

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **GEORGE HASTWELL SCHOOL**

Walney Island, Barrow-in-Furness

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112467

Head teacher: Bernard Gummett

Reporting inspector: Dave Smith  
17323

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 193431

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Moor Tarn Lane Walney Island Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria
Postcode:	LA14 3LW
Telephone number:	01229 475253
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Linda Kitchin
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17323	D Smith	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
			Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
			English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
13462	R Mothersdale	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16722	N Buckingham	Team inspector	History	The school's results and pupils' achievements?
			Geography	
			Religious education	
13101	M Kell	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Art	
			Special educational needs	
22466	D Pearson	Team inspector	Mathematics	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Modern foreign language	
			Foundation stage	
15600	C Richardson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
			Design and technology	
			Music	
			Equal opportunities	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

George Hastwell is a day special school for pupils aged between 2 and 19 years of age. There are currently 76 pupils on the school roll, 49 boys and 27 girls. The number of pupils on roll is a significant increase since the last inspection. All of the pupils have statements of special educational needs and the pupils have a wide range of needs. There are too few pupils in the foundation stage to report on that age range of pupils. Attainment on entry is very low because of the pupils' severe learning difficulties. The school is situated on Walney Island in the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness and all but two of the pupils live in the Borough. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is 43, which at 56 per cent is high compared with other schools. On leaving school most of the pupils follow further education courses at local colleges. The school has developed good links with local schools, as part of its inclusive approach. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

George Hastwell is an effective school providing a sound education, where the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. Teaching is good overall with some very good features and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. The good quality of the teaching is a significant factor in the good progress that pupils make, in lessons overall, although progress is satisfactory for the infant and younger secondary pupils. The curriculum is not balanced and in particular insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of science. There is insufficient assessment to guide planning, particularly to meet the needs of the pupils with additional needs and the more able pupils. Staff development is a strength of the school and helps to build a very good team spirit. The pupils' social and moral development is very good. The pupils' attitudes are very good and are at times excellent, particularly from the Post-16 students. Management of the school during a time of significant change is satisfactory. The school has a strong and successful commitment to providing a caring environment, fully involving all of the staff. The management team is too few in number and does not reflect the current size of the school. Consequently, there is ineffective strategic leadership of the school and management of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The governors are supportive of the school but have not yet developed their role to shape its future. Parents regard the school very highly. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school has a very positive ethos and caring approach that reflects its aims. This is made possible by the very good relationships throughout the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and their behaviour is well managed as is their very good moral and social development.
- The very effective teamwork between all staff has a good impact on the progress and learning of the pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning in class is good and is enhanced by the learning support assistants.
- The provision at Post-16 is underpinned by a clear philosophy and in particular promotes the very good personal development of the students.
- Staff development is given a high priority contributing well to the good quality of teaching.
- Parents have a very positive view of the school, helping to promote good attendance and pupils' positive attitudes.



### What could be improved

- Monitoring and evaluation involving all staff and governors in planning to provide the vision and clear education direction for the future of the school.
- Increased assessment procedures, as the basis for effective planning, to fully meet the wide range of pupils' needs, particularly for the pupils with more complex needs.
- More effective management of the curriculum to improve the balance of time allocated to subjects and to ensure curriculum access for all the pupils.
- The range of accredited courses.
- The amount of teaching time for the younger pupils.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators in monitoring the curriculum.
- Standards in writing.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997 and has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues identified at that time, despite the challenges of managing a doubling of the school population. The staff recognise that there is still room for improvement, in particular, the need to gather and use of data on pupil performance, as the basis of a structured approach to assessment. They have effectively placed a high priority on improvements in the school's accommodation and staff development, to significantly improve the quality of teaching. The school now provides a broad curriculum, supported by appropriate documents and they have made considerable progress towards providing the full National Curriculum and religious education. However, the subjects are not balanced and the taught time available to the younger pupils is too short. There has been insufficient progress in relation to this. Pupils' behaviour is now well managed and their behaviour has significantly improved since the last inspection. Progress has been made in developing the role of the subject co-ordinators but they are not yet fully effective. The school development plan is now costed and prioritised but does not provide enough detail to move the school forward.

### STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 13
speaking and listening	B	B	B
reading	C	C	C
writing	D	D	D
mathematics	B	B	B
personal, social and health education	B	B	B

Key	
very good	A
good	B
Satisfactory	C
unsatisfactory	D
Poor	E

other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C	C
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The range of pupils' needs is wide and increasing, which has a significant influence on the organisation of the teaching groups. Pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress over time although the pupils with complex needs do not make enough progress. Targets on pupils' individual education plans are often too broad, so it is difficult to measure progress accurately and to plan work to meet individual pupils' needs. Overall standards of achievement in English are satisfactory. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. Infant pupils show enjoyment in books and can sequence pictures to tell a story. The most competent readers have a good level of fluency and the Post-16 students develop their skills through the use of a wide range of appropriate materials. Insufficient progress is made in writing, with an over reliance on worksheets. The more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to fully develop their skills. Pupils make good progress, overall, in mathematics. Good links across the subjects are used, for example, to support learning of the older secondary pupils and the Post-16 students. Achievements in science are satisfactory. Pupils make good progress in personal, social and health education. In information and communication technology pupils and students make very good progress across the school. Pupils make good progress generally in religious education.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. In lessons and around the school pupils are very positive. They show a very caring attitude towards each other and join in the celebration of each other's success.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. There are no exclusions. Pupils are not aggressive towards each other and develop a sense of fair play. Challenging behaviour is well managed by the staff.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. This is a strength of the school. The older pupils and students display a sense of responsibility and maturity that reflects the very good work of the school. The staff work hard to ensure that the pupils enjoy increased confidence and relate well to others.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average for similar schools. Pupils like the school and most look forward to being at the school showing enthusiasm and very good interest in their activities.

Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. The sensitive support, provided by the staff, encourages pupils to be well motivated and behave well. Behaviour has significantly improved since the last inspection. An excellent karaoke style concert showed how supportive, relaxed and how happy the pupils are. The members of the school council have helped to draw up the effective school rules and the pupils do live by the rules in school. Pupils who have recently come from other schools are able to express that they feel more confident and happy at this school. Staff, pupils and students are very involved in the field study trips to local museums and they enjoy the residential visits. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to listen and help each other.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Years 1 – 6</b>	<b>Years 7 – 11</b>	<b>Years 12 – 13</b>
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. There is a high percentage of very good teaching in Post-16 and most of the teaching in lessons for the older secondary pupils is good or better. Much of the teaching for the junior pupils is also good or better. Teaching is good in mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. On balance, teaching in English is satisfactory although there is inconsistent use of the National Literacy Strategy. The best teaching ensures that there are high expectations, a very good level of preparation and expertise combined with very strong teamwork ensuring that the pupils make very good progress. Very good relationships and a caring and supportive approach by the well trained staff helps to promote the very good personal development of the pupils and students. Weaknesses in lessons are evident when there is a significant loss of time and the lesson progresses too slowly, losing the pupils' interest and limiting their learning. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and pupils' work is not marked consistently and therefore academic progress is not well managed.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The pupils are taught the full range of National Curriculum subjects and religious education. There is an imbalance in the time allocated to certain subjects and this is particularly evident for the younger pupils who have insufficient taught time. The provision for personal social and health education is good. The use of the national strategy for teaching literacy is inconsistent. The local community and other educational establishments make a good contribution to the pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' personal development is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good and this has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes to the school and relationships with others. It is good for spiritual and satisfactory for cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes good provision when promoting pupils' positive behaviour and their very good personal development. Effective child protection procedures are in place and the school works hard to provide a safe and secure environment for the children. Assessment procedures, to guide and support pupils' academic progress, are unsatisfactory.

The school's curriculum provides the required subjects but the time allocated to each subject is unbalanced. The school provides insufficient opportunities for the older pupils and students to follow courses leading to external accreditation. Provision for personal, social and health education is good as is the contribution of the community and the relationship with other schools in the area. The staff know the pupils well and they use this knowledge to guide their personal development. The school has achieved a Cumbria Healthy School Award and the school council are active in helping to maintain standards, for example, in relation to healthy eating. The Post-16 students have their own room and this helps to develop their independence. Nearly all of the staff are trained in a positive approach to managing pupils' behaviour. The school has effective links with parents and provides good quality information to them and they have a very positive view of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Despite the challenge of an ever-increasing pupil population the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. A very caring approach is engendered throughout the school very effectively fulfilling a major aim of the school. The management team is too few for the size of the school giving them insufficient time to focus on essential leadership tasks. Subject managers are developing their role but further developments are required.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are very supportive and are involved in the day-to-day aspects of the school and consequently know the school well. They have developed a more questioning role since the last inspection but need to formally plan more effectively. They have recently developed appropriate committees. There are no home-school agreements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school has not yet developed effective self-evaluation systems. The management team monitor the quality of teaching but there is insufficient monitoring of quality and standards by the subject co-ordinators. School planning is not informed by detailed self-evaluation.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. A strength of the school is the commitment to the personal and professional development of staff. There are sufficient well qualified and experienced teaching staff and they are very well supported by a high number of learning support assistants. Deployment of staff is generally effective as is the use of specific grants.

The majority of staff are well established, which has given the school a period of stability during a time of change. A strength of the school is the strong commitment to staff development and this has helped to improve the quality of the teaching. Since the last inspection, the accommodation has been substantially extended with spacious rooms and specialist provision, forming a pleasant learning environment. Generally, resources are satisfactory. Good use is made of the resources in the local community. Day-to-day management is effective and the school strongly supports pupils' personal development. Formal planning is not sufficiently developed and the management team carry too many areas of responsibility. The governors have regard to achieving best value for money and have recently formed a finance committee, to help manage this process.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very comfortable about approaching the school and they feel that the staff are very caring.</li> <li>• The teaching in the school is good and is well supported by the learning support assistants.</li> <li>• The school's effort to promote pupils' personal development.</li> <li>• The improved school buildings.</li> <li>• Appreciate the leadership of the school.</li> <li>• Their child likes school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents would like their children to be given more work to be done at home.</li> <li>• Some parents are not sure about the range of activities provided outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views of the school and the fact that the parents are made to feel very welcome and the ethos of the school is very caring. Opportunities are lost to extend the pupils' learning, as insufficient homework is set. The range of activities provided during the school day is appropriate but after school activities are limited by the need for pupils to travel home in the arranged transport.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1 All pupils and students have statements of special educational needs, which identify severe or complex learning difficulties but some have associated challenging behaviours, associated with autistic spectrum disorder. The range of difficulties within the school is wide and increasing, which has a significant influence on the organisation of teaching groups. It is inappropriate to compare pupils' achievements with national averages and expectations because, overall, attainment on entry is well below what would be expected for their age. However most pupils make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress over time. This is tracked by the use of nationally developed P scales and targets to improve achievement are set termly and annually in each subject. However, targets on pupils' individual education plans are often too broad, especially for pupils with the most complex needs so it is difficult to measure progress accurately and to plan work to meet individual pupil's abilities and to build on what they have learned. The school has set statutory targets to raise standards in English, mathematics and science by 2003.

