets for the children to work towards.
14. A further strength of the teaching is in the very good planning of lessons. The teachers were criticised in the last inspection because their plans were "missing clear objectives". They have made particularly impressive progress in rectifying that issue and the plans seen during the inspection consistently showed very clearly what children were expected to learn and how that was to happen. In addition, the teachers have become skilled in explaining this to the children,

even with the youngest children. This helps the children to understand what is expected of them and gets lessons off to a good start and continue in a purposeful manner.

15. Although teaching is good overall, there are occasionally weaker elements. The teaching of mental arithmetic for older children lacks pace and rigour on occasions and this is partly why children are not fast and accurate enough in this work. Occasionally, the pace of other lessons drops because children are given too much time or because the work they are asked to do is not structured well enough; for example, in a science lesson children were learning about bones and the skeleton. The teacher's explanations were good and the initial work of examining the skeleton of a real fish was very purposeful but they were given too long to make drawings and they were not given enough direction in writing about the work. This led to time being wasted and recording of work not up to the standard expected.
16. Apart from the particular strengths and weaknesses of teaching most other factors contributing to teaching and learning in most subjects apart from physical education were consistently good. In physical education the quality of learning is adversely affected by a lack of suitable equipment for children in the Reception year and generally by the poor accommodation available. Teachers teach basic skills in literacy well and they assess the work that children are doing well. The school has a well organised system for children having homework to do and this makes a sound contribution to their learning. Teaching and learning for children who have special educational needs is good. These children have appropriate targets and they are well supported in lessons.

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

17. The school provides a very broad range of very well planned and interesting learning opportunities which enrich the curriculum. The curriculum meets the needs and aptitudes of all children very effectively, including children under five and those with special educational needs. The school fulfils all statutory requirements in teaching all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and makes very good use of the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school has worked very hard to prepare for the introduction of Curriculum 2000. It has successfully rectified a weakness noted in the previous inspection report by its very well structured planning which ensures that children build on work that has gone before. The school is very successful in ensuring that all children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and have equal opportunities to succeed in them.
18. The school uses satisfactory strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and overall is making effective use of the national literacy and numeracy frameworks in order to raise attainment. It makes sound provision for children to use their literacy and numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects of the curriculum. Children use their literacy skills in history when they explain aspects of life in ancient Greece and use documentary evidence to describe Henry VIII. In geography, they write questionnaires to elicit opinions on the flow of traffic through the village and describe how the local environment may be improved. In science, children write predictions about plant growth and label diagrams. They wrote clear instructions for making a model lighthouse in design and technology and explained clearly in religious education how religious beliefs influence life styles in work. Children use their numeracy skills in geography where they make traffic surveys and present their findings in a range of computer-produced graphs. In history, children develop their understanding of chronology through the use of time lines and they count time in music. In science they measure pulse rates and use graphs to show the dimensions of bones.

Children use their word processing skills in describing features of St. Bridget's church, such as the font and lectern, and write about reincarnation in their studies of Buddhism. They use computers in song writing in music and use digital cameras in studies of the locality in geography. Children use the Internet and CD-ROMs to research Buddhism and Judaism in religious education and to find out about skeletons in science.

19. Provision for children with special educational needs is good. These children are identified at an early age because the co-ordinator for special educational needs is also the reception teacher. She gets to know the children very well and is therefore more able to follow their progress and advise other teachers later. Children with special educational needs have appropriate individual education plans prepared for them and parents are included in reviews of progress whenever possible.
20. The school makes good use of the specialist skills of staff. A very experienced teacher is responsible for Key Stage 1. In this small school effective use is made of specialist teaching in Key Stage 2. This helps to enhance children's learning by making good use of the staff's subject expertise and enables all children to be well known to staff who ensure that work follows on from what has gone before. The school has a well-planned scheme for teaching citizenship and personal and social education. The governors' policy is that sex education is taught as part of the science curriculum and as and when issues arise. Education about the use and misuse of drugs is planned to take place later in the year as part of the school's participation in the healthy schools project.
21. In this small school, staff work hard to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities in order to enrich the curriculum. These include, netball, football, recorder, chess and computer clubs. The activity club provides children with a wide range of activities such as baking, sewing and painting. In a similar way the school makes visits to places of educational interest such as Hadrian's Wall, Leven's Hall, Dove Cottage and Mungrisdale. Children are also provided with opportunities to make residential visits to places such as London, Paris and outdoor centres. The school welcomes visitors such as musicians, poets and historians in order to enhance its curricular provision.
22. The school makes very good use of the local community in contributing to children's learning. There are close links with local churches and the school participates in services and flower festivals. Senior citizens are invited into school celebrations and older members of the community help in the study of local history. Each Christmas, children participate in a scheme organised by the police for helping needy senior citizens. The school's autumn and spring fairs are part of the community calendar. A member of staff provides a computer class for parents and members of the local community. The school uses the village, beach and surroundings as part of its work in geography and history. There are close links with a local mining museum and children visit the local theatre. Local sports teams provide coaching in cricket, rugby and soccer. The school has very close links with partner institutions. For example, it co-operates with local small schools in curriculum development and shares Christmas and leavers' services with them. Parents of children in these schools participate jointly in courses about education. There are very close curricular links with a local secondary school. For example, children begin work in science, mathematics and English which is continued when they move to secondary school. A local secondary school orchestra gives performances for the children. Arrangements for the transfer of children to secondary school are good and help children in their move to a larger school. A parent and toddler group makes regular use of the school premises and liaises closely with the school; this means that children are used to coming to the school before they formally join the reception group.

23. Overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Children have many opportunities for moments of reflection and prayer. For example, during personal and social education lessons in Key Stage 1 children reflect quietly on friendship and about how they might treat others. During assemblies and worship, children join in sensitively with prayers, often written by themselves. They begin to understand prayer as talking to God. Children visit the local church and learn about special places and people as part of their work in religious education. They visit a Buddhist temple and share in a Shabbat meal, learning to respect the values and beliefs of others. Relationships in school are very good and children are confident that their own ideas and opinions are valued by other children and adults. In literature children appreciate the beauty of the poetry and language of poets and authors such as Tennyson, Shakespeare and Dickens. On visits to such places as Paris they look with awe and wonder at such buildings as the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame Cathedral. Children visit the Lake District and appreciate the beauty of their surroundings.
24. Provision for moral development is good. Children have a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong. This is enhanced by the very clear behaviour policy, which is well understood and used by children and teachers throughout the life of the school. In their personal and social education lessons children under five and in Key Stage 1 learn about fairness and respect for others. Older children develop insights into issues such as vivisection. They research newspapers in order to lead assemblies where they consider items of local, national and international news and discuss crime and justice. In its work in this area and in its overall ethos the school provides good opportunities for children to consider the guiding precepts of the Christian faith.
25. Provision for social development is good. This is enhanced by work in personal and, social education and citizenship lessons. For example younger Key Stage 2 children consider the consequences of antisocial and aggressive behaviour. Children in Key Stage 1 discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in Parton in their geography lessons and offer suggestions as to how the local area might be improved. In this small school staff are successful in the creation of a caring family atmosphere, where all children are known and respected and where the positive aspects of behaviour are emphasised. This is evident in assemblies and times of worship and, for example, when children, the headteacher and senior midday supervisor gather together regularly to discuss issues which might arise at lunchtime. Children contributed to the formulation of the behaviour policy and are consulted about aspects of life in school. For example, children indicated that it would be beneficial if equipment were to be available for their use during playtimes in the summer. Children help with the smooth running of the school, for example in helping to maintain the library and in the use of the digital camera to record life in school. Children take the initiative in helping children with special educational needs during lessons and help to raise funds for people less fortunate than themselves, such as children in Africa and Romania.
26. Overall provision for cultural development is good. Opportunities for children to appreciate their own culture are very good. Children learn about the local traditions of mining and fishing and about the importance of rum in the history of the nearby seaport. Their participation in a local project, the sheepfold experience, involved them in local history and enabled them to learn about dry stone walling, sheepfolds, farming and Cumberland wrestling. They had opportunities to sing with local folk musicians and write and sing their own lyrics for folk music. Children take part in celebrations such as Christmas, Easter and harvest and flower festivals. On their residential visit to London they visit many places of their own cultural heritage and on visiting Paris have opportunities for learning about a contrasting culture. The school has successfully addressed a criticism from the previous inspection in its provision of a multi-cultural education policy and in

its good provision for children to learn about other cultures. This is seen, for example, in religious education, where children learn about Judaism and Buddhism. They handle artefacts associated with a Shabbat meal and visit a Buddhist temple. In history children study ancient Greek and Egyptian cultures and in geography compare life in an Indian village with their own. In English they study traditional stories from Africa and, for example, children in Key Stage 1 help to build a Native American totem pole and learn about textiles from different cultures in their work in art. Children listen to Australian aboriginal music from a visiting musician and in music lessons hear music from Mexico and Africa. In physical education children take part in Jewish circular dances and American line dancing. The school works hard to ensure that children have opportunities to respect and appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures, for example by providing opportunities in assemblies and lessons for children to discuss any issues which may arise from the news. They carefully monitor the books and materials children use and provide younger children with play equipment representing different cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The care for children is consistently good. Each child is well known to all the adults working in the school, who work as a close and effective team. This supportive environment contributes to both academic and personal development. Children with special educational needs, and the less able, are similarly well supported by staff and volunteers.
28. Child protection arrangements are good, and comply with local guidelines. Liaison with appropriate agencies is in place. The health and safety of children are regularly monitored. A risk assessment was undertaken recently and the recommendations resulting from it are in hand. The school health service monitors children's sight, hearing and general health throughout their time in school, and there are enough trained first-aiders and equipment
29. The personal development of children is an important element in school life, and is closely monitored by teachers and support staff. This information is collated into a very good half-termly report to parents, based on effort, behaviour and academic achievement. The report is discussed with the child before being sent out. Weekly and termly assemblies are held to celebrate achievements in and out of school.
30. Procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are good. Good classroom management and high expectations for behaviour are in place from the time children enter school. Although infant and junior children play together in the playground, good supervision ensures fair play for all. The headteacher and the very experienced senior lunchtime supervisor hold weekly meetings with children, when any problems are discussed. Children are positively encouraged to report the smallest incidence of inappropriate behaviour, through assemblies, citizenship lessons and workshops, before it has the opportunity to escalate. They are expected to exercise self-discipline, and rewards and sanctions emphasise appropriate behaviour patterns. Parents are always involved in serious issues and the school has a very good system for regular reporting to parents where the teachers feel that an improvement in behaviour is needed.
31. Arrangements for children entering the reception class are well thought out. Home visits take place in the summer term, and children come to school for four visits in the second half of that term. They are also invited to any appropriate events during the summer term, including sports day. Parents attend an informal meeting to help them to prepare for their children's start in

school. Reception children start school one week after the other children, attending for the mornings only during the first week.

32. Arrangements for children moving to secondary school vary according to the school chosen by the children and their parents, but include induction visits, discussions with teachers from the chosen school, and work started in school and completed after the move.
33. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Parents usually telephone when children are absent, but letters of explanation are sought when necessary. Registers are checked regularly by the Education Welfare Officers. The registers provide a very clear system for attendance analysis.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. In their responses to the questionnaire, and similarly at the pre-inspection meeting, parents were extremely pleased with the school.
35. The range and quality of information for parents is good. The school's prospectus is clearly written and informative. Half-termly reports give very good information, on which parents are asked to comment. Annual reports follow an appropriate standard format, giving a clear indication of progress and, in some cases, they are very honest and direct about what children need to do to change and succeed. Parents are regularly kept up to date by newsletters and letters about all aspects of school life.
36. The school works in close partnership with parents, who come freely into school for informal discussions, assemblies, open days and coffee mornings. They are regularly consulted about aspects of school life, such as, for example, school uniform. The few parents with complaints speak directly to the school, and are happy with the results. However, the school does have problems getting parents to attend the academic meetings, such as that with the mathematics advisor.
37. Parents of children with special educational needs are informed as soon as their needs are recognised. An opportunity follows for parents to complete a comments sheet, in preparation for the child's annual review. Parents are invited to the review.
38. A homework diary and planner are used to consolidate contact between parent and school. Parents and friends regularly help in school, both in the classroom and with displays and artwork. A Parent Helper Course is held, and recently the school has started an ICT class for parents after school.
39. The school and parents are developing a close partnership which clearly benefits both the attitude of children and their learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear educational direction for the school. She is ably supported in this by the whole staff, who work very closely together as a team in this very small school. This effective leadership and teamwork ensure that the school's aims and values are very well reflected in its work. One of the school's aims is to offer equal

opportunities to all children. In this they are particularly successful as all children are very well included in what is going on both in lessons and in other aspects of the school's work. For example, the teacher and other adults in the reception and infant class worked very hard to make sure that the children with special educational needs were included in whole-class work by arranging for them to be chosen to lead or help in singing "Farmer's in the Den"; this added valuably to their social development.

