

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JAMES' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Millom

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112351

Headteacher: Miss Maureen Hughes

Reporting inspector: Mr Keith Edwards
21190

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 July 2000

Inspection number: 192951

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lonsdale Road Millom Cumbria
Postcode:	LA18 4AS
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Frank Cairns
Date of previous inspection:	11-14 February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Keith Edwards	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
			The school's results and achievements.
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Graeme Norval	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Jozefa O'Hare	Team inspector	English	
		Art	
		Design and technology	
		Special educational needs	
Michael Huggins	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Geography	
		History	
		Equal opportunities	
John Williams	Team inspector	Information technology	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		Music	
		Physical education	
		Under fives	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St James' Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school situated in the small town of Millom on the Cumbrian coast, where the level of unemployment is high. Millom is one of the designated Health Action Zones in Cumbria. The school draws both Catholic pupils and pupils who are not baptised in the Catholic faith from the town and outlying districts. The school, built in 1967, has no nursery but the majority of children who enter the school have benefited from pre-school education in a local nursery.

There are 218 pupils aged between four and eleven on roll. There are a similar number of boys to girls and numbers have remained almost constant since the last inspection. Only a small number of the children in the reception year are under five. Thirty-four children (16 per cent) claim free school meals. All of the pupils in the school are white and have English as their first language.

Pupils are admitted into the reception class in the year that they are five. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average although there is a wide range of ability in each class. There are 35 pupils, (16 per cent), on the school's register of special educational needs, two of whom have a statement. The pupils are taught in seven classes in discrete year groups. There are eight full-time teachers employed in the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many strengths. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the quality of teaching is good. The pupils achieve standards that are above average in most subjects by the time they leave school. The provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils is outstanding. Relationships within the school community are excellent and the school provides high quality pastoral care. St James School is at the heart of the local community and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent.
- The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- The pupils achieve standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school.
- The provision for the children in the reception class is very good and they make very good progress.
- The pupils behave very well and they have very positive attitudes to school.
- The school's aims and values are reflected in all aspects of its work.
- The school has very high standing within the community.
- The pupils' personal development and relationships are excellent.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology.
- Standards in writing in Key Stage 1.
- The consistency of marking.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997. Since then it has made good progress and is very well placed to continue to improve. It has successfully improved its assessment procedures to accurately monitor the work of all of its pupils and to match the work set in the core subjects more closely to the abilities of the pupils. The curriculum has good structure and subjects are well supported by appropriate schemes of work. The needs of the higher attainers are well addressed in the teachers' planning and the quality of teaching is good with many very good features. Furthermore, the school has successfully introduced the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and standards are continuing to rise year-on-year at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in writing have improved in the junior classes but more work is required to raise standards in writing in the infants.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	C	B	A
Mathematics	A	B	B	B
Science	C	C	B	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

At the age of eleven, the pupils' results are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Their achievements are above those of pupils attending similar schools in mathematics and science. In English, the pupils achieve standards that are well above those of pupils in similar schools. Standards are improving year-on-year in Key Stage 2 and the school consistently meets the targets it sets for its eleven-year-old pupils. With the exception of information technology where standards could be better, the pupils achieve high standards in their work in most subjects by the time they leave school. In the reception class, the children make a very good start and most pupils achieve the learning objectives for five-year-olds. There is some under-achievement, particularly in writing in Key Stage 1. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and enabled to reach their potential in literacy and numeracy.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to school life are very positive. They concentrate well and persevere with their work. Parents report that their children enjoy going to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour in and around the school are very good. Pupils behave particularly well in lessons. There have been no exclusions in the last school year.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils show an exceptional level of maturity and confidence for their age. They are very polite and are developing essential social skills. The quality of relationships in the school is excellent
Attendance	Standards of attendance and punctuality are very good.

The pupils' attitudes and values are a significant strength of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
32 lessons seen overall	Very good	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good. It enables pupils to make good progress overall. In all of the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory or better. Eighty-four per cent of teaching was good or better with 25 per cent judged to be very good. All of the satisfactory lessons were found in lower Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching for the children under five is very good. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good

with over a third of lessons judged to be very good. This high quality teaching enables the pupils to make good progress in all subjects except information and communication technology. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and this helps to ensure that the pupils make good progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils of all ages. The provision made for the under-fives is very good. All statutory requirements are met. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully introduced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for those pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables the pupils to make good progress in developing their skills in literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The pastoral aspects of the school are very good.

The contribution of the local community to pupils' learning is very good. Parents are very involved in the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent. She has established a very effective team and is very well supported by senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils all of its statutory requirements and provides very good support for the school. The governors work hard to ensure that the school maintains its standing in the community.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school includes success criteria in its improvement plan and has established clear priorities for development. It has taken very effective action to meet its targets.
The strategic use of resources	The school has adequate staffing, resources and accommodation. The school makes very good use of its support staff and provides good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The approachability of the school.• The school is well led and managed.• The teaching is good.• The school expects their children to work hard and to do their best.• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside lessons.• Homework.

The parents overwhelmingly support the work of the school. The substantial majority totally endorses every aspect of school life and report that their children enjoy school. An insignificant minority of parents expressed a concern that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. This opinion is not supported by evidence from the inspection. Considering the number of staff, their commitment to providing extra-curricular activities is very significant and these are well supported. The homework provision makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The children's attainment covers a wide range on entry to full-time schooling but it is average overall. The children respond well to the teaching to make very good progress in the reception class. By the age of five, the children are beginning to read, turning the pages of books correctly and recognising words. Many children write their name and are forming letters well. They are beginning to understand number and use mathematical language such as "more than" and "less than". They make good progress in their personal and social development. The children work well together in pairs and groups, share resources and have established good relationships with their friends and the adults who work with them. They make good progress in their physical development and show agility in their movement.
2. The National Curriculum Key Stage 1 assessments for 1999 indicate that pupils' attainments were below the national average in reading and writing and well below in mathematics. An analysis of the school's 1999 performance data indicates that the pupils' achievements were below average when compared with similar schools. The decline in standards is attributed to staffing problems that have since been successfully resolved. Results for tests this year show that the action taken by the school has resulted in improved scores. An analysis of the pupils' work across the curriculum indicates that standards are now in line with the national average. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively supported and helped to make good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment and achieve standards which are in line with the national average in most subjects at the end of Key Stage 1.
3. The National Curriculum assessments for eleven-year-olds in 1999 indicate that standards were above average in English, mathematics and science. An analysis of the school's 1999 performance data indicates that the pupils' achievements were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science when compared with similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are above average in these subjects. This represents a significant success for the school.
4. Although test results for eleven-year-olds at St James have fluctuated over the last four years, standards are improving in the core subjects in Key Stage 2. This is mainly due to the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the more effective teaching. The school consistently meets the targets set for its eleven-year-old pupils. The school's careful monitoring of the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to assess their impact demonstrates that the school has the capacity to continue to improve.
5. Pupils make good progress and achieve standards that are above average in speaking and listening. Pupils have a good command of language and by the time they leave school, most express themselves confidently to a range of listeners. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in this element of English. Teachers modify their questions to take account of their abilities. The pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and they confidently participate in discussions in lessons and in assemblies.
6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading in Key Stage 1. The sharp decline in standards, as measured in national tests, has been arrested. As yet, very few reach the higher levels but the situation is improving through the good teaching the pupils are presently receiving in Year 2. However, the pupils make good progress overall in the acquisition of reading skills. By the time they leave school, they demonstrate a range of skills. These include skimming text to gain an overall impression and scanning to locate information. Their literacy standards enable them to work well in subjects where they need to use their reading skills.

