

INSPECTION REPORT

THURSBY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thursby, Carlisle, Cumbria

LEA: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112123

Headteacher: Mr John Parkin

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jean Morley
25470

Dates of inspection: 30th April - 3rd May 2001

Inspection number: 191320

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11 Years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Road
Thursby
Carlisle
Cumbria

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Mary Steel

Date of previous inspection: January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25470	Jean Morley	<i>Registered inspector</i>	English; Physical education.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards: results and achievements? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What could the school do to improve further?
11468	Judith Menes	<i>Lay inspector</i>		How high are standards: pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27477	Jo Mitchell	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Art; Music; Religious education; Provision in the Foundation stage.	
8420	Val Roberts	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information technology Design and technology; Geography; History.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thursby Primary School is in the village of the same name, a few miles south-west of Carlisle. It is a small village school with 101 pupils, aged 4 to 11. The school serves the village and the surrounding rural area, although some pupils come from further afield. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average, while the proportion with special educational needs is well above average. There are two pupils for whom English is an additional language but neither is at an early stage of acquisition. Socio-economic circumstances are favourable. Cohorts are small, and attainment on entry to the school is variable. Taken over time, however, it is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Thursby Primary School is a good school. It is successful in many ways, not least in encouraging pupils to become thinking, thoughtful young citizens. Academic achievement is good: test results vary from year to year but, over time, pupils achieve well in a number of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Pupils in all classes are eager to learn. They have a mature and responsible attitude to their work, and behave very well, both in and out of the classroom. The high quality leadership of the headteacher is a key to the school's success: by his own example, he encourages all who work there to produce their best. He has a clear vision for the school. The quality of teaching is good overall, and often very good. When account is taken of all these features, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Standards in English, mathematics, geography and history are good at the end of both key stages.
- In addition, standards are good in science, design and technology and physical education by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching is good or better in 80 per cent of lessons, and in half of these it is very good or excellent.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- Pupils behave very well, are delightfully well mannered, and have a good work ethic.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development.
- Parents think very highly of the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards in some elements of information and communication technology.
- The presentation of pupils' work in *some* classes.
- The quality of teachers' marking.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Progress since the last inspection (January 1997), has been very good. The school has worked hard and successfully to address all the key issues raised in the last report. In particular, it has improved provision for the youngest pupils in school from very poor to good. Writing standards have also been improved, from unsatisfactory to good. In addition, standards have improved in reading, geography and history throughout the school, and in science, design and technology, and physical education at the end of Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, particularly in the class for reception and Year 1 pupils. There is now better provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships - reported as good at the time of the last inspection - are now very good.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	A*	D	E*
Mathematics	A	A	D	E
Science	C	A	E	E*

Key	
<i>very high</i>	A*
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	
B	
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E
<i>very low</i>	E*

The information in the table shows that results in 2000 were below the national average in English and mathematics, and well below that average in science. In comparison with similar schools, these results placed the school in the lowest five per cent nationally in English and science, and well below the average in mathematics.

However, the below average results in 2000 reflected a very small cohort with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. They were in no way indicative of falling standards. Standards in all core subjects are above average. In religious education they are satisfactory. In some elements of information and communication technology, pupils

produce work of a sound standard. However, the lack of sufficient computers has meant that the school has been unable to reach satisfactory standards in all elements. The deficiency in equipment has been made good in the last few weeks. The school knows its shortcomings and is addressing them as quickly as time and funds will allow.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are eager to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well even when not under direct teacher supervision.
Personal development and relationships	All relationships are very good. The school does a particularly fine job in helping pupils to develop as responsible young citizens.
Attendance	Attendance is very good.

Pupils' eagerness to learn is evident throughout the school. They take a very responsible attitude to their work, and collaborate well or work hard independently, as appropriate. Relationships are built on mutual respect. Where their teachers expect it, pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work. There is very little evidence of late arrival, and all lessons begin punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Foundation Stage	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Good 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 judgements made on the quality of teaching were fully supported by the quality and the quantity of work in pupils' books and on display. Of the teaching seen, three per cent was excellent, 37 per cent very good, 40 per cent good, and 20 per cent satisfactory. The three major strengths are the way in which basic skills are taught, teachers' expectations, and the management of pupils. Whilst all teachers' marking is satisfactory overall, it is not used in the best possible way to help pupils make optimum progress.

The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good. Although only a relatively small amount of teaching was observed, the work in pupils' books - both the quality and the quantity of it - provided strong evidence to support the inspectors' view that what they observed was typical of day to day work at the school. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught and the strategies adopted to develop writing skills are an example for others to follow.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school plans a good curriculum. The key strength is its breadth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good. Pupils who need additional help are quickly and reliably identified and are well supported both in the classroom and in extra support sessions.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal development, and for spiritual, moral, and social development, is very good. Provision for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well.

The school is skilled at developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills (particularly the former), by using the full curriculum. As a result, no subject is squeezed or sidelined: the quantity and quality of work in design and technology, geography and history, for example, is impressive. Teachers know pupils well and cater well for their physical, emotional and intellectual needs. The school monitors the pupils' performance carefully and is successful in providing a curriculum that offers a good level of challenge to pupils of all abilities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very clear direction for the work of the school. While pursuing high standards in the core subjects, his primary aim is the development of the <i>whole</i> child. This is supported by a rich and varied curriculum that includes an impressive range of extra-curricular opportunities. The headteacher is well supported by all his staff.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body provides sound support. Individual members bring particular expertise, and this is shared in such a way that all members learn and benefit from it.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is well aware of its strengths and knows the areas in which it could do better. It has a refreshing openness to advice and is eager to use it to improve its provision.
The strategic use of resources	All resources are used well, in particular to support pupils with special needs.

Spending decisions are taken wisely. Accommodation and resources are adequate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>More than 90% of the parents who responded felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• their child is happy at school and makes good progress there;• the quality of teaching is good and teachers expect pupils to work hard;• the headteacher and staff are approachable;• the school works closely with parents;• the school is well led and managed;• the school helps its pupils to become mature and responsible;• there is an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	<p>Between 20 and 30% of parents felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the amount of homework is not right;• they would like more information about how their child is getting on.

Inspectors wholeheartedly support all the positive views expressed by parents. With regard to their concerns, inspectors feel that the school does a great deal to keep parents informed about the progress of their child. In addition to opportunities for formal consultations, informal chats are always available. In respect of homework, inspectors feel that both the quantity and the challenge are appropriate. Teachers value the contribution it makes to pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The results of the end of Key Stage 2 tests in the Year 2000 indicate that, when compared with those of all schools nationally, standards in English and mathematics are below average, while those in science are *well* below. In comparison with those of similar schools, results are well below average in mathematics and very low in both English and science. These standards are not borne out - in any way - by inspection findings, which show clearly that standards in English, in mathematics and in science are good. In some elements of these subjects - investigative work in science, reading, and speaking and listening, for example - they are close to being very good. There are four main reasons for this apparent discrepancy.

- Firstly, cohorts in the school are small, and the significant variation in results between one year and the next is to be expected. The 2000 results are not representative of the school's performance over time, which exceeded the national average in English and mathematics and fell slightly short of it in science. The apparent low performance in 2000 resulted from standards attained by a few pupils with significant special educational needs. If these results are set to one side, **all** pupils achieved or exceeded the level expected at the end of the key stage.
- Secondly, although pupils are taught well in this school, they are not specifically 'groomed' towards the national tests. Hence, the work that they produce during the year sometimes slightly outstrips that which they produce under test conditions.
- Thirdly, the school places significant and justified importance on the aspects of the subject which are not tested directly - speaking, listening, and investigative skills.
- Finally, the school has been successful in maintaining a broad curriculum overall and has not 'squeezed' other subjects in order to focus more time on those that are tested.