2 Overall, standards of achievement in English are satisfactory. Pupils and students make good progress in communication skills and by the time they leave school they show confidence in performing in front of an audience. Young pupils use text and symbols to support the development of their communication skills. There is little evidence of pupils with the most complex learning needs, using technological aids consistently, to help them develop some independence in making choices or in communicating with others. Signing is not used regularly, as an aid to communication. However, the school does provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, for example, action songs and rhymes, and as they get older they have the confidence to interact with others and to respond to questions appropriately. Some may need encouragement but they work together, such as when they participated in role-play during a religious education lesson. In the secondary department pupils and students listen carefully, take turns to answer and become aware of when it is appropriate to talk and when it is not. They learn to express opinions and to take part in discussions showing mature attitudes.

3 Infant pupils show enjoyment with books, they sequence pictures to tell the story and some can retell the main theme. The more competent readers like to read and use picture clues to tell the story and can say what is happening. Some junior pupils continue to use a combination of words and symbols with a degree of confidence and lower attaining pupils remain hesitant and need a high level of support to make any progress. The most competent readers have a good level of fluency and have developed a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils and students increase the range of reading materials and group reading gives them opportunities to further develop their skills. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and are beginning to develop some information retrieval skills. Post-16 students develop their skills through the use of a wide range of relevant materials, which they will need when they leave school, such as, forms, newspaper advertisements and television schedules.

4 There is inconsistent use of the national strategy for the teaching of literacy and as a consequence the pupils make unsatisfactory progress in their writing. The youngest pupils make marks and scribble freely and the more able infant pupils can produce meaningful shapes, follow patterns and trace over single letters. Many junior pupils can write their name using neat print. Older secondary pupils demonstrate a range of writing and handwriting skills and younger secondary pupils use adjectives in their writing to enhance the meaning and can change verb tenses. The range of writing skills shows some pupils continue to trace over letters, while others develop an individual style that is becoming more expressive. However the more able pupils are not sufficiently well challenged to develop their skills as



well as they could. Older secondary pupils understand the idea of drafting and redrafting their work and they have some opportunities to write in different styles and for extended writing, as part of their topic work. Post-16 students are given worksheets that restrict opportunities for them to express themselves and write independently.

5 Pupils make good progress, overall, in mathematics. The infant pupils are beginning to identify numbers to five and the more able pupils can match numbers to ten in sequence. Some pupils can recognise shapes and match similar items. They enjoy learning by using number rhymes. Junior pupils are developing their mathematical language and are beginning to understand number patterns. More able pupils are starting to have a basic understanding of doubles. Pupils build on earlier learning about shapes and some pupils can link angles with the number of sides a shape has. Computers are used to support their understanding. Pupils with the most complex needs do not make as much progress because their individual needs are not always met. As pupils move through the school they consolidate basic calculations. Time is not well managed and the planning for pupils who miss part of a lesson to receive, for example, therapeutic support is not precise. Good cross-curricular links are used well, to support learning in mathematics. Older secondary pupils consolidate the process of division, multiplication and fractions when judging the amount of food on a field trip. They also practice measuring but find this difficult. Practical experiences of shopping and comparing prices enables Post-16 students to improve their management of money. Enterprise activities involve them in understanding costs, expenditure and profit.

6 Achievements in science are satisfactory across the school. Infant pupils mix ingredients and have an idea of the concept of how materials can be changed and junior pupils demonstrate their understanding of static electricity and the more able pupils can describe parts of a simple circuit. They also learn about earthworms and some can describe how earthworms improve the soil and how they live. A good range of age-appropriate resources and high levels of support ensure that pupils are given every opportunity to learn and make progress. Younger secondary pupils carry out simple investigations about load bearing bridges and pulley systems. They make satisfactory progress in their understanding about the pull of gravity and most pupils understand that there is a change in movement, as a result of pushing or pulling. Older secondary pupils learn how to classify animals by simple criteria, for example, by backbone, and they know some of the main features of common animals. More able pupils identify the three states of water and know that these can change or reverse. They have also been learning about the eye and with support can explain the functions of different parts. Students in Post-16 make very good progress as they learn about atoms, molecules and compounds. They are also increasing their understanding and use of the correct scientific terms and some know that O stands for oxygen and C for carbon. There is a good link with physical education when considering health and fitness issues.

7 In information and communication technology, pupils and students make very good progress overall, across the school. Junior pupils use computers to support their learning, in English and mathematics, by using a number of appropriate programmes. This builds on earlier learning when the infant pupils understand that using the space bar causes the screen to change. Younger secondary pupils are using word processing with confidence and the less able pupils use a text and symbol communication programme to aid their learning. As they move through the school, pupils build on previously learned skills to search the internet for information and also use Powerpoint presentations with confidence. In Post-16, students use a Smartboard, as a regular part of their lessons. They have acquired very good information and communication skills and are very confident in using this advanced technology. Some can also use spreadsheets, send and receive e-mails. They produce the school's newspaper, using symbols and digitised photographs very competently. Teachers are also very confident when using information and communication technology in lessons and this is transferred to pupils and supports their learning.

8 Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education. Work is well planned and this ensures that pupils are offered a good range of experiences. Pupils do make very good progress in some lessons

but the short amount of time allocated to the subject means that progress, over time, is only satisfactory. Infant pupils learn about the life of a monk and in an assembly they participate enthusiastically in role-play when celebrating the Buddhist festival of Wesak and show a good awareness of the symbolism associated with it. When lessons are well planned and a good range of resources are used, pupils make very good progress. Younger secondary pupils have learned something of Judaism and older secondary pupils discuss aspects of Buddhism following a visit to a local Buddhist community. Very good questioning by the teacher ensures that pupils make the most of their visit. Students in Post-16 have studied special books, ceremonies and celebrations of different religions.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9 Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. In lessons and throughout school, pupils are observed to be relaxed, friendly and happy. Where pupils have challenging behaviour, most respond to a familiar routine and relate to the supportive staff. This sensitive support by most teachers and learning support assistants ensures pupils are involved in learning and behave well in lessons and during lunch-time activities. Pupils show a very caring attitude towards each other and celebrate each other's success. This is very evident in a school assembly where pupils receive certificates for swimming. An excellent karaoke style concert also showed how supportive, relaxed and how happy the pupils are.

10 The members of the school council have helped to draw up the few school rules and are able to name them, for example no running or pushing. There are no exclusions and pupils who have recently come from other schools are able to express that they feel more confident and happy at this school. One girl, who missed the school transport, walked the two miles to school reflecting her positive attitude to the school. Targets are discussed with parents and support is always provided. All pupils are polite and friendly and respect each other and adults. Behaviour has improved greatly since the last inspection.

11 Staff, pupils and students are very involved in the field study trips to local museums and Furness Abbey to support their learning. They enjoy the residential experiences to Tenerife, Keilder and Bendrigg Trust outdoor pursuits centre. The good range of photographs show how much the pupils and students value the experiences and they enjoy discussing their adventures. Students take pride in their Youth Award Scheme. They successfully gain confidence and extend their experiences with work in the school and local community.

12 Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to listen to and help each other. Older secondary pupils and students contribute well to discussions and contribute their ideas to meetings. With good examples, set by the adults around them, most of the pupils are developing very good attitudes to work and are sensitive to the needs of others.

13 Attendance is good and above the national average for similar schools. Most pupils' absences are due to the nature of illnesses that may accompany their special needs. No pupils in the year prior to the inspection were stated to have unauthorised absences, which is well below the national average for all schools. However, in the current school year, the school is noting a significant increase in unauthorised absence, resulting from a non-attending pupil. Pupil's punctuality to lessons is satisfactory.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

14 The quality of teaching is good, on the whole, with some very good features and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. This is a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, a reflection of the school's very good staff development and improved specialist accommodation. There is a high percentage of very good teaching for the Post-16 students and most of the teaching in lessons, for the older secondary pupils, is good or better. Much of the teaching in the

lessons for the junior pupils, is also good, whilst on balance, teaching is satisfactory for the infant and younger secondary pupils.

15 When teaching is very good, the lessons challenge all of the pupils to make substantial progress in their learning. Teachers are very confident in their subject knowledge and plan clearly to promote pupils' learning with a clear focus on their subject. This is very evident in the best English lessons when the literacy strategy is used very effectively. Also the teaching of physical education and science, when taught by the subject specialist, clearly reflects the value of a teacher's confidence in their subject. Information and communication technology is taught consistently at a very good standard, reflecting the staff's expertise in this subject and ensuring that the pupils make very good progress in their learning. The teacher's very good planning ensures that a lesson following a visit to a local Buddhist community is very effective in extending the pupils' learning. Well-planned lessons are also a feature of some of the music lessons and this is combined well with the confident management of the pupils. The constructive use of the pupils' experience and knowledge is used very well in the teaching of local geography. High quality teamwork is a strength of the very good lessons as the learning support assistants work closely with the teachers helping to promote high expectations for all of the pupils. The very good staffing levels and caring support help to develop the pupils' very good progress in their swimming. Very good relationships are the foundation of the pupils' very positive approach to their learning and a growing confidence in their abilities.

16 The good lessons are well organised and staff work hard to meet the full range of pupils' needs in the class in a purposeful manner. The teachers check on pupils' previous learning and make the objectives of a lesson clear to the pupils. Questions are used well for example in a science lesson to effectively test and extend the pupils' knowledge of simple electrical circuits. Good teaching encourages the correct use of words that are specific to a subject and the use of these words is consolidated. Inappropriate behaviour is quickly and effectively managed an example of the school's positive approach to the management of pupils' behaviour. Lively and interactive teaching, a feature of many of the better lessons ensures that the pupils are fully involved, for instance in a practical mathematics lesson. A trip to Furness Abbey is well prepared following a prior visit by the teacher and this ensures that the time at the Abbey is well used and also provides a good opportunity for some follow up artwork. Relationships continue to be strong and humour is well used to maintain the pupils' interest.

17 Where the quality of teaching is satisfactory effective teamwork and constructive relationships continue to be features of most of the lessons. The staff know the pupils very well and do place a strong and effective emphasis on promoting their personal development. The best use is made of available resources and staff use their initiative to overcome gaps in resources. Lesson planning often relates to the majority of the pupils whilst the needs of the pupils with the most complex needs and the more able pupils are not fully met. An interesting introduction loses the pupils' interest when it is too prolonged and they remain inactive and at times become disruptive. Time is lost and there is insufficient urgency in lessons contributing at times to the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching.

18 The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and consequently the pupils are not given sufficient understanding of how they can improve their work. Assessment procedures in the school are unsatisfactory and therefore most teachers do not have sufficient data to keep them informed about the pupils' academic progress or plan accurately to meet individual needs. Homework is given when requested by the pupils or parents and the staff do acknowledge the additional work done by the pupils.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

19 The curriculum, provided for pupils between the ages of five and sixteen, meets statutory requirements, as all subjects required by the National Curriculum are now taught. Consequently, the pupils receive a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. There are only a very small number of young

children attending the school and their individual needs are met in a class containing older pupils. Post-16 pupils also follow a satisfactory curriculum that meets their needs, as they prepare for life after school.