7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their reading and in writing through appropriately focused strategies to meet their specific needs. An additional factor to this good progress is the effective support they receive from classroom assistants and from the well-briefed voluntary helpers. These pupils have step-by-step programmes to improve their reading skills. The good quality of teaching also makes an impact on their rate of learning.
8. Writing standards are broadly average by the end of Key Stage 1. However, there are some continuing weaknesses. Progress in the acquisition of writing skills is good in reception but this is not maintained as the pupils move through the key stage. In recent months, the school has taken action to rectify weaknesses in this element of English with some success. The pupils' spelling, sentence construction, punctuation and handwriting are improving. There are some examples where the pupils are using their newly learned skills to extend their writing in other subjects. Standards of spelling and punctuation match those expected of seven-year-old pupils. However, they do not write enough and their handwriting and presentation at Key Stage 1 could be better.
9. By the time they leave school standards in mathematics are above average. This represents good progress in Key Stage 2 as standards at the age of seven are close to average. The school has successfully introduced the Numeracy Strategy, and makes good use of assessment information to set targets for improvement. This strategy has reversed the decline in standards in Key Stage 1 over recent years. The school is now well placed to continue to improve. The pupils are responding well to the Numeracy Strategy and its emphasis on mental mathematics and are making good progress in calculations involving tables and measurement. The pupils make good progress in acquiring and using an appropriate mathematical vocabulary. They are skilled in collecting data and representing the information in a range of graphical forms. The pupils apply their skills in numeracy well in other subjects such as science and geography.
10. The pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and by the age of seven standards in science are close to the national average. The younger pupils engage in practical investigations and can classify materials according to their properties. They respond well to the good quality teaching in Key Stage 2 and make good progress. By the age of eleven, the pupils engage in investigations and apply sound scientific methods to their conclusions. They check the validity of their predictions and know how to apply the concept of a fair test.
11. By the time most pupils leave the school, their understanding of information technology is below national expectations. Very few pupils have computers at home and in school the teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities to use computers to assist their learning. Furthermore the pupils have very few opportunities to experience control technology or to use information technology for modelling.
12. The pupils' achievement in history and geography is good. These subjects are supported by clear schemes of work and field visits that stimulate the pupils' interest. Standards in art and design and technology are supported by clear schemes of work and standards are above expectations. Art is used well to support learning in other subjects such as mathematics and science and there is a clear development of skills. Pupils achieve well in physical education and music. Their achievements in both subjects are well supported by opportunities to join with pupils from other schools in competitive and celebratory events. The pupils sing with sensitivity and clarity and this makes a strong contribution to their sense of belonging to a special community.
13. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress. The higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged in Key Stage 2 and make good progress overall in most subjects. The attainment of boys and girls is broadly similar in the core subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The pupils' attitudes to school life are very positive. Parents report that their children enjoy going to school. The pupils know they are there to learn. They settle down quickly and are keen to get started. They listen attentively and are usually eager to answer questions. They enjoy the challenge of learning, showing an exceptionally high level of interest and involvement when given an activity to do. The pupils work very hard with very good levels of concentration. They speak proudly of their school and take care of its resources.

15. The parents' positive views about behaviour are confirmed by the inspection. Standards of behaviour in and around the school are very good. Pupils behave particularly well in lessons. The school has a clear behaviour code and pupils know what is expected of them. Behaviour in assemblies is exemplary; and in the playground and the dining room is also impressive. Movement around the school is orderly. The pupils do not consider bullying a problem and they know who to turn to if an incident occurs. There have been no exclusions in the last school year. The very high standards of pupils' attitudes and behaviour noted in the last inspection have been maintained.
16. The pupils show an exceptional level of maturity and confidence for their age. They are developing essential social skills. They are very polite and friendly. The school ethos, embodied in its prayer, emphasises the importance of the individual within the school community. The quality of relationships in the school, noted favourably in the last inspection, is outstandingly good and is a strength of the school. Most pupils get on very well with each other and with adults in the school. The very high standard of moral teaching, which characterises the school, ensures that pupils have an exceptionally well-developed awareness of the impact of their actions on others. Relationships between many of the pupils and the lunchtime supervisory and classroom assistants are very close. Dining is a civilised social occasion with noise levels that allow easy conversation. Table manners are acceptable.
17. The pupils generally collaborate very well and are prepared to listen to each other's views. They know the importance of taking turns and sharing. As they move through the school, pupils begin to show a good level of independence, with the majority prepared to work hard on their tasks without too much direct supervision; for example, in the literacy hour when pupils generally work well at their independent tasks. Extra responsibilities, like taking the register to the office, are accepted enthusiastically. The school has a system of class V.I.P's whereby pupils are selected in turn for extra responsibilities and privileges. This develops confidence and a sense of responsibility. Through the activities of the school council pupils make an outstanding contribution to the organisation of the school. Equipment and books are handled with respect. The pupils willingly take responsibility for keeping their classrooms tidy. There is very little litter around the school.
18. The very good attendance and punctuality are among the strengths in this school. They reflect the high level of school and parental support that the pupils receive. The pupils' own commitment and attitude to their education also supports high attendance. Attendance makes a significant impact on pupils' learning.
19. Attendance since September 1999 is greater than 96 per cent overall. Individual year group attendance frequently exceeds this figure. All absence is accounted for and carefully recorded and there has been no unauthorised absence. There is no evidence of any pupils taking excessive holidays during term time. Almost all of the pupils arrive on time each morning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The overall quality of teaching is good. It enables pupils to make good progress overall. In all of the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory or better. Eighty-four per cent of teaching was good or better with 25 per cent judged to be very good. All of the satisfactory lessons were found in lower Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching for the children under five is very good. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good and enables the pupils to make good progress across the curriculum with the exception of information and communication technology. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and this help to ensure that the pupils make good progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
21. The quality of teaching in the reception class is very good and this represents a significant improvement from the last inspection. Staff work well as a team and steadily integrate the children into the welcoming atmosphere of the reception classroom. They set challenging and interesting tasks, which are well linked to the areas of learning. Staff clearly understand the needs of young

children. They have high expectations of the quality of work and behaviour. All members of the team place a strong emphasis on the use of good quality language. They encourage the children to work independently and to make choices in their work.

22. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The teachers' planning is well structured and lessons have clear learning objectives. The planning takes account of the range of ability of the pupils in each class. The behaviour of the pupils is well managed, although in Year 1 the discipline lacks the rigour to ensure that the pupils remain on task throughout each lesson. Support staff are used effectively to help individuals and small groups of pupils. For example in a mathematics lesson in Year 1, staff help the pupils to understand data handling in group work and individually on the computer. However, lessons in Year 1 are impaired by a sufficient lack of challenge and pace and so the pupils' learning does not build successfully on what they already know and understand. Furthermore, there has been disruption to the teaching provision in Year 2 that has only recently been rectified. The quality of teaching is now good for the seven-year-olds, but the pupils' progress has been slowed in the interim.
23. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is good and in a significant minority of lessons the teaching is very good. This enables the pupils to make good progress in most subjects. In Key Stage 2 the teachers work very effectively as a team and plan thoroughly across the curriculum. The teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this to good effect when dealing with questions posed by the pupils. They plan a stimulating range of activities and use a range of teaching methods. This motivates the pupils and ensures that they remain interested in their work. This is particularly true of literacy and numeracy lessons where several lessons were very good. This very successful teaching is characterised by high expectations of pupils' behaviour and endeavour. The teachers share the target for the lesson at the start and this gives the pupils a focus. Plenary sessions are used effectively to reinforce what the pupils have learned and to clear misconceptions.
24. Throughout the school, the teachers use the pupils' work to create interesting displays and to set good examples of what can be achieved. They plan their work successfully to ensure that the pupils' learning in one subject supports their work in others. For example, pupils in Year 6 use their skills in drawing and literacy to support their work on habitat in science. In Year 4, the pupils need to use their skills in measuring accurately to enable them to construct frames for silk printing.
25. However, marking is not always sharply focused. In the best examples seen teachers have marked pupils' work so that they know exactly what they need to do to improve. The most successful teaching occurs when teachers assess effectively whether their pupils have understood the work and achieved the target and then give them appropriate work to follow on. This occurs in most classes in mathematics, where the teachers carefully assess what individuals and groups of pupils have learned each day and modify their plans accordingly. Homework is used well to support learning but information technology is not. Although the teachers plan carefully to link different subjects to support learning, the potential of information technology is often neglected.
26. Pupils with special educational needs make good and, often, very good progress through the effective support they receive in class. These pupils are identified early and intervention plans are put swiftly into effect. This results in the pupils being removed from the school's register for special educational needs. Their individual education plans are relevant and show step-by-step learning programmes. These are evaluated on a daily basis and progress reports are discussed with those involved with these pupils. Very good liaison is maintained between support staff and teachers so that everyone is aware of each pupil's needs. Their work is appropriately modified to meet individual needs. Teachers make high demands on these pupils. Support staff and voluntary helpers are well briefed by the teacher; continuity and progression are, therefore, assured. The teachers successfully modify questions in lessons to meet these pupils' specific needs. These pupils participate in plenary sessions to share and to celebrate their work with others.

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

27. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils of all ages. All statutory requirements are met. The provision made for the under-fives is very good. In the past year the school has given a strong priority to the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The national strategies have been appropriately customised to meet the needs of the school and its pupils, although thus far these strategies have had clearer impact on standards at Key Stage 2.