2. The end of Key Stage 1 test results in 2000 indicate that when Thursby school is compared with all schools nationally, pupils reach average standards in reading and in mathematics, while in writing they achieve standards that are well above the national average. Teacher assessment indicates that standards in science are below those expected. When compared with those of similar schools, results in writing are good. In reading and in mathematics they are below average, and in science they are well below average. As in Key Stage 2, these standards are not borne out in work seen during the inspection, where standards were good in reading, writing and mathematics and sound in science. Again, cohort numbers account for some of the volatility, and test results are affected by the high proportion of pupils with *significant* special educational needs. For example, in a cohort of 14 in the current Year 2, four pupils (29 per cent) have such needs.

3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their potential. Thanks to the priority given to them, all receive additional support - both in the classroom and in small group lessons elsewhere. The quality of this support is very good: work set is closely

matched to the difficulties pupils are experiencing. In addition, while the work successfully builds on pupils' belief in themselves, it also challenges them vigorously. All these pupils make progress which is at least good and, for many, is very good.

4. Viewed over time, teacher assessments in Key Stage 1 and test results in Key Stage 2 suggest that pupils do less well in science than they do in English and mathematics. Inspection findings support this view to some extent. Investigation in science is a strong feature, a fact demonstrated in the way the curriculum is planned, and the way the subject is taught. The knowledge and understanding that the pupils accrue from this experience has not always been fully 'translated', to help pupils grasp the *scientific implications* of what they have learned. However, the school itself has realised the need to take action on this issue, and has been doing so. This will lead rapidly to pupils achieving higher standards at the end of both key stages than was the case previously. Indeed, given the current rate of progress, the Year 6 cohort will achieve above average test results this year.

5. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1. They are satisfactory in some elements at the end of Key Stage 2 but unsatisfactory in others: control and modelling in particular. The school is fully aware of the shortcomings and is addressing them as fast as possible. The very recent acquisition of new computers will help significantly, but too little time has elapsed since their arrival for any impact to be apparent. Standards in religious education are satisfactory at the end of both key stages.

6. In physical education, pupils achieve above average standards at the end of Key Stage 2 and are close to achieving similarly high standards in Key Stage 1. The same is true in design and technology. In geography and in history, standards are above those expected at the end of both key stages, while standards in art and in music are sound throughout the school.

7. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls, but this is an area that the school is monitoring carefully to ensure that the current balance is maintained.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their work are particularly strong features of the school and its ethos. So, too, are their behaviour and their relationships with staff and with each other. This makes a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. Attendance and punctuality are very good and both have improved since the last inspection.

9. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They take an interest and pride in their work and concentrate well in lessons. They listen carefully to the teacher and to each other, and are keen to contribute by offering their own ideas and suggestions. They collaborate very well, working and discussing constructively to produce a worthwhile result. Pupils participate with enthusiasm in extra-curricular activities such as the choir, learning to play the recorder, or in sports such as cricket and gymnastics.

10. Pupils behave very well in class and around the school. The school's high expectations help them to develop self-discipline such that staff seldom need to intervene with more than a reminder.

Staff are very good role models, treating children with courtesy and respect. Pupils and parents have been involved in the development of the school rules. These are clearly expressed and consistently referred to. Pupils quickly learn what is expected of them, and courtesy and good behaviour have become firmly established in the ethos of the school.

11. Pupils are impressively confident, friendly with each other, and have relaxed but respectful relationships with staff. The purposeful, friendly and secure atmosphere in school fosters mutual respect so that bullying and harassment is not a problem amongst pupils. The school helps pupils to develop mature attitudes and to consider the feelings of others.

12. Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities and carry them out reliably and sensibly. Among other things, they help to prepare for assemblies, lunch times and physical education lessons, and put up bollards to stop vehicles entering the playground, thus making a useful contribution to the running of the school. They play with the youngest pupils during wet playtimes and some are involved in a paired reading session with younger children in the summer term.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. At the time of the last inspection, nine per cent of teaching was very good, 56 per cent was good or satisfactory, and the remainder - 35 per cent - was unsatisfactory, poor or very poor. Almost all of this weak teaching was to the very youngest in the school - reception age children and Year 1 pupils. Since that time there has been a significant improvement. The quality of all teaching is now satisfactory or better. Of the 35 lessons observed during this inspection, one (three per cent) was of the very highest quality. Thirty-seven per cent were very good, 40 per cent were good and 20 per cent were satisfactory.

14. Clearly, there are no weak teachers in this school. Taken overall, there is no significant difference between the quality of teaching in the three key stages - it is good in them all. It is of note, however, that the quality of teaching to the very oldest pupils in school is particularly strong. It is to the credit of the headteacher - whose class this is - that he successfully manages to combine his leadership and management role in the school with his 90 per cent teaching commitment.

15. Also of note is the dramatic improvement in the quality of teaching to the youngest pupils in the school. This has been underpinned by fundamental changes to the curriculum planned for these pupils, which now matches their needs well. Furthermore, this class caters for two key stages: the Foundation Stage and the first year of Key Stage 1. The teacher skilfully manages this difficult task and, with high quality classroom support, is successful in providing both groups with experiences that match their needs.

16. There are *no weak features* in the work of teachers in this school although there are two areas that are less strong and where improvements could be made.

- Firstly, the presentation of pupils' work is not consistent through the school. In some classes it is first rate. However, the route to these particularly high standards is not a smooth

one. In particular, some pupils in Key Stage 2 could do better if their teachers expected more of them.

- Secondly, teachers' marking could be used to greater effect to help pupils make progress. Currently, all work is marked. Marking is thorough in terms of highlighting errors, and written comments are used well to praise pupils for their efforts. All these are positive features. What teachers do too infrequently is to point the way forward:
- to show pupils how they could improve their work;
- to refer to earlier comments to check that the suggested improvements have been made;
- to link comments to pupils' targets which themselves are pertinent and sharply focused.

17. These are *relative* weaknesses only and are far outweighed by the significant strengths of teachers' work. There are three particularly strong features:

- Firstly, the basic skills of literacy and are very well taught. The school makes good use of other subjects as vehicles for pupils to consolidate these skills. This is particularly true of writing. Numeracy is well taught. All teachers, including the teacher who provides additional support for pupils with special educational needs, are skilled in helping pupils to develop these basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Teachers challenge pupils and motivate them to learn. There is no disenchantment amongst pupils: regardless of their ability, they concentrate hard on what they are doing and take a full part in all lessons. Teachers are skilled at managing the full range of ability in their class. The more able, the less able, and the pupils of average ability all have equal opportunities to learn. A simple example will serve to illustrate the point. Year 2 pupils were using *catalogues* in an English lesson and the teacher wanted to write that word on the board. A pupil with significant special needs was able to provide c-a-t, a pupil of average ability added a-l-o-g, and a more able pupil was able to supply the ending. All pupils on the register of special educational needs receive additional, out-of-class support. This is regular and of high quality.
- Thirdly, pupils are managed particularly well. Behaviour in classrooms is very good though there are no overt signs of how this is achieved. Although it is embedded into the practice of the school, this has not come about without skill and sustained effort. The result is that teachers do not have to spend time establishing an environment where pupils can learn: the pupils just know how they should behave. There are warm working relationships between all teachers and all pupils. Liking and respect are reciprocal.

18. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and their planning provides a sharp focus for their work. They ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn. Day-to-day assessment is also good, and the recent introduction - in some subjects - of individual subject targets will now allow further progress. Homework is kept to sensible proportions. It is carefully marked, and is valued by teachers as making a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

19. The school recognises the need for work with computers - and other technical equipment - to become an integral part of work in all subjects, and it is moving towards achieving this. In this respect, newly acquired computers will make a significant improvement to pupils' opportunities.

20. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. No group is disadvantaged. They all work hard and are eager to please their teachers. The strong emphasis on investigative work, (particularly in mathematics and in science) and the equally strong emphasis on speaking skills (particularly in English), mean that pupils have to think for themselves. They are resourceful. They learn confidence because they all work in classrooms where they can try out their ideas without fear of reprimand or reproach. They work hard, even when not under the direct supervision of their teacher. The collaborative work between pupils is another feature of the school's, work that contributes towards the good progress being made.

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

21. Since the last inspection, the school has made good improvement in the quality and range of curriculum opportunities. The majority of subjects now have subject co-ordinators. Well-documented staff meetings and detailed discussions on the curriculum ensure that co-ordination of the curriculum is well established. The school has matched its curriculum with guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and, with the exception of some aspects of information and communications technology, all subject areas are covered. In preparing for the Foundation Stage, the school has significantly improved its provision: from 'very poor' at the time of the last inspection to good. It provides very well for pupils with special educational needs: an improvement on the good provision reported at the time of the last inspection.

22. The quality and range of planning for children in the reception class are very good. There are imaginative and stimulating activities for the development of specific skills. Children meet adapted forms of the literacy and numeracy hours each day, and these prepare them well for embarking on the National Curriculum. Resourceful activities develop children's creative and physical abilities. They also provide a firm base for their understanding and knowledge of the world.

23. In response to the concerns raised in the last inspection, a good quality curriculum has been organised through planning which is consistent across the school. Support from talented teachers and specialist teachers ensures that all pupils have equal access to all parts of the curriculum. Teachers use the national literacy and numeracy strategies skilfully, and comment upon the positive effect that these have had upon raising standards. The school recognises the difficulties of provision for foundation subjects, but makes purposeful links across subjects when planning termly themes. For example, teachers link mapping work with the journey of Florence Nightingale to Scutari, and pupils exercise their letter writing skills when setting off on a journey to invade Britain. Information technology remains insufficiently developed, the result of a former lack of resources. However, these have very recently been substantially upgraded, and the good input of a visiting specialist to promote pupils' skill is well under way to improve provision.

24. The curriculum is enhanced through staff teamwork, and there is a rich and varied range of extra-curricular activities. These not only include successful musical and sporting activities but also involve visits out of school and visitors to the school. Visits are made to museums for history projects and to the Roman Wall. To enhance their geography work, Year 5 and 6 pupils have a residential visit that includes fell walking and caving. The local village is used for geographical as

well as historical studies. Visitors to the school contribute to physical education through soccer and cricket coaching; musicians support the school's interests in music, and a local vet and doctor have talked to pupils on subjects that are included in their topic work. Additionally, pupils have good opportunities to understand their world through visits to the theatre, through taking part in whole school productions, and through opportunities to enjoy visiting theatre groups.

25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Careful assessment from the Foundation Stage onwards ensures that pupils' needs are identified early and accurately. A skilled co-ordinator ensures that targets within individual educational plans provide a good match to pupils' learning needs. Close discussion between teachers and support staff helps to ensure that pupils are successful in achieving their targets. The provision for personal, social and health education is supported by visits from the school nurse, and for the older pupils the misuse of drugs is covered in science lessons. Teachers have undertaken training which culminated in all classes creating their own book of 'personal concerns'. This includes supportive descriptions from their friends, about their positive characteristics. The concerns of pupils are often discussed in activities such as circle time.

26. Links within the immediate locality are positive, and senior citizens are frequently invited to school activities. Where possible within the small community, constructive links are made with local businesses. For example, football and netball kit has been sponsored, and larger organisations have supported some refurbishment of quiet and environmental areas in the school building and grounds. There are positive links with cluster schools, by which expertise is shared amongst teachers. Secondary school staff visit the school regularly to ensure that eleven year old pupils make a smooth transition from primary to secondary education.

27. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues to be a strength of the school. There is very good provision for spiritual development. This incorporates a growing insight into human values and religious beliefs. Not only is the awareness of God as a creator present in assemblies and in religious education, but there is also a tangible school spirit, continually reinforced by the weekly celebrations of pupils' achievements. A programme of musical, sporting and creative achievement is celebrated. Pupils perform and describe how they came to be awarded certificates, trophies and medals. Their teachers nominate pupils whose work, behaviour or thoughtfulness has been exceptional during that week. Pupils are impressed by these achievements and applaud generously.

28. The moral development of pupils is very good. The five school rules, negotiated through discussion between pupils and teachers, are the foundation of pupils' understanding of right and wrong within the school. These are also linked with expectations within the home-school agreement. Whilst there are those who have behavioural targets within their individual education plans, all pupils have a clear understanding of acceptable behaviour. Teachers remind pupils periodically of the rules but this did not appear to be at all necessary during the inspection.

29. The social development of pupils is very good. Across the school there is an air of social goodwill. Pupils willingly welcome visitors, and are naturally courteous and helpful. In class activities they readily collaborate and assist each other. Older pupils have a variety of responsibilities, such as acting as librarians, answering the telephone, participating in the dining chair

rota, and helping in school assemblies. House captains are identified to younger pupils so they can act as 'personal counsellors', if they need help in the playground, and there is an expectation within the school that everyone can independently access the resources they may need for their work. Pupils volunteer to clear and tidy away - and in a cheerful and responsible manner. The school, in liaison with the Parents' and Friends' Association, takes part in a variety of fund-raising activities.

30. The provision for cultural development is good. Pupils experience the values and beliefs of other people through religious education and through subjects such as geography. In addition, the school endeavours to provide resources that will widen pupils' understanding: for example, the few pupils in school who are from ethnic minority groups - sometimes together with their families - talk to their peers about their customs and beliefs. The school celebrates other cultural traditions through art and music and, where possible, invites visitors who will contribute to pupils' development. An African drummer has visited the school, and a visitor who has now gone to live in India gives talks to the school when she comes back to England. The school grasps all available opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of the diversity of the wider community - particularly as there are few easily accessible institutions or places of worship representing faiths other than Christianity.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school takes good care of its pupils. Class teachers know their pupils very well as individuals; they treat them with respect and help them to improve and make progress. They are aware of pupils' medical needs, and monitor and support their attendance, behaviour and personal development through observation and discussion with other members of staff.

32. Governors take an active interest in the health and safety of pupils and have made appropriate arrangements to ensure that the school is a safe learning environment. Issues identified in the last inspection report have been dealt with. The school has established procedures for child protection and has arranged training for staff.

33. The school has been particularly successful in promoting both good behaviour and warm relationships amongst its pupils. 'Thursby Golden Rules' - drawn up in consultation with pupils and parents - form a code of behaviour. As a result of the collaborative production, this enjoys widespread support. It forms the basis for behaviour management and relationships in the school and, together with the merit system, has been effective in promoting good behaviour. The merit system covers all aspects of school life - improvement as well as achievement. Assemblies to which parents are invited are held regularly. At these the school recognises pupils' out-of-school successes, such as in music and sport, as well as rewarding and celebrating good work and achievement in school.

34. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are much improved since the last inspection and are now good. The school has common approach to assessment that is clear and accessible. Each cohort of pupils has a 'yearbook'. This is informative - outlining relevant information on pupils in the class, such as those with summer birthdays. National test results are recorded alongside more informal tests for reading and spelling. Individual tracking of pupils' progress begins from Year 1. From this information, teachers are able both to identify the pupils experiencing difficulties with

learning and to analyse the progress of all pupils. They also make good use of this comprehensive information in order to adjust their planning and to organise for ability grouping within the class. Alongside this information they keep termly curriculum webs and the individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are particularly well recorded showing clear objectives, action taken and the outcome of review. Reading intervention reports (for those pupils receiving help with reading skills) are clear and detailed. Clear termly targets for individual pupils are important outcomes from the recorded information and some analysis has resulted in action to improve the performance of boys. A record book across subjects has recently been initiated: it holds examples of pupils' work and gives a good picture of their progress across the curriculum.

35. Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is mainly monitored through individual education plans or records within the home school agreement. Teachers know their pupils well and there are opportunities for pupils and parents to comment within their termly reports.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. Parents are happy with the work of the school, and many are delighted, in particular with the quality of teaching and the behaviour and values their children develop. The school welcomes parents warmly. They, in turn, are confident that teachers will listen carefully if they have any concerns, and that the matter will be dealt with fully.

37. The school provides good information both for parents of children joining the reception class and, subsequently, through regular newsletters. Written reports provide useful information on pupils' progress and targets for improvement, and the school holds well organised and well attended meetings for parents with their children's teacher. These also provide opportunities for parents to give *their* views on their children's progress.

38. The school has developed highly effective links with parents, through consultation, which have had an impact on pupils' behaviour and academic progress. Parents support their children's work at home, particularly by hearing them read. This has helped them to make good progress. The school invites parents to celebration assemblies. These show them what their children have been doing and encourage them to praise their achievements. Parents make a valuable, and much appreciated contribution to the life of the school - through fund raising, helping in school, and with extra curricular activities.

39. About one-quarter of those parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that they would like more information about how their child is getting on. The school does a great deal to keep parents informed about the progress of their child. In addition to opportunities for formal consultations, informal chats are always available. In respect of homework - about which some, albeit fewer parents expressed concern - inspectors feel that both the quantity and the challenge are appropriate. Teachers value the contribution it makes to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. He uses his vision, skill and energy to provide pupils with a high quality education, of which a particular strength is its breadth. The following attributes are all testament to his clear commitment to the education of the 'whole child':

- The very good relationships in the school;
- the mature attitudes to work displayed by pupils;
- their natural courtesy, thoughtfulness and willingness to see others' points of view;
- their willingness to express a considered opinion, and, by the age of 11, their above average achievement in most subjects of the curriculum (not just those that are tested);
- His ability to combine successful leadership with a 90 per cent teaching commitment - where the quality of teaching is consistently very good - is commendable.

41. The staff support the headteacher through their willingness to adapt to change, their high quality work in the classroom, and the time they devote to activities outside lessons. Although the roles of individual subject co-ordinators is not *highly* developed, the willingness of all adults in the school to work with and for each other means that no area suffers. Management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There is a clear commitment to improvement and the skill to achieve it.

42. The headteacher has embarked on a process of formal monitoring of teaching. He monitors informally in a range of ways and is articulate and accurate when describing the strengths of the staff. He is equally adept at recognising areas where improvement could be made and, along with his staff, is refreshingly open to considering new strategies or approaches. Support for newly qualified staff is of a high quality.

43. The governors provide sound support to the school. Some are particularly well informed and are able to lead the way, for example on finance and on an understanding of standards and the data associated with them. Other governors are benefiting from this expertise. There is a core of key members of the governing body who most ably fulfil the role of being a 'critical friend'. However, *all* are willing to undertake a specific role in school and, in this way, all are active. All are keen to support the headteacher personally, and the school as a whole.

44. Until very recently, the school has had few choices to make in relation to the budget: there has been little to spend beyond the payment of essentials. The latest spending decisions have been wisely taken. The school has just acquired several new computers and, given the continuation of current efforts, these will soon have an impact on pupils' skill and achievement. Technology is used well to support the administrative systems in school. There are adequate resources in all areas of the curriculum.

45. The school has sufficient knowledgeable and experienced staff to teach the curriculum well. The support staff are valuable and valued, and make a positive contribution to the pupils' progress. The school has extensive and attractive grounds. There are plans underway to develop these so that teachers can make more use of them to support the curriculum - in science, geography and art, for example. These developments have been made possible through the sterling efforts of the Parents' and Friends' Association. The school is rightly keen to acknowledge the value of their contribution.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. In order to improve further, the headteacher, staff and governors should work together to:

- raise standards in information and communication technology through ensuring that all elements of the curriculum are thoroughly taught.
(Paragraph: 101)
- ensure that the high standard of presentation of pupils' work - evident in *some* classes - becomes a feature of the work in *all* classes.
(Paragraph: 16)
- develop the potential of teachers' marking to help pupils make progress.
(Paragraph: 16)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	37	40	20	0	0	

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	101
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR- Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	27

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.2
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National comparative data	0.5
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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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	*	*	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	13	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100	93	86
	National	83	84	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	13	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100	93	86
	National	84	88	88

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

** Numbers below 10 are not reported.*

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	*	*	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	*	11
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	79	64	79
	National	75	72	85

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	71	71	71
	National	70	72	79

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

** Numbers below 10 are not reported.*

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black - Caribbean heritage	0
Black - African heritage	0
Black - other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	99
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes:****YR - Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.4
Average class size	20.2

Education support staff:**YR - Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	212102.00
Total expenditure	196454.00
Expenditure per pupil	1820.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	2698.00
Balance carried forward to next year	18346.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

76.2%

101

77

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57.1	36.4	3.9	2.6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44.1	48.1	3.9	1.3	2.6
Behaviour in the school is good.	40.3	58.4	1.3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28.6	50.6	18.2	2.6	0
The teaching is good.	53.2	41.6	0	0	5.2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35.5	36.8	22.4	4.0	1.3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64.9	31.2	3.9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61.0	33.8	3.9	0	1.3
The school works closely with parents.	35.1	59.7	5.2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	61.0	35.1	0	0	3.9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44.2	51.9	2.6	0	1.3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54.5	37.7	6.5	0	1.3

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

47. The provision made for children in the Foundation Stage is good: this represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be poor and the curriculum to be inappropriate - 'bearing no resemblance to the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes for pupils under five'. Although the five reception children are in a mixed age class with Year 1 pupils, the curriculum is carefully managed so that the needs of all are met. There is a good balance between lessons that they share with older pupils and those where they work separately. For example, the whole class enjoyed a lesson on sowing seeds while the reception children worked on their own in a literacy session. In a music and movement session, on moving like animals, the younger children benefited from being in a larger group with the older pupils as it helped them to develop their ideas. In a whole class numeracy session the teacher used good questioning skills to include both groups. Assessment data shows that when children enter the reception class their level of attainment is average when compared to all other children in the authority. Children make good progress, and by the time they complete the Foundation Stage they are well prepared for the more formal teaching that follows. They are confident and independent, having reached levels of attainment which, across all areas of learning, are above those expected for children of a similar age.

48. Planning for the reception children is good and meets the needs of them all, including those with special educational needs. The curriculum provides experiences that are based firmly on the nationally identified goals for learning. The school works closely with the nursery (independently run but sharing the same building) with the result that transition from one to the other is smooth. The teacher and support staff work very well as a team and create a warm and secure environment for children to start their school life.

49. There is no variation in the quality of teaching that children receive across all areas of learning. It is consistently good.

