

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST CUTHBERT'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL and
NURSERY**

Carlisle

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112370

Head teacher: Mr J Turner

Reporting inspector: Miss K Manning
20267

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st June 2001

Inspection number: 191323

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 with nursery
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Victoria Road Carlisle Cumbria
Postcode:	CA1 2UE
Telephone number:	01228 607505
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Nash
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

OIN	Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20267	K Manning	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? How well are pupils taught?
1234	T Bradley	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22881	G Halliday	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
12631	M McLean	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Equal opportunities English as an additional language	

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REPORT CONTENTS

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

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Cuthbert's is a small primary school in Carlisle and admits pupils aged from three to 11. It serves the local and wider community, including a small number of children from travelling families and from ethnic minority families. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language. Although it is voluntary aided and has a Catholic denomination, fewer than half of the pupils are from Catholic families. Unemployment in the town is high and 45 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. The school has a nursery and 36 children attend for five sessions a week. When they start in nursery their experiences vary greatly, but most do not have the skills and knowledge that are expected of three-year-olds. Children leave the nursery when they are four and most join the reception class. At present there are 154 pupils in classes from reception to Year 6. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is much higher than in most other schools. Eighty pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs because they have learning, physical or emotional difficulties. Of these, sixteen pupils have statements of special needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. Good leadership helps the school meet each new challenge successfully and ensures that the school is likely to continue to improve in the future. A third of the teaching is good and the remainder is satisfactory. This ensures that pupils reach the standards of which they are capable. Pupils learn in a school that puts their well-being before all else and as a result they have positive attitudes to learning. The cost of achieving this is average and because the school has significantly reduced its overspend in budget it is giving satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and as a result they do well and a significant number achieve the levels expected for their age.
- Good leadership has helped the school improve considerably in the last year.
- Staff manage pupils well and as a result pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well.
- Standards in physical education are high.

What could be improved

- Standards in music are not high enough.
- Teachers' marking does not help pupils understand how they could do better.
- Systems for encouraging good attendance and following up absences are not effective.
- Co-ordinators do not keep a close check on the quality of teaching and the work in pupils' books.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved at a good rate in the last year. All of the key issues have been tackled systematically and rigorously. Co-ordinators have begun to monitor the quality of teaching by checking teachers' planning. This has helped staff make the changes necessary to ensure that planning is now something that teachers do well. Long-term plans now ensure that work gets progressively more difficult from one year to the next. Short-term plans ensure that teachers make better use of assessment to plan work that meets the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. Co-ordinators are not yet observing their colleagues at work or checking standards by looking at pupils' books and these remain areas for further development. Governors and the head teacher have drastically reduced the school's large overspend of budget and have plans for bringing spending into line with income in the next couple of years. The recently appointed secretary and bursar ensure that finances are managed efficiently. Teaching is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Training and the purchase of computers have helped improve the school's

provision for teaching information and communication technology. Because staff work together well as a team the school is in a good position to be able to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	D	B	A*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	E	C	A	
science	E	C	B	A	

In this school, the small numbers of pupils in each year group affects the results of national tests considerably. This means that one or two pupils can make a tremendous difference to the percentages and consequently the school's overall performance. The results of national tests in 2000, showed that pupils did well in English and science and standards were average in mathematics. A real success for the school was how well pupils performed when compared with those from similar schools. They were in the top five per cent of schools in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The school exceeded its target for English in national tests in 2001 but failed to reach the target it had set for raising standards in mathematics. Test results are rising at a rate similar to the national trend.

Inspection findings differ from the results of National Curriculum tests. Pupils of all abilities and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve the levels of which they are capable. By the time they leave reception class most children have made significant gains in their knowledge and skills in all of the areas of learning, though they are below what is expected in speaking and listening, mathematics and in talking about what they know of the world. Their skills in reading and writing, creative and physical development and their personal, social and emotional development are typical for their age. By the end of Year 2, standards are typical of seven-year-olds in most subjects. They are high in physical development and below what is expected in music. This year, standards in Year 6 are greatly affected by the fact that three-quarters of the pupils in the year group have special educational needs. Just over a third of pupils reached the expected levels in English and science and less than a quarter reached the expected level in mathematics. Standards are above average in physical education. They are below average in information and communication technology by the age of 11 and in music by the ages of seven and 11.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school. They enjoy all activities and are keen to learn and do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Most pupils are well behaved and courteous in lessons, assemblies and at breaks. A significant number of pupils have difficulty behaving well and need additional support from the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils like and respect their teachers and form satisfactory relationships with other children and adults. They are willing to take responsibility for helping out around the school and getting what they need for lessons.

Attendance	Attendance is below average.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Thirty per cent is good and a further two per cent is very good. The remaining 68 per cent is satisfactory. There is good teaching in each key stage of pupils' education. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective and ensures that pupils do as well as they can.

Strengths in teaching ~ there is good teaching of pupils with special educational needs, particularly in reading and writing and a significant number of pupils catch up with their learning ~ teachers' planning is good and ensures that work is pitched at the right level for pupils of different abilities; this helps every pupil achieve their own personal best ~ teachers manage pupils well and as a result most pupils concentrate and are able to get on with their work ~ teachers make good use of the time and talents of support staff and students to work with small groups of pupils.

Weaknesses in teaching ~ teachers' marking does not always help pupils understand where they have gone wrong or how they might reach their personal targets; this prevents pupils from having a clearer knowledge of their learning ~ teaching of music is unsatisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant. It is enriched by an appropriate range of after-school activities and strong links with the church and local community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is one of the strengths of the school. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Carefully planned work and additional support results in these pupils making good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes satisfactory provision for the very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. They are given help and support when it is needed, but already speak good English when they start school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted to a satisfactory level through lessons and assemblies and in the day-to-day life of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for promoting pupils' health, safety, welfare and child protection are good. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' behaviour are very good. The school is not doing as much as it could to monitor and raise levels of attendance.

The school's procedures for assessment are good in all subjects except music. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' achievements and learning in English, mathematics and science and maintain useful records in other subjects. Teachers make good use of the information they get from assessments and tests to ensure that work meets the needs of all pupils. The portfolios of pupils' work provide a good picture of how well

each pupil is doing and are valuable when writing annual reports to parents. The school's partnership with parents is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher is a strong leader who provides firm educational direction for the work of the school. The leadership and management of senior members of staff are good. Existing systems to check the quality of teaching and learning are just developing and are in need of improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors fulfil most of their duties well and are very much involved in the school's work. There are some omissions in the information they provide for parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has only just begun to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses in a systematic way. This is a key area for development if it is to continue to improve at the same good pace as it has in the last year.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses all of its resources satisfactorily and for the benefit of pupils. Good use is made of the time and talents of teachers and support staff to provide help for pupils with special educational needs.

Governors and teachers make thorough comparisons of pupils' performance in tests with local, similar and all other schools. This is helping them to set realistic targets for raising standards. Staff and governors have only just begun to consider whether what the school offers is good value for money. Governors try hard to ensure that they get the best possible value for money from spending and are working hard to reduce the overspend in the budget. Parents' views about the school are sought on important matters, though this is not always done in a formal way. There are sufficient staff, accommodation and resources to teach the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • Parents are pleased that their children are expected to try hard and do their best. • They are pleased that teachers help their children to become mature and responsible. • Parents feel that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on in school and that the school works closely with them. • They feel that the school is led and managed well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of parents would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons. • Some parents are concerned that their children are not making good progress.

Inspection findings support parents' positive views of the school. Teachers and the head teacher welcome parents into the school and are always ready to listen to their concerns. They make sure that parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and work closely with parents whose children have special educational needs. Teachers expect children to do their best and to behave in a mature and responsible way. Parents are right to think that the school is led and managed well. Inspection findings are that there are sufficient after-school clubs and activities for a school of this size. Most pupils make steady progress and those with special educational needs make good progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 The school's results are affected by two important factors. The small numbers of pupils in each year group affects the results of national tests considerably. One or two pupils can make a tremendous difference to percentages and consequently the school's overall performance. In addition, when they start in nursery, although their experiences vary widely, most children do not have the skills or knowledge expected for their age.

2 During their time in the foundation stage, children learn at a steady rate. By the time they start in Year 1 most have gained in personal and social development and in creative and physical development and their achievements are typical for their age. While they have done well with reading and writing children's achievements in speaking and listening remain below the levels expected. It is a similar picture in mathematical development, children have not caught up sufficiently and most do not achieve the standards expected for their age. Although children have a sound knowledge and understanding of the world, a significant number lack the vocabulary and confidence to talk about what they know.

3 Although inspection findings appear to differ considerably from last year's National Curriculum test results this is not the case. It is the make-up of classes that varies considerably and this is what makes the school's results fluctuate the way they do.