20 Although the overall school curriculum is now sufficiently broad, there remain deficiencies in the balance of these learning experiences as they are provided for pupils through class and individual timetables. In part this is because planned teaching time in the primary department is too short. In addition, although the school tries hard to meet the academic, personal and therapeutic needs of its pupils it does not get this balance right.

21 The school has not made sufficient progress, since the previous inspection, in addressing the key issue to reorganise the school day. The amounts of taught time allocated to different subjects on the timetables for secondary pupils, are unsatisfactory and this produces an unbalanced curriculum. This is due to a combination of whole school decisions relating to the teaching of English, mathematics and personal, social and health education and the lack of robust monitoring of class timetables. There is insufficient time devoted to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science across the school. On the other hand, there is a disproportionate amount of time identified for personal, social and health education for younger pupils. There are too few opportunities for the oldest and most able pupils to follow externally accredited courses.

22 The school's provision for secondary pupils with additional special needs is unsatisfactory, although it is satisfactory at Post-16. Many pupils with additional needs are withdrawn from classes for individual or small-group speech therapy and physiotherapy sessions. Whilst these pupils undoubtedly benefit from this input, the school does not effectively manage the time available in lessons. There are many instances of pupils missing class time and not having the opportunity to catch up on the work that they have missed. In particular, on too many occasions, pupils return to lessons midway through and no activity has been prepared for them.

23 Some aspects of curriculum management have been addressed satisfactorily since the previous inspection. All subjects now have policy statements and guidance for teachers on what should be taught. They are particularly good in subjects like science but they lack detail in subjects such as English and art and design and therefore there is no guarantee that pupils are able to build systematically on their learning as they move through the school. The role of subject co-ordinators remains unsatisfactory, as they do not have routine and planned opportunities to monitor the classroom work of colleagues.

24 The school's strategy for teaching literacy skills is at times used very well but, overall, its use is unsatisfactory as it is not sufficiently well planned or monitored and therefore there is a lack of consistency across the school. In particular, too many lessons in the secondary department are concerned with the whole-school topic being studied or with other subject material, rather than having a sharp focus on developing specific literacy skills. The strategy for teaching numeracy is satisfactory. Planning is better than for literacy and mathematics lessons retain a numeracy focus, but the effectiveness of the strategy is once again limited by the lack of opportunity for the subject co-ordinator to monitor classroom practice.

25 Personal, social and health education is good. A planned programme provides a variety of age-appropriate experiences and opportunities for teachers to introduce a range of topics including sex education and drugs awareness. The curriculum for older secondary pupils has a satisfactory vocational dimension as pupils have careers education and the oldest ones have work experience placements within the school. Post-16 pupils also benefit from the school's membership of a national Young Enterprise scheme, which introduces them to many aspects of running a small business.

26 The school makes good use of the community to extend pupils' experiences. Visitors to school have included musicians, artists, theatre groups and storytellers and these have provided rich learning experiences. Pupils' learning opportunities are also developed well, through trips out of school. Visits to the Lowry Centre, the local Dock Museum and Furness Abbey have all provided valuable experiences and

a number of pupils have benefited from residential visits too. These have included Bendrigg Lodge for outdoor activities and some pupils have had the exciting experience of being part of the crew of a sailing ship that went to France. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities that enhance the taught curriculum during the school day.

27 There are good links with local schools, as the school supports inclusion whenever possible so that pupils have attended both primary and secondary mainstream schools. In the past, these arrangements have enabled secondary aged pupils to study subjects that are not available in their school and to gain accredited qualifications through the host school. There are no pupils benefiting from these arrangements at the present time, although links are maintained. Some mainstream pupils, with learning difficulties, have the opportunity to attend lessons in the school. Currently there are only limited links with local further education and sixth form establishments so that pupils do not benefit on a regular basis from the courses that they offer. However, the school is included in a recent application made by a partner institution, for funding through the 14-16 Flexibility Bid that will give pupils access to courses involving applied information and communication technology.

28 The school sees its priority in equal opportunities provision as balancing the needs of pupils with challenging behaviour and the needs of the class groups as a whole. However, there is an equally important priority in ensuring that the pupils with the more complex needs have equal access to the same curriculum as other pupils in the school. The high quality of additional support and therapies, for the pupils with more complex needs, is recognised as essential but planning does not always make the best use of class time available to them. These pupils have little independent access to their learning, for example by the regular use of technology such as switch access.

29 The school's use of the community to support the curriculum is good. Students on work placements go to a wide range of jobs in the community. For example, helping to renovate old houses for starter homes or working on recycling projects. The school's recent introduction of a school uniform has been helped by the support it has received from a local manufacturing firm to design the sweatshirts, and embroider the new school logo. In geography, pupils are using the concept of the island on which the school is built, to explore geographical similarities and examine social issues. Many local groups, for example Ulverston Motorcycle Club, support the school. The school is justly proud of achieving the Cumbrian Healthy School Award.

30 The comprehensive personal social and health education programme successfully underpins the ethos of the school to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Provision for moral and social development is very good and good provision is made for the pupils' spiritual development whilst it is satisfactory for their cultural development. All areas have improved since the last inspection. The ethos of the school provides a set of values, principles and beliefs that sets the scene for trust, concern for others and the opportunity to experience feelings and emotions. There is a clear and published moral code and this is promoted consistently throughout the school. Social interaction is encouraged during most lessons, while residential opportunities fully extend pupils and students in working together and trusting each other.

31 The lower school assembly celebrates the Buddhist Festival of Wesak, where pupils enjoy the quiet and reflection time of music. In religious education lessons pupils handle artefacts with care as they are introduced to the idea of respect and reverence. During a session in the Jacuzzi, young pupils with the most complex needs react very positively to music, light and water movements. The pupils respond, enjoy receiving their swimming awards and celebrate each other's achievements in a whole school assembly. They quietly listen to a prayer and join in with a song. There is a rapturous response from pupils, during a performance of popular singing and dancing. Pupils express themselves eloquently and emotionally both in

singing and in their response to music. Pupils' contributions are valued and they are encouraged to question and explore during most lessons.

32 Success is celebrated and pupils applaud each other when they try hard or gain a certificate. Older pupils are able through citizenship and careers lessons, to express their ideas on issues and appreciate and respect the views of others. Pupils have star charts, tokens and class rules and they are often reminded of the school rules during lessons. Pupils are able to refer to their feelings that the teacher has written up for them. Rotas for jobs and class responsibilities further support personal values and encourage responsibilities. It is necessary to address behavioural targets for a few infant pupils, in order that they maximise their opportunities for learning.

33 The opportunities for very good social development are encouraged well during lessons and in the use of the local community. Pupils enjoy visits to the local leisure centre for swimming. Groups take turns to participate in horse riding and photographs show how well they respond to the routines. Planting trees in Grizedale Forest and canoe trips in the Lake District provide very good opportunities for pupils to think of others and work as a team. Lunch and break times are quiet social occasions where pupils behave well. Older pupils often cook their own lunches and eat together in their class, where they share tasks and help each other.

34 Cultural development is encouraged through books and performance. A good example is the Literacy Summer School, where all pupils and staff involved enjoyed a performance of a Midsummer Nights Dream. Books record past activities where pupils can refer to them in the library. The local environment is used well to support topic work in lessons, such as a visit by the infant pupils to Furness Abbey. Post-16 students have carried out a more sophisticated study in the local library to research, in detail, how the monks lived and worked. Religious festivals are studied and celebrated in religious education although pupils do not have many opportunities to experience the wider multicultural aspects of society.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

35 Procedures for the health and safety and well being of pupils are satisfactory. The school is very aware of maintaining a high staff/pupil ratio when out on school visits and activities, to maximise pupils' safety. For example, when thirteen pupils went to the public leisure centre for a swimming lesson, each pupil had a member of staff or volunteer with them in the water, plus the head teacher at the side of the pool, to ensure overall pupil safety. Twenty-four of the staff have recently updated their first aid training, and parents authorise any medication that they feel staff can reasonably administer to their children. There is no resident school nurse and the school relies on peripatetic visits from the community school nurse to support the work of the staff. The school recognises the need to increase the level of nursing provision available to the school. The school's health and safety policy allocates areas of responsibility in the school to designated persons, but there is no formal health and safety audit of the school, and the Governing body do not have a health and safety responsibility or committee. The school does not directly supervise pupils' arrivals and departures, although in the afternoon, staff escort pupils out to their transport. However, on occasions, transport does start moving when pupils are still in the vicinity and there are no clearly marked traffic free areas in the school car park/playground, where pupils can walk or be wheeled in safety, although there are plans to rectify this. Speech therapists and physiotherapists treat pupils in designated specialist areas in school and meet their needs despite the pressure on the service following the significant increase in the number of pupils in the school.

36 Procedures for child protection in the school are satisfactory and in line with those of the area child protection services. Many staff in the school have received training, linked to their professional development, in the awareness of child protection issues. No specific courses for child protection



awareness and referral procedures have taken place recently, and the head teacher, who is the named person, is aware of the necessity to update his training.

37 The individual needs of pupils and students are well known to staff and they use this knowledge to guide pupils' and students' personal development well. The school has achieved a Cumbria Healthy School Award and is open to re-examining any issues that may give pupils and staff concern. For example, recently the school council commented on the quality and amount of school lunches, and as a result of collaboration, pupils now feel that school lunches are healthier and more substantial.

38 The school recently supported pupils whilst they decided on whether to adopt a school uniform, and then guided them on the design and purchasing of the chosen style of uniform. Older secondary and Post-16 students benefit from careers guidance information. Post-16 students have their own separate classroom and leisure area, and the opportunity to prepare and eat their lunch or snacks in a relaxed and informal setting. Work experience programmes prepare most of the Post-16 pupils to find out about the world of work outside of school, whilst the remainder of the students complete their work experience in school. College taster courses also help students and their families decide what form of education or social direction their life will take after leaving school. Pupils at the end of their secondary education are not given this opportunity and the school plan to rectify this. Throughout the school, tokens, stars and for example, responsibilities for certain jobs in the class, are used effectively to influence and guide pupils' views and personal development. The school is strongest where it allows pupils' individual talents to flourish. This is vividly illustrated by a concert of pop songs performed by pupils and students, for friends, pupils and visitors during the inspection. Pupils, who at other times would never have envisaged performing in public, displayed an amazing range of talent and shone with confidence in front of their audience. The school is sensitive to individual needs of pupils. For example, in a class where there is a high number of boys to girls, attempts are made to include another girl into the class, on occasions, to reduce the boys' opportunities to dominate choices and behaviour.

39 The school's procedures for assessing pupils' achievements and progress are unsatisfactory and provide insufficient guidance and support for pupils' academic progress. The school are aware of the need to more effectively assess pupils and use this information to establish an appropriate level of challenge in their individual targets. Currently pupils' targets in their individual plans are too broad, especially for the pupils with more complex needs. There is little evidence of ongoing assessment and recording being carried out to measure pupils' progress accurately and to then inform the establishment of the pupils' termly targets.