41. There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection and leadership and management have improved overall. The headteacher has implemented a number of changes to both the buildings and to ways of doing things. An excellent example of this is the specialist teaching that now takes place. This is a very good strategy and means that teachers can concentrate on fewer subjects and use their own knowledge and understanding in the subjects that they teach more effectively. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics and has led to improvements in standards of children's work, for example, especially in ICT. The teachers have also been able to concentrate well on the areas or subjects in which they co-ordinate the work of the whole school. The teachers consequently have a clear understanding of what children achieve in the different subjects and they can target money carefully to buy equipment and books that are most needed. For example, the teacher in charge of science has a good set of books to help the older children revise for their National Curriculum tests in science in Year 6. These help to improve what children know and understand.
42. Although the headteacher has very little time not directly teaching her class, she has, nevertheless, been able to monitor the teaching of the other teachers effectively in order to develop the quality of teaching in the school. She has begun to implement the new legislation for teachers' performance management and is well placed to ensure that the school has identified useful priorities for its future development. The headteacher has taken a leading role in ensuring that the governing body has enough information to enable it to take informed decisions. However, although the governing body is effective in fulfilling its statutory duties and in financial monitoring, it is not effective enough in shaping the direction of the school's development as it relies too much on the headteacher and does not have satisfactory systems in place to enable it to monitor the work of the school so that it can act as a "critical friend" and hold the school to account for its performance. Overall, the school applies the principles of best value soundly.
43. The staff work very closely and effectively together and they share a commitment to improve and to meet the targets that the school has. For example, the school is aware of the need to improve children's extended writing and has already taken part in a number of initiatives to do this including taking advice from the local education authority's literacy consultant and involving themselves in events such as the "Sheepfold Project".
44. The school has very little room for manoeuvre in allocating its budget. The apparent deficit results from money for the fencing of the playground being taken from the school's budget in error and this has been corrected. Indeed, through careful financial planning and extensive use of additional government grants the school has ensured that it is well staffed, has a good level of equipment and books and has done all it can to improve the buildings. For example, the partitioning of the upstairs has improved the Year 5 and 6 classroom considerably and means that children can learn without interruptions. Although the school has unsatisfactory accommodation for physical education, which reduces the quality of children's learning, it has made good improvements to the accommodation upstairs, for example, by portioning off the Year 5 and 6 classroom and incorporating the computers into the classrooms.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. The school should:

- Improve the overall quality of children' independent, extended writing by;
 - Providing more opportunities for children to use what they have learned in their own writing and
 - Improving the consistency of children's work by always insisting on high standards, with regard to grammar, punctuation and vocabulary.
- Improve the speed and accuracy of mental arithmetic by adopting a consistently more rigorous approach to teaching and learning.
- Improve the provision for the physical development of children in the reception year by providing them with a suitable range of large equipment to use.
- Improve the governing body's role in shaping the direction of the school by ensuring that governors develop more rigorous ways of monitoring the work of the school in order to develop the governing body's role as "critical friend" and informed decision maker.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	28	48	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's children

Children on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)		55
Number of full-time children eligible for free school meals		24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of children with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register		20

English as an additional language

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

Child mobility in the last school year

	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

The tables showing test and examination data at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have been omitted because the year group size is 10 or fewer.

Ethnic background of children

	No of children
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	45
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to children of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.2
Number of children per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	18

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	58

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	157527
Total expenditure	160657
Expenditure per child	2869
Balance brought forward from previous year	-6676
Balance carried forward to next year	-9806

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

56

Number of questionnaires returned

13

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	31	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	46	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	38	8	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	38	31	0	0
The teaching is good.	54	46	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	23	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	23	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	46	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	62	38	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	46	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	77	23	0	0	0

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

46. Children join the mixed reception and infant class in the September after their fourth birthday. Although children's levels of attainment vary over a wide range when they join the school, their attainment on average is low, particularly in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and personal, emotional and social development. This is reflected in the early assessments made by the school and confirmed by other data collected and analysed by the school. Although children make good progress during their first year in school, and the quality of teaching is consistently good and occasionally very good, the attainment of many is still below that typically expected in communication, language, and literature, mathematical and creative development, physical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In personal, social and emotional development, children are on target to attain the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

47. The children achieve rapidly and standards are as would be expected because of the consistently good teaching by the infant teacher. Children quickly settle to their tasks and persevere with their work because teachers and ancillary staff who know the children well effectively manage them and use praise coupled with fair and firm guidance. Children become familiar with school routines and staff ensure that they begin to take turns, share equipment and move around the classroom and school sensibly. There is a good partnership between staff, parents and voluntary helpers. This is crucial to the children's developing understanding of perseverance, concentration and always trying to do their best, whether they are supported by an adult or choosing their own activity. For example, in work on matching words to pictures children take turns and begin to wait for others to finish speaking before they speak. When they work on making model dolls they sustain their concentration in cutting and sticking and take a pride in their finished work. During well-planned whole class sessions children learn to co-operate with others and begin to understand the consequences of their actions on others. During these sessions children are given every opportunity to gain praise and recognition for their good behaviour, attitudes and work. Staff make careful assessments of children's achievements and these are used to plan their work and are shared with parents.