4 In the year 2000, the results of National Curriculum tests in reading, and writing were well below the national average. These figures were low because of the high proportion of pupils in Year 2 who had special educational needs and this brought the schools results down considerably. In contrast, the results of National Curriculum tests in English for 11-year-olds showed that standards were above the national average. This was because the Year 6 class included several very able pupils who achieved a higher level. This put St Cuthbert's in the top five per cent of similar schools. Inspection findings show that most seven-year-olds, including those who speak English as an additional language, reach the expected levels in reading and writing. In Year 6, three-quarters of pupils have special educational needs. However, as with Year 2, all pupils achieve a personal best. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs work at levels that are below those expected for their age but the most able pupils achieve a higher level.

5 The results of National Curriculum tests in mathematics in 2000 followed the same pattern. Very few seven-year-olds reached the level expected for their age though most 11-year-olds did. The most able 11-year-olds did not do as well in mathematics tests as they did in English tests. Inspection findings show that teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and this ensures that most seven-year-olds reach the level expected for their age. This year, most of the pupils in Year 6 do not reach the expected level because of their special educational needs but all of them do as well as they possibly could.

6 Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2000 showed that standards in science were below the national average. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards were above the national average and that pupils performed far better than those in similar schools. Inspection findings show that most seven-year-olds reach the level expected for their age and that gaps in pupils' knowledge of life and living processes no longer exist. Once again the high proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 who have special educational needs prevents standards from matching the national average. All pupils achieve the levels of which they are capable and standards have risen steadily in the past three years.

7 There is no pattern to whether boys or girls perform better in National Curriculum tests in mathematics or science. In some years girls do better than boys but this is not always the case. However, girls have consistently performed better than boys in English tests for 11-year-olds. The school's own

analysis of test results indicates that girls often do better at reading because they are more interested than boys in reading books.

8 When judged together, standards in all three subjects are improving at a similar rate to the national trend. This means that despite the high number of pupils with special educational needs the school is managing to overcome the challenges presented by this situation and help pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable.

9 Pupils with special educational needs, make good progress towards the targets of their individual education plans. Throughout the school, they benefit from working in small groups and the extra help they get from adults. The small number of pupils who are from travelling families and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress as a result of the help and support they get in school.

10 Standards in information and communication technology are typical for seven-year-olds and below what is expected of 11-year-olds. They are higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection because the school has improved the resources and because training has given teachers the expertise they need to teach the subject more confidently. Younger pupils are becoming familiar with many of the programs on the school's computers but their progress is limited by the amount of time they get to work on computers. Older pupils have a lot of catching up to do in their use and understanding of information and communication technology.

11 One of the things the school does well is ensure that pupils gain high standards in physical development. From an early age pupils are encouraged to take part in dance, gymnastics and sports activities that make them agile and graceful and instil a competitive spirit that helps them do well in local competitions and tournaments.

12 Standards are not high enough in music. Not enough time or emphasis is given to the subject and teachers lack the talent and enthusiasm necessary to motivate pupils to do well. Consequently, although pupils sing reasonably well they have only a limited knowledge of music and composers and lack skills of composing and performing music for others. The school recognises that this is an area for development.

13 In all other subjects, standards match the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds. In geography, pupils have a sound understanding of the local area and the countries they study. In history, pupils know about Victorian England, the ancient Egyptians and the lives of major historical figures by the time they leave the school. In both subjects they are beginning to develop skills of researching facts from books and other sources. In art and design they produce lively and colourful pictures and three-dimensional models. They design and make models of a reasonable quality in design and technology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14 Pupils' attitudes to school are good and are more positive than they were during the previous inspection. Their enthusiasm for school is apparent as they talk about their favourite lessons and activities. Pupils in junior classes are particularly enthusiastic about taking part in the sporting and gymnastic activities at lunchtime or after school and they look forward to using computers at breaks. In lessons, when their teachers are clear about what they have to do, pupils are eager to take part and work hard. In a geography lesson in Years 5 and 6, the pleasure felt by pupils was obvious when they met their teacher's challenge to find locations for a specialist holiday from a range of maps and literature. Children in the foundation stage are keen to learn, they come in to nursery and the reception class with smiles on their faces, ready to get on with the days activities. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are confident and have positive attitudes to their work because of the extra support they get and the success they enjoy from activities planned to match their needs. Teachers make sure that they are included in discussions and they achieve success because questions are chosen carefully to match their ability. The small number of pupils who come from travelling families are keen enough to return to the school whenever they are in the area.

15 The school has been successful in improving standards of behaviour and they are now good. Pupils generally behave well in class. They settle quickly, listen attentively and do as they are told without fuss. Those who have special educational needs related to behavioural and emotional problems are helped to play a full part in lessons and they respond by following instructions. As a result, teachers do not have to waste time establishing order and pupils are able to learn. In the playground, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. They generally play and get on well together and any incidents of bullying are handled firmly by the school. There is very little squabbling or arguing between pupils and no fighting or name-calling was seen or heard during the inspection. Lunchtimes are pleasant, social occasions, when children sit with their friends and enjoy a chatter as they eat their lunch.

16 Pupils' personal development is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and form the basis of pupils' positive attitudes to learning. They are not afraid to join in and *have a go* because they are well aware that their contributions will be valued, whether they are correct or not. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Years 2 and 3, pupils guessed how many cubes the teacher was holding and were not deterred when their first estimates were a long way out. Throughout the school, pupils form friendships with one another and show that they care for their classmates by being helpful and sharing equipment. When asked, they happily work in pairs and small groups and they are willing to offer advice when someone else is unsure what to do. In situations where they are expected to share their feelings and beliefs, pupils in junior classes show that they are tolerant of others. This was evident in a personal and social education lesson when pupils in Years 3 and 4 listened to the views of others and showed that they were interested by the questions they asked.

17 Parents are right to believe that their children gain maturity and a sense of responsibility. This starts in the nursery when children learn to be independent and do things for themselves. As they get older, pupils take on more responsibilities for jobs that help the smooth running of the school. For example, they ring the bell to let everyone know it is playtime or lunchtime and help distribute apples to each class.

18 The level of pupils' attendance has fallen since the previous inspection and is now below the national average. Most absence is caused by illness and there is little unauthorised absence. However, an increasing number of parents are disrupting their children's education by taking them out of school for holidays during term time. Punctuality is satisfactory. Most pupils arrive on time each day so that the morning session can begin promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19 Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. More than two-thirds of the teaching is satisfactory and the remaining third is good with a small proportion that is very good. The strategies used to teach literacy and numeracy are effective and ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. Teaching of music is unsatisfactory and this is an area for further development. Teachers do not have the expertise or confidence necessary to raise standards and not enough time is given to teaching music.

20 One of the main reasons why teaching has improved is that teachers are much better at planning than they were at the time of the last inspection. As new schemes of work and national guidelines for teaching have become available, the quality of teachers' planning has also improved and many of the weaknesses identified in the previous report have been ironed out. Teachers have clear, long-term plans, which ensure that pupils of all ages are taught a curriculum that is broad and balanced. In addition, their termly and weekly planning ensures that pupils of different ages and abilities are given work that meets their individual needs and helps them do as well as they can. This is particularly evident in the work planned for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils form a large part of each class and teachers are very conscientious in ensuring that the work they get helps move them forward so that they achieve success at their own level. At the same time, teachers ensure that the brightest pupils in each class are given work that challenges and extends their learning and helps them achieve the higher levels. For example, in a good English lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 who had special educational needs worked on spelling techniques

while the most able used computers and texts to scan and skim text for information. Teachers also ensure that pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from travelling families are given work that is pitched at the right level and as a result they achieve as well as they can.

21 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is one of the strengths of the school. Assessments of what children can do when they start reception class are used to diagnose which children have difficulties learning or behaving. Teachers have started to make good use of these tests to plan the right sort of support. For example, children who do not speak often are encouraged gently to repeat words and sentences. Teachers plan work very thoroughly and ensure that it is linked to the targets in each pupil's individual education plan. This means that they are always working at the level that is right for them. The targets in these plans are very detailed and carefully thought through, so that pupils move forward in the small manageable steps that are necessary for them to succeed. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs gain the maximum benefit from lessons and that they are given the extra help they need to make good progress.

22 Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils well. In this school a significant number of pupils find it hard to concentrate, which means that teachers are constantly reminding pupils to look, listen and not to call out. However, they do this in a way that does not disrupt the pace of lessons and ensures that pupils concentrate on their work. For example, in several lessons teachers told pupils that they would listen to someone who had their hands up, so reinforcing the point that pupils should not call out. Teachers insist that pupils get on with their work reasonably quietly. This means that pupils of all abilities are able to give their best effort and are not disrupted by others. All staff are consistent in their approach to discipline so pupils know what to expect. All of this means that pupils acquire knowledge and understanding in a calm and purposeful atmosphere.