40 The school's procedures to monitor and promote attendance are satisfactory. The school has a very close link to the education welfare service, and relies on their regular monitoring of the school's registers to maintain an oversight of registration procedures. Although there is no member of staff who has specific responsibility for monitoring the attendance registers, staff have a good day-to-day knowledge of the attendance of pupils, and quickly follow up any absences that have not been notified to them. The school does now comply with the statutory requirement to take a register twice in the day. The school does have a signing in and signing out book for individual pupils who may, for example, be attending a hospital appointment and this is completed for them by the staff.

41 Overall, the school's procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour, and ensure an absence of oppressive behaviour, are good. Nearly all staff are trained in the promotion of positive pupil behaviour and adopt a well-considered approach to managing pupils' behaviour. The improvement in pupil response to this method of behaviour management, has led the school to consider a review of its restraint policy. Several pupils have individual behaviour targets and rewards that especially motivate them. For example, a summary of good behaviour and attitude in school and on transport home, means that one pupil is allowed to ring the bell to end break time, and another can have a specified time in the ball pool.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

42 Parents' views of the school are very positive and nearly all are tremendously supportive of the school's teaching of their children and the school's efforts to promote pupils' personal development and help them become mature and sensible. Parents are particularly impressed with the team spirit in school amongst staff and the fact that this extends to them, as part of the school's inclusive approach to educating their children. There is frequent contact between home and school by phone and home/school books are used where parents and school judge this appropriate. Parents have been impressed with the

enhanced school environment that has resulted from recent building work, and the improvement in toilet and changing facilities for pupils. Although generally positive about their judgment of behaviour in the school and the expectations that staff have for their children, there is a measure of parental anxiety in these areas. There are pupils with challenging behaviour in the school but staff do demonstrate the expertise and confidence to manage the pupils' behaviour. Overall however, parents are very comfortable about approaching the school and are especially pleased with the leadership of the school.

43 The quality of information to parents is good. Pupils, through the school newspaper and with staff support, provide parents with an exciting and illustrative account of each term's work in the school, covering achievements, visits and items of interest, for example the sale of bird boxes made by the Team Enterprise Company. Escorts, especially those escorts who are also classroom support assistants during the school day, provide a good link between home and school. Regular newsletters and letters go home to parents. Written annual reports to parents are very detailed, and cover a wide range of work completed by pupils. However in terms of informing parents of the progress of their children, reports are only satisfactory, as there are no clear levels to compare with previous years.

44 Parents and carers involvement with the school and contribution to their children's education is satisfactory. The school does not have a home/school agreement, a statutory requirement. The school has recently revived the Parents School Association and hopes to build on the interest of parents whose children have only recently started attending the school, as well as those parents whose children have been in the school for a long time. Many parents live a long distance from the school, and others do not have time to come into school during the school day, as it would clash with their other commitments. A few parents have concerns over the amount of work their children get to do at home, but homework is available on request, and if pupils take the initiative to extend their work to home, this is recognised by the school.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

45 The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, despite the challenges of an ever-rising pupil population. The management team believes in and engenders a very caring approach in the school. This high level of care has a particular focus on the pupils' personal development and a feeling of self worth with significant improvements in levels of confidence. This concern for the welfare and views of others is central to life in the school. The senior management team is made up of the head teacher and deputy head teacher and they work closely together. This management team is too few for the size of the school as pupil numbers have nearly doubled since the last inspection and staff numbers have significantly increased. The head teacher and deputy head teacher have too many areas of responsibility and this gives them insufficient time to focus on essential leadership tasks, such as an effective overview of the curriculum and planning for the future of the school.

46 Subject management has developed since the last inspection and the co-ordinators have produced policy documents for every subject. The monitoring of the quality of teaching is carried out by the senior management team and in a few subjects but this is still in the very early stages of development. This means that the co-ordinators do not have an accurate picture of the approach to their subject or areas for improvement. Subjects such as science do have a development plan but this process is limited by the fact that subject co-ordinators do not manage their own budget and therefore, they cannot project developments into the future. The head teacher agrees that this is a necessary priority for change, not only to improve subject management but also to further the experience and expertise of the staff.

47 The school development plan is now prioritised and these targets are priced, as recommended in the last inspection. However, the planning is only complete to the end of this academic year. The head

teacher and governing body do have ideas for the future development of the school but they are yet to be formalised and therefore, they do not provide the essential clear direction for the future of the school.

48 The governors are very supportive of the school and its aims. Some of the governors are regular visitors to the school and spend time in the classroom and work with the pupils. Governors know the school well and have positive relationships with the staff and pupils. The governors have taken a more critical role since the last inspection but there is still the need for a more questioning relationship and in particular to help provide a clear vision for the future direction of the school. The school is constantly changing and the governors provide insufficient strategy to shape this change. The governors have recently formed a finance committee, that has clear terms of reference and is an important step towards the formal structures required for effective leadership. Currently there is insufficient formal monitoring of the impact of governors' major spending decisions, on raising the quality and standards of education provided by the school.

49 The school secretary is very efficient and makes a valuable contribution to the day-to-day running of the school. She has developed, along with the head teacher; secure day-to-day systems for the financial management of the school. Secretarial time is limited and the head teacher is aware of the need to provide additional help, as a means of freeing up some of his time. The amenities fund is well managed by the head teacher, a possible area for delegation and these funds do make a valuable contribution to the school resources. They are currently saving for an additional mini-bus, an essential and well-used resource in the school. Funding has been made available as part of the Sports Action Zone, which provides a good opportunity to work with mainstream schools. The school does have a large carry forward, some of which is committed and the school find it difficult, due to funding arrangements, to predict future expenditure accurately. They are clear that improved formal planning will go part way to resolving this issue. The principles of best value are applied in the school's financial management systems.

50 The school has a sufficient number of well-qualified and experienced teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and number of pupils currently on roll. The majority of staff are well established and this has given the school stability, during a time of increasing numbers of pupils on roll, with a widening range of special needs. Teaching staff are very well supported by a high number of learning support assistants and together they make a strong team and work very well together. A strength of the school is the commitment to the personal development of all staff. This boosts confidence and results in a positive team ethos. Staff training is clearly linked to the identified needs of the school and the personal needs of staff. A large number of the staff have successfully completed a Certificate in Professional Studies through Manchester Metropolitan University and this has not only extended their expertise but has also helped to promote the team spirit in the school. The induction process for newly qualified staff is well organised and efficiently carried out, providing a good basis on which to build.

51 Since the previous inspection the accommodation has been greatly extended, giving the school spacious rooms and a very pleasant learning environment for the pupils and students. There are now specialist rooms for science, design and technology, art and food technology even though some of these have dual use. Classrooms are bright and airy and the school is very well maintained by the cleaner in charge and her team. The hall doubles up as a dining area as well as being used for physical education and the lack of adequate storage space restricts the quantity and range of resources. However the school does compensate for this by using local community facilities. Outside hard play areas are adequate and there is a large grassed field for team games.

52 Generally resources are satisfactory but good in some subjects, for example, religious education and information and communication technology. Resources for music, however, are poor and this restricts the range of activities that can be planned. Good use is made of resources in the local community, such as the abbey, museum and the local environment, especially for geography, history, physical education, religious education and outdoor education.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

53 In order to build on the school's present achievements the head teacher, staff and governors should now:

- 1 Improve standards in English by ensuring a more consistent approach to teaching literacy skills, in particular, in writing.  
(Paragraphs 4, 54, 62, 63, 64)
- 2 Improve the overall management of the school by;
  - a) developing long term monitoring and evaluation systems to provide a clear sense of vision and direction for the school. This should include staff and governors;
  - b) developing the role of the subject co-ordinators.  
(Paragraphs 23, 24, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 66, 74, 88, 103, 123, 135)
- 3 Ensure that all pupils, particularly those with more complex needs, are able to make enough progress, by improving the use of assessment procedures.  
(Paragraphs 1, 2, 5, 18, 22, 28, 39, 66, 68, 74, 81, 88, 96, 99, 114, 123, 135, 138)
- 4 Improve the overall curriculum by;
  - a) ensuring a better balance of time for each subject and equal access for all pupils;
  - b) developing the range of accredited courses;
  - c) increasing the amount of teaching time for younger pupils.  
(Paragraphs 20, 21, 27, 82)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed

67

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

29

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	20	19	26	2	0	0
Percentage	0	30	28	39	3	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

No of pupils

Number of pupils on the school's roll	76
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	43

#### **English as an additional language**

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	8.3

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	73
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***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, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.4
Average class size	9

#### **Education support staff: YN – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	27
Total aggregate hours worked per week	732

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001 - 2002
	£
Total income	768,545
Total expenditure	794,409
Expenditure per pupil	11,034
Balance brought forward from previous year	137,558
Balance carried forward to next year	111,694

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	76
Number of questionnaires returned	42

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	21	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	36	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	48	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	31	19	2	26
The teaching is good.	79	17	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	74	17	5	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	10	2	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	38	2	2	5
The school works closely with parents.	74	21	2	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	81	12	2	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	21	0	5	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	62	12	12	0	14

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

### **ENGLISH**

54 Pupils have immature communication skills and low literacy levels when they enter the school. A number are reluctant speakers, non-readers or at the early stages of reading, and have limited writing skills. Although pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and satisfactory progress in reading, their achievements in writing are unsatisfactory. Overall standards in the subject are satisfactory and this represents satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

55 Staff in the primary department use a combination of text and symbols to support the development of pupils' language and communication and there is also evidence of the innovative use of imported digital photographs, on some worksheets, to further promote these skills. Strategies such as this are very effective in developing the communication competence of most pupils, but there is limited evidence of other systems to support the acquisition of these skills by pupils with the most complex learning needs. There too few examples of these pupils using technological aids such as switches, to enable them to make choices and participate in lessons with some degree of independence, and signing systems are not used routinely or consistently.

56 The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their listening and speaking skills in English and other lessons. These planned opportunities also make a strong contribution to developing aspects of personal development, such as pupils' confidence, a more positive self-image and awareness of the needs of others and when given the opportunity pupils generally respond well. The infant pupils join in with action songs and rhymes and their listening skills are sufficiently developed for them to interact and anticipate the next action. Junior pupils ask and answer questions confidently, although some may need prompts and encouragement to do so. Pupils work collaboratively as their social skills and confidence develop, such as in shared reading exercises when they role-play, and some express opinions clearly.

57 Younger secondary pupils listen carefully to instructions, in subjects such as mathematics and science and they answer questions in context. They also begin to appreciate the idea of turn taking and the need to listen to others. This is evident in their classroom behaviour as they develop a growing appreciation of when it is appropriate to interject, and when it is necessary to remain quiet and listen. Although their responses are inconsistent, a number of pupils demonstrate that they listen to other speakers and are beginning to adapt their speech to different audiences.

58 Older secondary pupils can speak knowledgeably and with purpose about a variety of topics and use appropriate language in a variety of contexts. This is demonstrated very well in a careers lesson in which a group discussion focuses on 'where they are and where are they going'. Pupils consider the opinions of others and begin to put themselves into hypothetical situations, in which they anticipate what they might do and how they may feel, expressing these thoughts well. Pupils' performance of a concert during the inspection shows most clearly the confidence pupils have when speaking and singing in front of a large group of people and how they listen closely to others when singing, as duets or trios.

