

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GREENGATE INFANTS' SCHOOL**

Barrow-in-Furness

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112205

Headteacher: Miss J Marshall

Reporting inspector: D Nightingale  
OFSTED Inspector Number: 18911

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September 2001

Inspection number: 194254

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: nursery and infant

School category: community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 7 years

Gender of pupils: mixed

School address: Greengate Street  
Barrow-in-Furness  
Cumbria

Postcode: LA13 9BY

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Appropriate authority: the governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr T Shuttleworth

Date of previous inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18911	Mr D Nightingale	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and Communication technology Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13450	Mrs J Madden	Lay inspector	None	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18344	Mr D Earley	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
3609	Mrs M Hulme	Team inspector	Foundation stage curriculum Art and design Design and technology Music Religious education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is for children aged 3 to 7 years and is smaller than many primary schools. There are 174 pupils on roll with more boys than girls by a ratio of 3 to 2. This includes the equivalent of 22 children full-time in the nursery. Children are taught in six classes with an additional class for the Nursery children. Information available indicates that when children enter the school their overall attainments are well below those expected of children of their age. Forty-six per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is well above the national average. There are 84 pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is above average compared with schools nationally. There are four pupils with statements of special educational needs and this is above average. There are no children from minority ethnic groups or with English as an additional language. The school is part of the Barrow Community Learning Partnership (Education Action Zone). Many children come from homes where family income is low. This has been recognised by government and European Commission grants to the area.

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

This is a good school, which is successfully raising the standards achieved by its pupils. As the result of well-considered teaching and the effective implementation of National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved. The overall quality of teaching is good, helping pupils to learn well and make good progress. Children with special educational needs receive very good support. Assessment information is used very well to help the school plan a high quality curriculum that meets the needs of all children very well. Children are cared for very well and the procedures for encouraging children's personal development are good. Parents are well informed about the work of the school and are appropriately consulted over some issues. A hard working staff and supportive governing body support very good leadership by a dedicated headteacher. The school benefits from the effective use of grants and activities of the Education Action Zone. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Children make good progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, as the result of the good teaching they receive.
- Children with special educational needs are given very good support, guidance and programmes of work.
- Very good use is made of very well thought out procedures for assessing children's attainment and progress to help children, including those at the Foundation Stage benefit from a very well planned curriculum.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership through personal example and commitment
- Parents have very positive views of the school and are well satisfied with the quality of education it provides.
- The school knows all the children very well and ensures that they receive a high level of care - this is reflected in the very good relationships in all classes.

#### **What could be improved**

- Consistently high challenge in the work provided in science in order to raise standards.
- The monitoring and evaluation by the governing body of important decisions and the effectiveness of financial decisions in order to better understand what needs to be planned to meet the school's future needs.
- Recording of major decisions by the governing body in the minutes of their meetings and including the implication of these in the school development plan so that they can be rigorously evaluated.

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

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

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in 1997. All the key issues have been successfully addressed and improvements have been made in other aspects of school such as teaching. Results

in National Curriculum tests have improved in the last year. Pupils now have more chances to use their skills and knowledge in investigative work in science, mathematical and design and technology. This has helped improve standards in these aspects of the subjects. Improvements in the provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development have helped further children's personal development. Topics in religious education are covered in more depth and children have some time for quiet reflection. Assessment and recording is now very good and includes tasks for assessing higher attainers. Resources, particularly in art, library and design and technology are now good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	E	E	E	E	well above average A
Writing	E	E*	E	E	above average B
Mathematics	E	D	E	D	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The table does not include results for the latest year, 2001, as no comparative data was available at the time of the inspection. In 2001, there was a significant improvement in the number of children attaining the expected levels in all three subjects. There was a particular improvement in the proportion of children achieving at the higher level. The percentage of children achieving at the expected level, or better than this, was very similar to the national average for 2000. Inspection evidence found that this improvement was sustained as most children were working confidently at the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics. Although teacher assessments showed standards in science to have improved in 2001, the proportion of children with a clear understanding of each topic is still just below average. Some aspects of children's work in art and design and in design and technology are of very high quality. Standards in swimming are very high. By the time that they leave the school, children make good progress overall and achieve well considering their levels of attainment when they start school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards achieving targets in their individual education plans (IEP). By the age of six, at the end of the Foundation Stage, children's attainment is typical of that expected of children of their age.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good relationships in the school lead to children's very good attitudes and enthusiasm for learning. They enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Children behave well in and around school. They are proud of the trust placed in them to behave responsibly.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Children take responsibility for themselves and the equipment they use. They willingly take on tasks to help around the school and classroom.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance levels are in line with the national average.