Personal, social and emotional development

50. The personal, emotional and social development of reception children is enhanced by their being in a mixed aged class, and by the end of the year they have developed into independent 'little people' who are confident and eager to learn. They show maturity and a level of development that exceeds that which is expected for children of the same age. The children are given good opportunities both to play and to share creative activities in a mixed age group. This supports their learning across all areas of the curriculum and prompts their social development. Adults provide good role models in their caring relationships with children and with each other. They make good use of praise to encourage children to try hard, to raise their self-esteem, and to promote their confidence in learning.

Communication, language and literacy

51. During the reception year, children learn a great deal about language, and by the time they leave the class they exceed the expected levels of attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing. They are continually engaged in conversation with adults as they take part in activities such as baking and sowing seeds. When they had finished the apple crumble they had made with the school cook, they proudly and clearly explained to the rest of the class how they had made it. Children are introduced to the joy of stories and they quickly learn how books work. They make a good start on reading. Some of their reading is impressive: simple texts read fluently, with expression and with real appreciation of humour. Progress in writing is good: children move from copying underneath the teacher's writing to composing and writing their own sentences, which include accurately spelled simple words. In role-play areas, children benefit from sharing their play with older pupils in the class. For example, in the travel agent's the older pupils take the leading role in filling in booking forms while the younger child in the group looks at travel brochures and makes choices about where to go.

Mathematical development

52. Although the reception children are included in the numeracy lesson with the older pupils, good planning and skilful teaching ensures that the needs of both age groups are met. Children make good progress and achieve a level of attainment, particularly in number, that is above that expected. The whole class session is kept to a suitable length for the youngest children. The teacher directs questions in such a way that while the children are counting they are learning skills and basic knowledge of number.

53. Younger children count to 20 both forwards and backwards and then the older pupils count in 'tens'; the younger children are invited to join in if they want to. Younger children use 'white boards' and pens to write '7' while, at the same time, the older pupils use number cards to find '37'. When the older pupils are doing more formal work, the younger children are engaged in practical activities and games. For example they played an addition game while the older pupils worked on more formal tasks. The game, involving dice, was clearly explained to 'a visitor', who was then told, "You can have the orange counter. You start here, and count from one." The children were confident in using mathematical terms such as 'add'. They gave clear instructions on how to add the two dice together, the dice with spots being added to the dice with numbers by 'counting on'. At the end of the lesson, when they explained their activity to the rest of the class, it was clear that children's confidence and knowledge had been suitably reinforced.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

54. Throughout children's time in the reception class they have a good range of experiences that help them to learn about the world. Their progress is good. The balance of activities is good: it includes opportunities for children both to choose for themselves - such as role play in the travel agent's and to work supported by an adult - such as baking. By the time they leave the reception

class, the level of their knowledge, understanding and curiosity about the world exceeds expectations.

55. In baking sessions, children understand that cooking changes the food in both appearance and taste. For example, they noticed that the stewed apple used in the apple crumble was different from the apple slices. They were able to explain that the slices of apple were put into cold salted water before they were cooked, to stop them going brown. By examining and tasting fruit, they noticed differences in shape, colour, texture and flavour. Children working on the computer use the mouse to select and move an icon on the screen. They know the vocabulary 'mouse' and 'click'.

Physical development

56. By the end of the reception year, children have developed good physical skills. They are confident in their movements in and around the hall, and use space well. At the time of the inspection, the outdoor play area for reception children had only recently been completed and was not in full use. From now on, this area will be fully included when activities are being planned. Class sessions in the hall are well planned and allow children to develop their physical skills within their own choice and capability. They find spaces in the hall and move with due care for others. On the large apparatus, children demonstrate skills in controlling their bodies and using their arms both to support their weight and to pull themselves along. In a well-planned lesson, good use was made of this apparatus for climbing. By just requiring 'one balance' and 'one jump' on each set of apparatus the teacher allowed the children (and the older pupils) freedom of choice to move as they felt confident. This ensured that skills were developed within a secure and supportive environment while still offering challenge to the more ambitious child. Children are given many opportunities to build with construction kits, to explore materials including sand and water, and to manipulate jig-saws. All children hold pencils correctly and have good control when writing, drawing and colouring.

Creative development

57. Children are given good opportunities to develop creatively throughout the reception class. They enjoy these activities and make good progress, so that by the end of the Foundation Stage they attain levels of understanding and skill which are above that for their age. Children are well supported in these activities and learn to use paint to create pictures of themselves. Using coloured modelling material, they design and make necklaces. With the support of an adult they design patterns and colours for clay tiles. These are then transferred on to soft clay and, finally, painted in chosen colours. Children experiment with musical instruments in the classroom, and their musical experiences are enhanced when they hear older children play at the weekly celebration assemblies.

ENGLISH

58. Since the last inspection, Key Stage 2 test results have ranged from very high to below average. The lowest results were in 2000. Given the small cohorts in the school, this variation is not surprising. Furthermore, there were several pupils with significant special needs in the group. It is

more useful to look at the progress that pupils make as they move through the key stage. This can be done by comparing the Key Stage 1 results from 1996 with the Key Stage 2 results from 2000. These show that **all** pupils progressed through the two National Curriculum levels expected, while some achieved a three-level improvement. Put in percentage terms, 64 per cent of pupils achieved the level expected in 1996, while in 2000 that percentage was 79. The 1997 results from Key Stage 1 and the results predicted for the pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 2 show similar progress and inspection findings indicate that the predicted levels will be achieved. Progress overall is good, and the standards pupils achieve in their day-to-day work show that it is close to being very good.

59. Results in Key Stage 1 have also been variable, ranging from well above average to below average. Again, this can be accounted for in terms of cohort size and make-up and, again, progress is good.

60. Standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils throughout the school listen well, and by the time they are in the top two classes they listen very well. Pupils are confident speakers from the reception year upwards, and teachers make good use of opportunities - in a variety of lessons - for extending pupils' vocabulary and their confidence in speaking in front of an audience. In design and technology, for example, having made bread buns in a variety of flavours, some Year 5 pupils described with confidence what they thought the finished product would taste like, and what texture they thought it would have.

61. Reading standards are good throughout the school. Teachers do sterling work in developing pupils' reading skills and a love of books, but credit for the success must also go to parents, the great majority of whom listen to their children read on a regular basis until they have the skill and confidence to read independently. These good reading standards mean that almost every pupil in the school can read what is necessary for them to undertake their work in all the areas of the curriculum. Furthermore, the school is quick to recognise potential problems and has put a lot of effort into ensuring that no pupil has difficulties that could have been addressed sooner. Pupils on the register of special educational needs receive high quality teaching, which is skilfully matched to the help they need.

62. Writing skills are developed well through the school. There are two significant strengths in the way in which writing is taught.

- Firstly, the school uses other subjects as a vehicle for developing pupils' writing skills. Not only does this provide pupils with the practice they need but it also helps to maintain the high profile of the subjects involved.
- Secondly, there is no over-emphasis on the use of worksheets.

63. A full literacy hour was observed in each of the five classes. The quality of teaching was excellent in one lesson, very good in two, good in one and sound in the fifth. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress through the school. The key strengths are:

- basic skills are taught very well;
- writing skills are then developed systematically in lessons in other subjects;

- the warm relationships between teachers and pupils are conducive to learning;
 - work is varied so that it provides the right level of challenge for the child attempting it.
64. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is a slower pace to the lesson that is the weaker feature.
65. There are two specific areas where there is room for some improvement - the quality of teachers' marking and the presentation of work in some classes. They are not unsatisfactory, nor close to being so, but they are *relatively* weak. These shortcomings have been dealt with in full in the teaching section of this report as they have a wider application than in the subject of English.
66. In many instances, teachers work collaboratively when dealing with issues in English. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator works hard in her own right and, with the support of her colleagues, has been successful in overseeing the implementation of the literacy strategy. Resources are satisfactory and the school has made an attractive library through imaginative use of a small area adjacent to the school hall. This resource is well stocked and well used. Computers and other technology are not yet an integral part of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the school knows what needs to be done and is moving in the right direction as fast as resources and improving staff expertise will allow.