28. Particular effort is made to enhance pupils' curricular opportunities through providing a wide range of rich, stimulating and challenging activities for pupils, and teachers (and other adults) give much effort and time after school for the benefit of pupils. This very good provision has a very positive effect on pupils' learning and is a strength of the school. There is a very good range of sports activities, including soccer, tag rugby, running, quick cricket, netball, and rounders, and these particularly motivate pupils. A wide range of other activities include cycling proficiency, brass band, school choir, meditation, and holy communion club A homework club provides a further opportunity for pupils to improve their learning.
29. The school is very successful in promoting pupils' personal and social education, and there are well-thought out programmes for personal and social education, sex education and drug education, which are well supported by staff. As a result pupils co-operate well and relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. The school council makes a further significant contribution to the involvement of pupils.
30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The pupils have equal access to all aspects of school life. One disabled pupil has his physical education programme modified and he participates in all physical activities as far as his disability allows. Extra-curricular activities are well taken up by special educational needs pupils. The quality of their individual education plans is very good. These are carefully formulated to ensure maximum progress which the special educational needs pupils make in every area of the curriculum. In most instances, their education plans cover literacy and numeracy, but some appertain to the pupils' behaviour.
31. Provision of equal opportunities is good, and staff provide good role models for their pupils. In collective worship, displays, circle time and the taught curriculum, an attitude of caring and respect for others is consistently engendered. There is a strong awareness amongst staff of equal opportunity issues. All pupils have an equal opportunity to extend their learning. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good for the under-fives and very good at Key Stages 1 and 2.
32. The contribution of the local community to pupils' learning is very good. Parents are very involved in the work of the school and there are many offers of assistance and support. Parents help to encourage home study, and the local parish gives active support. The rotary club have sponsored costs for drugs education. Visits to local places such as the Folk Museum, the library, the Palladium, or Sellafield Visitors' Centre or more distant places such as Glasgow help to broaden the experiences offered to pupils, although there is more limited use of skills in information and communications technology for this purpose. Relationships with partner institutions are excellent. The local nursery and the school work well together to provide a highly structured and well thought out induction for the under-fives. There are also excellent links with the local secondary school, where there is very good curriculum liaison. Year 6 pupils visit Millom school for special events such as science days or able pupil days. There are also organised opportunities for Year 6 and Year 7 pupils to meet together socially outside school time.
33. In the last inspection the curriculum was broad but not wholly balanced, and history, geography and information technology were under-represented. There have been improvements in provision to ensure satisfactory coverage of all subjects. There are still some inconsistencies in planning for progression and continuity across the curriculum, but the quality of planning has improved and is monitored well by co-ordinators.
34. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The dedicated headteacher, ably supported by caring and committed staff, is pivotal in this provision. This is an even more positive picture than was found during the previous inspection, when it was judged that the provision was very good. St. James' School is a very caring place where the principles of showing compassion, love and respect for each other, the wider community and the world, is evident. There are spiritually uplifting displays in every classroom and spaces available in the school. This excellent provision is also evidenced in subjects such as English, art, music and in lessons where the teachers encourage the pupils to think about their attitudes and feelings. Through well-planned assemblies, the pupils develop a good insight into citizenship and these help to strengthen the sense of belonging to a community.
35. The school has aims and principles for these important aspects of school life and these underpin all learning activities for pupils. As a result, there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in which the pupils

learn. The pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and their behaviour is impeccable. At the time of the inspection, this was evidenced in the way the pupils worked during their lessons and did not allow the excitement of the forthcoming school sports to detract from their enthusiasm for their learning. The parents are justly proud of the way that the school helps their children to become confident, responsible people with enduring values, able to contribute effectively to society. The rich experiences and activities that are offered to the pupils outside their lessons, such as participating in the school council, effectively help them to prepare for life as adults.

36. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is excellent. There is a very well planned programme of collective worship that is mainly Catholic in character but includes an appropriate range of festivals and events from other religions. A spiritual element of awe and wonder is apparent in these assemblies where the pupils are encouraged to reflect upon some of the fundamental questions in their lives. The teachers take care to value the pupils' ideas for others to see; for example, in lessons there are plenary sessions where the pupils are helped to take pride in themselves through discussions on new learning. In the reception class, the teacher asked the pupils to close their eyes to reflect upon words which others offered, such as 'spiral', 'delicate', 'fragile'. One of the pupils added that words 'can make a picture'. As the pupils move through the school, they are provided with numerous opportunities to reflect upon world issues and their place within the scheme of things. Their responses are thoughtful and display a deep spiritual awareness and self-knowledge.
37. The provision for pupils' moral development is outstanding. The school places a very strong emphasis on moral issues and all staff work very hard to develop high moral standards. The pupils are taught the principles of right and wrong; these are embedded in all aspects of school life and are respected by the pupils. Moral principles are reinforced by teachers and praise is used effectively to support these ideals. The teachers understand the importance of leading by example and treat each pupil with individual respect. The school operates as an honest and fair society which actively promotes equal opportunities, regardless of ability, background, gender or belief. The pupils know and respect the school rules; they understand the importance of self-discipline, fairness, trust and honesty. They are proud of their school. These qualities are demonstrated by the careful manner in which they handle resources and equipment during their lessons and in their responsible behaviour when sharing space in and around the school.
38. The provision for the pupils' social development is excellent. Social education permeates all aspects of school life as exemplified by the very good relationships that exist throughout the school and in which all staff set good role models. The provision is further enhanced by the active support the school receives from the parish priest and the governors who regularly participate in the daily life of the school. Positive relationships are successfully promoted in many aspects of school life. A special dinner, for example, prepared and served by the staff for Year 6 pupils, marks the end of their time at St. James' School. Opportunities for social contact outside the classroom, such as extra-curricular activities and educational visits, further encourage this development. The school has won the North West regional final for their design and technology work. The pupils travelled to London for their prize and to participate in the celebrations with schools representing other areas. The school benefits greatly from the strong support it receives from parents and the wider community and this has a significant impact upon pupils' social development. The pupils are encouraged to show sensitivity and consideration for the needs of others. This is reflected in the wide range of fund-raising activities, such as funds for foreign missions or making up parcels for children in Kosovo.
39. St. James' School has justly gained wide recognition locally and nationally for the outstanding work of the well-established school council. The pupils were invited to the Houses of Parliament to talk about this work and met the Secretary of State for Education. This is an excellent example of the school effectively preparing its pupils for an active participation in the democratic processes of the country. Pupils from every class have an opportunity to participate in this work. The council holds meetings regularly at which concerns and worries are discussed with the headteacher in the knowledge that these will be acted upon. Through its work, the pupils are given real opportunities to voice opinions. For example, through the school council, they contribute to the school development plan, suggesting worth-while activities and practical ideas for the school. All these experiences effectively prepare the pupils for life in the wider community.
40. The pupils' cultural understanding is effectively developed through subjects such as English, geography, history, art, music and through religious education. A wealth of experiences, visits and visitors heightens the pupils' awareness of some of the wider dimensions of life. The pupils celebrate other festivals beside Christmas and Easter. These include the Chinese New Year, the

Muslim Eid, Hindu Divali and pupils learn about Buddhist 'mandalas' which symbolise love, friendship and peace. There are planned opportunities for the pupils to recognise and appreciate their own culture and heritage. They are introduced to the works of the local poet, Norman Nicholson and learn to enjoy the beauty of the English language from the works of John Ruskin, Shakespeare's plays, sonnets, and poems by Ted Hughes. Visits to Abbot Hall in Kendal and to the Charles Rennie MacIntosh Museum in Glasgow also help the pupils to appreciate visual arts. The school's provision for the pupils' cultural development, therefore, is very good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school makes very good provision for the care of its pupils. The pupils' health, safety and welfare are a high priority for all members of staff and the governing body. Classroom support assistants, some of whom also work as mid-day dining room assistants, are fully involved in providing an atmosphere where pupils feel safe. Pupils know they can ask any member of staff for help and that they will receive support and advice should they be needed. Very effective procedures are in place to ease the transfer from the local nursery and to the local secondary school. Inspection evidence supports the view of parents that their children are well cared for.
42. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection matters. The procedures follow the appropriate guidelines and there is good training to ensure that all members of staff know how to handle any child protection concerns should they arise. The school has a significant number of students under training and they receive the information provided to permanent members of staff. The governing body is fully involved. One of the governors has detailed knowledge through his professional association with young offenders.
43. In health and safety matters the school is advised by external professional consultants. A governor takes a close interest in health and safety and there are regular reports to the full governing body. Appropriate procedures are in place to treat and record any incidents of concern and some staff are trained in immediate first aid. Parents are informed both verbally and in writing of any incidents and the school is examining ways to ensure that all details are included in written records. The pupils awaiting collection by parents are well supervised.
44. Attendance is monitored rigorously. Registers are maintained carefully and weekly attendance statistics are calculated and entered. During the day registers are kept in the secretary's office and are regularly monitored by senior staff. Follow-up procedures for any unexplained absence are clearly recorded. The education welfare officer visits the school on request but the very good procedures and attendance seldom call for his intervention.
45. Parents and pupils have no concerns about bullying. The very good behaviour and excellent levels of personal and social responsibility displayed by all pupils create an atmosphere where any form of oppressive behaviour is unlikely to occur. There are no recorded incidents of any such behaviour in recent years. These aspects of school life are supported by strong procedures.
46. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and cared for in the school. Parents are welcome to discuss their children's progress and any concerns they may have. They are fully informed of their children's progress. Assessments are carefully maintained and all advice from outside agencies is appropriately recorded and shared between all on the 'need to know basis'. Literacy support records are exceptional; these are analytical and record what the pupils know, understand and can do. Information from these is shared with the teaching staff and used to inform planning.
47. Much of the school ethos is directed towards developing pupils' self-confidence and personal maturity. A large number of the school's formal procedures contribute to pupils' personal development. One hundred per cent of the parents responding to the questionnaire are of the opinion that the school is successful in helping their children to become mature and responsible. Evidence from the inspection very strongly supports the parents' view.
48. The school council contains members from all year groups. The range and depth of suggestions produced by pupils indicate a level of maturity and thought for the welfare of the school and its population that is extraordinary. Examples of some of the comments and suggestions made by pupils include "A garden area where you could sit, think and be quiet; we need signs and quiet things to use in there", "Year 6 need a bigger, better blackboard", "We need new comfy chairs for

teachers”, “Just stay the same, I have no complaints at all”. The school has acted on a number of the suggestions, including the formation recently of a small brass band.