23 Teachers make good use of the time and resources available to them. Lessons always start on time and they generally move along at a pace that is brisk enough to ensure that pupils remain motivated. Teachers also make very good use of the talents of classroom assistants and students to support the work of pupils with special educational needs and those from travelling families. The close attention classroom assistants give to individuals and groups of pupils allows these pupils to gain increased understanding of the work and leads to good progress. This is particularly evident in infant classes where several pupils who have special educational needs have nonetheless reached the level expected for their age in National Curriculum tests in mathematics this year.

24 There are strengths and weaknesses to the way teachers assess what pupils know and can do on a day-to-day basis. They question pupils skilfully to find out what they have remembered and to move them forward in their thinking. However, there are some weaknesses in the way teachers mark work that have not been picked up because co-ordinators do not keep a close enough check on pupils' books. Although pupils' work is marked, teachers rarely include the sort of comments that would help pupils improve their performance. Many pupils have targets for improving their work but these are not commented on in teachers' marking. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils' work is dated or make it clear whether work is practice or tests. This makes it extremely difficult to track pupils' learning or measure their progress, particularly when work is on loose sheets. This is an area for development for the school.

25 All teachers set homework that is relevant to what pupils are learning in school, although some do this more regularly than others. From reception class onwards, pupils are encouraged to take books home to read with parents or carers. Reading at home also encourages pupils' to want to read. Older pupils are given spellings and multiplication tables to learn at home. Each week they are tested on what they have learned and it is evident from results that pupils benefit considerably from help at home.

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

26 The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements and promotes pupils' academic and physical development successfully by teaching all of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Sex education, and topics about healthy lifestyles and the misuse of drugs help promote pupils' personal development, and although there is no formal programme of study this aspect of the curriculum reflects the school's aim that pupils are prepared for life outside of school. A suitable range of after school sports and clubs enrich the curriculum and help promote pupils' social development. They gain a good sense of fair play and a strong competitive spirit that helps the school do well in local tournaments, competitions and sports events. Educational visits in the area and to a residential field study centre extend the range of pupils' experiences and contribute to their learning and personal development.

27 The strategies used to teach literacy and numeracy are effective and ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. More time is devoted to teaching English and mathematics than other subjects and the curriculum includes booster classes for pupils in Year 6 and additional support for pupils who struggle with reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers make good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to plan work and this is one of the reasons why standards are rising in line with the national trend, despite the high proportion of pupils in the school who have special educational needs.

28 All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to make progress. Girls and boys play football and other sports. Pupils of different ages are given work at the right level and the small number of pupils who come from travelling families are given the support they need to help them catch up on what they have missed and achieve their personal best. Pupils with special educational needs get a good deal from the school, which is one of the reasons why they do so well. Their work is planned carefully and they are given help in most lessons. When necessary, they get additional help from specialists, such as speech therapists and parents are given the guidance they need to help their children at home. Those who speak English as an additional language and the small number from travelling families have the same opportunities as other pupils to make progress.

29 The school's links with the community continue to be good. There are strong links with the Roman Catholic Church. The parish priest visits the school very regularly, not only to lead assemblies or mass but also to help pupils with their work on computers. Pupils benefit from this additional expertise and this is helping raise standards in information and communication technology. The school's close relationship with local businesses and project groups has a positive effect on pupils' health and personal development. They benefit from funding which enables the school to give each child an apple or part of an apple each day. In addition, initiatives where a parent of Indian origin and a chef from a local Chinese restaurant visit the school to talk about their food and explain how it is cooked help widen pupils' cultural development. The school works in close partnership with local secondary schools, which helps the oldest pupils make the transition to Year 7 confidently.

30 The school has maintained its satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development. Daily worship provides opportunities for pupils to pray and to think about God and their beliefs in a calm and reflective atmosphere. The youngest pupils gain a sense of wonder at nature and the world. As they get older, pupils understanding of religious beliefs grows and they learn to see how religion affects individuals and communities.

31 The school's provision for pupils' moral development continues to be satisfactory. Teachers set clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour and promote moral values positively. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong from the time they enter nursery. Teachers discuss unacceptable behaviour with pupils and encourage them to apologise when they have done wrong. Younger pupils learned that it is right to say *sorry* from stories and talked about when they are sorry for the things they do wrong to friends and family. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to discuss moral issues in lessons. The quiet, intimate atmosphere encourages all pupils to take part, so they can all gain in moral development. Staff are

good role models and make a point of being polite and considerate to each other and to pupils.

32 The school's provision for pupils' social development is good. This is a better picture than at the time of the previous inspection. Although informal, the programme for personal, social and health education makes a valuable contribution to this, aiming to promote pupils' ability and motivation to work together co-operatively. The school works hard to develop pupils' sense of community. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to collect for charity and to care for others. Mass is conducted in the school and parents are welcomed to attend this and special assemblies. From the nursery onwards children are expected to take responsibility for themselves, though older pupils are given only a small number of duties that help the school run smoothly. For example, they ring the school bell and act as monitors in classrooms. The school also provides opportunities for older pupils to live and work together as a team when they take part in the annual residential visit.

33 The school's provision for pupils' cultural development has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures in many lessons. For example, in history and geography lessons and on fieldwork outings pupils develop their knowledge of their locality and of the wider world. They learn of famous artists and see pictures and art in the school corridors. Pupils visit the local theatre and there is a fairly extensive range of visitors to the school who tell stories, and talk about the past or engage pupils in dance and musical events that increase their knowledge of a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34 The school has maintained its good arrangements for child protection and ensuring the health, welfare and safety of pupils. The head teacher has responsibility for dealing with any issues of child protection, and the school follows the useful local area guidelines. The school's policy provides suitable guidance for staff though they have not had any formal training. All staff play their part in ensuring that children are safe when they are in school. There are regular fire drills so that pupils know what to do in an emergency and all equipment is checked to ensure good standards of safety. Pupils who feel unwell or have accidents are looked after well and their parents are informed.

35 The monitoring of pupils' personal development is based on teachers' knowledge and is mainly informal. Nonetheless it is good. All staff care about the pupils and treat them with kindness and consideration. Teachers are quick to spot if pupils are unwell or distressed and take the time to talk with them about their problems. Staff try very hard to ensure that pupils are healthy. The breakfast club aims to give pupils a nourishing start to the day and the school makes good use of funds to ensure that every child eats some fruit each day. At lunchtime, supervisors make sure that pupils who have a school meal get enough to eat and that they have a balanced diet. Pupils with special educational needs and those from travelling families are given the help and support they need to feel that they are succeeding in school.

36 The school is not monitoring or promoting attendance as well as it could and this is an area for further development. Teachers record pupils' attendance in registers but the school's reaction to pupils being absent is not as quick as it should be and relies on parents providing an explanation. Sometimes this does not happen and absences go unexplained. In addition, pupils are not rewarded for good attendance and there is nothing to motivate them into coming to school every day.

37 The school has very good procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour and encouraging them to behave well. There are few rules but teachers insist that pupils respect one another and treat everyone with courtesy. Their standards are clear and consistent, so that pupils know what to expect and rewards and sanctions are fair, and pupils understand the systems. Any bullying or harassment is dealt with very quickly by staff, who set good examples to pupils through their own behaviour and relationships. Teachers and support staff work hard to ensure that pupils who have behavioural and emotional problems stick to the targets they have agreed, even when this is something as simple as putting a hand up and not shouting out answers. Good behaviour is rewarded by a mention in the school's *Golden Book* and at a special assembly.

This motivates pupils to behave well and makes them think about the impact of their actions on others. As a result, all pupils know that they will be dealt with fairly but firmly and this is one of the reasons why behaviour is satisfactory.

38 Since the last inspection, the school has improved procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance and they are now good. Assessment is a regular feature throughout the school. Pupils' progress is checked carefully through a variety of school and national tests. A thorough analysis is made of test results to identify trends in attainment and look for gaps in the curriculum. This was successful in identifying gaps in the teaching of writing, which teachers were able to remedy and so raise standards in the last year. Teachers are currently using the same procedures to identify why pupils have not done well enough in this year's mathematics tests. Teachers have begun to establish precise targets to improve the attainment of pupils in infant and junior classes. Most of these targets are concerned with raising standards in literacy and numeracy and a weakness to the assessment is that teachers are not referring to them in their marking of pupils' work. A good feature of the assessment is the portfolios of work that teachers keep for each pupil. These provide valuable information about pupils' learning and achievements. In addition, because the work is dated, annotated and given a level of attainment, they ensure that what teachers write in annual reports to parents is accurate.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39 Parents continue to have positive views of the school. They value the efforts made on behalf of their children and are pleased with most aspects of the school's work. Only a small proportion of parents attended the meeting before the inspection or gave their views in questionnaires. However, they had many good things to say about the school. Parents are particularly pleased with the way they are welcomed into the school and that teachers and the head teacher are always available to talk over any problems or concerns that they have about their children. They feel that their children are expected to work hard and do their best in school and that they are kept informed of how well their children are doing. Their positive views are supported by inspection findings, which are that the school works in close partnership with parents.