MATHEMATICS

67. Since the last inspection, Key Stage 2 test results have ranged from very high to below average. The lowest results were in 2000 when they were below average. In comparison with those of similar schools, results were well below average. However, inspection of the year's work throughout the key stage, but with a particular focus on Year 6, clearly shows standards to be above average. As the group of pupils tested is small, the 2000 results are not representative of the school's performance which, over time, exceeds the national average. The inclusion of a number of pupils with special educational needs affects the overall results significantly. If the results of these pupils are set aside, the standard reached by the remaining pupils exceeds the national average.
68. The end of Key Stage 1, test results in 2000 indicate that when the school is compared with all schools nationally, pupils reach average standards in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, they are below average. These results are not borne out in work seen during the inspection, where standards were good overall and where, exclusive of those with significant special needs, pupils were well on course to achieve above average test results.
69. Standards of numeracy in both key stages are good. Pupils of all ages show confidence with numbers. They regularly practise number problems. They discuss ways of working things out, and explain their answer clearly. Key Stage 1 pupils count and write numbers with confidence. They count on from numbers beyond 100 and work out addition and subtraction facts, using their understanding of 'tens'. They talk together about how they arrive at the correct answer when working with the ideas of more than and less than. Key Stage 2 pupils make a good start in their knowledge of mathematical language. They know how to write number sentences and match opposite number sentences to check for accuracy. Year 6 pupils recite their tables correctly and use their individual whiteboards to give a quick response. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge in other subjects - such as geography and science - to create tables and complete surveys.

70. Achievement in mathematics is good across the school. Younger pupils work accurately with money up to 50p and measure objects in their classroom - *up to* and *more than* 30 centimetres. They label 2D shapes correctly and have a simple understanding of fractions such as *half* and *quarter*. The good progression through Key Stage 2 shows best in Year 6, where pupils write clear explanations of what fractions represent, and use co-ordinates to plot the profile of people and objects. The levels of accuracy in calculations are progressively good and higher attaining pupils work at a rapid pace on well-organised and challenging tasks. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly where there is additional support for them. Targets for these pupils are well matched to their needs, and the quality of support for identified pupils in Key Stage 1 is particularly good.

71. Of the four mathematics lessons observed, the quality of teaching was very good in one and sound in three. When this is added to the evidence accrued from looking at pupils' work over the school year and from talking with pupils, the quality of teaching and learning is judged to be good overall and particularly strong in Year 6.

72. Good practical learning opportunities as pupils enter the Key Stage 1 ensure that they quickly acquire solid number skills that will support future work. Teachers plan their work closely to the demands of the numeracy strategy, making their learning intentions sufficiently clear for all pupils to understand the task. They are particularly good at questioning pupils' thinking. Pupils are encouraged not only to answer with accuracy but also to ask questions of the teacher. The management of pupils and relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. These positive features outweigh the occasional weakness of an overlong oral session. Teachers are well practised in exploring how well pupils have performed by the end of the lesson. There is good support for pupils who wish to improve on the work they have done.

73. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They are lively and enthusiastic in mental sessions and are keen to answer. Their attitudes to learning are very good and all pupils take part in activities with high levels of concentration. Where activities demand collaborative work, pupils discuss their ideas and calculations productively and point out inaccuracies to their partners in a positive way. This was particularly notable in Year 6 where pupils had to make a match between written problems and given solutions. The presentation of work is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, with well-presented work by higher attaining pupils. Standards of presentation are good by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils have a clear grasp of how calculations are to be set down and this contributes to the high levels of accuracy they achieve.

74. The subject is co-ordinated efficiently by the head teacher. The numeracy strategy is firmly established in a way which the staff believe has enabled pupils to 'think more'. Although resources for the subject were initially low, clear audits of need have raised these levels. The subject is effectively monitored and staff make regular assessments of progress. The effects of mixed age groups have been discussed thoroughly in recorded staff meetings, and all staff ensure that long term planning takes this factor into account. The use of information and communication technology is still a recognisable area for development. During inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils were experiencing their first encounter with spreadsheets.

SCIENCE

75. At the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were judged to be in line with those achieved nationally. Since that time, results in national tests have suggested that standards have varied from well above to well below national averages. The results of the tests in 2000 were the lowest in this range. However, small cohorts and a larger than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs make it unreliable to judge standards and progress on test results. In fact, pupils in the current Year 6 have made good progress since the Key Stage 1 tests. Furthermore, inspection findings indicate that not only is attainment above that expected for pupils of similar age, but that the predicted above average levels will be achieved during the forthcoming tests.

76. Results at Key Stage 1 are based on teachers' assessments, but the overall picture is again skewed because of small cohort numbers. These assessments suggest that attainment is low, but they are not supported by inspection findings. Standards at the end of the key stage are judged to be in line with those expected nationally - as they were at the last inspection.

77. Pupils' skills in investigating and experimental work are well developed because the school places high value on this aspect of the subject. Despite this, over several years, test results at the end of Key Stage 2 - and teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 - have not reflected the good teaching pupils receive as well as might be expected. It is likely that not enough emphasis was placed on ensuring that the scientific facts 'discovered' in investigative work were properly translated into the scientific understanding that pupils need. The school is now alert to this need and is trying to address it. Evidence suggests that its efforts are proving successful.

78. Teachers are enthusiastic about science, and this results in consistently good teaching through the school, with some very good teaching in Key Stage 2. Of the five lessons seen, the quality of teaching was very good in three and good in the remaining two. The practical approach to science is a key strength of teachers' work, and the associated collaboration between pupils contributes greatly towards their social development. Pupils are interested and motivated and have particularly positive attitudes to their work. They enjoy the problems that are presented to them, usually in the form of investigative work. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils worked collaboratively to devise an experiment that would establish the conditions needed to grow mould on bread. This lesson offered good challenge in planning a 'fair test' and required pupils to make hypotheses so that they could decide where their slices of bread would be placed. The planning for writing up this investigation was meticulous. The teacher had high expectations of scientific writing, and pupils were required to decide where it was appropriate to use diagrams, bullet points and tables.

79. The school has recently embarked on a millennium project to develop the grounds as an environmental resource, incorporating a pond and a wild life area. The newly appointed science co-ordinator has ambitious yet achievable ideas for this project. Although the area is not fully developed at the moment, it is used as a useful resource: pupils in Key Stage 1 enthusiastically looked for mini beasts in two contrasting local habitats, in the hedgerow and underneath a log that they had positioned a week earlier. The skills of 'finding out' and

'predicting' are therefore developed early, and this leads on to the mature attitude and collaborative working that is such a positive feature in science lessons further up the school. Even in Year 1, pupils work together, studying and sowing seeds, and try to predict how tall their plants will grow.

ART AND DESIGN

80. Pupils enjoy working with a variety of media as they progress through the school and, as at the last inspection, their attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with that expected of pupils of a similar age. Art has a firm place in the curriculum and is valued by teachers and pupils alike. This results in good teaching throughout the school. Since the last inspection, the school has produced a scheme of work that is based on the development of skills. It keeps this under review to ensure that there is progression and continuity of work: this was not present at the last inspection. For example, pupils in Year 1 are introduced to work with clay tiles by designing patterns which they transfer, using suitable tools. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils examined the textures of walls in the school grounds and these textures were to be reproduced, later, on to clay models of the school buildings.