Communication, language and literacy

48. Teaching and learning are good although standards are generally below those typically expected of children of this age. Planning is detailed and thorough. It is shared with children and this helps in the effective teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing because children know what is expected of them. Staff are careful to prepare work and provide support for the relatively high proportion of children with special educational needs. For example, staff set individual targets on initial sounds and writing for these children and provide an appropriate level of challenge and adult support. Although children have a limited range of vocabulary, most children talk quite readily to staff and peers. This is because their contributions are welcomed and children know that their efforts will be respected. Staff prepare a wide range of stimulating activities based on different themes at different times of the year. For example during the inspection, a large, well-made model train was a focus for children's role-play and speaking, reading and writing work. Children share a book, "The Train Ride" and the teacher uses questions well in order to enhance their understanding of the story. She shares her very good

subject knowledge with children so that they increase their knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds. Similarly, writing is developed through a range of interesting activities. Many children form letters correctly and are beginning to write their own names. Some more able children use appropriate upper and lower case letters and begin to read from a list of key words. Teachers very skilfully prepare a range of activities which encourage children to extend their initially limited attention spans. Carefully planned activities for speaking and listening, reading and writing are balanced well with opportunities for children to develop communication skills through independent and imaginative play.

Mathematical development

49. Children are taught through many practical activities as well as recording their work in the appropriate stage of their development. Staff plan carefully for the development of mathematical language through both formal and informal teaching. The teacher organises a very good range of practical activities to interest children whilst they are learning to count and recognise numbers. For example, the teacher uses songs, rhymes, actions and number jigsaws to extend children's skills in counting. They make pictures from different shapes and begin to develop their mathematical language when playing with dominoes. Many children begin to count to ten, recognise numerals 1 to 9 and use numbers in familiar settings. Some more able children confidently understand and use vocabulary such as, more and less. Staff use questions well to extend children's mathematical thinking and deepen their understanding. For example, they ask children challenging questions about the differing numbers of frogs on a lily pad in their whole-group work. Children's good learning is enhanced by the teacher's very good subject knowledge, which she shares carefully with children. She has very high expectations and is well supported by ancillary staff, parents and volunteers who work hard to engage children's interest and concentration. As a result children behave well and concentrate on their lessons. While this effectively supports their acquisition of early numeracy skills most children achieve below the expected level. However, they make good progress compared with their attainment on entry to the reception year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

50. Standards are generally below those typically expected for children at this age. However, the quality of teaching is good and children learn at a good rate. This is due to the very well planned activities and effective teaching that stimulate children's interest and make learning fun. For example, children use the train to learn about waiting rooms, tickets and journeys. They learn about colour and light because the teacher prepares the room and materials carefully. Children learn about occupations in their local area and begin to distinguish between different kinds of food. The teacher organises visits to the beach so that children can sort materials found there. Children know about special people and places and celebrate festivals such as Christmas. This is enhanced by the teacher's very good subject knowledge which she explains carefully. The teacher carefully plans work on toys in the past involving children's families. Children handle antique toys so that their knowledge and curiosity about the past are enhanced and children are introduced to an early concept of time, as old and new are compared. Most of the children need support in these activities and the teacher organises adult support well so that communication and discussion are encouraged in order to deepen their understanding.

Physical development

51. Although the teachers work very hard, standards are low, largely because the resources and accommodation are very limited. The provision of opportunities for children to work on such

aspects of physical development as travelling and moving to music is adequate and children's learning in these aspects is satisfactory. Similarly, provision for children to develop physical skills involved in the use of small equipment such as construction kits, tools, paint brushes, to work with sand and water, to use containers and blocks, is adequate. Children's learning in these aspects of physical development is satisfactory. However, children do not have enough opportunities to develop larger movements involving balancing, climbing, swinging, pulling and pushing because such apparatus as, for example, climbing frames, steps, ladders, benches, nets is not available. Nor do they have ready and frequent access to a choice of indoor and outdoor equipment which would enable them to pedal, push, control, change direction, climb and balance. The school is aware of these limitations but in spite of the efforts of the teacher to make the best of the circumstances with which she is faced, standards and provision overall are unsatisfactory.

Creative development

52. Children's learning is good but the standards achieved by most children are below what are expected for their age. Staff plan effectively together to support this area of development. For example, as part of their project on toys children worked well with a voluntary helper to cut material, use glues and began to produce well-finished model dolls. The teacher uses her very good subject knowledge effectively to ensure that children sing tunefully and harmoniously. She ensures that they begin to use untuned percussion instruments sensitively and make simple repeated rhythmic sequences. She uses questions very effectively to encourage children to think hard. For example, children's knowledge and understanding were extended when she asked them to indicate which instruments would make long or short sounds. The teacher uses praise and encouragement well so that children persevere with their work, such as painting shapes to make a picture and constructing a Native American totem pole. The teacher organises children and materials well so that time is well used and children work in a range of materials. For example, children use a range of imaginative play materials and experiment with plaster of Paris. They use sand, water and dough, accompanied by sensitive adult intervention in order to extend their learning.
53. The teacher makes very good use of assessment in order to ensure that future work builds on and extends children's learning. This is enhanced by detailed records and individual targets for improvement, which are shared with parents. The teacher is very knowledgeable and plans her work thoroughly and comprehensively to ensure that children's learning builds on work that has gone before.

ENGLISH

54. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in reading, writing and speaking and listening is in line with national expectations for seven year olds. This Year 2 group of children is very small, with a large proportion of children with special educational needs. These standards, which are in line with the findings of the previous inspection, are part of an improving trend in reading and writing shown by National Curriculum test results over the previous four years, except for the 2000 results, when there was a lower achieving year group of children. By the end of Year 6 attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing is in line with national expectations for eleven year olds overall. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection and reflects the generally improving trends in the National Curriculum test results in English during the previous four years except for the 2000 results, when there was also a lower achieving year group, with a larger proportion of children who had special educational needs.