40 Teachers ensure that parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and learning. At the start and end of each day, teachers make themselves available to talk with parents. They also use this time to seek out parents if their children are having difficulties or problems in school. Parents say they value these informal discussions and that they help keep them informed of how well their children are doing. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs linked to behaviour are kept up-to-date in this way and because they have been involved in agreeing the targets for their children they feel that they are in a position to help out at home. The written reports to parents provide the information they need to assess how their children have progressed during the year. The reports also set targets for improvement in English and mathematics, which pave the way for parents to help their children at home. Regular newsletters are friendly and informative and provide reminders to parents about school events, such as educational visits and the times of mass. A small amount of information is missing from the governing body's annual report to parents and the school's prospectus. The school sought the partnership of parents for its home-school agreement and the combined efforts of parents and teachers have a positive effect on pupils' behaviour in school.

41 The school's links with parents are good. This is largely because parents are encouraged to play a part in their children's learning, both at home and in school. A small number of parents are involved in extra-curricular activities and many more help to raise additional funds for the school by organising social events. Several parents help out in classrooms and provide valuable support for teachers. Others give their time to help out in the school's breakfast club. Parents of children in the nursery say that they value the visits that staff make to their homes before their children start school and that the close partnership between home and school is begun right then. Parents of pupils with all types of special educational needs are kept well informed and involved with the school's support for their children. They are consulted about their children's individual education programmes and invited to review their progress so that they can help their children at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42 The head teacher is a good leader who has got a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve and a vision of how it should provide for the community it serves. With the support of the senior management team and governing body, good progress has been made in the last year in tackling the issues identified in the previous report. The head teacher and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. An efficient system for planning and evaluating realistic and achievable targets for development has enabled them to identify the same issues for development as this report. This strong leadership places the school in a good position to maintain and improve many of the qualities seen during the inspection.

43 The head teacher has introduced a more rigorous system of checking the quality of teaching. Senior teachers, and advisers from the local education authority have observed the teaching in English and mathematics. This highlighted some of the weaknesses in teaching that prevented pupils making the progress of which they were capable. The changes made as a result of this have helped raise standards in both subjects and is one of the main reasons why the school's results are rising at similar rate to the national trend. Heartened by this success, the head teacher and staff have plans to extend the monitoring of teaching to other subjects. At present the school is at the early stages of evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. The head teacher and co-ordinators have rightly identified the need for more rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and more systematic checking of pupils' work as key areas for development in the next year.

44 At the time of the previous inspection subject co-ordinators did not have a good enough understanding of their roles. This is not now the case. Staff with leadership and managerial roles now make a satisfactory contribution to the effective management of the school. Subject co-ordinators provide informal advice for colleagues and more formal training in their subjects when appropriate. As a result, there is a strong sense of shared purpose and teamwork in the school, which is evident in the support teachers give to one another and their willingness to work hard to continue to raise standards. Subject co-ordinators monitor the curriculum more closely through looking at teachers' planning. They analyse the results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science and are involved in consultations about setting targets and identifying gaps in teaching or learning. They are not yet monitoring the quality of teaching by observing their colleagues at work and this prevents them from sharing the good practice that exists in the school. Neither are they checking pupils' work, which prevented them from spotting that marking is not as effective as it could be. Co-ordinators realise that this is the next step along the way to raising standards and have made this a priority for further development.

45 Governors support the life and work of the school well and have a good idea of its strengths and weaknesses. There have been some changes to the governing body since the time of the previous inspection and this has strengthened the leadership of the school. Members of the governing body have continued to increase their involvement with the school since the previous inspection. There are trained governors for literacy and numeracy and the chair of governors works in close partnership with the head teacher to manage spending. Together they have made some difficult decisions regarding staffing in order to reduce the large overspend to the school's budget but are determined to bring spending into line. Governors are responsible for appraising the work of the head teacher and are involved in setting realistic targets for raising standards in English and mathematics in National Curriculum tests.

How efficiently the school is managed

46 The financial management and control of the school is efficient and unobtrusive. Administrative systems are computerised and the school's secretary and bursar carry out the day-to-day running of the school efficiently. The school has had a deficit budget since before the previous inspection and it had not been brought under control sufficiently until the appointment of the present head teacher, who works closely with governors to make regular checks on spending. Governors ensure that all additional funding is used for its intended purpose. Funds for training teachers are used effectively to increase their knowledge, evident in the improved provision and higher standards in information and communication technology. Governors, the head teacher and senior staff regularly apply the principles of best value and always try to make the best use

of finances.

47 There are sufficient teachers and support staff to teach the curriculum. They work as an efficient team, whose responsibilities are delegated thoughtfully by the head teacher. In particular the time and talents of support staff are put to good use in working with groups of pupils who have special educational needs. Their significant contribution to teaching is one of the reasons why these pupils make good progress. Teachers deploy well the many students who work at the school as part of their training. They are given the support they need to do well in their own professional development and in turn play a valuable part in working with small groups of pupils. The extra adult help in classes is another reason why pupils with special educational needs get such a good deal from the school.

48 Teachers make best possible use of the adequate accommodation and resources. In most subjects there are sufficient resources to help maintain standards. However, in English a significant number of books are old and worn and there are not enough big books to make it easier for pupils in infant classes to read the stories they hear in literacy lessons. Visitors to the school and educational outings enrich the curriculum and bring subjects to life for pupils. All of which helps raise standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49 Governors, head teacher and staff should;

A. **Raise standards in music by**

- ensuring that teachers have the training they need to teach all aspects of the subject,
- providing more opportunities for pupils to listen to and appraise music and to perform for others,
- ensuring that sufficient time is devoted to music,
- strengthening the leadership of the subject by enabling the co-ordinator to play a full part in monitoring teaching and the curriculum.

(paragraphs 118 – 123 of the main report)

B. **Improve the quality of marking by**

- ensuring that written comments on pupils' work tell them what they need to do to improve their performance,
- linking comments to pupils' individual targets for improvement.

(paragraphs 24, 82, 89, 98, 109 of the main report)

C. **Strengthen the leadership and management of the school by**

- agreeing and implementing procedures for co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching,
- ensuring that co-ordinators keep a regular and systematic check on pupils' work.

(paragraphs 42, 43, 44, 98, 103, 110, 122 of the main report)

In addition to the above key issues there is also a minor issue that the school will wish to include in the action plan;

Increase levels of attendance by

- agreeing and then implementing procedures for rewarding good attendance and for following up absences more quickly than at present. *(paragraph 36 of the main report)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	30	68	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	154
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	70

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	71

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	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	12	15	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	20	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74% (77%)	74% (82%)	74% (86%)
	National	83% (82%)	84% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	11
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	20	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74% (77%)	78% (86%)	85% (91%)
	National	84% (82%)	88% (86%)	88% (87%)

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

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	6	7	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	1		
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69% (64%)	62% (57%)	85% (82%)
	National	75% (70%)	72% (69%)	85% (78%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58% (39%)	54% (50%)	69% (57%)
	National	70% (68%)	72% (69%)	79% (75%)

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

¹ Numbers are not included where the number of boys or girls is 10 or less.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	125
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)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.3
Average class size	25.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	26

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	378,197
Total expenditure	378,158
Expenditure per pupil	2,012
Balance brought forward from previous year	-30,835
Balance carried forward to next year	-30,796 ²

² This is planned to be reduced to –£13,052 by the end of the current year.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	172
Number of questionnaires returned	20

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	25	10	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	20	10	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	45	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	47	5	0	0
The teaching is good.	75	20	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	40	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	25	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	45	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	80	20	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	25	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	45	10	5	5

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

50 Children in the foundation stage are taught in the nursery and reception class. Most children are three years old when they start nursery and transfer to the reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. The school's assessments show that though the children's experiences and knowledge vary when they start nursery, their achievements are mainly below what is usually found in children of their age.

51 The school continues to make sound provision for children in the foundation stage. More than a third of the teaching is good and the remainder is satisfactory. As a result, children make good gains in their personal and social development. In other areas of learning they make steady progress. They widen their knowledge and understanding of the world and learn new skills in creative and physical development. Although their speaking and listening skills are below what is expected for their age, most children achieve many of the early skills of reading, writing and numeracy. By the time they leave the reception class, children have achieved as well as they can, even though standards are below what is expected for their age.