59 On balance, pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their reading skills. Infant pupils with the most complex needs, look at picture books and show an interest in them, showing their understanding by eye pointing when given choices. They sequence pictures of a nursery rhyme correctly, to tell the story and match pictures, from the same story when presented with two lists of pictures. More competent readers are very willing to read, handling books and turning pages appropriately. They use pictures as clues and talk about them, identifying characters and explaining, simply, what is happening.

They read some common words confidently, but often need encouragement to do so, and are beginning to know some sounds such as 'a', 'o' and 'i'.

60 Junior pupils demonstrate a range of reading competence. Some pupils are still at the early stages of reading, using a combination of words and symbols. Less able pupils are still very hesitant readers and do not use clues from pictures, to aid their comprehension. As a result they do not answer questions with any confidence. More competent readers try to establish the meaning of words they cannot read by using additional cues and they use pictures to retell the story. The more able pupils are more independent readers as they read, more fluently, using different strategies to read unfamiliar words. Text is not always read with expression and punctuation is frequently ignored, but these pupils demonstrate their understanding by answering questions about the story.

61 Pupils in the secondary department develop increasing fluency and expression in their reading and are more adept at showing their comprehension of what they read. Younger secondary pupils extract information from diary entries and use their knowledge of alphabetical order, to find information in dictionaries. Older secondary pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and the purpose of a contents page and an index. When faced with new words they try to read them by combining their knowledge of letter sounds, which help pupils read, with any other contextual clues they can see, such as in pictures. Group reading of books such as *Watership Down* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and novels like *The Iron Man* is used effectively to encourage reading skills. Post-16 students develop their reading skills through a very good range of age appropriate materials. The more able students read the headings on forms that are used for applying for a driving licence and a passport, identify the main features in newspaper advertisements, find information in Yellow Pages, and extract detail from written timetables, such as television schedules.

62 Pupils do not make sufficient progress in writing. The infant pupils make marks on paper and scribble freely and the better writers produce meaningful shapes on paper. They follow patterns and are beginning to trace over single letters. Junior pupils complete simple writing patterns independently and copy writing with handwriting that is printed but neat and legible. They write their name and produce writing to accompany a picture, such as writing the name of a dog under the correct picture, after having read different descriptions. However, there is an over reliance on worksheets and limited evidence of focused work on developing writing skills, such as the use of writing frames.

63 Pupils in the secondary department display a range of writing and handwriting skills. Younger secondary pupils use adjectives to make simple sentences more interesting and informative and change the tense of verbs by adding 'ed' or 'ing'. Pupils with better handwriting skills write neatly, with a cursive script, whilst others are still at the stage of tracing over letters and joining dots. Pupils' handwriting is developing more individual style and their writing, generally, is more expressive. However, the more able pupils are not always sufficiently well challenged as they do not have enough opportunities to write in different styles.

64 Older secondary pupils are developing the idea of drafting, writing down ideas quickly, in order to organise their thoughts later. There are some opportunities provided for pupils to write in different styles, such as writing letters to their favourite *Harry Potter* character, and for extended writing, such as independently chosen projects as part of their topic work, but these opportunities are limited and narrow in range. Similar restricted opportunities are provided for Post-16, students when they use worksheets rather than being provided with writing frames or other resources, that enable them to express themselves more independently.

65 On balance, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and it is good for the junior pupils. The best teaching is supported by high quality planning, that follows the format of the National Literacy Strategy. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and activities are provided that meet their diverse needs. At these times pupils work very hard, concentrating well and showing a high level of interest. Good pupil management and a well-organised classroom contribute to ensuring that all pupils have the chance to

participate through the use of switches and the effective input of learning support assistants. Teaching of such high quality, enables a class of junior pupils to improve their knowledge of prepositions. Effective groupings mean that individual pupil's needs are met, so that more able pupils can work independently. Other pupils have varying levels of support, when they receive praise and help but are still challenged to complete the tasks themselves. Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, there are features of unsatisfactory practice. Teachers do not generally maintain ongoing assessment details of what pupils can do, know and understand.

66 Management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The subject co-ordinator does not effectively monitor teaching of the subject throughout the school. There is inconsistent use of the National Literacy Strategy and insufficient time is devoted to the teaching of English. Long term planning for teaching the subject and assessment of pupils' achievements are also unsatisfactory. Guidance on what should be taught is inappropriate because it does not identify the subject content that is to be covered, for pupils of different ages. Therefore, there is no mechanism for ensuring that pupils follow a comprehensive and increasingly challenging subject curriculum, as they move through the school. Assessment procedures are not sufficiently detailed, rigorous or consistent and therefore teachers cannot use this information to meet individual pupils' needs. The school makes good use of local resources and facilities, and of visitors into school, to extend pupils' experiences. This was particularly well demonstrated during the school's two Literacy Summer Schools when pupils studied Lakeland Writers during the first and performed a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the end of the second.

## **MATHEMATICS**

67 The provision for mathematics is good and has improved since the last inspection, especially in the quality of teaching. Standards of achievement and progress are satisfactory for the infant and younger secondary pupils and good for all other pupils and students at Post-16. The co-ordinator has excellent subject knowledge and has successfully implemented the policy for mathematics, to include numeracy. The teaching programmes are used with performance scales (small steps) to plan termly targets for each pupil and where teaching is sensitive to individual needs, these are successful. Provision for pupils with more complex needs is not addressed effectively as individual education plans do not focus on developmental small steps in order to show progress.

68 Some infant pupils can pick out numbers to ten and match them in sequence. Other pupils can count to five and match numbers to shapes. A few pupils recognise shapes and match to similar objects. Other pupils love the singing and actions for the game of 5 speckled frogs, where they are beginning to anticipate the next action. Pupils are supported, individually, with small group work being the most effective. Individual work would further provide an opportunity to show progress and support pupils with challenging behaviour. Care must be taken to provide appropriate work for the most able pupil and those pupils with more complex needs.

69 Younger junior pupils are very curious and active and respond well to the colourful resources which are easy to recognise and touch. Pupils are encouraged by the good use of questions to work on their own and think about their answers. Good use is made of words to describe 'big' such as 'enormous', 'whopping' and 'huge'. A few pupils know that estimate means guess and are encouraged well to think about 'less than' and 'more than'. The correct use of words such as doubles, tens and units help pupils to make good progress to count on from a number such as 2, 6 or 8 to make 10 and understand the pattern of numbers. A few pupils recognise  $5 + 5 = 10$  and recognise double numbers for example  $8 + 4 = 4 + 4 + 4$ . The teacher makes sure the end of the lesson is exciting with the pupils marking their own work and calling out their scores. The teacher works with each group in turn, which ensures she knows exactly what pupils can do and what they have to do next. A boy with complex needs is making good progress in

recognising pictures of his classmates, himself and staff. He shows particular pleasure when he sees his teacher on the screen.

70 Older junior pupils are successfully encouraged to write number answers in a writing frame and this provides a good record of their work. The good emphasis on square corners as right angles together with clear demonstrations, ensures pupils are beginning to recognise these. Some pupils know that if a shape has three sides it has three corners. A few pupils know that a square has four right angles. Most pupils can name a hexagon, pentagon and octagon and match shapes on their work sheets. Although a few pupils have difficulty in recognising a rhombus and a parallelogram, they know that they do not have right angles. The very good use of computer programmes, with pupils who need more support, helps them to understand shapes and numbers. The range of information and computer technology software supports mathematics well. Pupils with more complex needs experience work with switches with the speech and language therapist. The aims are not clear, nor is the work carried through to the classroom or linked to individual education programmes, in order to show progress.

71 There is, at times, insufficient planning by the teachers, for younger secondary pupils and this limits the progress that they make. Pupils who return from other activities, are not always included in the lessons. The worksheets are not clear and the work for all of the pupils is the same. A small number of pupils can complete all the work sheets to multiply and count, for example 9 times 3 and 10 times 4. Most pupils can say what they have understood, such as tens and hundreds, on a number square. There is some loss of time in lessons and consequently there is limited opportunity at the end of lessons to check on and re-enforce the pupils' learning.

72 Older secondary pupils respond with interest to the practical session of survival. This is linked well to their activities at the Bendrigg Trust Adventure Centre. The sharing of apples and chocolate bars challenges pupils to think of each other, while learning fractions, multiplication and division. Some pupils know that 12 bars between three people is 4 each. When presented with 5 apples for 10 pupils, a few pupils said they would have to be cut in half. Most pupils are able to estimate lengths but a few have difficulty in measuring correctly. They help each other and work hard to work out the answers, they share ideas and are very sensible.

73 Post-16 students experience shopping and planning meals, as part of their work towards accredited courses. They research prices in supermarket adverts and practise giving change up to £5. The excellent planning and use of enterprise work in the Young Enterprise business, shows the very good progress students have gained in confidence and understanding, of income and expenditure. Two students understand what is involved in the media wing of the business and can name the activities they have been involved in, such as designing and making Christmas cards, recipe cards, work for war memorial books and a charity. Most pupils understand expenditure, for example the cost of materials they have used such as paper, stamps and photocopying. One student can take the income away from the total cost, in order to calculate the profit. Good use is made of calculators. They were successful in presenting their work at the area finals held at the local VI Form College.

74 Teachers and learning support assistants work hard as a team to support pupils and students. Relationships are very good and pupils behave well. There is insufficient monitoring of the subject across the school. More appropriate individual small steps are planned to provide a more secure method, to show progress. There is little on going assessment, it is not consistent and requires monitoring in order to inform planning. Where teaching is very good work is marked regularly. There is no school approach to this, to inform the most able pupils about their achievement. A review of worksheets is necessary to ensure they are appropriate to the individual needs of the pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

75 The provision for science is good, a reflection of the quality of teaching and management of the subject, improvements since the last inspection. Overall, the pupils make good progress with a balance of good and satisfactory progress for the junior and younger secondary pupils. Students' progress in Post-16 is very good, whilst the older secondary pupils were taught no science during the inspection, as they were involved in the Bendrigg Challenge. Infant pupils experience some limited science teaching in a food technology lesson. The school now has good quality specialist accommodation for the teaching of science but this is not used to its full potential as insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of this subject.

76 Infant pupils take part in mixing ingredients to make a cake and the concept of change of state is introduced, although not in a way understood by the pupils. They also, as shown in photographs, made bricks using clay as part of their Building Project.

77 Junior pupils confidently recall information about static electricity and in particular, how balloons can be attracted to materials. Some of the pupils understand that electricity is required to light a bulb and that a battery is a source of this power. The more able pupils can describe the parts of a simple circuit, such as wire and bulb. Teaching is good with appropriate resources available and the pupils thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to build simple circuits with a partner. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and this gives pupils the confidence to apply themselves and answer questions. At the end of the lesson most of the pupils can correctly identify complete and incomplete circuits. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they remember the main features of earthworms. The more able pupils are effectively challenged to learn and describe the basic conditions required for the earthworms to live and improve the soil. Pupils are encouraged to follow hygiene advice, as they wash their hands after handling the worms. The interest of some pupils is lost, as they remain inactive for too long a period but the pupils do enjoy watching the worms in their new wormery. The more able pupils know what materials magnets are made from and the fact that they attract certain metals. Pupils with the most complex learning difficulties encounter the experience of handling magnets.