49. Another aspect of personal development is the selection each day of a VIP (very important person) in each year group. The VIPs wear a special sweatshirt that distinguishes them from all other pupils and carry out a number of duties. They also enjoy privileges such as entering the dining room first at meal times. Teaching staff take great care to ensure that different pupils serve on the council each term and that all pupils are selected during the year.
50. The outstanding content and presentation of the assemblies that were observed during inspection aid personal development and maturity and support pupils' welfare.
51. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development helps to promote good standards of learning. The school has effective procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and maintaining good standards of behaviour. All the teaching staff know their pupils well, have good relationships with them, and have a good picture of their strengths, weaknesses and personal qualities. Circle time and collective worship are both used well to support pupils' personal development and to celebrate achievement. All pupils are treated as special and important.
52. The school has developed clear and very effective procedures for assessing, monitoring and reporting on the attainment and progress of pupils. There is an appropriate formal assessment timetable for each year group. In reception, the pupils enter with a baseline assessment and retesting is carried out at the end of the year to measure progress. Regular testing of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, using standard assessment tests and teacher assessments is carried out at regular intervals throughout the year in all classes throughout the school. Each class maintains individualised records of formal assessment for English, mathematics, science and religious education, in a standard format, as well as more general records of other subjects. The tests show whether individual pupils are making progress at, above or below their own personal potential and their likely grades in the national statutory end-of-key-stage tests. Results are used to identify target groups of pupils who demonstrate the capacity for improvement or who require additional support. This has allowed the head and deputy to provide effective and more focused help for pupils who need it. A positive initiative by the assessment co-ordinator following a recent course has been the more detailed analysis of the National Curriculum tests and the setting up of a computerised assessment manager system to track pupil progress through school. This is beginning to enable the school to track the progress of particular groups of pupils more effectively, and inform action to raise standards. The material made available to staff by the co-ordinator is clear and helpful.
53. The procedures for placing pupils on the special needs register are effective and consistent, and their assessment is good. Individual action plans include suitable targets and teachers have criteria for judging success. There are regular reviews of targets set and of the progress made towards them by pupils.
54. Care of pupils has improved since the last inspection, when assessment was not used sufficiently to inform curriculum planning and better co-ordination of assessment practices was needed. Baseline assessment information is now well used in planning to identify early learning goals. Use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is well used by teachers for mathematics,

English and science. Day-to-day assessment is sound. Teachers identify assessment opportunities in their planning. Subject co-ordinators take in planning to check and see if assessment is appropriately linked to planning, although the monitoring of learning outcomes is less well developed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Parents have an excellent opinion of the school and are very satisfied with their children's behaviour, development and progress. Evidence from this inspection supports the parents' opinions.
56. The school's partnership with parents is very effective and has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve. A significant number of parents, grandparents and members of the local community, support the school in different ways. Many help in classrooms and others by accompanying pupils on trips to locations outside the school. There is a formal Parent and Community Guild. As the name indicates parents and members of both the Catholic and non-Catholic community support the school in fund-raising activities. For example, until recently the majority of computers used in classrooms have been bought with funds raised by the Guild.
57. Home reading diaries are in regular use and support with reading at home is significant in raising pupils' standards. The home school agreement contains sections specifying what school, home and pupils will achieve together, and also contains sections specifying the individual duties of the family and the child.
58. The prospectus and the annual report to parents are informative and clearly written. They comply with statutory requirements in all major respects. The school recognises the need to include, in the next governors' annual report, structural changes that have been approved to aid the access, admission and treatment of physically disabled pupils. These improvements will take place during the summer holidays.
59. Parents are very satisfied with the level of information they receive. There are three formal opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress throughout the school year. The school's open door policy is widely recognised. As an aid to increase pupils' maturity, parents are encouraged as early as possible to leave them at the school gates rather than at classroom doors. Recognising that this diminishes opportunities for parents to talk informally, the headteacher makes a point of being outside near the school gates at the beginning of each day.
60. Parents of children with special educational needs are made to feel welcome when they seek a consultation with the staff. There is an 'open door policy' and the parents are particularly impressed with the help their children receive when the need specifically arises. Parents give examples, whereby their children received 'tremendous support' from reception to Year 6. In one case for example, praise was given for the teamwork which resulted in her daughter making good progress in reading. Following this success, her child received a certificate at an assembly.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. Overall the leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and with the effective support of key management staff and the governing body, gives a very clear direction, for the development and improvement of the school. The good improvement since the last inspection owes much to her leadership and to the effective teamwork of staff and governors. The school has successfully addressed most of the issues arising from the last inspection. In particular, the school is now making much greater use of assessment information to match work more closely to the abilities of the pupils. Appropriate schemes of work are in place for all subjects. There is a greater degree of challenge for the higher attaining pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, and the quality of teaching is now subject to a systematic review. Although there is still under-achievement in writing in Key Stage 1, standards in writing are much improved for the older pupils. There is a very positive ethos that reflects the school's commitment to improving standards and to equality of opportunity for all pupils.
62. The headteacher has developed a very good balance between the strategic, administrative and monitoring elements of her role. In all of these she is very well informed. The school is committed to raising achievement, which is exemplified by the realistic targets that have been set for end-of-

key stage tests in English and mathematics. The school has made a thorough analysis of test data that have been undertaken by pupils and particular strengths and weaknesses have been noted.

63. The headteacher is a very effective special educational needs co-ordinator. The policy for special educational needs is reviewed regularly and reported annually to the parents. The co-ordinator monitors the work of the support staff and gives encouragement and praise for their work. Literacy support staff are encouraged to attend courses and to use information from these to support the work of special needs in the school. The school's assessment procedures are informative and analytical. These form a secure basis for the planning of step-by-step learning activities in English and mathematics for the pupils. The knowledgeable special educational needs governor keeps an overview of the work in this area. The level of support enables the pupils with special educational needs to make good progress throughout the school.
64. The contribution of the governing body to the effective running of the school is very good. The governors take their responsibilities very seriously and are committed to raising standards in the school. They keep well informed and work hard at their individual and collective roles. They have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governors' committees have appropriate terms of reference. There are governors for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs all of whom are supportive of the work in the school. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory obligations. Governors regularly review curriculum policies.
65. Although the school's formal system of appraisal is in abeyance, members of staff receive regular professional development interviews. The school has developed a system for the induction of new members of staff and is a very good provider of initial teacher training. Each year, the school supports a number of students training to be teachers as well as students working towards different national qualifications in child care. They all feel part of the team and are well briefed before starting work. They speak highly of their training and involvement.
66. The school improvement plan is a very useful working document and is based on a thorough audit of the school's current position. The involvement of staff, governors, parents and pupils in formulating the plan ensures that the educational priorities identified provide a shared vision for the school's development. Targets are set and costed for each year and the school is developing efficient procedures for monitoring and evaluating the extent to which these priorities are achieved. The plan provides a clear view for the school's long-term development and a framework for financial planning.
67. The school's financial procedures are very efficient and effective. The school has systems that can readily provide accurate financial information to guide the headteacher and governors in making their spending decisions. The most recent auditor's report for the school contained a series of minor recommendations, which have been acted upon. The school seeks best value for money by comparing prices and evaluating the quality of its purchases and the services that are provided. It considers different strategies for funding identified areas efficiently and how to target the money it spends. Specific grants are used effectively to raise standards. The governing body takes a keen interest in the school's performance and how it is perceived locally.
68. There is a good number of well-qualified staff and class teachers with a wide range of experience. The strong leadership supports the sense of unity and common purpose amongst all staff. The school has a very high level of experienced learning support assistants who are totally integrated into the teaching team. They provide valuable support for pupils with special education needs and general support to all year groups, particularly in reception and Key Stage 1.
69. Good use is made of the grounds to support the curriculum. There are several garden areas and the front entrance playground is marked for younger pupils. However, it does not provide an appropriate, secure environment for children under five. The school lacks the required external playground and wheeled toys for this age group.
70. The internal accommodation is cramped. The reception classroom is used as a general access corridor to other classrooms. The library area is restricted and there is no computer suite for whole class teaching of information technology. However, ineffective use is made of the practical area adjoining the junior classes and the number and location of computers are barely adequate.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. The school should now:

- Raise standards in information and control technology by:
 - providing pupils with greater access to computers during lessons
(paragraphs 25 & 131)
 - consistently teaching the skills necessary for pupils to perform a range of functions, including controlling, modelling and monitoring, in a diversity of contexts
(paragraphs 131 & 134)
 - planning for the use of information technology across the curriculum
(paragraphs 25 & 131)
- Improve standards in writing in Key Stage 1
(paragraphs 8, 79 & 88)
- Rigorously apply the marking policy to show the pupils how they can improve their work
(paragraph 25).