81. The awareness of sculptures in the environment was very well developed in a Key Stage 2 lesson. Good levels of discussion developed from studying photographs of famous sculptures in their settings - including the work of Henry Moore and Gormley's 'The Angel of the North'. Pupils then went on to consider the location and design for a sculpture - to enhance their own, newly developed wildlife area. The use of sketchbooks is good; in this lesson they were used by pupils to record their initial ideas and to practise skills in shading, using different grades of pencil.

82. In Year 6, work on the Bayeux Tapestry was enhanced by the teacher's good subject knowledge - based on a visit to see the original. Pupils were interested and motivated and therefore concentrated well to reproduce the lines and shapes from pictures of the tapestry.

83. Observational drawing features throughout the school, and pupils develop sound skills, using different grades of pencils for shading. Although younger pupils looked at paintings by Monet as an introduction to colour mixing, there is little evidence, particularly in Key Stage 1, that the work of famous artists is fully used to develop drawing and painting techniques.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Opportunities to observe design and technology were limited, but work on display and investigation of written work indicate that there has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection. Overall, standards are good and progress for all pupils is good, regardless of gender or ability.

85. By the age of 11, pupils reach levels above what is expected for their age. When making a facsimile of a guitar they carefully observe the features of the instrument to determine the process they will follow in their own design. Their initial drawings are

carefully labelled and measurements are precise. They check their work as they proceed and make comments on the necessary changes and adaptations. As they complete their instrument, they evaluate the work they have done and comment on how it could be improved.

86. By the age of seven, pupils are close to reaching levels above those expected for their age. From Year 1, pupils describe how their *Lego* house was made and why they made it in the way they did. They describe what choices they could make within a house - "I will make my bedroom out of card board. I will use wallpaper." They complete a chart which helps them to evaluate their work - *What I did. What I used. Did I enjoy the activity? Am I pleased with my work?*

87. The finish of practical work and the presentation of their written work in Key Stage 2 showed good attitudes to the subject. Designs were carefully labelled; gluing and finishing was precisely executed. Pupils are keen to accept the challenges they are set. For example, some older Key Stage 2 pupils enthusiastically joined in a discussion on the baking of bread and the variety of breads available.

88. Whilst lesson observation was limited, work on display and in pupils' books showed clearly that teachers provide good learning opportunities within this subject. They plan activities that will motivate pupils to be inventive as well as skilful, and challenge pupils through good initial discussion, encouraging them to question what they are doing. They have high expectations that the process will be recorded in a clear and evaluative way so that a good finish will be achieved. They provide good resources so that pupils' designs can be successfully achieved. Good links are made with other subjects such as art, mathematics, literacy and history, in order that the time allocation for this subject can be economically managed.

GEOGRAPHY

89. Standards in geography have improved since the last inspection and are now good in both key stages. Similarly, the progress of all pupils - including those with special educational needs - is good.

90. By the age of 11, pupils interpret maps well. They use them successfully in their work when showing rivers of the world and sources of rivers for their study. Pupils write clear descriptions, and illustrations are well labelled - to show erosion and deposition, for example. Pupils look for information on a chosen country and identify particular features such as the population figures and the national currency. They make clear choices to illustrate the journey of a product to the supermarket, for example. *The journey of corned beef* or *The journey of a prawn*. A sound understanding of scale arises from their use of Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs. From the early part of the key stage, pupils increase their understanding of environmental issues through studying the features of their immediate locality. The recent foot and mouth crisis is a reminder to pupils of changes in their landscape at present. Pupils in Year 6 use their prior knowledge to understand the features of

a contrasting landscape: they are able to make a comprehensive list of the differences between the landscape of St Lucia and that of their own. They use pie charts successfully to estimate the proportions of land in terms of its use and, equally successfully, reflect on the use of land in their own locality.

91. By the time pupils are seven, they have a good sense of place and some of the weather effects in warm and cold countries. They use the atlas to find the names of warm countries and carefully colour the weather bands across the world. Younger pupils recognise the British Isles on a map and use an Ordnance Survey map successfully to plot a local walk. "It took me 2 minutes to walk to these places". Through their study of the immediate locality and the weather, they have a simple understanding of environmental change.

92. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall. The presentation of much of their work is of a good standard. Key Stage 1 pupils outline their maps carefully and write clear descriptions on their holiday postcards. Older pupils co-operate well in their group work. The quick response to tasks in Year 6 was very good: pupils were keen to answer questions and give alternative suggestions of their own.

93. There were only limited opportunities to observe teaching, but it is judged to be good overall. Teachers provide a good range of learning opportunities which interest pupils and seek to raise their curiosity about the world around them and beyond. They introduce their lessons with purposeful discussion so that pupils are keen to ask questions of their own. Teachers plan their lessons well to include activities that will encourage observation as well as reinforce pupils' learning. In some lessons, activities are organised specifically to encourage pupils to think for themselves and to devise different and quick ways of recording their observations. The pace of the lesson in Year 6 was very lively and kept pupils alert, increasing their rate of learning through well-judged, timed tasks.

94. National strategies for literacy and numeracy affect the provision for foundation subjects such as geography, but the subject is well co-ordinated and makes good links with these key areas of the curriculum. Additionally, pupils experience simple fieldwork in the locality, through walks and local investigation, and Key Stage 2 pupils benefit greatly from the residential visit they make. This gives good opportunity for exploration through fell walking and caving, as well as significantly adding to their personal development. Visitors to the school from India and Africa help pupils to understand the life and culture of other countries.

HISTORY

95. The provision for history has improved despite the constraints which the core curriculum places on time allocation. The attainment of pupils overall is above expected levels, and progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good.

96. Older Key Stage 2 pupils write clear descriptions of life amongst the ancient Britons. They understand why Britain was a good target for invasion and write detailed letters to the families the Vikings left behind. Pupils gather information on ancient civilisations, and their very good illustrations of the Aztec gods capture the exotic nature of these people from the past. In exploring the idea of

invasion, pupils answer questions on, 'How could you plan an attack? What was a fort used for? What do you think happened?' Pupils successfully use historical sources when learning to extract information quickly. They check whether the information they have is hearsay or real experience when role-playing the part of time travellers.

97. By the age of seven, pupils have a good sense of the past. They examine toys of their grandparents' era and compare them with their own toys when linking work with design technology. They write clear accounts of well-known people and events, such as Florence Nightingale and The Gunpowder Plot. They make simple comparisons between the hospitals of the Crimea and the hospitals of today.

98. Pupils enjoy history and their attitudes to the subject are good overall. They listen to each other well in group work, and offer constructive ideas. Key Stage 1 pupils are keen to perform well when writing stories of Florence Nightingale. Older pupils show positive attitudes and an interest in extracting information for historical purposes.

99. Whilst opportunities to observe history teaching were limited, the standards of work indicate that teachers plan history well to make effective links with other subjects. These links encourage pupils to widen their thinking and understand more clearly the endeavours of people in the past. For example, younger pupils mapped Florence Nightingale's journey to Scutari, and older ones plotted the invasions of Britain. Teachers have high expectations and pose good historical questions for pupils to answer. They choose a variety of methods to engage pupils' interest, and use resources well. Recently, teachers have begun to assess pupils work well in line with guidance offered by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Good displays, within classrooms and across the school, reinforce pupils' sense of time. Younger pupils are able to see how information is gained from the Internet and how written work can be word processed on the computer in different fonts. Older pupils are able to observe well-illustrated time lines which range from large-scale illustrations of Greek heroes to press cuttings on the present crisis of foot and mouth disease across the country. Teachers use a variety of resources, such as poetry, artwork, aerial photographs and press cuttings, to illustrate these events.