78 Younger secondary pupils respond well to purposeful teaching as they learn about different shapes and effective load carrying on bridges. Most of the pupils are challenged to use the appropriate terms, for example, weight and kilogrammes. They appreciate the opportunity to carry out a basic investigation, building two different bridges from card and testing their load bearing limits. The learning support assistants provide valuable help to the pupils, enabling them to increase their progress when making observations and recording their findings. The use of inappropriate language by one pupil is quickly and effectively managed. Resources are limited, for example, there are no appropriate weights but the teacher is well prepared and improvises well. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of the fact that gravity pulls things down. The lesson is slow to start and some of the pupils are easily distracted requiring frequent prompts to maintain their attention. However, most of the pupils understand that there is a change of movement, as a result of pushing or pulling an object. The equipment has been well prepared by a learning support assistant and this helps the pupils to focus and become involved in building their pulley systems.

79 The previous work of the older secondary pupils shows that the more able pupils identify the three states of water and that these changes are reversible. From clues about the main features of common animals, they are able to correctly identify them. Pupils can also put animals into groups for instance, those with a backbone. They can label the different parts of the eye and with varying levels of support, explain how they work. There is evidence of some self-evaluation by the pupils as a good reflection of their growing maturity. When using equipment, to make white light from various colours, the outcome was unexpected and the pupils understand the need to repeat their investigation.

80 Post-16 students make very good progress in their understanding of atoms, molecules and compounds. The teacher's very good subject knowledge and detailed planning, ensures that all of the students remain keen and interested throughout the lesson. The very practical approach to learning is right for the students and they also enjoy an element of fun and humour in the lesson. The teacher challenges pupils to use the correct scientific terms and for instance, some of them do understand that O stands for oxygen and C for carbon. The students enjoy the opportunity of building models of some of the most common molecules. The learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the lesson and in particular ensure that all of the students are included in the activities. There is a good link with physical education as the students visit a local gym to test their theories on health and fitness.



81 Overall, the quality of teaching is good with a balance of good and satisfactory teaching for the junior and younger secondary pupils. The quality of teaching in Post-16 is very good. A consistent feature of the teaching is the very good relationships between the staff and pupils. The best teaching is well informed by a confident level of subject expertise and a very good level of preparation, to ensure that all ability levels gain access to science. The best use is made of the adequate resources, often supported by self-made equipment. Assessment is not sufficiently well developed to ensure that planning is fully informed, to ensure that all of the pupils are making progress. The marking of pupils' work is not consistent, at times failing to inform future pupils about their learning. In a few lessons the pupils have to listen and observe for too long and at times are easily distracted.

82 Science is well managed by a teacher with an interest and expertise in science. Planning does aim for full coverage of science and identifies the areas to be covered in the whole school topics and this relates to the ages of the pupils. Post-16 students study topics, such as the environment and health and safety, as part of their Youth Award Scheme. The co-ordinator does monitor the quality of teaching in science, in some of the classes. She is planning to extend this aspect of role and sees the advantage of a subject specialist, teaching science to all of the secondary aged pupils in the school. There is a specialist room for the teaching of science, an improvement since the last inspection. Too little time is allocated to the teaching of science and yet in the Science Policy the school states that science is, "an important part of every pupils' education". The school has the facilities and combined with the expertise of the co-ordinator, they are in the position to ensure that all of the pupils have an appropriate share of good quality science teaching in their curriculum.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

83 The achievements of infant and younger secondary pupils in lessons are, on balance, satisfactory. Art and design is not studied by older secondary pupils and although it forms part of some of the weekly options provided for Post-16 students, it is not studied on a regular basis. The school's provision for art and design has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection.

84 Infant pupils experience different materials and techniques. They print, paint, and stencil as they make collages from different materials and experiment with different textures by adding glue and sand to the paint. Pupils make choices, such as which shades of translucent paper to use when making a stained glass window, and the highest attaining pupils cut and stick this paper to their window outlines.

85 Junior pupils extend their understanding of different techniques and materials through first hand experiences and by looking at the work of famous artists such as Pollack. They produce paintings with a particular theme, such as 'waves' following a visit to the Dock Museum, and demonstrate their new skills in other media too. They select and use different materials to produce three-dimensional work, such as masks and puppets and the more able pupils use pencils and brushes with growing confidence and competence, to draw and paint with increasing accuracy.

86 Younger secondary pupils develop their knowledge of different materials. They examine the work of famous artists in more detail, such as *The Boots* by Van Gogh and Cézanne's *Still Life*, so that they understand how different materials, like leather, can be represented in paintings. They show this developing understanding, through experimentation, that enables them to improve their skills at painting, in a similar style. Consequently, the more able pupils combine and use different textures to make patterns and other visual effects, in their two-dimensional work. These pupils also know about the qualities and characteristics of materials used for three-dimensional activities, through their work with clay and plaster, such as when they made frescos.

87 The quality of teaching is, on balance, satisfactory, ranging from good to unsatisfactory. When teaching is good, pupils are provided with activities that interest them and they have a good understanding of what they are required to do. At these times pupils concentrate well and are fully involved in what they are doing. These good attitudes are maintained because pupils are well managed and the classroom is organised, by a balance of independent working with support from the class teacher and effective learning support assistants. Consequently, all pupils learn well because they all participate fully in the activities. This is well demonstrated, when a class of younger secondary pupils work together, to produce a mural depicting a crowd scene at a football match, an activity linked to the topic of 'Buildings' in which sports stadia are being examined. Pupils with more complex difficulties needs are fully involved, as learning support assistants provide them with multi-sensory/tactile experiences. A wheelchair bound pupil gets great pleasure from hand painting and another pupil is equally enthralled as he helps to produce the pitch, through painting with his feet. On other occasions, unsatisfactory features of teaching, associated with classroom management, restrict pupils' development of new skills. In these circumstances time is not used well, pupils are not managed securely and activities are not explained clearly and as a result, pupils do not work with any sense of understanding or real purpose and therefore learning is severely limited.

88 The school now has a specialist art room, which is also used for design and technology, and this has had a positive impact on extending pupils' learning opportunities. Facilities in both the local and wider community are used well to develop pupils' social and cultural development. Visits to local museums and art galleries promote pupils' understanding of local culture, and trips to places such as the Lowry Centre add a further dimension to their knowledge of their cultural heritage. Visitors into school run workshops on puppetry and mask making, and contribute well to enrichment of the subject curriculum. However, aspects of the subject's management are ineffective. There is no systematic monitoring of classroom practice or strategic planning for the development of the subject, and assessment is not carried out or recorded routinely. There is a subject policy in place but the school still lacks effective guidance on what the teachers should teach.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

89 Pupils' achievements and progress in design and technology, and the quality of teaching are satisfactory across the school, other than for the older secondary pupils where it is very good. In the previous inspection insufficient lessons were observed to form a judgement on quality and standards.

90 Infant pupils make satisfactory progress when studying a topic on buildings. They use plastic bricks in their study of construction materials. Pupils ice the roof of a cake in the shape of a house and they are able to observe the change, in icing sugar, when water is added to it. However, several of the pupils are easily distracted from the focus of the lesson and this impedes pupils' learning.

91 Junior pupils are making satisfactory progress. They construct houses from plastic bricks and materials such as shoe boxes, in their study of buildings. The teacher involves the pupils well, encouraging them to handle materials and carry out simple tasks in making muffins.

92 Younger secondary pupils again, make satisfactory progress. They study a wide range of historical structures and investigate the suitability of some materials for building. Pupils do effectively develop and plan to optimise the design of a structure. The good rapport between pupils and staff is clear and helps pupils maintain their interest in the task.

93 Older secondary pupils make very good progress. They study a range of paper structures which are required to withstand a range of forces, in the investigation of free standing structures. The teacher has effectively planned a series of lessons, looking at countries with famous buildings around the world. This information is then linked to the characteristic food of each country. In one lesson the country is

Turkey and pupils are engaged in making some tasty Turkish Kebabs. The teacher's very good preparation, class management and relationship with the pupils make the occasion a very enjoyable one for the pupils and promotes very good learning.

94 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour towards the subject are mainly good. Good lesson planning, pace to lessons and the rapport they have with the staff promotes pupils' good attitudes and behaviour. They listen to their teacher's instructions, are keen to answer questions and on several occasions pupils applauded other pupils' successes. Where the attitudes and behaviour are less than good, the teachers' poor lesson planning and class management results in a deterioration of both pupils' attitudes and behaviour distracting from the intended learning outcomes of the lesson.

95 The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory but there is some very good teaching for the older secondary pupils. Where it is very good the lesson is well planned and prepared. There is good pace to the lesson, pupils are grouped according to their ability and pupils concentrate well taking pride in their work. Where teaching is satisfactory there is generally a good rapport between the staff and pupils but limited lesson planning and poor class management results in a loss of pace to a lesson and pupils lose interest in their work.

96 The leadership and management of the subject, shared between two teachers, are satisfactory. There is the lack of a consistent provision for the formative assessment and recording of pupils' progress and achievements. These are set annually and are reviewed at the end of each term. However there is no provision for assessment and recording between the termly reviews. For pupils with the more complex needs, progress is in small steps and it is important therefore to record this progress as and when it occurs. The guidance on what teachers should teach in design and technology is good. However the planning has insufficient reference to the levels at which the pupils are working.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

97 Pupils achieve well in most lessons but only make satisfactory progress over time, because of the small amount of time allocated to the subject. During the inspection, no lessons were observed of the teaching of older secondary pupils and Post-16 students. Judgements about progress are made on the analysis of work and displays around the school. On a visit to Furness Abbey the infant pupils follow a monk around the site and locate different rooms, library, kitchen, hospital etc and they enjoy exploring the immediate environment. These pupils have also visited the fire station, the local park, a candle factory and been on a train journey and these have improved pupils' understanding of their local environment. Junior pupils are learning about where they live and can identify some important buildings in Barrow, such as, the hospital, town hall, leisure centre and McDonalds. This is developing previous work and pupils show a good understanding of the location of different buildings. Less able pupils learn their address and telephone numbers. Very good teaching and knowledge of pupils' individual abilities, ensures that pupils learn very well and make good progress. They have also made a study of holiday destinations, leisure activities and completed a survey of holiday accommodation in the area. Younger secondary pupils are undertaking a local study of Walney Island. They consider why people came to the island and some grasp the physical limitations on lifestyle of living on an island. They show a growing understanding of the application of geographical ideas to social issues. They are learning about the location of different types of buildings within Barrow and the choice of housing styles. Pupils then try and plan their own town and identify essential buildings they would need. Analysis of work shows that older pupils and students have had opportunities to undertake a river study and compare, in a simple manner, the Thames and the Ganges rivers, looked at Europe, including France and Italy and holiday and leisure facilities in the area.

98 Teaching and learning are, on balance, good across the school. The best teaching occurs when the teacher uses the pupils' own experiences and understanding to demonstrate locations of important buildings in Barrow. Good teamwork in the classroom means that pupils receive the right amount of help, which enables them to complete tasks and learn well. Relationships with pupils are always good and this helps to keep pupils on task. Shortcomings in lessons occur when the teacher does not make sure that pupils are listening and their attention is lost or when the task is some way beyond pupils' understanding.