55. The school has worked very hard in order to improve standards in English at both key stages, particularly in reading. However, although standards in writing are generally satisfactory, there are weaknesses in presentation, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary in independent extended writing and sometimes in other subjects - for example, in science particularly. The school has made satisfactory use of the National Literacy Strategy in order to improve attainment. It makes good use of assessments in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and set targets for improvement for individuals and groups. The school makes effective use of "Additional Literacy Support" classes and is involved in writing projects in order to improve attainment.
56. When children enter school standards are variable, although attainment is generally lower than would be expected. There is a high proportion of children with special educational needs in this small school. For many children initial reading skills are weak. Their vocabulary is very limited and the initial writing skills of many children are underdeveloped. As they move through the school, children's limitations are mostly successfully remedied by consistently good teaching and by the age of eleven standards are generally typical for their age, with a minority achieving above this.
57. By the age of seven, most children listen carefully and say why they like particular stories. They describe the events and ideas in the stories clearly and are confident to explain why some behaviour is acceptable and some is not, in their personal and social education lessons. By the age of eleven children know how to explain the actions of characters in stories such as "Tom's Midnight Garden" and justify their predictions of likely outcomes by reference to the text. Older children confidently lead assemblies, clearly explaining their carefully prepared views and opinions concerning issues arising from current news stories. They listen attentively and respond readily to questions and opinions from peers and staff concerning these issues.
58. Most children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in reading because teaching is thorough and well planned. Younger children have a good grasp of letter sounds and confidently use a range of strategies such as phonics and picture cues in order to read new or unfamiliar words. They enjoy reading and for example, confidently describe the adventures of "Kim and the Computer Giant". Older children read with increasing fluency and accuracy from a range of texts. Children in Year 6 enthusiastically explained why they prefer the work of such authors as Dahl and Kingsmith. They know how to locate reference books in the library and, for example, use contents, index and glossaries effectively in their research. They also make effective use of CD-ROMs and the internet in researching such subjects as religious education.
59. During their time in school teachers ensure that children write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Younger children describe the local environment and explain how it can be improved. They write short pieces depicting how characters in a story might have different points of view. They write short imaginative stories and describe a visit to Cockermouth. Younger children in Key Stage 2 write poems about personal experiences based on published works such as "Summer Place". They wrote letters to the local council and produced factual writing about the Olympic Games. Older children write lyrics for songs, devise advertisements and produce persuasive writing about vivisection. They wrote interesting poems about "stuff they like" and described the contributions made by the ancient Greeks to the modern world.
60. In both key stages children complete exercises on punctuation, spelling and grammar. Higher and average achieving children generally reach satisfactory standards relative to their ages and abilities. Children with special educational needs have individual education plans which identify

specific aspects of work to be targeted and which help them to make good progress. Lower achieving children's work on punctuation, spelling and grammar exercises is generally less accurate and they complete less work than expected for children of their age. For example, the spelling of simple words by lower achieving children in Key Stage 1 is weak. Younger lower achieving children in Key Stage 2 do not consistently use capital letters and full stops. Most children complete these exercises accurately and make good progress in these aspects of their work as they move through the school. However, when they are asked to produce independent extended writing most children do not consistently transfer the levels of skill acquired in their exercises on punctuation, grammar and spelling to this work. The amount of writing produced is limited. The writing of the majority of children at both key stages, including that of the higher achievers, does not generally include interesting vocabulary or words chosen adventurously and for effect. At both key stages, children's handwriting is generally satisfactory. However, many children find handwriting difficult and many older children do not write fluently or present their work neatly. Teachers provide regular practice in handwriting and this is beginning to lead to an improvement in the overall standards.

61. Children need to be given more opportunities to complete extended independent writing and to consistently apply their knowledge and skill in grammar, spelling and punctuation. The school should provide more emphasis and opportunity for children to extend their vocabularies and to learn how to use words imaginatively and aptly in order to improve the overall quality of their writing.
62. The quality of teaching is good, overall, throughout the school. Teachers usually plan their work very carefully and share their lesson objectives with children. This means that work is closely linked with what has gone before and children have a clear idea of what is expected. For example, in the Years 1 and 2 class with older children the teacher reviewed the text from the previous lesson and explained clearly that children were to write a story indicating the passage of time and link this with the construction of conditional sentences. This gives them an understanding of what they must do to improve and enhances their learning. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and a good understanding of how to teach basic skills such as phonics and understanding of text. For example, Year 1 children learn to recognise, blend and spell initial consonant clusters such as "sn" and "cl" because the teacher uses clear explanations and provides good examples. Year 4 children began to understand the figurative language and rhyming pattern in Tennyson's, "The Eagle" because the teacher shared her enjoyment and understanding of the poem with the children and clearly analysed the rhyming pattern with them.
63. In the Years 1 and 2 class, the teacher uses very effective teaching methods, such as the use of a puppet to help children to identify phonemes. This helps the children to increase their knowledge and to work hard. In Key Stage 2, older children sustain their interest in poetry because the teacher reads in a lively and expressive way. However, in Key Stage 2, when the pace of the lesson occasionally drops children do not maintain the same level of concentration. Teachers control children well and relationships are good so that children behave well and work hard. For example, older Key Stage 2 children listen attentively to text and are confident to pose and answer questions because they know that what they have to say will be respected and valued. This extends their speaking and listening skills and increases their understanding of how authors handle the passing of time.
64. The school has successfully rectified a weakness identified in the previous inspection by ensuring that teachers mark children work regularly and make comments which are supportive and guide children on the next steps to be taken. For example, in Year 6 the teacher identified

why a diary extract is well written and reminded another child to remember the appropriate handwriting style. This is complemented by the care teachers take during lessons in their ongoing assessment of children's work so that, for example, the Key Stage 1 teacher corrects and advises children on how to extend their skills in the recognition of phonemes and to develop their story sequences. Teachers have generally high expectations of children's work so that when Year 3 children are sharing a poem the teacher challenges them to produce their own descriptive words. The teacher in Key Stage 1 uses questions very well to challenge children to increase their skills in using letter combinations.

65. The co-ordinator organises the subject well and provides advice for other members of staff. Along with the headteacher she monitors planning to ensure that children's work in both key stages is based on work that has gone before. This helps towards the gradual improvement of standards.

MATHEMATICS

66. Attainment when children start in the reception year is below average overall, although there is a very wide spread between years because of the small size of each group. By the time they move into the infant stage of their education children's overall level of attainment is still below average. However, by the end of Key Stage 1 attainment overall is around the average for this age in most aspects of the subject. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is also around the average in most areas. However, an important weakness is children's ability in mental arithmetic. In this aspect, they are below average at the end of both Key Stages and they are not able to add, subtract, multiply and divide quickly, accurately or confidently enough. Children in Key Stage 2 do not know their multiplication tables well enough and this slows down their working out of problems. Despite this weakness children make good progress in Key Stage 1 and sound progress in Key Stage 2 overall.
67. While the national results in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 show a gradual improvement, the school's results have improved more dramatically from well below average to above it in both 1999 and 2000. The results of the school's National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show large swings in the level of attainment but, taken over a period of time, they mirror the judgements of the inspection and show an improvement that is very broadly in line with the national rate of improvement. Although attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 was below average, this year group had more children than usual with special educational needs and attainment in 1999 was above average. In comparison with schools having a similar percentage of children entitled to free school meals, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above average in 2000 and, despite the relative weakness of the 2000 Year 6 group as a whole, the school was still above the average for these similar schools.
68. Children in Years 1 and 2 recognise different coins and can exchange coins for others of the same value; for example, a girl in Year 2 was able to offer five ten-pence coins as an alternative to a 50 pence coin. The work using money was built on in the Year 3 and 4 class where children practised working out the change they would need in a shopping game on the computers. A particular strength in the subject is the way that children use these computers; in the
Year 5
and 6 class children have collected information and produced graphs in the form of both bar charts and pie charts. Children, by the end of Key Stage 1, can recognise larger numbers such as 700 and they can count in ones, twos and tens but they cannot add and subtract large enough numbers quickly enough; for example, they find it difficult to give an example of subtracting a