Other issues which should be considered by the school

- Provide a secure outdoor play area and suitable wheeled toys to support the younger children's physical development
(paragraphs 69 & 77).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	25	59	16	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

Number of pupils on the school's roll	218
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	34

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	35

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	19	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	10	7
	Girls	18	17	17
	Total	24	27	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (89)	87 (82)	78 (82)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	9
	Girls	19	17	18
	Total	26	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (89)	81 (82)	87 (86)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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
	1999	17	17	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	16	17	16
	Total	30	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (73)	88 (73)	88 (76)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	15
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	30	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (73)	88 (73)	94 (76)
	National	67 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	218
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	31

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	219

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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	370,470
Total expenditure	374,321
Expenditure per pupil	1,715
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,922
Balance carried forward to next year	5,071

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	218
Number of questionnaires returned	71

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	20	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	82	18	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	83	15	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	41	7	0	0
The teaching is good.	87	13	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	21	1	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	10	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	86	14	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	76	23	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	89	11	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	85	15	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	38	8	0	6

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

72. At the time of the inspection there were six children under five years of age in the reception class. The school admits children to the reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. The provision for children under five is good and shows an improvement since the last inspection. Levels of attainment are broadly average for the age group across all areas of learning. Children generally settle quickly into school. They continue to develop their social skills and confidence. This contributes very positively to the good progress that children make in the reception class.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. Most children enter reception with average social skills. Through very good teaching, and good provision in this area of learning, the children make very good progress at the start of their time in reception. They quickly develop an understanding of right from wrong and a respect for each other and adults. Most children make good gains in independence and develop very good relationships with each other and their teachers. Children take pride in what they achieve and enjoy their work. They join in activities with enthusiasm. For example, when adding coins and giving change they showed respect for other children's guesses even when they were wrong and were pleased for themselves and their friends when they guessed correctly. The majority of children quickly achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

Language and literacy

74. The provision for the development of language and literacy is very good. The majority of children enter the reception class with broadly average levels of attainment. Teachers use the literacy strategy well to develop and extend children's listening, speaking and reading skills. Staff further develop and extend children's language skills through careful selection of books, stories and opportunities for role-play. Children enjoy this work and make rapid progress in learning letter sounds and reading. They choose books to take home and enjoy sharing stories. They handle books carefully. Most begin to build up a sight vocabulary effectively and efficiently read books at an appropriate text level. This year's cohort read particularly well. Children consolidate and develop their early writing skills. They learn to hold and use pencils correctly. Many recognise and write their name accurately. By the time they are five years of age, most of the class achieve or exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes and begin National Curriculum programmes of study.

Mathematics

75. Very good teaching and the provision of a wide range of practical experiences ensure that children make good progress in their mathematical development. By the age of five, most pupils reach or surpass the Desirable Learning Outcomes for mathematical development and begin the National Curriculum confidently. Many children count reliably everyday objects to ten and begin to establish the skill of finding one more or less than any number in this range. They use pin boards to help them to count and calculate answers, and the higher attainers make up their own simple sums. They learn about shapes and colours, and begin to use everyday words to describe position. The teacher plans interesting practical activities such as the flower shop and giving change for sweets.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. The children learn to explore the world around them in a scientific way and they make good progress. By the age of five, most are ready for and have begun National Curriculum programmes of study. Through good teaching and the provision of interesting activities, children investigate the world, using appropriate senses and a developing range of language. For instance they observe minibeasts carefully noting how snails move and which surfaces they prefer. Through play, they experiment with sand and water and learn about the malleable properties of clay, making finger pots. Children learn how things work through experimenting with a variety of construction kits and reinforce their learning through the use of computers.

Physical development

77. The school makes good provision for children's physical development and they make good progress. The quality of teaching is very good. In the hall the pupils learn how to jump and to land correctly, then link together curled and stretched body shapes. In class they use pencils, crayons, scissors and other equipment, with increasing control. Children run fast in the playground and begin to acquire a good awareness of space. However, at present they lack large wheeled toys and a secure outdoor area where they can play with confidence and improve their body control and co-ordination. Staff encourage independence and this encourages children to fend for themselves. For example, by expecting children to put their coats on and take them off at play and home times, and requiring them to change into indoor shoes, they improve their organisational skills and co-ordination. Most children reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes for this area of learning rapidly and begin Key Stage 1 work confidently.

Creative development

78. The quality of teaching and the provision for this area of learning are good and children make good progress. By five, the majority achieve the desirable outcomes for this area of learning and start National Curriculum work. Children use opportunities well to create pictures and objects from a variety of media and tools. They learn the skills of making by, for instance, creating collage pictures of an owl. Having enjoyed the story of "The Very Busy Spider" they make pictures of shiny spiders' webs. Children enjoy music lessons and learn to use a variety of percussion instruments. They focus on loud and soft sounds. Children enjoy singing and join in enthusiastically, for example, in singing nursery rhymes or in assemblies. They use their imagination well in role-play activities such as when buying or selling in "The Flower Shop" or when giving change for sweets.

ENGLISH

79. Following a close analysis of school results in the pupils' performance in the national tests in 1999, the headteacher and staff have put into effect plans to rectify matters as urgently as possible. These included a stronger emphasis on the development in writing skills and regular opportunities for sustained writing in Year 2. The deputy headteacher has undertaken the teaching for this class in recent months and while there are still some weaknesses in this attainment, there is evidence that standards are rising. The appointment of additional literacy assistants to give specific and targeted help to pupils have also effectively aided pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through direct and appropriate teaching of specific skills to match their abilities. They attain satisfactory standards in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans.
80. The pupils' attainment in English is broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1, but it is above average by the time they leave school. In Key Stage 2, the pupils make rapid progress as evidenced in Year 3, where the pupils have successfully made up the lost ground through effective and skilful teaching. This progress is maintained as the pupils move through the school. The teachers in this key stage provide the pupils with a range of purposeful, interesting tasks that promote good progress for pupils of all abilities.
81. Standards of speaking and listening are average by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make good progress in the acquisition of these skills in reception. In this class, through well planned activities, the pupils acquire a wide range of vocabulary which effectively helps them to express themselves in discussions and in answering questions. This good rate of progress has not been maintained as the pupils move through the key stage. However, in Year 2, since the deputy headteacher's good teaching, the pupils are beginning to improve their skills. For example, in one literacy lesson, the pupils gave good explanations about different tournaments.
82. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress and, by the time they are eleven, standards are above average in speaking and listening. The younger pupils use an increasing range of vocabulary to express ideas and opinions in detail. Teachers and classroom assistants improve the pupils' learning through skilful questioning and by giving good explanations to clarify meanings. For example in Year 3, the pupils discussed the different styles of poetry following their shared reading session. In a very good lesson in Year 5, the teacher asked skilful and challenging questions to extend her pupils' listening and speaking. She pushed and probed the pupils' understanding through questions such as "What did the Yoruba tribe feel about the elephant?" and "How do you

know?" so that the pupils could articulate reasons for their opinions. The pupils participate in lively interchanges of ideas in discussions on different issues. They recall how they were involved in arguments for and against fox-hunting. Each side put forward reasons for their opinions, following which, it transpired that some pupils changed their views and voted accordingly. This was a good example of persuasive presentations.

83. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in this element of English. They listen carefully and confidently participate in discussions in lessons and in assemblies. Teachers take care that they are given appropriate opportunities for speaking and listening by modifying their questions to take account of their abilities. Nevertheless, the teachers make demands to maximise learning opportunities for these pupils. Teachers and classroom assistants create a climate whereby pupils feel comfortable to express their opinions, in the knowledge that these would be valued by the adults.
84. Standards in reading reached by the seven-year-old pupils are average. As yet, very few reach the higher levels but the situation is improving through the good teaching the pupils are presently receiving in Year 2. Reception pupils make good progress in learning to read through systematic and progressive teaching of phonics. However, this is not sustained with sufficient rigour in Year 1, to consolidate and build on earlier learning. In Year 2, at the time of the inspection, the pupils read a variety of texts with fluency and understanding. Pupils' enjoyment of reading is encouraged through whole-class reading activities using the 'Big Book' where they can share in the joy of stories with others in the class. Many pupils in this year group read well and with expression and talk about characters and about their favourite books. In recent months, these pupils have acquired a range of reading strategies and skills to enable them to read and understand unfamiliar text.
85. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in reading and by the time they are eleven, their attainment is above average. The younger pupils read with fluency and considerable expression increasingly difficult and complex texts. As they go through the key stage, the pupils acquire skills such as skimming and scanning to gain information in their reading. In Year 5, the pupils were observed in reading complex scripts such as 'As you like it' with clear understanding and obvious enjoyment. In Year 6, the pupils build on this good progress and read a wide range of books from a variety of authors, such as Charles Dickens, Dylan Thomas, Ted Hughes, the Diaries of Samuel Pepys, and more recent authors such as Roald Dahl and J.K Rowling. In this group, the pupils have a mature understanding of authors' and poets' intentions which they articulate and show an appreciation of English literature. Their attainment, therefore, is well above average. Throughout the school, pupils' reading is well supported by regular reading at home. Most use the public library, in Millom, which effectively reinforces their reference skills and extends their range of reading.
86. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their reading and in writing through appropriately focused strategies to meet their specific needs. An additional factor to this good progress is the effective support they receive from classroom assistants and from the well briefed voluntary helpers. These pupils have step-by-step programmes to improve their reading skills. The good quality of teaching also makes an impact on their rate of learning. Individual education plans are very well constructed, appropriate targets set and regularly assessed and information used from these to plan the next step in their learning. Their progress is reviewed regularly and appropriate action is taken, for example, to remove the pupils from the Code of Practice Register or to move them up or down as the need arises. The headteacher keeps an overview of these pupils' progress ably supported by a knowledgeable governor for special needs.
87. The higher attaining pupils make good progress in English through rigorous and consistently challenging tasks to meet their specific needs. They are identified early and provision is made to ensure that they make the rate of progress of which they are capable. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully addressed this issue. In addition, the co-ordinator for English, having attended a course on 'the able child', is putting into effect new strategies to enable the staff to provide appropriate programmes of work for these pupils. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting were very pleased with the provision made in this respect.
88. Writing standards are broadly average by the end of Key Stage 1. However, there are some continuing weaknesses. Progress in the acquisition of writing skills is good in the reception class but this is not maintained as the pupils move through the stage. In recent months, the school has taken action to rectify weaknesses in this element of English with some success, since the deputy head's intervention. She has put into effect literacy programmes to improve the rate of progress for these pupils. These include writing regularly and frequently outside the literacy hour, to build on and to