99 There is good guidance on what should be taught but little monitoring is undertaken to see how the subject is taught or is developed across the school and there is very little specific assessment at the end of each topic. Very good use is made of the local environment to carry out fieldwork and pupils and students are encouraged to use secondary sources of information, such as photographs and the internet to support their studies. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

## **HISTORY**

100 Infant and junior pupils' achievements in history are good and are satisfactory across the rest of the school. This is mainly because there is no clear structure to the organisation of the subject, in that some classes have discrete lessons and sometimes history is taught in an alternative module to geography. No lessons were observed teaching older secondary pupils and judgements about progress are made on the analysis of work and displays around the school. There has been some improvement since the last inspection.

101 Infant pupils visit Furness Abbey and are at the early stages of learning about past ways of life and look for very simple differences between the ruins and their own houses. A monk tells them about life long ago and this interests the higher attaining pupils, who are curious about the ancient sanitation systems. They enjoy dressing up as monks and this adds a lively dimension to the visit. Junior pupils have an exciting lesson about building methods in Ancient Greece as they attempt to build a structure using these old methods. The lively and enthusiastic teaching encourages the pupils and they enjoy themselves while learning. Younger secondary pupils think about the influence of the church in The Middle Ages and they use pictures to gain information about the reasons people attended church at that time. The long introduction to this lesson results in some pupils losing interest and not understanding the objective of the lesson. Other pupils learn about the Great Fire of London and consider the problems associated with the housing at that time and also recall what they learned about the Black Death. The activities however do not inspire the pupils and some lose interest when they go on for too long. In Post-16, students are currently learning about the Queen's Golden Jubilee and comparing her life with that of Queen Elizabeth I. They work hard and find this interesting and the good use of questions from the teacher means that they gain a wider perspective in that they learn when the potato was introduced and also discuss Shakespeare. Analysis of work and displays around the school show that pupils have undertaken a local history study of Barrow, the Norman Conquest and aspects of the Victorians. Young pupils have compared old and new toys and clothes in Tudor times and this gives them an idea of the passage of time.

102 Teaching is generally satisfactory with a balance of strengths and weaknesses. It is good or very good for infant and junior pupils when a more practical approach helps pupils to learn more easily. Good resources, which they handle carefully and opportunities to dress up as a monk, brings history to life for them. They enjoy these lessons and respond very positively. In all lessons, the very good teamwork and understanding between the teachers and the learning support assistants enables lessons to run well and pupils are confident and make good progress. When there is a sharp focus to the learning objectives and teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, lessons are lively and pupils learn well. Shortcomings in lessons occur when they are not so well prepared, work does not meet individual needs, some concepts are too difficult for the abilities of the pupils and time is wasted, resulting in few opportunities for pupils to learn.

103 Co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory and there is currently no overview of what is being taught or how well pupils are learning and there is no assessment done at the end of each topic, to tell teachers what progress pupils have made. The nationally developed P scales are used, by individual teachers, to record what has been taught but the data is not consistently used to inform curriculum planning although annual targets are set with the intention of raising standards.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

104 Standards of achievement in information and communication technology are mainly very good throughout the school. Secondary pupils and Post-16 students achieve very well and their progress is very good whilst the junior pupils make satisfactory progress.

105 Standards across the school show an improvement since the last inspection, when they were reported as being inconsistent, due to an improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' positive attitudes towards the learning of information and communication technology.

106 No observations could be made of the class with infant pupils and therefore no judgements can be made on the quality of teaching or achievements for these pupils. They are able to use subject related programs such as the Animated Alphabet and link that touching the space bar causes the screen display to change.

107 Junior pupils use information and communication technology to support their learning, mainly in English and mathematics. Using such programs as 'First Keys', they are able to reinforce their learning of initial letter sounds. They effectively use the Primary Maths CD ROM to recognise simple shapes and putting shapes into sets. A noted feature of the teaching is the good rapport between pupils and staff and this motivates the pupils to learn.

108 Younger secondary pupils develop their understanding of information and communication technology. The more able pupils use word processors and the other pupils use a symbolic and text communication program. Teachers make good use of questioning and encouragement to guide and enable their pupils' learning.

109 Most older secondary pupils continue with their word processing and are able to search the Internet for required information and to use the multi-media program Powerpoint. In one observed lesson pupils were able to control a Powerpoint presentation from a Smartboard. The very good relationship between teacher and pupils creates an atmosphere that encourages pupils' learning.

110 In the Post-16 class, good use is made of information and communication technology in the teaching of other subjects. This is a common use of information and communication technology throughout the school. During an observed program on spelling, using the computer program Starspell, students are able to type in their spellings from a keyboard on the Smartboard, while one student controls the program display, also using the Smartboard. Enjoyable learning experiences and challenge is created by the teacher, as the students work hard to complete their accurate spellings as quickly as possibly.

111 By the time students are due to leave school some students can make their own Powerpoint presentations, inserting digitised pictures and text and are able to use the multimedia computer to play audio CD ROMs. Some use spreadsheets and word processors and send and receive emails. Most of the students join in the termly production of the school's newspaper using symbols, from Writing with Symbols, text, and digitised photographs, produced by the students. They continue to develop their information and communication technology skills and undertake associated modules within the Youth Award Scheme.

112 Pupils' attitude and response towards the learning of information and communication technology skills, is very good. The quality of teaching is mostly very good. Teachers plan their lessons well, providing learning tasks appropriate to their pupils' learning abilities although sometimes, the more able pupils are not challenged and there is too great an emphasis on differentiation by support and not by task. Mostly, this means that the majority of pupils show enjoyment and interest in the lessons. Pupils listen to their teacher's instructions and working collaboratively or individually, they are keen to complete the given tasks.

113 Where the quality of teaching is very good the planning is detailed, lessons are managed very well and teachers make very good use of praise to motivate their pupils and questioning to guide their learning. Where teaching is less than very good, the teacher's lesson planning is not detailed and the pace of the lesson varies.

114 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory but there are issues that need to be addressed. Although referred to in the guidance for teachers on what should be taught there were too few observations during the period of the inspection of information and communication technology being used to support the access to learning of pupils with the most complex learning difficulties. There is insufficient assessment and recording of pupils' progress.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

115 Provision for French lessons for secondary pupils is satisfactory. Post-16 students experience French as a small part of their accredited studies. Good use has been made, in the past, to provide practical experiences, with a European day, where pupils join in, looking at slides and tasting food from different countries. The co-ordinator has good subject expertise and this is shared with colleagues in the school. The policy is supported well, by guidance on what teachers should teach, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Older secondary pupils make good progress in lessons and satisfactory progress over time. As yet resources are few, although Smartboard presentations are in place.

116 The use of a game, at the beginning of the lesson, encourages younger secondary pupils to say the French words and match to a picture on their card and a real object, for example a rock and a cloth. All pupils, with help, complete the task to match a well known French building with the French word, however, this is confusing with English instructions. All pupils behaved well and copied the words and tried to pronounce them. Pupils relate well to the pleasant manner of the teacher and learning support assistants. When the worksheets are the same and too complicated for most pupils and progress is slow. Good use is made of symbol cards, that gives pupils good cues to name family members. Pupils with more complex needs are not involved in the lessons and achieve very little except for the social experience.

117 Older secondary pupils enjoy taking the register in Spanish and German. The well planned lessons and good pronunciation of the teacher, encourages pupils to speak to each other in different languages. The routine of greeting, between staff and pupils at the start of a lesson, helps everyone to practise spoken French. The small step approach to learn ten words to name buildings familiarises pupils with the words to ask directions. The good use of different work sheets ensures pupils can match English and French words to a picture. A few pupils make good progress to name and recognise all the French words and as the lesson is well organised, pupils behave well, are very sensible and try hard.

## **MUSIC**

118 Standards of achievement in music are, on balance, good throughout the school. Pupils achieve very well and their progress is very good for juniors and upper secondary pupils and also by the students at Post-16. Younger secondary pupils make good progress and the infant pupils make satisfactory progress. The previous inspection did not come to any judgements on quality and standards, as insufficient lessons were taught during the inspection.

119 Infant pupils learn to recognise loud and quiet sounds when they are using triangles, cymbals and drums. The higher attaining pupils can recognise and name the instruments. Junior pupils are able to sing songs, some with different words for each verse, in tune and follow quite complex tempo using drums, tambourines and wrist bells. Younger secondary pupils enjoy the experience of using a range of electrical instruments. In a lesson, most pupils, supported by adults, are confident in handling the instruments. Working in pairs, pupils 'compose' short tunes. The higher attaining pupils are able to tune their guitars and experiment with sound pitch and tone. The teacher has good subject knowledge and gives the pupils clear guidance, which boosts pupils' confidence.

120 By the time students are due to leave the Post-16 provision, they are able to recognise and name different types of music such as classical, pop, folk, country and western. The students make good use of information communication technology. They listen to a variety of music and each demonstrate their likes and dislikes of the music by typing a score into a Smartboard display. The music is produced by recordings and is effectively saved into a multimedia computer. The very good planning of the lesson by the teacher and turning it into a 'jukebox jury' type of session, visually motivated the students.

121 Pupils' attitudes to their learning is mostly good. They enjoy and are interested in their music lessons. They have formed good relationships with their teachers and this encourages their learning. Pupils help each other and in particular, pupils help others with more complex needs to shake their wrist bells. Where pupils' attitudes and behaviour are less than good is when there is insufficient rigour in the lesson and pupils become disinterested in their learning.

122 The quality of teaching is good, overall, with some very good teaching and a small amount of satisfactory teaching. Where teaching is very good the lessons are well planned and confidently managed. Teaching also fully involves all pupils and uses their questions to reinforce or challenge their learning. In the satisfactory teaching observed, although the lesson was well planned the slow pace to the lesson results in pupils becoming restless, and slows down their learning.

123 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has only been in post for a few months and realises that there needs to be an evaluation of the organisation of music in the school's curriculum. There is no consistent approach to the assessment and recording of pupils' progress and achievements in the subject, between the termly assessments. There needs to be appropriate target setting and monitoring of the subject. The co-ordinator realises that the present National guidance for the teaching of music needs adapting, to be more relevant to the needs of the pupils.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

124 The provision for personal, social and health education continues to be good. The co-ordinators provide valuable guidance on what should be taught and this is applied in the lessons and has a positive impact on lessons and the routines of the school day. Regular time is given, in the secondary part of the school, to work with the careers officer and to citizenship. Good examples of time when pupils share ideas, involved younger pupils, in thinking about their friends. As this is taught time, it is necessary to monitor the use of time and what takes place in time-tabled activities, such as breaks and lunch-times. For example drinks time is a valuable social occasion for very young children to make choices and learn table manners but this is not always effective.