number from a larger one to give an answer of ten. Similarly, in Key Stage 2, children can recognise very large numbers but they do not know their multiplication tables well enough to help them with problems using mental arithmetic.

69. Despite the deficit in mental arithmetic, the quality of teaching is sound overall for Year 5 & 6 children and good for the younger ones. Teachers work hard and use the format of the numeracy hour appropriately but the oral, mental sessions are not sufficiently rigorous in Key Stage 2 to fully involve all the children, where some tend to rely on the efforts of others. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject themselves and they plan their lessons well, making it very clear to the children exactly what they are learning even for the youngest children. This means that they can explain things well to the children and set them useful work to consolidate what they have been told. Teachers are very successful in making work for the children as interesting as possible. The children are given real money to use when they are practising how to work out the change needed and, in the Year 5 and 6 class, children were challenged to make the three-dimensional shapes that they were learning about. On some occasions, children are given too long to do the work and the pace of their learning drops. Infant children are particularly well managed, for example, the teacher, with valuable help from the non-teaching assistants, was able to consolidate work on numbers by involving the children physically in a variety of ways in singing and demonstrating the song "Five Little Frogs on the Lily Pad". This kept the younger children and those with special educational needs, who have very short concentration spans, learning right up to the end of the numeracy hour.
70. The headteacher is responsible for the subject and she is well aware of its stage of development. The local education authority's numeracy consultant has already visited and worked in Key Stage 1 to good effect and further visits are planned for Key Stage 2. Other subjects are used well to help children in numeracy. Computers are particularly successful and the school has a good range of software to support numeracy. There are other valuable opportunities also; for example, the infant class have learned a good range of number and action songs; the Year 3 and 4 class have conducted a traffic survey and the Year 5 and 6 class used measuring in connection with science.

SCIENCE

71. Attainment varies considerably between year groups because of their small size but taken over a period it is around the national average at the end of both key stages. This fits broadly with the picture painted by teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 and with the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment in the subject has improved at about the same rate as the national improvement. At the end of Key Stage 1, the teachers assessed attainment as being above average in 1999 and average in 2000 but it is likely to be below average this year. In the National Curriculum tests in Year 6 attainment improved from 1997 to 1999, when it reached very high levels and the school was in the top five per cent of all schools. However, the 2000 Year 6 was not as strong, as there were more children with special educational needs and attainment overall in this year was below average nationally, although it was average when compared with schools having a similar proportion of children eligible for free school meals.
72. In the infant class, children learn well as a result of good teaching. The teacher manages the children well so that they have interesting things to learn and so that they can all make a contribution to whole-class discussions. This is very difficult given the age and the number of

children with special educational needs. For example, in a very good discussion at the end of a lesson, the teacher enabled a Year1 boy to tell the rest of the class that a pencil “rubber” would snap and not stretch like a rubber band. The children learned a lot about materials and how they can change in the lesson. They were also able to explain that bread becomes harder and smaller when it is toasted (as well as enjoying the toast afterwards!). In the two junior classes, the teaching is sound. The teacher has a good knowledge and understanding of science herself and she organises interesting practical activities for the children to learn from. For example, the older children learned about liquids and condensation through a useful demonstration. The teacher emphasised the principles of scientific enquiry well but the pace of the lesson dropped somewhat when the children were given too long to record their work and when the recording lacked purpose. Their weak recording was confirmed by an examination of the work in children’s science books. Their recording shows that they have been given good opportunities to observe, measure and then draw conclusions but the standard of their recorded work is not good enough.

73. The science co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and presents the older children with many interesting opportunities for learning outside their normal lessons, for example, by visiting The British Association of Young Scientists’ science fair in Kendal each year and by working towards a science achievement award scheme in the science club. These clearly improve what the children know and can do. Children also use ICT well to help them learn. For example, the Year 3 and 4 children quite routinely found information about the human skeleton from a CD-ROM to add to what they had been told by their teacher. They were also very adept at using a “search engine” to find information from the Internet, although this particular activity lacked focus and had little impact on children’s scientific knowledge or understanding.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

74. There were no lessons in either art and design or design and technology during the inspection. From an examination of teachers’ planning and a limited quantity of work available, it is clear that the school covers the requirements of the National Curriculum and that standards in art are in line with what is expected. There was not enough work available in design and technology to be able to reach a judgement on standards, as the children had taken their work home.
75. In Key Stage 1, children have designed and made good quality puppets following a visit to the school by a professional puppeteer. Using the same basic design, the children added a variety of materials including fabrics to make their own puppet. They have written about and drawn pictures of their own sandwiches and this work was sensibly linked to science about healthy eating. The children’s work shows that they have designed and evaluated their work satisfactorily.
76. In Key Stage 2, children have made pencil drawings from observation of plants, these show sound use of line and form to show detail clearly. One particularly good drawing of a Christmas arrangement was well composed with good attention to detail. Drawing has also been used appropriately to support other subjects (for example, showing the “Wheel of Life” in the study of Buddhism in religious education). Paintings of sailing ships show appropriate use of pencil sketching being used to develop work into painting as well as mixing colours to achieve the tone and shade required. Children have studied a variety of containers and used pencil and chalk drawings to help them. They made containers to take home a Christmas cake, which they had made in school.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