Personal, social and emotional development

52 This area of learning is taught well and children make good gains in their personal and social skills. By the time they start in Year 1 children's achievements are typical for their age.

53 Teachers and other adults work hard to ensure that children feel happy and secure in school. They know each child and have built up warm and friendly relationships with children and their families. As a result, children who have been reluctant to leave their parents gain the confidence to come into nursery and join in activities. Those who have special educational needs linked to emotional and behavioural problems settle to the daily routines in both classes.

54 Teachers ensure that children have regular opportunities to choose their own activities and take part in those led by an adult. For example, in the nursery children help staff prepare the snack for other children and see this as a special responsibility. In the reception class children are pleased when they are chosen to work with their teacher. Children respond to these many opportunities to be independent in a positive way. Most are motivated to learn and happily join in with activities suggested by an adult. For example, children in the reception class pretended to be adults in the Victorian kitchen and included other children in their role-play. Children also learn to do things for themselves, such as getting their coats on before they go outside to play, and washing their hands after painting or using messy materials.

55 A good feature of the teaching is the way that all adults encourage children to form friendships with one another and work and play together. Children are reminded of the need to take care of one another and when squabbles about sharing toys or equipment break out they are generally dealt with quickly and fairly by staff, and to the satisfaction of all parties. Most children wait patiently for their turn. This was evident when two children in the nursery sat very quietly as they waited for their turn to play outside.

Communication, language and literacy

56 Teaching is satisfactory and as a result children make steady progress in speaking and listening and reading and writing. Though they achieve many of the early goals in reading and writing standards in speaking and listening are below what is expected for their age when they start in Year 1.

57 When they start nursery, a significant number of children have poor speaking and listening skills. Many do not speak clearly and are unused to listening for any length of time. Staff constantly encourage children to answer questions and talk about what they are doing and as a result, most children gain the confidence to take part in and initiate conversations with other children and adults. Those who have

substantial problems get the support they need from speech therapists and other specialists but a significant number are reluctant to talk in anything but short phrases or single words. Despite the many opportunities that teachers plan for listening to stories and instructions, many children are still poor listeners when they start in Year 1.

58 Teachers are good at developing the basic skills of reading and writing. Each day, children have time to listen to and read stories. Children learn to look at the pictures and the letters to help them read words they do not know. Consequently average and higher attaining children in the reception class read simple stories and try to sound out unfamiliar words. Teachers also ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for children to write. In the nursery, children are encouraged to copy their names and to write as part of their role-play. In reception class, children copy the writing of adults and by the time they start in Year 1, most children write or copy simple sentences and use capital letters and full stops.

Mathematical development

59 Sound teaching of number and mathematical language helps children learn at a steady pace and gain confidence in using numbers to solve simple problems. Despite this, few achieve all of the learning goals expected for their age by the time they start in Year 1.

60 One of the strengths of the teaching is that staff make mathematical activities purposeful. For example, in the nursery they count how many children are at an activity. In the reception class children learned the days of the week and months of the year as they filled in their class calendar. This constant use of mathematics means that children understand its relevance to daily life and use it confidently. By the time they leave the reception classes, average attaining children order and work with numbers up to ten. The most able have begun to record their addition and subtraction as sums, such as $6 + 3 = 9$.

61 Through answering questions such as, which one is bigger, children learn to make comparisons and widen their vocabulary. Children with special educational needs benefit in the same way but are also helped to do well because they get additional support from staff. Very often this takes the form of activities that are specifically aimed at the targets teachers have set for them.

62 Learning is consolidated through play and exploration and, through this children learn to use the mathematical language of measurement, such as heavy and light or full and empty. For example, children in the reception class described the base of an iron they were drawing as being a triangle. Throughout the foundation stage children enjoy their work in mathematics because it is fun and purposeful.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63 Teaching is satisfactory and helps children develop many of the basic skills that help them make sense of the world. By the time they start in Year 1, most children's knowledge and understanding of the world is typical for their age, but a significant number lack the vocabulary and confidence to talk about what they know.

64 One of the strengths of teaching in this area of learning is that children are encouraged to find things out for themselves. This was evident in science-based activities in the nursery, when children explored the properties of boats to see which ones floated best. They quickly learned that both light and heavy boats floated. Teachers also emphasise the importance of asking questions, such as where are the spikes on roses, and of looking carefully. As a result, children are very keen to explore the world and find things out. They particularly enjoyed finding out about a limousine by getting in to have a look for themselves.

65 Teachers help children learn about their neighbourhood and families through looking at pictures and photographs. In this way children see that there are different types of houses and buildings in the town and draw and paint maps that include features such as roads and buildings. Stories and discussions are a good source of information about different situations and people. For example, the teacher skilfully guided

questions to help one girl in the nursery share what she had learned about bison with other children. This helped them understand about other cultures.

66 Teachers ensure that children use computers regularly and that they know how to use tape machines when they want to listen to a story. Consequently, children move the cursor on the computer with the control needed to operate programs. Children quickly learn to do this easily and settle down to listen to stories or play computer games. Staff ensure that children learn about important events in the church calendar and their own life; for example, Christmas and baptism.

Physical development

67 Satisfactory teaching helps children gain a sense of co-ordination and balance in their play and movement and to master the skills of handling small tools such as paintbrushes, pencils and scissors in their work. This is one area of learning where attainment is typical of three-year-olds when children start in the nursery and because they make steady progress during their time in the foundation stage, standards are at the levels expected for their age by the time children start in Year 1.

68 Teachers ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to engage in physical activities, both indoors and when playing outside. As a result, children are robust and lively. Children in the nursery tricycle up and down the yard at a great speed and hop, skip and jump in their games with one another. Those in reception class enjoy physical activities involved in gymnastics. They are agile and confident when using the large climbing frame in the hall and a number are keen to climb to the top. Because the teacher demonstrated the moves for them most children could execute simple gymnastic movements safely. Although they can rely on support staff to help them if things go wrong, children in the reception class are fairly good at dealing with zips, buttons and shoes when dressing themselves.

69 Teachers also teach skills such as cutting and gluing, to help children gain control of these types of movement. As a result, most children are adept at using paintbrushes, pencils, and crayons, completing jigsaw puzzles, building with construction toys and pouring water into containers. Few children use scissors with a good level of competence and many struggle to cut along a curved line. Despite this they enjoy any activity that involves making models or pictures.

Creative development

70 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting creative activities through which children can explore colour, texture, shape and music. As a result of many opportunities to paint, make models, sing and play musical instruments, children make steady progress and by the time they start in Year 1 they have achieved many of the skills expected for their age.

71 Children enjoy being creative and are proud of their efforts. This was evident in the way children in the reception class were keen to show off the charcoal drawings they had made of a Victorian iron. Children's work is valued and is displayed effectively in the nursery and reception class. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to sing and take part in action rhymes. In the nursery they join in with the actions of traditional circle games such as the Farmers in His Den and join in with the chorus.

72 Children's imagination is further evident in role-play, when they enjoy acting out parts. For example, when a small group of children took on the characters of Victorians in their kitchen and animated discussions took place about dinner and the clothes they were wearing.

ENGLISH

73 Standards achieved by seven-year-olds in National Curriculum tests in reading were well below average in national terms but average when compared with pupils from similar backgrounds. Standards in writing were well below average in national terms and below average in comparison with those reached by pupils in similar schools. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs had brought down the school's results considerably. Standards achieved by 11-year-olds in National Curriculum tests were above average. Pupils performed so well that in comparisons with similar schools they were in the top five per cent.

74 Over the last five years, seven-year-olds boys and girls have performed equally well in national tests. However, 11-year-old girls have done better than boys in each of the last five years.

75 Most seven-year-olds reach the level expected for their age and all of them achieve a personal best. This is partly because children make steady progress in the nursery and reception classes. Consequently, when they start in Year 1 they have made considerable gains in reading and writing. Another factor is that pupils' difficulties with literacy are identified quickly and they are given good support. This helps many of them to catch up with other pupils and prevents them from falling too far behind.

76 Although standards appear to be low by the end of Year 6, this is because almost three-quarters of the class have special educational needs and many of these do not reach the level expected for their age. However, between Years 3 and 6, pupils make steady progress and by the time they leave the school all pupils reach the levels of which they are capable.

77 Teaching is never less than satisfactory and there is some good teaching in the Year 5 and 6 class. Throughout the school, teachers plan carefully so that pupils of different age and ability in the same class are given work that meets their needs. This is particularly relevant for pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers take great pains to spot pupils' difficulties early on and they are given help and support with reading and writing. In infant classes, this helps pupils learn a range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words and the focus on handwriting gives them the confidence to write short stories and accounts. As they get older, pupils who have difficulties with reading and writing continue to be given extra help and support from teachers and classroom assistants. By the time they leave the school, they read a range of texts fairly fluently and they write for a range of purposes, for example, in science they write about experiments and investigations.