125 In most classes, registration time provides a valuable social start to the morning or afternoon where pupils and adults greet each other. Social occasions, such as a concert, provide a good time for rehearsal where pupils mix, talk, work and play together. Pupils with more complex needs react with smiles when they experience materials and listen to music and singing. Older pupils are encouraged well to work in pairs and share ideas, for example, in a mathematics lesson pupils estimate lengths and work together on their measuring tasks and recording results. The Board Meeting, managed by the Post-16 students to demonstrate their team enterprise initiative, illustrates their developing maturity. They discuss ideas for further enterprise opportunities and welcome support from their business partnership.

126 Fun games, in a group discussion, encourages junior pupils to take turns as the leader, where they enjoy thinking of different actions. The use of a friendship wall involves everyone in saying what their friends are good at, for example, swimming, telling jokes, dancing and writing. Pupils make very good progress, encouraged by staff, to develop their personal skills. They involve pupils with more complex needs and say they are happy and smiling. Older pupils are very interested in a discussion about the



effects of alcohol on the body. Pupils share ideas and make good suggestions for example “you would be dizzy, talk gibberish, be wobbly and have a headache”. An in depth discussion developed with the Careers officer, when pupils were asked to think about life events and what they think they might do in the future. They are able to think about the passing of time and things that have affected them, such as changing school and holidays. A challenging activity for Citizenship discusses reasons why people fight wars. The good use of Powerpoint slides promotes interest in the purpose of the United Nations. This is linked well to personal relationships, in a task to think about the impact of war, on innocent victims.

127 The guidance for teachers on what should be taught, is very detailed to include a full range of experiences and is supported by a good range of resources to include the healthy eating project, sex education and solvent abuse. The teaching of personal social and health education is well supported by valuable staff training. The school recently gained the Healthy School’s Standard’ which is identified as a priority in the school development plan. Progress by pupils is recorded in end of term comments and used to inform the annual review. Good use is made of the local authority resource centre and the community nurse.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

128 The provision for physical education is good and pupils make good progress that is an improvement since the last inspection. This is because the subject is well taught and the pupils are very keen to take part in the good range of activities. In addition, the subject is now managed by a teacher with a good knowledge of the physical education curriculum and she is well supported by the rest of the staff. All of the pupils are given the opportunity to go swimming, using a local leisure centre, and they make very good progress in their water skills. These achievements are celebrated by the whole school as the pupils share in each other’s success. The pupils are currently the champions of Cumbria’s Special Schools Swimming Championships. The pupils also have many successes in a similar annual event for athletics. The older pupils and students gain a great deal from the good range of outdoor activities provided by the school. Teamwork is a strong feature of pupils’ involvement in physical education as they work increasingly well in pairs or teams as they progress through the school. Pupils with the most complex learning needs are, where possible, involved in the activities and the co-ordinator is planning to further develop this level of participation.

129 Infant pupils make satisfactory progress when they roll the ball to each other in sitting games. Pupils are motivated when they are actively involved, whilst at other times a large percentage of the pupils disrupt the lesson. Some pupils show good progress in developing their confidence in the water. They are able to play in the Jacuzzi without armbands, following an initial fear of the water. Other pupils take part in the swimming at the leisure centre, with older pupils and make very good progress.

130 Junior pupils are effectively encouraged to warm up as part of an athletics lesson and particularly enjoy the variety of running and jumping exercises. They respond well to a range of instructions as they are asked to stop or change direction and quickly find a space when asked to. They make good progress in their hurdling, relay skills and standing jump. All of the pupils are included in the activities, and planning, for example, for extending basic co-ordination skills and participation with others, is effective. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in their confidence to accept the challenge of new skills. The teacher uses the available resources well and these are age appropriate and attractive, helping to maintain the pupils’ interest. The length of time for each activity is well thought out, as pupils enjoy their activities, yet keenly move to the next. The teacher has good subject knowledge and her enthusiasm is well supported by the skilled learning support staff. Pupils are encouraged to work hard and make very good progress in developing their Kwik Cricket skills, with an excellent attitude to their learning. Other pupils make very good progress in their water skills, at the local leisure centre. The pupils are given confidence and encouragement by personal assistance and they consequently make very good progress.

A number of the pupils can, with support, swim 10 metres and some can swim 25 metres. Their attitude and co-operation is excellent, which promotes very good progress. Pool supervision is of a very high standard and pupils can extend their skill in a safe environment. Swimming continues to be a strength of the subject across the school.

131 The younger secondary pupils make good progress. Pupils make good progress with their throwing and catching skills as part of a cricket skills lesson. They quickly warm up at the start of a lesson and this effectively includes a non-ambulant pupil. Boys and girls are well integrated in the lesson and a pupil with challenging behaviour, is proud to demonstrate his catching ability. Pupils do make progress, as the challenge of the catching increases and in particular they are willing to try new skills, following praise by the staff. The relationships between pupils are very good, for example, some of the more able pupils are willing to spend time and help develop the skills of other pupils. Pupils with the most complex learning difficulties relax and extend their physical skills as they pass a ball, with help, in circle games.

132 Older secondary pupils have the opportunity to make progress, in athletics, supported by a coach. Pupils are encouraged to make a choice of activity, which reflects their age and growing maturity. This process is well managed and the pupils usually have their first choice. Pupils are keen to be involved in power walking, jogging, keep fit or football. The staff are fully involved in these activities, which helps encourage the pupils to do their best. Many pupils are aware of the need to warm up before a game of football. The pupils sensibly select teams and both boys and girls co-operate well in the activity. Staff set a good example and effectively encourage pupils to be competitive, yet very fair. Pupils make good progress in their positional and tactical skills in football.

133 Post-16 students talk enthusiastically about their outdoor education opportunities. Leisure provision is particularly effective for the students. They enjoy the opportunity to take part in caving and understand the purpose of climbing ladders and the need for safety helmets. The students and older pupils climb in a local quarry and photographs of them climbing and abseiling clearly show that there is a good level of challenge in the climbs. The Bendrigg Challenge is an excellent opportunity for them to develop their team building skills, in difficult situations. There is clearly a very good team spirit and the students are very supportive of each other, for example, sharing their food. They have the opportunity to play golf, dry slope ski, canoe and go horse riding, as their experience of leisure pursuits in the wider community builds. Students continue to gain their swimming awards as they build up strength and stamina for their personal survival awards.

134 Overall, the quality of teaching is good with some very good teaching and a small amount of satisfactory teaching. Teaching is very good with the high expectations established in swimming and where excellent attitudes and motivation are promoted. Very good teaching, in relation to the Bendrigg Challenge, is linked to a high level of preparation, expertise and very good relationships. Good teaching is evident where expectations are made clear and teaching is enthusiastic. Teaching is satisfactory when, although pupil management is secure, some of the chosen activities do not maintain the pupils' interest.

135 The subject is well managed by a qualified physical education teacher and she has recently improved the organisation of the subject. A development plan has been produced which clearly outlines some well considered priorities for the next two years. This plan includes the need to develop an effective policy for recording and assessment, as currently pupils' progress across the school is not fully measured and recorded to guide planning. The co-ordinator does not yet have the opportunity to manage a budget and therefore she is unable to cost the developments. Resources are adequate for the teaching of the subject currently, but plans for the further improvement in the range of equipment are limited by inadequate storage facilities. The Physical Education Policy does reflect the school's commitment to the full range of National Curriculum Activities. A large number of staff have been involved in training, linked to physical education, extending the range of activities available to the pupils. The co-ordinator is well supported by other staff particularly in relation to outdoor education. The school is fully involved in a Sports' Action Zone in Barrow-in-Furness that promotes good links with mainstream schools.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

136 Achievements in religious education are generally good across the school. Pupils make good progress in lessons but progress over time is only satisfactory because insufficient time is allocated to the subject. Analysis of work showed that pupils are offered an appropriate range of experiences within the five major religions, they consider special places, books and celebrations and very good use is made of local places which have a religious significance. The youngest pupils thoroughly enjoyed being part of an assembly celebrating the festival of Wesak, a Buddhist celebration. They are led through the assembly by the teacher prompting and making good use of questions to involve all pupils. They develop a good awareness of the most relevant symbols associated with the celebration and their role-play enables others to improve their understanding. During a visit to Furness Abbey infant pupils learn something of the life of a monk and understand that it has been a place of worship. Younger secondary pupils are introduced to aspects of Judaism and consider the importance of the Ten Commandments as a moral code. They show interest in some Jewish symbolic objects such as a seder plate, a kippah and a scroll. Older secondary pupils discuss their visit to Buddhist community and relate what they have learned about that religion to their own lives. They begin to have an awareness of the 8 steps to Buddhism. No lessons were observed in Post-16 but students have studied special books, special ceremonies and celebrations and aspects of different religions.

137 Where lessons are well planned and the activities are appropriate to the age and understanding of the pupils, they learn well. This is seen during the very good assembly for all primary aged pupils, when the activities interested the pupils and the resources used brought the topic to life. In another lesson for older secondary pupils the follow up discussion from a visit to a local Buddhist community was carefully directed using questions to assess what pupils had learned but also extend their thinking about some essential Buddhist principles. The good selection of resources to illustrate aspects of Judaism are used well to encourage a feeling of respect and reverence and an improved understanding of the importance of symbolic artefacts. Very good support from learning support assistants ensures that pupils can concentrate on the tasks and maintain an interest in the lesson. However, when commercial worksheets are used they are not adapted to meet individual needs and not always marked or annotated as a means of assessment.

138 There has been some improvement since the previous inspection. The subject is well planned, ensuring a good range of learning opportunities for pupils and students. Guidance for teachers on what should be taught is linked to the schools' topic programme, that is also aligned to the guidance from the local authority. An improved tracking system for the subject would, however, see how much of the scheme of work is covered because the subject is allocated only a small percentage of time. In addition, primary aged pupils are taught through cross-curricular links and a weekly assembly and assessment is not used to measure pupils' progress at the end of each topic.

## **POST 16 PROVISION**

139 The school provides good, well-managed provision for the Post-16 students. Students are taught as a separate class so that they follow a discrete curriculum. This is underpinned by a clear philosophy with a particular emphasis on the students' personal development and this is a strength of the school. The aims of the provision give an appropriate focus on a more work-related curriculum and also effectively encourage aspects of very good personal development. This develops, in students, a good attitude to independent learning and an understanding that the decisions they make have certain consequences.

140 Students always make at least satisfactory progress in lessons. There is a high percentage of very good teaching which is characterised by very effective planning. Well informed classroom organisation acknowledges students' growing maturity and the curriculum aims to provide them with opportunities for making responsible choices. All students benefit from the teaching of the core subjects

of literacy and numeracy. They then have an input into constructing the remainder of their individual taught curriculum and this includes working for the Youth Award Scheme. The teacher and learning support assistants are sensitive to this developing maturity as they have high expectations for their progress. The staff's day-to-day relationships and interactions with students, encourage and promote self-esteem. This is evident during the inspection as students are pleased to confidently talk about their work.

141 Students gain vocational experience from a variety of work experience placements provided by organisations associated with the Community Action Furness programme. However, the school's links with other local educational establishments are limited, so that in this school year, students do not follow courses at local colleges. A Young Enterprise Scheme gives students valuable experience of running a small business, as the school has a number of small contracts, such as making bird boxes. These initiatives generate income and the business is managed via weekly Board Meetings that are chaired by the students themselves and attended by the school's external adviser from local business.