77. During the inspection it was not possible to see any geography lessons in Key Stage 1, or to see any history lessons in Key Stage 2. However, evidence from the lessons seen and from scrutinies of children's work and teachers' planning, and from discussions with children and teachers, the findings of the inspection are that by the ages of seven and eleven children reach standards in geography and history in line with what is expected for their ages. This accords with the findings of the previous inspection. In the one history lesson seen at Key Stage 1 and the geography lesson seen at Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was very good. This was reflected in the quality of children's very good learning.
78. By the age of seven children increase their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past. For example, they handled household artefacts from Victorian times and compared them with present day utensils. The Key Stage 1 teacher is very successful in relating the study of history and the passage of time to children's own lives and in presenting the subject in a stimulating and interesting way. The teacher shares her very good subject knowledge with the children so that they begin to understand why people lived as they did and about how historians find out. She asked parents to complete a questionnaire devised by children concerning toys and games in use when they were young. Parents and grandparents were invited into school to talk to children about these. This enabled children to develop their skills of historical enquiry and to increase their understanding of chronology. In the lesson seen, children developed their understanding of old and new, when, in a very lively and interesting way, the teacher used a collection of old toys and photographs in order to challenge children to research, write and discuss the characteristics of old and new toys.
79. By the age of seven children begin to increase their understanding and skill in the use of maps. For example, Year 2 children draw maps of their routes to school and clearly indicate features along the way. Key Stage 1 children visit places locally such as a park, the beach, the church and shops. They take photographic evidence and write about and sketch how particular locations are used. Children write about jobs in the local area, describe different kinds of housing and know about services such as electricity and water. Children identify local places that they like or dislike and explain how the quality of the environment might be improved.
80. By the age of eleven most children have extended their understanding of chronology through the use of time lines and know how to find out about the past, using such sources as artefacts, books, archaeology and computers. They describe the life styles of the ancient Greeks and explain their contribution to modern life. They devise questions and research answers about the life of Tutenkhamen and the beliefs of ancient Egyptians. Most children know about events in the reigns of Tudor monarchs and compare standards of Victorian hygiene with those of the present.
81. By the time they are eleven children use a variety of maps, atlases, Ordnance Survey maps and plans of varying scales. For example, they use Ordnance Survey maps showing the local area. They use maps of Paris and diagrams of the London underground during visits to these places. They locate countries and places on maps of Europe and compare their own industrial, seaboard environment with contrasting rural environments in Cockerthorpe and the Lake District. Most children offer reasoned explanations for the advantages and disadvantages to the environment of a proposed local by pass. In the lesson seen in Key Stage 2 the specialist teacher used her very good subject knowledge to help children learn how to collect and record evidence about the effects of traffic on the locality. She organises children and materials very efficiently so that

they conduct a traffic survey and record their findings clearly, including the use of the computer to make block graphs and pie charts. The teacher challenges children to compare data from traffic surveys in different parts of the village. She has high expectations leading children to produce useful questionnaires to elicit local views of the effects of traffic flow on the village.

82. The organisation of the specialist teaching seen in geography in Key Stage 2 is a very effective way of managing a small number of teachers with several subjects to teach. It enables children to share the teacher's particular knowledge and skills and enhances their learning. Planning in both subjects is very thorough. This is enhanced by the good use the school makes of its regular assessments in history and geography.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

83. It was possible to see teaching of ICT only with older children. Nevertheless, it is evident from this and from observations of children using computers in other lessons that the standard of this work is high and, in some respects, it is very high. This is an improvement since the last inspection and the work in ICT is very much a strength of the school.
84. The oldest children in the school were particularly impressive in the way that they could make, test and improve sequences of instructions to make things happen. They were able to write and edit these sequences to control a set of traffic lights on the screen. They had worked out and planned what they wanted the lights to do and were then able to give the computer instructions to turn the lights on for the correct period of time and then off again. They correctly simulated the sequence of real traffic lights. Not only were they all capable of this difficult task but many were able to make a separate sequence that they put into their main sequence to make the amber light flash, simulating the lights on a “pelican” crossing. In their work, the children were very aware of the need for precision in framing the sequences and worked hard to find and correct parts of their sequences that were not operating as they wanted. They were able to combine using the keyboard and mouse very effectively to enable them to work quickly and accurately.
85. Children use computers routinely in their work in other subjects - for example, writing in English, geography, history and religious education and drawing graphs in mathematics. They are completely at ease in finding things out from either reference CD-ROMS or from the Internet, ascertaining whether it is useful and discarding it if not. In a science lesson, children were able to find out further information about the human skeleton from a CD-ROM, which added to their learning.
86. The standards are high for two main reasons; first, because the teaching is very good and second, because the school has a very good quantity and range of equipment to which the children have very frequent access. The school uses the specialist knowledge and skills of one teacher to lead the teaching in ICT and this is a very successful strategy. Her colleagues continue this good work in their own teaching. She has very high expectations of the children and gives them interesting and challenging work. Children are encouraged to use the computers whenever possible, although on some occasions they use them without a specific enough purpose so that children waste time finding information that does not improve their learning.
87. The school has greatly benefited from a local charity in the provision of computers but it has also spent money from government grants wisely. Computers are easily accessible to the children, they are connected to the Internet and they have a good range of other equipment and software available. The school follows national guidance in planning what the children are to learn. The teacher in charge of ICT provides very good leadership and knows exactly what the school needs to do to improve even further. These factors have contributed directly to the high standards.

MUSIC

88. Throughout the school children attain the standards expected for their age in the aspects of music seen during the inspection. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. The music curriculum is enriched by the provision of peripatetic teaching of brass instruments for approximately 13 children and by the extra-curricular recorder group of approximately 10

children. The learning of children in the older Key Stage 2 class has been considerably enhanced by their participation in a project led by a musician. Children wrote, composed and performed words and music celebrating local history and traditions. Their work was collated on a CD and played on local radio. This was a very worthwhile and enriching experience which helped to increase the skill and motivation of children of all abilities.