78 Teachers ensure that the basic skills of literacy are given sufficient emphasis in all lessons. The effective use of the National Literacy Strategy has a positive impact on reading, so that average attaining pupils in Year 2 read a range of texts accurately and the most able pupils use contents, indexes and glossaries to research information. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 gain from reading a wider range of information books, poetry and fiction. Most pupils read fluently and with expression but lower attaining pupils often lack understanding of what they have read and do not pick out important bits of text when explaining the plot or sharing information.

79 Greater attention to writing and handwriting has helped increase the proportion of pupils in Year 2 who achieve a higher level. Pupils are already confident writers when they start Year 1 and they continue to make steady progress with handwriting and spelling throughout the infants. By the end of Year 2, the most able pupils have a good stab at spelling difficult words, such as nearly and get more spellings right than average or lower attaining pupils who often spell words the way they sound. Most pupils write stories that start in the traditional way, for example, one day or once upon a time. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 continue to emphasise the need for neat handwriting and this has raised standards of presentation in several other subjects. Although most 11-year-olds do not reach the level expected for their age, this is because many have special educational needs. However, the most able pupils write in a good fluent style, though the work of lower attaining pupils often has many crossings out and mistakes. Pupils use imaginative words and descriptions in their stories. They choose to use words such as, disgraceful to make their writing lively.

80 Another feature of teaching, which underlies steady learning, comes from well-planned opportunities for speaking and listening. Despite this standards in both are below what is expected for seven and 11-year-olds. Good relationships between teachers and pupils give pupils the confidence to join in discussions and to get the maximum benefit from activities. Infant pupils learn to take turns and listen to what others have to say and by the time they are in Year 6, most pupils listen attentively and are willing to talk about books, poetry and plays.

81 The good relationships between pupils and adults are also a factor in how well teachers manage pupils, particularly those whose special educational needs stem from emotional and behavioural problems. Because they are keen to please their teachers, pupils generally try hard and behave well in lessons.

82 Teachers' make sound use of assessments and tests to set realistic targets for what pupils should be able to achieve. These mostly focus pupils' attention on improving standards, for example, doing better at spelling tests. Occasionally they are about improving the way that work is presented. Although pupils are given these personal targets for improvement, teachers' marking of their work is not linked to these targets in a constructive enough way to help all pupils achieve them. This had not been identified because the co-ordinator does not monitor the work of pupils. Despite this, the co-ordinator generally provides a strong lead for the subject. By monitoring teachers planning and analysing the results of tests, gaps in teaching were identified and these led to changes in the way that writing is taught. Plans to extend monitoring provide scope for raising standards even further. With the support of the co-ordinator and the successful use of the National Literacy Strategy, the school is in a good position to meet the challenging targets it has set for raising standards in the coming year.

MATHEMATICS

83 The results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 show that standards in mathematics were well below average in national terms and in comparison with those reached by pupils with similar backgrounds. However, the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs had brought down the school's results considerably. In the tests for 11-year-olds in 2000, far fewer pupils than in most schools reached the level expected for their age. This was because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs who achieved as well as they could but did not reach the expected level. In contrast, the most able pupils did very well and the proportion who achieved a higher level was greater than in most other schools. This was a real success and meant that pupils outperformed those in similar schools by a long way. Boys and girls did equally well in tests. The school failed to match the targets it had set for raising standards in 2000. This was because one or two pupils did not do as well as expected on the day of the test.

84 Inspection findings are that most seven-year-olds reach the level expected for their age. In Year 6, most pupils do not reach the expected level. This is because almost three-quarters of the class have special educational needs. The small number of pupils who come from travelling families and those who start the school part way through their education are given all the help they need to catch up and do as well as possible. The most able pupils are challenged by their work and are working at a higher level by the end of Years 2 and 6.

85 There are several strengths to the teaching of mathematics and one or two gaps, which make it satisfactory. A particular strength is the way that teachers' plan work to meet the needs of the different groups of pupils in their classes. This was a key issue at the time of the previous inspection and is now something that teachers do well. The work of pupils with special educational needs is planned carefully to ensure that it matches pupils' individual targets. Though it is often the same type of work as that which the rest of the class are doing it is generally easier. For example, in a class of pupils in Years 5 and 6, average and higher attaining pupils converted litres into centilitres and millilitres while those with special educational needs read scales using the same measurements. As a result, pupils with special educational needs used their knowledge of counting in 50s to read the measurements accurately. Teachers also ensure that the most able

pupils are challenged at their own level and go on to achieve higher standards. This happened in a lesson in Years 3 and 4, when the most able pupils were asked to work out addition of hundreds, tens and units, while lower attaining pupils worked in numbers to 100. As a result, the most able pupils put their understanding of place value to good use and quickly worked out the answers using a method of vertical addition.

86 Throughout the school, teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively to teach the basic skills of mathematics. Beginning in the reception class, children are encouraged to work out mathematical problems through a range of practical activities. In Years 1 and 2, teachers ensure that pupils learn the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and that they know more than one way of working out the same problem. This ensures that by the end of Year 2, average and higher attaining pupils work out the difference between two numbers by subtracting or counting on. In Years 3 to 6, teachers help pupils to see that addition can be carried out in any order and that addition and subtraction as well as multiplication and division are inverse operations. Consequently, by the time they are in Year 6 pupils use this knowledge to check their work.

87 Teachers are good at assessing pupils' progress and attainment and using this to help them pitch work at the right level. Pupils are tested at the end of each year and the results of tests are analysed thoroughly in order to identify gaps in teaching and learning. For example, last year the co-ordinator spotted that pupils were not very good at explaining their mathematics and more time and effort has been given to this aspect in mental mathematics sessions. As a result, pupils are improving, for example, those in Year 2 explained how they subtracted nine and nineteen in their heads and using a 100 grid. However, this is something that pupils throughout the school have difficulty with, partly because of their limited vocabulary.

88 Although the methods used to teach mathematics are effective a weakness in the teaching is that teachers do not always use the time at the end of lessons effectively enough. In the best lessons, teachers use this as a time to go over what has been taught and to question pupils to find out what they have learned. However, in some lessons this is used as a time when pupils talk about what they have done in their groups. Too often this results in a significant number of pupils not paying attention because they are not interested and the time is wasted. Another gap in the teaching is that not all teachers use information and communication technology to teach mathematics and computers are often left idle during numeracy lessons.

89 Another gap in teaching is that although pupils' work is always marked it is not done in a way that would help them improve their work. Teachers generally use ticks and give praise. They do not make the sort of comments that would tell pupils where they have gone wrong and in particular how they could work towards their individual targets. In some classes in the infants, teachers do not correct pupils work when they write numbers the wrong way around, which means that they continue to make the same mistakes.

90 Teachers are aware of the first weakness, because of the regular and systematic monitoring of teaching that has gone on since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. They were not aware of the second weakness because the co-ordinator has not yet begun to monitor pupils' work in an equally vigorous way. This is an area for further development but, given the thoroughness with which the co-ordinator has evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the subject over the past few years, the school is in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary to continue to improve the quality of teaching.

SCIENCE

91 The results of teachers' assessments of seven-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards in science were below average. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs had brought down the school's results considerably. The results of National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 showed that standards were above average in national terms and well above average when compared with similar schools.

92 Inspection findings show that pupils do as well as they can in science and achieve the standards of which they are capable. Most seven-year-olds reach the level expected for their age. This is because

teachers match work reasonably well to suit pupils' capabilities. There is a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 with special educational needs, so many do not achieve the standards expected of 11-year-olds. However, sound teaching ensures that they achieve the standards of which they are capable.

93 Teachers' planning has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. The school's scheme of work for science is based solidly on national guidelines and ensures that pupils learn step-by-step in lessons and as they move through the year groups. As a result, they make steady progress. A particular success is how teachers tackled a problem picked up from last year's national test results for seven-year-olds. They showed that teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in the area of materials and their properties. Teachers targeted this area so now pupils' knowledge and understanding of it has risen to a satisfactory level. For instance, pupils in Year 2 sort materials into groups on the basis of simple properties and know, as one pupil says, Wool is thick and soft, leather is strong. They know materials are chosen for specific uses, such as wool for clothing. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work so they know how well they are doing. However, they do not make enough written comments to show pupils how to do better and learn at a faster rate.