100. Visits to museums such as the Tullie House museum to study the Romans, *significantly* enhance provision for history. Equally, visits to the Roman Wall and residential visits to York give pupils first-hand experience of events and changes over time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

101. The provision for information technology has improved since the last inspection. A co-ordinator has been designated and has successfully completed an audit of skills. Initial training of staff has taken place and further training is envisaged. Resources have been considerably improved and a visiting teacher is presently raising the skill levels of pupils in the top two classes. As the improved resources have only recently been active, standards are not wholly satisfactory by the time pupils are eleven. They are satisfactory in some elements at the end of Key Stage 2 but unsatisfactory in others; control and modelling in particular. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 1.

102. The school is fully aware of the shortcomings and is addressing them as fast as possible. The very recent acquisition of new computers will help significantly, but too little time has elapsed since their arrival for their impact to be apparent.

103. By the age of seven, pupils use the keyboard and mouse with suitable control. They operate simple programs connected with literacy and numeracy and create short pieces for work related to other subjects such as history. By the time pupils are eleven, they have increased the levels of these skills and are able to save and store their work. When presenting work such as poetry or the writing of letters they can edit and present their work in different fonts and some aspects of layout. The teaching provided specifically for pupils in the top two classes is more intensive and clearly connected with the demands of the curriculum. Pupils learn new skills and applications at a faster rate. This significantly adds to their achievement in the subject. Presently, they understand the purposes of spreadsheets and are in the first stages of setting up presentations for a slide show. They use appropriate vocabulary such as, *icon* and *font*, and talk of *custom animation* when preparing their slide show.

104. Teaching is satisfactory overall where the use of the computer is incorporated in lesson planning. Where the more intensive teaching occurs, it is good. The level of confidence within the staff is variable but skills levels are developing well and all teachers include ICT within their planning across the curriculum.

105. Work displayed in Key Stage 2 showed the use of the Internet for information on rivers, and the effects of building dams. As a result, pupils are becoming increasingly familiar with resources such as the digital camera, which was used in art-work. The results of the training teachers have received can be seen in the work they do with the pupils, but currently there is not uniformity in their level of skill. The quality of their assessment of pupils' work in the subject is also variable. The use of control technology was not seen during inspection.

106. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall but are particularly good where intensive teaching occurs. Younger pupils are interested, and keen to practise the simple skills they have. Older pupils concentrate hard when working on new applications and carefully select and work through the processes to achieve colourful and eye-catching results. Several pupils have computers at home but there is little difference in the levels of expertise between those who do and those who do not.

107. The management of the subject is very positive. A good start has been made in engaging pupils with the new resources and, as a result, pupils feel confident within the range of their experience. The initiative and commitment shown so far indicate a positive raising of standards across the school.

MUSIC

108. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection but further evidence is taken from assemblies and lessons by peripatetic teachers. Pupils enjoy music and make steady progress through the school, so that attainment is in line with expectations - as it was at the time of the last inspection. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching, but staff do value music as part of the curriculum and join in sharing the achievements of those pupils who perform in assemblies.

109. Music is used at assemblies to act as a focus as pupils file in and out, but it is purely 'background'. Opportunities are lost to develop knowledge or listening skills by identifying features of the chosen music. Hymn singing does not feature in daily assemblies but is reserved for the weekly celebration assembly so there are only limited occasions when pupils have the opportunity to sing, particularly as a whole school. However the Key Stage 2 choir sings tunefully and with expression, the pupils holding their parts well in two-part songs.

110. The recorder groups are strong and provide good opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2 to learn the instrument. During the celebration assembly the advanced group impressed the audience with a medieval melody that they had composed themselves. Opportunities for pupils to learn both stringed and woodwind instruments are good, tuition being provided by peripatetic teachers.

111. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher very effectively used 'sing back' techniques to teach and give pupils practice in singing, using variations in tempo, dynamics, pitch. Through high expectations and good support, pupils were able to sing a line of a song, making decisions about all three criteria. A musical quiz in a Key Stage 2 class gave pupils suitable practice in identifying different voices, used in different ways, and reinforced their knowledge of musical terms. Overall, the provision for musical development is stronger through the extra-curricular activities than it is through music lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. At the time of the last inspection, standards in physical education were judged to be satisfactory. On the evidence of this inspection, standards are close to being good at the end of Key Stage 1 and are good at the end of Key Stage 2.

113. Clearly, evidence collected during the period of an inspection is unlikely to cover all the elements of the primary physical education curriculum. However, the standards of gymnastics seen in a Year 6 lesson were very good. Year on year, all Year 6 pupils achieve the expected swimming standard and many of them exceed it. All experience a range of adventurous activities, and photographic evidence of these confirmed a challenging level of difficulty. Pupils do well in competitive games against local schools. The school provides a rich and varied range of sporting activities outside lessons. These are very well attended by pupils from this key stage. Combined, these pieces of evidence clearly indicate above average attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.

114. The standard of gymnastics demonstrated by Year 6 pupils was very high. They performed forward rolls and headstands with scrupulous attention to the quality of their performance. Working with a springboard and box, they produced a vault of equally high quality. The progress made by pupils in this activity was very good. This was the result of the skill of their teacher, in demonstrating the technique, in judging each individual's 'starting point', in being sensitive to the level of confidence of each pupil, and in attention to detail in the performance itself. Pupils in the Year 5/4 class worked on a dance routine related to an African folk story, *The Calabash Children*. They made good progress in this complex lesson, where their teacher guided them through the process of producing a dance routine. The strength of the lesson was the freedom for the pupils to respond individually. Pupils in Year 2 learned to pivot as part of a throwing and catching routine. Year 1 pupils used apparatus to produce one balance and one jump. They, too, made good progress over the period of the lesson.

115. The quality of teaching was very good in the first of these four lessons and good in the remainder. There was no significant weakness in any lesson but the very good lesson has significant strengths. Firstly, the attention to the detail, precision and points for improvement in the pupils' performance was excellent. Secondly, despite the need for the teacher to work with the vaulting group, all other pupils were fully active throughout the session.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. The school places great value on religious education, and these lessons make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Standards achieved by pupils at the ages of seven and eleven are in line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. Teaching of religious education is based on this locally Agreed Syllabus and provides teachers with a secure framework within which to work. Pupils learn about Christianity and two other major world faiths: Islam and Buddhism.

117. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection, so no judgement is made on teaching. However, throughout the school the empathy that exists with the feelings and sacrifices of other people indicates that teachers are successful in teaching this aspect of the subject. Further evidence is taken from scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils. Younger pupils are introduced to Bible stories from both the New and Old Testaments and these are continued throughout the school, with the older pupils interpreting the meaning of the parables. The assemblies taken by the local vicar on a regular basis enhance pupils' knowledge of the Bible and Christian faith, and pupils enjoy and look forward to his fortnightly visits.

118. In the observed lesson in Year 1, the teacher very effectively developed the theme of 'belonging'. By using such meaningful resources as sweatshirts - including those from school - the teacher generated enthusiastic discussions on signs of belonging to a club or a group. Following on from football teams with their home and away strips, pupils readily focused on crosses worn by Christians, and scarves worn by Muslim women.

119. Pupils in the Year 6/5 class showed great respect for the Buddhist faith and considered that Buddhists probably thought a great deal about their faith in their day-to-day life, more so than Christians. They are beginning to understand that all faiths have common values and that they help people to lead better lives.