89. By the end of Key Stage 1 most children identify different sound sources and distinguish between long and short sounds. They follow a simple score and learn to play in sequence using untuned percussion instruments and singing. They play the instruments carefully and maintain a steady beat. Most children confidently clap a rhythmic pattern and sing action songs tunefully. By the end of Key Stage 2, most children use pitched instruments and their own voices to sing up and down the scale. They recognise and describe the effects of their music making. Most children sing tunefully with clear diction and accurate pitch control. They collaborate well in singing harmonious rounds and identify melodic phrases and understand how they fit together. Children increase their understanding of musical language, using, for example, drone, score and round accurately.
90. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good and this is reflected in good learning. Music is taught by the co-ordinator in Key Stage 2. Teachers have a good subject knowledge, which they use to explain things carefully to children and so, for example, older children understand how to listen carefully and collaborate in singing rounds accompanied by tuned percussion instruments. Teachers plan their work thoroughly so that it builds on previous work. When they share lesson objectives with children this gives the pupils a clear idea of what is expected and helps to improve their performance. For example, in Key Stage 1, the teacher carefully revised work on long and short sounds from a previous lesson and explained to children that they were going to use their knowledge and skill with a simple score. They were then well prepared to make good progress in the new aspect of their learning, which has built firmly on what has gone before. Teachers have high expectations, challenging children to listen, respond and play and sing in unison. They listen and observe carefully so that they can analyse children's performance in order to advise them how to improve. For example, children's performance is enhanced when the teacher is satisfied that most recognise the length of sounds produced by different instruments. Relationships are very good so that children know that their efforts will be valued. This gives them the confidence to improve and helps children to enjoy their music making and performing. Teachers control and manage children well so that they behave well and work hard and enthusiastically.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

91. It was only possible to see physical education in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 in gymnastics during the inspection. Nevertheless, in this work, standards are in line with what is expected despite the adverse conditions in which children are learning. The school has maintained these standards since its last inspection.
92. By the end of Key Stage 1 children know the importance of warming up before physical education and they participate well in movement to music. They follow the direction and demonstration by the teacher and other adults and thoroughly enjoy responding energetically to the music. They can balance appropriately and they can link their balances together into a short sequence but the learning in this part of the lesson seen was unsatisfactory as the hall in which the lesson took place was very cold, therefore the children could not retain the suppleness achieved through the warm up session. By Year 4, children have learnt to extend their range of

balancing and jumping. They use the advice of their teacher and their observations of other children to improve their performances. They can also relate learning in other subjects; for example, children understood the idea of symmetry and were able to use this in improving their gymnastics.

93. The teaching of gymnastics is good in Key Stage 1 and sound in Years 3 and 4. The teachers plan the work well and explain clearly to the children what they are to learn and how they are to do it. Teachers give good demonstrations; for example, in the mixed reception and infant class, the children enjoyed taking part with their teacher and the other adults in a lively “aerobics” session. Teachers give the children a satisfactory range of work to do despite the difficulties of the accommodation, which prevent exploration of equipment beyond mats, stools and benches; for example, in the Year 3 and 4 class, the teacher had used the equipment available to teach the children how to do a variety of jumps. Teachers evaluate the work that children do and help them to improve.
94. Although the school follows national guidance in teaching physical education, it is hampered in some respects by the lack of facilities. While providing a safe enough environment for learning the quality of this learning, is reduced by the lack of good quality equipment easily accessible in lessons. This means that, despite the best efforts of the teachers, activities lack variety.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

95. During the inspection it was not possible to see any religious education lessons in Key Stage 1. However, from the lesson seen in Key Stage 2 and from scrutinies of children’s work and teachers’ planning and from discussions with children and teachers, the findings of the inspection are that standards in the work seen are in line with what would be expected for children aged seven and eleven in the locally agreed syllabus of religious education.
96. Teachers employ a variety of approaches to children’s work in following the locally agreed syllabus of religious education. For example, children in Key Stage 1 learn about relationships and are challenged to consider how they would react to behaviour such as selfishness or unkindness. They visit a Buddhist temple and the local church and learn about special places, symbols and artefacts. Teachers help children to establish an awareness of themselves as special people when they handle and talk about baby toys. They use these to reflect on how they themselves have changed. They act out the story of Jesus and the fishermen for assembly and begin to understand how Jesus helped people to change. Children begin to learn about compassion and begin to understand that people have different points of view. For example, they are challenged to write the Buddhist story of Siddhatha, Devadatta and the wounded swan from the perspective of each of the people involved.
97. In Key Stage 2 children know about stories from sacred texts such as the stories of Samuel and of Jesus and Zaccheus. Teachers ensure that older children deepen their understanding of these texts. For example, children are challenged to compare the similarities and differences in the accounts of Jesus’ birth as related by Luke and Matthew. They respond thoughtfully when asked to formulate their own rules for a country code in gaining insight into the Ten Commandments. In increasing their understanding of discipleship, children write thoughtful job descriptions for disciples. Most children write insightful pieces which distinguish between things people need and the things they want. Teachers provide the children with attractive displays which encourage them to deepen their understanding. For example, teachers use photographs of St. Bridget’s church and the local Methodist church and ask children to compare the two.

Photographs and artefacts from Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism are readily available to help children to increase their understanding of these religions and to recognise the similarities and differences between them. As part of work on Buddhism children write thoughtful pieces, using word processing, which help them to increase their understanding of the Buddhist belief in reincarnation. Younger children in Key Stage 2 visit St Bridget's church. They know about the use of features such as the font, lectern and holy table. They begin to understand the symbolism of the cross and the use of bread and wine and are given opportunities to reflect on their feelings inside the church. They use Bible stories such as the Good Samaritan in order to discuss kindness and forgiveness in their own lives and begin to understand how religious belief can influence people's lives. Teachers mark children work regularly and make supportive comments which help to extend children's thinking. For example, a teacher's comments encouraged a

Year 4 child to consider what Christians think about at advent.

98. In the one lesson seen, which was in the class for younger Key Stage 2 children, the quality of teaching was very good. In this lesson, the specialist teacher shared her very good knowledge to enable children to increase their knowledge of Jewish artefacts and family practices as they participated in a form of Shabbat meal. This also helped to sustain their interest and encouraged them to work hard. Her very thorough planning was shared with children and built on previous work so that children knew clearly what was expected and their learning was enhanced. The teacher very carefully illustrated similarities between Jewish and Christian symbols so that children's understanding was deepened. She provided sensitive opportunities for reflection. Children were encouraged to make effective use of CD-ROMs and the Internet in order to increase their research skills and extend their knowledge.
99. The co-ordinator, who is also the specialist teacher, has worked very hard and successfully to produce a very thorough and comprehensive scheme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus. She makes good use of her expertise in the classroom and in her monitoring of planning in order to enhance learning. The school makes effective use of assessment in order to help teachers ensure that children build on previous knowledge and understanding.