94 Teachers usually manage pupils well. They insist on acceptable behaviour so lessons proceed smoothly in an orderly atmosphere. For example, pupils in an infant class were very sensible and behaved well when the teacher required them to observe each other's ears so they could get an idea of how sound enters them. This was because the teacher's introduction had thoroughly aroused their interest and they understood her expectations of good behaviour. Sometimes pupils' behaviour requires firm handling. In a lesson in Years 3 and 4 the teacher, though firm, was not consistent enough in controlling some pupils' tendency to call out in their enthusiasm. This led to a lack of self-discipline in how some higher attaining pupils approached their work and they achieved little. Similarly, in a good lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teacher's expertise and consistent control kept the lesson flowing smoothly and quickly from a lively and informative introduction, through the investigation, to a conclusion where pupils compared their predictions against the evidence gathered. They learned a lot in a short time about identifying patterns from information gained using a sensor showing the rise in temperature over time when water is heated to boiling point.

95 Teachers deploy support staff well to help pupils with special educational needs make good progress. For instance, in a lesson in Years 5 and 6 the support assistant gave especially good, close support to a group of pupils, quietly repeating the teacher's questions and scientific vocabulary. They remained focused and interested throughout the lesson and learned at the same good rate as other pupils.

96 A good feature of teaching is the emphasis given to experimental and investigative science. For instance, in a lesson in Years 3 and 4 the teacher thoroughly prepared pupils to interpret data collected during an investigation and to use bar charts to present their findings. They were able to interpret their results to find out whether the tallest pupils have the longest arms and the biggest feet. Teachers ensure pupils learn the required vocabulary for their learning in a progressive way. For instance, in this lesson the teacher used the words interpret, bar chart and axis. More complex vocabulary is introduced to match learning as pupils get older. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6 the teacher talked about the x axis and the y axis, constant temperature and change of state. Pupils are not very good at talking about or explaining their science. For instance, one of the oldest pupils found difficulty describing heated water as bubbling or boiling. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to explain their scientific knowledge in scientific terms to develop their skills. Pupils show a growing understanding of the need for a fair test as they move through the school. In Year 2 they know that to compare how far toy cars travel down ramps of differing slopes you just let go and do not push. By the time they are in Year 6 they are beginning to understand that for consistent and reliable results tests need to be repeated.

97 Most pupils learn at a steady rate in lessons and as they move through the year groups. Because of the good support pupils with special educational needs receive they learn well. Most pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well because teachers usually make lessons interesting and enjoyable.

98 The management of the subject is satisfactory. The way teachers check pupils progress during the

year has improved and is now consistent and good. The school uses the information gained well to plan lessons. However, the school does not provide any opportunities for the co-ordinator of the subject to check teaching and learning in the classroom. This is a reason why a weakness in how teachers mark pupils, work has not been picked up. The quality of management gives the school the capacity to improve standards.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99 Standards in art and design, and design and technology have been maintained since the previous inspection. By the time they are aged 11 pupils attain standards typical for their age. They experiment with tools and techniques for drawing, painting, printmaking, collage and pottery. Pupils design and make products from their own plans. They test products for strength, such as wigwams made from art straws. The school has improved its provision for three-dimensional art. For instance, pupils in Year 6 make an interesting range of pots from clay and decorate them with attractively painted designs. By the time pupils are seven, they have experimented with a range of media, tools and techniques. Pupils paint self-portraits, print from polystyrene and experiment with textiles such as wool. They cut and join materials such as paper and card when they make houses and apply colourful finishing techniques.

100 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good. Teachers' planning has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. This means that pupils learn step-by-step as they move through the school. Teachers manage pupils well and insist on acceptable behaviour so lessons take place in a suitable atmosphere for learning. In one lesson in Years 3 and 4, however, the teacher's continuous checking of minor misdemeanours, interrupted the flow of pupils' participation and the lesson became laboured as their concentration and interest waned. Teachers deploy support staff well to help pupils with special educational needs. For instance, in a lesson in Years 4 and 5 the teacher prepared pupils to sketch designs and paint in the style of Paul Klee. The support assistant gave her pupils such close support they made even better progress than other pupils.

101 Teachers match the methods they use to the purpose of the lesson. They gain pupils' interest with informative discussions. For instance, in a lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher inspired pupils with a display of surrealist paintings and a knowledgeable discussion about the artist René Magritte. Many pupils responded with imaginative sketches in the style of the artist. Practical activities are always purposeful. However, there is not a consistently good approach in how teachers teach pupils to prepare an annotated design brief before they attempt to make their product; pupils do not always put enough thought into what they do. Many pupils find difficulty in giving reasons for why they think their work is good, or otherwise, and how to improve it. For instance, in a lesson in Years 3 and 4 pupils attempted to evaluate their products, sandwiches, against their original design. Their limited skills in speaking prevented them from giving meaningful evaluations. Teachers do not consistently give pupils enough opportunities to help them overcome this disadvantage, which carries over into how pupils make written evaluations. They do not develop this aspect of design consistently well enough.

102 Pupils enjoy their lessons; most listen to what is said so they know what to do and are keen to join in discussions. They learn at a suitable rate. Pupils' attitudes to the subjects are satisfactory because of the sound teaching they receive. Teachers make lessons interesting. In a well-taught lesson in an infant class, pupils' attitudes to their work were good and they learned at a fast rate. The teacher showed pupils a range of books with moving parts so they immediately became interested. She showed them how they could incorporate split pins and pivots into their own puppets and windmills. Both the teacher and support assistant gave positive and active help throughout. Even those pupils with behavioural problems concentrated on their work, thoroughly involved in what they were doing.

103 The management of the subjects is satisfactory. However, there is no provision for co-ordinators to check standards of teaching and learning so they do not have the opportunity to become aware of strengths and weaknesses. Because of the recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy not enough time has been given to art and design, or design and technology in the last couple of years. This has an impact on the depth of

knowledge and level of skills pupils acquire. The school has identified both of these areas for development and the co-ordinator has a firm view of what needs to be done to improve the situation.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

104 Standards are typical for seven and 11-year olds. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a sound knowledge of the topics they have studied in geography and history. This is a similar picture to the time of the previous inspection.

105 Teaching is satisfactory and ensures that pupils learn at a steady rate. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is evident in the work planned for pupils, which shows that skills are taught in a logical sequence. This helps pupils develop sound geographical and historical knowledge and understanding, as they get older. For example, in history, pupils in Year 2 learn simple facts about the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes. By the time they are in Year 6, they have gone beyond knowing simple facts and have their own views about historical issues such as working class Victorian children having to work. In geography, they have a sound knowledge of the places they study.

106 In both subjects, teachers' planning is thorough and they introduce pupils to topics by starting from what they already know. For example, the youngest pupils learn to draw simple maps of their journey to school and to describe some of the local features such as the church, shops and gardens from discussions and walks around the local area. Similarly, they gain a sense of history and the passage of time when they talk about how their lives differ from those of their grandparents. Teachers ensure that as they get older pupils gain a sound understanding of different cultures, including those from the past. Consequently, the oldest pupils talk knowledgeably about civilisation in ancient Egypt and Victorian England from their work in history and about an Indian village they have studied in geography. They understand the importance of location in determining life-styles and employment and use a widening range of sources to research information about the places they study. For example, pupils in junior classes use CD-ROMs³ and the Internet to research information in both subjects.

107 The methods used by teachers are effective. Teachers make good use of visits to provide pupils with first-hand experiences, which pupils say they enjoy very much. For example, pupils learn about the geography and history of Carlisle from visits and outings. This gives them a starting point for much of their work and helps them make comparisons with their own lives and those of children in other periods or parts of the world. For example, pupils in Year 2 created posters and pamphlets advertising the benefits of living in Carlisle and wrote about how their lives differ from those of children living in Mexico. Pupils in Year 6 wrote postcards from Pakistan that described some of the major physical and human features of the country. Teachers promote pupils' concern for the environment by the tasks they set. For example, in Year 6, pupils make sensible comments about the effect on the environment of the proposed re-routing of traffic through their city. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have an opportunity to visit a residential field study centre, where they extend their study of geography well.

108 Teachers make good use of all of the resources available to them. Pupils in junior classes are encouraged to use information and communication technology to research facts and figures. For example, a group of pupils in Years 3 and 4 used computers to research information about Chembakoli, the village they were studying in geography. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 looked up census information about the occupation and ages of Victorians in their history work. Pupils respond well to using computers and enjoy leaning in this way. Visitors to the school fascinate pupils with their experiences and are a valuable resource. This was evident when a local historian showed pupils in Years 4 and 5 slides of what life was like in the nearby town of Silloth in Victorian times. Pupils remained enthralled for a long period and showed from their questions and discussions how interested they had been.

³ Compact discs with a read only memory

109 Although teaching is at least satisfactory there are a few weaknesses in the teaching of both subjects. Teachers normally set the same tasks for the whole class. This provides insufficient challenge in some tasks, particularly for higher attaining pupils. When teachers mark pupils work, it is often simply a tick, usually without a useful comment as to how the pupils might improve their learning.