extend pupils' writing skills. These sessions are now beginning to pay dividends. There are some examples where the pupils are using their newly learned skills to extend their writing in English and in other subjects. The pupils' spelling, sentence construction, punctuation and handwriting are improving, through better planning and higher expectations by the teacher in Year 2. In this respect, the school is beginning to address successfully the weaknesses identified in the last inspection.

89. In Key Stage 2, pupils make rapid progress in writing through good and often very good teaching. Attainment, therefore, is above average with a significant proportion of pupils reaching well above average. The pupils write for a range of different purposes including stories, poems, diaries, newspaper articles and reports. By Year 4, the pupils have learned to organise their writing into linking paragraphs, with well-extended and formed sentences. They use an increasing range of punctuation marks correctly. The pupils are beginning to be more creative, as observed during the inspection. In that year group, there were some good examples of this development. One pupil recorded: "*Sometimes the flowers seemed to be talking to each other*". Another pupil wrote: "*The waterfall showed the most spectacular rainbow which glimmered in the sunlight and sprayed fresh water on the flowers*". By Year 6, the pupils' writing is expressive with vocabulary used imaginatively to enhance meaning. They model their work on other writers successfully. In one example, the pupil used "The Three Witches" from Macbeth to compose her own spell. It showed good command of figurative language to create lively imagery. Their spelling of regular and irregular words is generally accurate. The pupils write in ink, using joined and fluent script.
90. Throughout the school, pupils use reading and writing to support their learning in other subjects. There are examples on displays and in their books where pupils use these skills in religious education, history, geography, in evaluating designs or paintings or recording findings in science and mathematics. As yet, information technology is under-used in the development of pupils' skills in English. Since the previous inspection report, when it was judged that the range of writing offered to the pupils was too narrow, the school has successfully addressed this issue.
91. The overall quality of teaching is good, with a larger proportion of good or better lessons observed in Key Stage 2. These lessons were characterised by brisk pace, challenging and interesting tasks, high expectations and infectious enthusiasm. As a result, the rate of learning was good and, often, very good. Teachers show good subject knowledge and understand how to combine the various skills of speaking and listening to reading and writing. Precision in the use of terminology and attention to detail are consistently emphasised by the skilful teachers. As a result, pupils make good gains in improving their skills. Teachers manage their pupils well. Lessons start purposefully, with teachers outlining the learning targets, thus involving their pupils in their own learning. Good use is made of homework which is regularly marked by the teachers. Most teachers use meaningful marking, with comments to help the pupils to improve their work. For example, comments such as 'Could you have rearranged your poem?' to improve the format or 'Please take time to edit your spelling because it detracts a little from your work', after giving praise 'for capturing the magic of bonfire night'. Throughout the school, there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in which the pupils learn. Each classroom has a very good literacy environment. Books are invitingly displayed, with every space utilised for pupils' work and challenging questions posed to attract comments from pupils.
92. The school has successfully implemented the Literacy Strategy. Good schemes of work give guidance to teachers as to what should be taught next. Through these, progression and continuity are assured. There is a whole-school approach to planning and assessment of pupils' work, information from which is used to plan the next steps. However, the use of computers is not a planned feature of English.
93. The good co-ordination of English is effectively improving standards. The careful analysis of the pupils' performance has enabled the school to focus on areas of weakness and to address these through appropriately targeted teaching. The pupils' progress is monitored well. In addition, the curriculum committee of the governing body has been involved in this analysis, and action taken by the members to ensure that pupils in all year groups progress well and attain standards of which they are capable. The school, therefore, is well placed to make further and greater improvements in standards.
94. The library has a satisfactory collection of books for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious studies. The space available is rather limited for independent study but the governors plan to improve the situation as soon as the funds allow. There are good quality and quantity of books for the implementation of the Literacy Hour in each class and they are well used by the staff and pupils

alike.

MATHEMATICS

95. By the age of seven the pupils achieve standards that are in line with the national average. The quality of learning is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. The pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 and by the time they leave school standards are above average. When compared to similar schools the attainment of the pupils at the age of eleven is above average. Standards have risen since the last inspection.
96. The school has placed great emphasis on the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy, including good procedures for assessing and tracking of pupils' progress. In order to raise standards the school has analysed the results from standardised tests. Within each class the pupils are grouped by attainment and work at a challenging level is prepared for each group. This has a marked impact on the progress made by the pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school has identified the problems that some pupils have with understanding and using mathematical concepts and has incorporated suitable activities into the individual education plans of the pupils with special educational needs. Support staff are used very effectively throughout the school to guide the learning of groups of pupils.
97. Most pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and confidently offer answers to questions. They work well independently and in small groups. When they are given opportunities to solve problems using a variety of numerical operations the pupils explain how and why they have reached an answer and some of them are able to suggest alternative ways of working it out. The pupils in Key Stage 1 have a sound understanding of place value; they recognise odd and even numbers and know strategies for addition and subtraction. They solve simple shopping bills and they recognise a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes. The pupils understand that statistical information can be displayed in a graph. By the age of seven, they understand the term 'multiple' and are beginning to understand the commutative element of times tables.
98. In Year 3 the pupils' progress accelerates. The pupils are able to use their knowledge to multiply and divide larger numbers to solve problems. The pupils can recognise and extend number sequences and begin to investigate the relationships between number patterns. In Year 4 the pupils explore perimeter and angles. They explore ratio and learn how to tally data and to represent statistical information in a range of forms. For example, they make a survey of favourite food choices and their classmates' preferences about hobbies.
99. By the end of the key stage the pupils have a good understanding of multiplication tables. This is reinforced on a regular basis by the teachers who adopt a range of methods to encourage the pupils to have a rapid mental recall of multiplication facts. They learn about simple equations and begin to translate fractions into decimals. The higher attaining pupils can convert fractions into percentages. Pupils of all abilities recognise complex shapes such as the trapezium and rhombus and can describe their properties using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. The pupils have a good understanding of long multiplication and division and can convert imperial measurements into their metric equivalents.
100. The overall quality of teaching is good. Where the best teaching is seen, the teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils and have high expectations of the pupils' ability to use intellectual effort, to concentrate and to explain their answers. The teachers use appropriate vocabulary and open-ended questions to extend the pupils' understanding of the topics, and ensure good pace. Most lessons are well organised and have a good structure. The introduction is used well to stimulate the pupils' interest and the plenary is used effectively to establish what the pupils have learned and to clarify teaching points. In these lessons the pupils make good progress in learning skills and in gaining mathematical understanding. Where the teaching is less successful, but still satisfactory in lower Key Stage 1, the pace of the lessons is too slow, and the effectiveness of the learning opportunities is lessened. The expectations of the pupils' achievement are not high enough as the teaching does not successfully build on what the pupils already know and understand.
101. There are good examples of the pupils using mathematics in other subjects, particularly in Key Stage 2. For example, lower juniors learn about degrees and relate this to their compass work. They use their knowledge of coordinates to work out grid references. Upper juniors use their numeracy skills to support their work in science. For example, they plot graphs to record how

different materials dissolve and the resistance properties of materials when investigating friction.

102. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning and contributes to an evaluation of the subject and future priorities for the school development plan. Mathematics is being given a high profile in the school, it is given appropriate attention in lessons and in all the classes there are interesting and interactive displays in place to support the teaching and learning. Although information technology is used occasionally to support learning, for example in Year 6 to support pupils working on function machines, this valuable resource is under-used. Mathematics homework is set for the pupils on a regular basis and is closely related to the work being done in classes. This makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

103. By the end of Key Stage 2, the 1999 national assessments showed that the standards of attainment in science were above the national average. This is a significant improvement since the previous 1996 report, where although the work then seen was satisfactory, this was not borne out by the subsequent test results. Few pupils progressed to the higher level. When compared with similar schools, the 1999 national tests show standards are above average. Over the past four years the picture has been one of steady improvement, and since 1997 the average attainment at Key Stage 2 has been consistently above the national average. There has been little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in science.
104. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the national average, during a year when pupils' learning had been adversely affected by staff instability. This is in line with the previous report, and an improvement on the 1999 teacher assessments. The pupils make at least sound progress. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. Much of pupils' work is based on first hand learning. By growing plants from seed to flower they learn the correct terms, such as root, stem, leaf and flower. By the end of the key stage the pupils can discuss types of food that make up their diet and name some, and recognise that exercise and good diet are very necessary if they are to grow up healthily.
105. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above average. Year 6 pupils have used conventional symbols for electrical components. They understand about electricity flow, and can describe how they made magnets using a coil during their visit to the local comprehensive school. They can construct circuits from diagrams using conventional symbols and can cite examples of electrical conductors and insulators. They have good scientific vocabulary. Most pupils, for example, can explain terms such as precipitation, evaporation or condensation. Throughout Key Stage 2, there is more challenge for more able pupils, who can carry out more complex independent investigations. Their approach to their work is very well structured and, as in the case of a lesson seen on the making of pitched musical instruments, they understand how to record their work in a systematic and scientific way. They can carry out fair testing, and modify variables appropriately.
106. The pupils make good progress in their learning between Key Stages 1 and 2. In Key Stage 1 pupils can discuss their visit to the Lakeside Aquarium, recognise variation between animals, fish, birds and plants, and identify basic differences within these groups. In examining grasses in the classroom, they know that there are many varieties of grasses, and can generate simple language to distinguish between them. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have studied plants and animals in a variety of habitats such as woodland or marshland. They can represent feeding relationships in food chains beginning with green plants. They have carried out fieldwork observations and investigations, both locally and on field trips to Scotland, and can draw up more complex classification keys to aid identification. Higher attaining pupils can handle scientific vocabulary and concepts with confidence and accuracy.
107. Pupils respond well to their science lessons. They work hard, and sustain interest well. They talk about the subject with enthusiasm. Behaviour is almost always good, because pupils are interested, purposefully engaged and enjoy their work.
108. The teaching at both key stages is predominantly good and is never less than satisfactory. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is particularly good with some stimulating work being undertaken. The teachers are well prepared and planning focuses on clearly defined science objectives. Generally, teachers make good links with previous learning, and explain to pupils the purpose of their work. Many have good knowledge of the subject, and know how to use questions effectively to

challenge pupils' thinking and further their learning. Classroom helpers are well briefed and are a useful support for pupils. Relationships within the classroom are good, and this is a noticeable feature of many lessons. Very occasionally, concerned about maintaining control, teachers become over-directive and do not focus sufficiently on pace, rigour and challenge.

109. The subject co-ordinator has a love of the subject and is committed to raising standards. She provides clear guidance about what is to be taught and her reviews of her colleagues' planning provide a useful check. She has given some support for junior colleagues in the classroom, and takes an after-school science club which has helped to raise standards. Resources are generally good, and in the past years there have been grants from outside sources to provide resources such as a vegetable garden to extend the pupils' studies. Effective use is made of assessment. Teachers are encouraged to carry out pre-topic assessments to establish a baseline for learning, as well as assess learning after their science topics have been taught. Good use is made of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in science, although links with numeracy, especially the making and interpretation of graphs showing science data, were very limited.

ART

110. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and attain standards that are above those expected of for their age at the end of both key stages. Basic skills are developed systematically as pupils move through the school. The school has maintained its high standards since the previous inspection report.
111. The pupils are given opportunities to acquire skills in using a range of media, such as paint, crayon, tissue and clay. They explore pattern, texture, colour and line and learn to apply these skills in a variety of ways. In Year 2, for example, the pupils produced sensitive pictures of sunsets, mixing colours to good effect. The teacher displayed these carefully and interchanged these with photographs of sunsets taken locally. In Key Stage 2, the pupils build on these skills to develop their expertise in working in both two and three dimensions, including clay. During the inspection, there were good examples of plaques made in clay, showing good progress in this aspect of artwork. In a very good lesson in Year 3, the pupils made very good progress through skilled and enthusiastic teaching by the subject co-ordinator. She prepared several displays to stimulate and encourage pupils' imaginative responses. She gave the pupils very good demonstrations and explanations for creating their own artist's palettes of colours. Their work is further enhanced through aesthetically arranged displays which inspire the pupils to produce good work. As a result, observational drawing was particularly effective. The classroom assistant was well deployed to give appropriate help if required. The adults made demands on the pupils to which they responded well. In this lesson, the pupils were completely absorbed in their work. In discussions with the pupils in the school, it is obvious that they enjoy their lessons in art and are proud to have their work displayed around the classrooms.
112. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The teachers use the medium of art to raise the pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures. There are displays of batik work, drawings and painting after the style of the impressionists. Crafts, fabric printing and paintings linked to other faiths are on display. These include Rangoli patterns and 'mandalas' based on the Buddhist religion. Following the visit to Glasgow, the pupils learned to paint after the style of Charles Rennie Maclntosh. The pupils have opportunities to see art displays in galleries, such as Abbot Hall, and the school seizes opportunities to have artists in residence to widen the curriculum effectively.
113. Art is very well led by an enthusiastic and talented co-ordinator, who leads by example. There are very good schemes of work that give guidance how the subject should develop. Teachers follow these schemes so that art builds progressively on what the pupils have learned earlier. There are good quality resources that are carefully stored for easy access for staff and pupils. These factors contribute to the good progress and standards attained in the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they go through the school and by the time they are seven and eleven, their standards are above those expected of pupils of these ages. The school has raised standards since the last inspection.

115. From the reception class to Year 6, the pupils learn to develop skills and use techniques of design and technology, including food technology. The teachers are guided by a good scheme of work to ensure continuity and progression in the subject. Design and technology is used effectively to support learning in other subjects. For example pupils in Year 3 use mathematics to measure balsa wood accurately to make their frames for silk painting. They used batik to decorate cushions which pupils made for Christmas presents. Pupils made seating boxes with the help of the artist in residence, recently. The school has been successful in the Young Engineers for Britain award which they won for the whole of north-west England. The pupils travelled to London to receive their prize and to participate in the finals. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents were rightly proud of the school's success.
116. The pupils progressively build on their skills as they move through the school. This is mainly due to the enthusiastic role of the subject co-ordinator who leads the staff well. She keeps an overview of development of skills through scrutiny of planning and of displays. She has identified small steps in learning so that there is progress in the subject year by year. This is evidenced in records maintained and in the displays around the school. In Year 2, for example, there is an effective display about seaside holidays where the pupils use various materials to good effect. Their skills are effectively extended through planned opportunities by the teachers to enhance learning in other subjects. Year 3 pupils design and make 'dream-catchers' out of a combination of various threads, and wires and in history, Year 5 pupils design and make Tudor houses in connection with their project and draw plans for making their musical instruments. They label each drawing and list equipment and resources they require. They subsequently evaluate their designs and improve these as necessary.
117. Resources for design and technology are of good quality, well displayed and within easy access by both teachers and pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

118. Attainment at both key stages is better than those found in most schools nationally. Pupils, including those with special needs, learn effectively and make good progress. The school has improved on the standards achieved by pupils at both key stages during the last inspection.
119. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils can describe the place where they live, especially the beach and the basic town facilities. They demonstrate a sound understanding and awareness of localities other than their own. For example, they have studied the island of Struay, its climate and the lives of its population, and can make a series of comparisons with their own town. They can plan simple routes on maps and have a basic geographical vocabulary.
120. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have a more developed level of skill and knowledge in using maps. They can use letter and number coordinates and can relate steepness to contour lines on Ordnance Survey maps. They are able to make three-dimensional representations of contour slopes using polystyrene tiles, and can locate mountain ranges in Britain on a map. They make comparisons between their locality and other areas of Britain they have visited on field trips, such as Glasgow or Windermere.

They use their studies of distant countries like Kenya to demonstrate similarities and differences in terms of features such as farming, transport or culture. They can interpret photographs of a Kenyan village and suggest what the villagers might have to eat.

121. In the one lesson seen, at Key Stage 2, teaching and response were both good. Scrutiny of pupils' past work and discussions held with them about it, together with evidence of teachers' planning, shows that teachers generally know their subject matter, although the quality of pupils' work and its quantity are variable from class to class. When discussing their work pupils display positive attitudes towards geography. They sound enthusiastic and are keen to talk about what they have learnt.
122. Resources are generally satisfactory, and supplies of atlases are good. Resources are well organised and stored and good use is made of what is available. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop more focused coverage, and monitors the planning of staff in relation to the curriculum. She has plans to develop the monitoring and assessment of pupils' work to help raise standards.

HISTORY

123. In the last inspection standards of attainment were in line with national expectations at both key stages. The school has maintained the standards achieved by pupils at Key Stage 1 and improved standards at Key Stage 2.
124. At Key Stage 1 standards of attainment are sound. By the end of the key stage they can identify similarities and differences between the holidays which the Victorians enjoyed and their own seaside holidays. They know that at the Victorian seaside there were bathing machines, as well as puppet shows, donkeys and swings, and that most people wore their best clothes and stayed covered up out of the sun once they were out of the water. They have developed a basic chronological vocabulary. They have begun to explore historical evidence, such as Victorian photographs, and are able to use textbooks to locate information.
125. At Key Stage 2 standards of attainment are good. The pupils enjoy explaining the work they have done, in the school, in the locality and on field trips. Year 6 pupils know the differences between primary and secondary sources, and can discuss the strengths and weaknesses of a range of historical resources, including photographs, school records and Victorian census returns, that they have studied. They have carried out their own enquiries about their locality; going to the local library, visiting a local museum, using the internet, and carrying out interviews with local residents to find out more information about Millom's past. They learn from adult helpers about their own schooldays in Millom, and observe date stones around the town to help them to sequence buildings and building styles. They have developed a good chronological vocabulary and a satisfactory sense of time over a longer period.
126. The pupils enjoy their history lessons, behave well and work hard. They speak about their history work in a lively and interested way, although standards of presentation in their books are not always as high as their oral abilities. Overall the response of pupils is good.
127. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers make good use of a range of historical resources, and encourage pupils' historical enquiry skills as well as knowledge and understanding through effective questioning. Where teachers provide more challenging questions based on first hand experience, such as visits and visitors, looking at pictures or handling real historical evidence, pupils make good progress. Teachers make good use of timelines, and have high expectations of the quantity of work. Organisation and discipline are good. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound.
128. The co-ordinator has been in post for two years and has an enthusiasm for the subject. Although the school has recently concentrated on literacy and numeracy she has provided useful support for her colleagues. She has interesting ideas to develop the curriculum further, and recognises the need to help staff develop more rigorous assessment and more focus on historical enquiry. Currently she is able to monitor curriculum planning but not pupils' attainment throughout the school. Resource provision is generally adequate, although pupils have insufficient opportunity to handle and investigate a range of historical artefacts.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

129. Standards in information and control technology are below average at the end of both key stages. Although the school has made improvements in the provision, standards have slipped since the last inspection.
130. The school has recently improved its stock of modern computers. These are located in individual classrooms. The co-ordinator has put in place a scheme of work and the school now fulfils its statutory requirements. However, it is too soon to see a substantial improvement in information technology skills, particularly at the end of the key stages although some improvement is evident. Word processing skills generally are below average in Key Stage 1 and are just below average at the end of Key Stage 2. There remain deficiencies in the areas of control, monitoring and modelling. The teachers are beginning to use computer skills in several subjects; for instance pupils use CD-ROMS to research their history project on the Tudors. However, the school recognises that this aspect of its provision is unsatisfactory at present.
131. The majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 can name many of the keyboard keys; for instance space bar, delete, backspace and caps lock. They learn to use the mouse effectively and can explain which icon to click on to save their work. They have some difficulty in setting up the computer but remember writing up their stories and poems. They have programmed the Roamer and many have used the computer to produce graphs. They have some knowledge of the use of information technology in the home and in everyday life, and can describe Playstations and their use, but many do not know how to access information using a CD-ROM. They look forward to their time on the computer but are provided with too few opportunities to practise their skills. This means that pupils, particularly those who do not have a computer at home, make slow progress.
132. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have satisfactory word processing skills. The more able and those who have computers at home can enter, save to disc, store, print and change the font size. They can move and edit sections of text and describe clearly how to cut, paste and copy. They have some experience of data handling and spreadsheets and have recently begun to keep their current work on disc. They have some knowledge of logo and can describe how to compile different kinds of graphs and a pie chart. They use an interactive CD-ROM to access information for a history topic on the Victorians and to research information on cold and hot bloodied animals to support a science theme. Pupils in both key stages are given opportunities for internet access and they have some knowledge of e-mail and the application of information technology, at home and in the world around them.
133. When pupils have hands-on experience they show interest, perseverance and the ability to work co-operatively. They speak enthusiastically about computers and enjoy using them.
134. The school acknowledges that some teachers lack sufficient expertise and confidence to extend pupils` learning and provide the higher levels of information technology capability. The co-ordinator is planning a programme of in-service training to remedy this. The school is equipped with a satisfactory number of modern computers. At present these are spread out in each classroom and there is no system for using them to the optimum effect. The school is considering adapting a room to provide a suite of computers so that essential skills can be taught more efficiently, at the pupils` own level, in order to accelerate their progress.

MUSIC

135. Pupils attain above average standards in music at the end of both key stages. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. High quality music, particularly singing, plays a significant part in school life. The pupils listen to specially chosen music as they gather for collective worship. This helps to set a quiet and reflective tone and makes a good contribution to pupils` spiritual development. They sing joyful hymns in two and three parts with very good attention to pitch and tempo. The school choir, which is well attended, attains very high standards of performance. They sing in the church on special occasions. The pupils who have joined the new brass band make very good progress in developing their performing skills and several already play with a local brass band. A specialist teacher gives a large number of individual pupils tuition in woodwind, flute and recorders.
136. A commercial music scheme underpins the teaching of music and ensures that all the essential

elements of the National Curriculum are covered. When teachers plan their curriculum themes they build in musical experience to enrich pupils' understanding. For instance pupils in Year 1 listen to "Summer" from "The Four Seasons" by Vivaldi. Pupils in Year 2 compose pieces of music on themes such as animals or weather, exploring the sounds that a variety of instruments make, before performing their compositions to the remainder of the class. Year 3 pupils listen to examples of Greek music, and in Year 5 enrich their historical study of the Tudor period by listening to music played on instruments of the time. Pupils in Year 6 develop their understanding of the Victorians by listening to street cries from the time and by performing authentic songs in their own Victorian Old Time Music Hall.

137. Through this rich range of musical experience pupils learn to develop their listening and appraising skills as well as those of performing. By the time they reach Year 6 they perform confidently with controlled phrasing and the majority can maintain independent lines. They identify change in musical character and mood, recognise the characteristic music of various times and places and learn to appraise and evaluate their own efforts. They gain valuable experience of performing by participating in a variety of school productions such as the recent Key Stage 1 performance of "The Very Grumpy Sheep," and the Key Stage 2 spectacular, "Shake, Rattle and Roll," which was so enjoyed by parents.
138. Although no direct class teaching was observed during the inspection, a scrutiny of teachers' planning files reveals that lessons are planned carefully and that teachers provide a series of varied and interesting musical activities. The co-ordinator, who is enthusiastic, teaches singing throughout the school and monitors her colleagues' planning to ensure that musical skills are developed progressively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

139. At the end of both key stages most pupils exceed the standards expected for their age. A significant number achieve good standards in dance, gymnastics, cross-country running, games and swimming. There has been an improvement in standards since the last inspection.
140. Young pupils learn about the importance of warm up when taking part in exercise. They have a well developed understanding of the function of the heart and of the health related benefits of exercise. They run in different directions changing direction as instructed, jump with feet together and bend their knees on landing. Pupils in Key Stage 1 continue to achieve good standards in dance and games skills are well developed by the end of Key Stage 2. In school swimming lessons, older pupils develop their water competence via a series of exercises designed to improve their stroke production, in the basic swimming strokes. By the time they leave the school the majority of pupils achieve the national standard of a swim of twenty-five metres, unaided. School teams participate in a wide range of competitive sporting events against other schools, with some success.
141. There is equal access to all activities and the majority of pupils make good progress overall as they develop and improve their skills. Progress in dance lessons leads to refinement of movements, improvement in physical control and appreciation of space. In athletics pupils benefit from a range of well-thought-out activities each designed to offer them further challenge. In swimming lessons pupils develop confidence in the water and improve their strokes. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils with talent and dedication to achieve their potential. Both boys and girls have opportunities to make progress in developing appropriate skills in out-of-school clubs and team activities in athletics, rugby, running, swimming, netball, short tennis, cricket, rounders and soccer,
142. Pupils' response in physical education lessons is good. Pupils dress appropriately, and are enthusiastic. The vast majority of pupils enjoy their lessons, participating fully and high levels of enjoyment are evident in the activities seen. Pupils work hard to develop their skills and the majority work well co-operatively during group and team activities. They are happy to demonstrate and take pride in their physical prowess. During sports day events for instance, pupils in both key stages are very keen and enthusiastic. Pupils in Key Stage 2 in particular learn about the importance of the individual's contribution to the team effort as they all participate in such events as the sprint, javelin, triple jump, netball, long jump, hockey dribble, shot-put and discus, all contributing to a team prize.

143. Good use is made of outside help such as advice from the county cricket coach. The school enters competitions against local teams. The co-ordinator supports his colleagues with help and advice. He is helped by several members of staff, who have individual sporting interests. A recently adopted scheme of work ensures that the school meets all National Curriculum requirements. The school has developed a joint-use arrangement for a good local field. Although the school hall is small for physical education, particularly for classes of Key Stage 2 pupils, good use is made of the local sports centre during the winter months.