110 The co-ordinators have only recently taken responsibility for their subjects. They check teachers' planning, and this resulted in a review of the work covered. As a result, planning is now securely set within a two-year cycle of topics from Years 3 to 6. Co-ordinators do not yet check the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. The co-ordinators role is developing slowly, with plans to sample pupils' work and work alongside colleagues.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111 Standards have risen since the previous inspection. They are typical for seven-year-olds but remain below what is expected of 11-year-olds. Since the last inspection, the school has bought new computers and software and this is a factor in why standards are now rising. Pupils in infant classes have caught up quickly, but pupils in junior classes were a long way behind. They have made good ground in using multi-media but there are gaps in their understanding of spreadsheets and databases and they are unsure about how to use technology such as digital cameras and sensory equipment.

112 The school's provision for information and communication technology has improved considerably since the time of the previous inspection and the curriculum now fully meets statutory requirements. As a result of training teachers are far more confident at using computers and teaching is satisfactory and ensures that pupils' learn at a steady rate.

113 Teachers' planning is thorough, yet realistic, and puts the school in a good position to remedy the gaps in pupils' learning over the next year. Teachers ensure that all classes have some time to work on computers each week. However, because classes have only one or two computers available to them it takes a long time for all pupils to have their turn, even working in pairs and threes. This slows the pace of learning and is one of the reasons why pupils in Year 6 have not made the progress necessary to reach the level expected for their age. It also means that at times when the teacher is explaining something new to the whole class, a significant number of pupils lose interest and become restless because they are not actively involved in the lesson.

114 Teachers are beginning to use computers to teach other subjects, especially where this is part of the information and communication technology programme of work. For example, pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class consolidated their understanding of how to conduct a scientific experiment by sequencing a series of captions using cut and paste procedures. As a result they improved their word processing skills at the same time as they increased their understanding of scientific experiments and investigations. Similarly in the Year 2 and 3 class, a small group of pupils listened to and read books from the school's reading scheme while the class teacher and support assistant worked on reading activities with other groups of pupils. However, this does not happen often enough and computers are often left idle for great parts of the day, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. The co-ordinator has identified this as a weakness in the teaching and has rightly made it a priority for improvement in the next year.

115 A good feature of the teaching is that teachers ensure that work is pitched at the right level for pupils of different ability. They do this by ensuring that pupils practise and use the same computer skills and are not hampered by their difficulties with reading or writing. This helps pupils with special educational needs do well, and ensures that they do not lose their motivation to work with computers and other technology.

116 Pupils are very keen to work with computers and those in Year 6 have a good knowledge of using multi-media to communicate with others. They know about electronic mail and the Internet and how to use

CD-ROMs to research information. As with many other subjects, they lack confidence when talking about their work or explaining why they would choose to use computers over more traditional methods of communicating information.

117 The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator has evaluated the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning carefully and produced a plan of action that puts the school in a strong position to carry on improving and raising standards. Staff are willing and enthusiastic; they recognise the shortcomings presented by the organisation of computers and are determined to make the best possible use of the resources available to them.

MUSIC

118 Standards are below what is expected of seven and 11-year olds. They have fallen since the previous inspection and this is an area the school has identified as an area that needs improving. There are two main reason why standards have fallen; some teachers lack the knowledge and confidence to teach music and not enough time is given to the subject. In addition, gaps in the curriculum and teaching, that were identified in the previous report have not been tackled successfully and remain weaknesses.

119 Teaching is unsatisfactory and not of a consistently high enough quality to raise standards. Most teachers do not have a sound enough knowledge of how to teach music and they have not had the training they need to help improve their teaching. As a result, pupils' learning is slow and their knowledge of composing and appraising music is very limited. Although teachers use the national guidelines to plan work pupils are not taught musical skills or knowledge in a systematic way. Consequently, pupils get to an early stage in their understanding or skills and move no further. For example, because teachers in infant classes provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to sing in lessons and assemblies, by the time they are in Year 2, pupils sing tunefully and with clear diction. However, without firm direction the singing of older pupils lacks vibrancy, even though they enjoy performing for an audience. This was evident when pupils sang hymns in assembly. Although they sang tunefully and with reasonable diction there was no one to conduct their voices and ensure that they all started at the same time or held notes for long enough.

120 Music is not taught often enough for pupils to gain the skills they need to reach the levels expected for their age. For example, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to listen to and appraise music. All pupils get the chance to sing and listen to music in assemblies; however, they are not told enough about the music or the composers and have very little understanding of musical styles. This was evident in discussions when pupils talked of pop and classical but knew very little of other types of music and could not name any famous musicians.

121 Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to compose music and this is an area where they have very little knowledge. The oldest pupils know how to use computers to compose, download music and sounds but other than this teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to compose music or to research about musicians.

122 The subject has not been managed well enough to cause standards to improve. One important reason for this is that the school has been without a co-ordinator for some time. The recently appointed co-ordinator has made a good start by identifying crucial gaps in the curriculum and teachers' knowledge and has a clear view of what training and resources are needed to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. The school recognises that the co-ordinator needs to keep a closer check on teaching and learning if standards are to rise.

123 The school has begun to tackle the problem of teachers' limited understanding of the subject; from September onwards pupils will be given tuition from music specialists who will visit the school each week. However, until teachers' knowledge and confidence improves it is unlikely that standards will rise and this is a key area for the school to improve.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124 Standards in physical education have risen since the previous inspection and are now above those expected for seven and 11-year-olds. This improvement is the result of many good features of teaching, particularly in some classes. Teachers' planning is good. They develop pupils' skills systematically year by year. Teachers provide a wide range of activities, which help pupils develop a sense of achievement as individuals and members of a team. By the time they are eleven pupils attain standards above expectations for their age.

125 All pupils learn games, gymnastics and dance. Junior pupils go on to learn athletics, outdoor and adventurous activities and swimming. They are taught to swim in Year 4 and achieve standards that enable them to attain standards typical of 11-year-olds by the time they leave the school. A good feature of the school's provision for physical education is the range of extra-curricular activities on offer. This makes a positive contribution to the school's praiseworthy achievements in local competitions, such as junior pupils' recent team successes in the North Cumbria schools' gymnastics competition.

126 Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 sets a standard for pupils to aim for as they become older. In lessons in this class the teacher's expertise enables pupils to learn quickly. During a dance lesson there was a clear improvement in performance as the lesson proceeded because of the teacher's continuous and active support. The teacher ensured all pupils listened carefully to instructions so they knew what they were expected to do and learn. With encouragement and due praise they thought about their movements and were keen to do well. By the end of the lesson pupils' travelled, turned, swayed and jumped in a controlled way.

127 The best teaching is in the Years 5 and 6 class, where it is very good. The teacher's enthusiasm and spirit for the subject inspires pupils to a very high level of commitment to improvement. Planning and preparation is thorough, so that a games lesson on the field ran like clockwork. Its structure and pace moved pupils from practice to performance step-by-step at a rate that secured good learning. The teacher took pupils' individual needs into account so all, including those with special educational needs, could participate successfully in playing a game of rounders.

128 Pupils benefit from good features of teaching in all lessons. Teachers' good planning ensures pupils learn progressively in lessons and as they move through the school. Teachers manage pupils well and insist on acceptable behaviour so they can learn in safety. A particularly good feature is the way teachers begin and end lessons with warming up and cooling down activities. Most teachers make sure pupils understand the reasons for this so they take the exercise seriously. For instance, pupils as young as six automatically put their hands over their heart to feel the change in pulse rate. Teachers make good use of support staff so pupils with special educational needs can progress at the same rate as others. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6 the support assistant joined in a throwing, batting and catching practice with a pupil and gave continuous practical coaching advice, which resulted in good learning. Most teachers demonstrate coaching points and use pupils well to demonstrate good practice to others and to make teaching points. Pupils learn well from this and improve their performance.

129 There are features that some teachers could develop better. For instance, in one lesson the teacher's control was so tight that there was no opportunity for pupils to get their own equipment and develop their initiative and a sense of communal responsibility. In a lesson on the field the teacher did not make sure all pupils listened to instructions and watched demonstrations of throwing, striking and catching a ball, so they missed important teaching points. Because the teacher did not coach all pupils actively enough some of them did not learn as well as others. Teachers do not usually give pupils enough opportunities to talk about what they see in demonstrations. This means that they are not always clear about how they can improve their performance. However, the many good features in teaching lead pupils to enjoy their lessons and learn well. They are enthusiastic and sensible in their approach and are keen to improve their performance. By the time they are aged 11, pupils understand the conventions of fair play and show good sporting behaviour as

individual participants and team members.

130 The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is aware of gaps in the monitoring of teaching and knows what needs to be done to improve the school's provision in this subject.