Pupils' positive attitudes to work and to school are reflected in their overall very good behaviour and the very good relationships within the school. The school builds well on the Foundation Stage where children are confident to tackle new activities, form good relationships, talk about their play and are very interested in what they do. In a few lessons, children become restless when the teacher does not sustain children's interest

through sufficient challenge in the activity or discussion. Pupils with special educational needs who find it difficult to sustain good behaviour are managed well so that they learn to accept rules and behave sensibly in lessons.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	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 overall good quality of teaching helps children to learn well. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. Teaching of English was very good in most lessons and the teaching of mathematics was good overall. Children under the age of six receive consistently good teaching.

Very good relationships between teachers and children underpin the good management of classes and help establish a purposeful working atmosphere. This motivates pupils to make good efforts to succeed in what they are learning. Teachers' good understanding of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies has helped them implement these very well so that children learn the required skills systematically and effectively. Teaching children in Year 2 in groups according to ability in English and mathematics is helping focus on children's needs and this, together with consistently good teaching in literacy and numeracy, is helping to raise standards. Teachers ensure classroom assistants are well briefed about what they are to do so that these staff very effectively support children, particularly children at the Foundation Stage, those with special educational needs and all children with reading. Very good use of assessment in lessons helps to support planning day by day and ensures children are given work that builds successfully on what they have learned. In some science lessons children do not consistently receive work to challenge their thinking.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school has worked hard and successfully to provide a broad and balanced range of very well planned learning opportunities for all pupils. The curriculum planned for children at the Foundation Stage is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Children's IEPs are well written with clear and achievable targets. These are reviewed regularly so that children's progress is carefully monitored.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Moral and social development are very good. Teachers use every opportunity to help children understand right from wrong. An orderly community encourages friendship groups and gives children opportunities to take responsibility. Children are given an awareness of other cultures and the need for tolerance and understanding.
How well the school cares for its pupils	School takes very good care of its children and offers a wide range of support and guidance appropriate for the age of the children.

Parents have very positive views of the school and are well informed about its activities and their children's progress. Parents are appropriately consulted on some issues. The school makes very good provision to ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum and opportunity to succeed. Very well planned opportunities for personal, social and health education, including citizenship contribute to the improvements in the school's provision for the personal development of children. There are good links with the community in order to support children's learning. The school works well with the playgroup on site and neighbouring infant and junior school in order to enhance the continuity of children's learning. Very good procedures for assessment are used very



well to inform planning. The care and protection of children is of a very high quality. Support and guidance for children with special educational needs is very good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	By personal example the headteacher gives very clear and successful leadership. She has the respect, confidence and trust of staff, parents and governors. Subject co-ordinators give good and sometimes very good leadership to their subjects. There is little delegation of other management tasks.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. The governing body conscientiously endeavours to fulfil their required role. However, it does not make appropriate record of important decisions in minutes of their meetings or include the implications of these in the school development plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are suitable procedures for monitoring subjects and standards. Strategies for evaluating significant decisions made by the governing body and of school development targets are not sufficiently rigorous to give governors a clear picture of their effect, the needs of the school and the actions needed.
The strategic use of resources	Effective use is made of resources to support teaching and of the available accommodation. Longer term financial planning does not take enough account of the growth and use of a substantial accumulated surplus.

The overall leadership of the school is good, particularly by the head teacher and subject co-ordinators. The school's aims are reflected well in the daily life of the school. The governing body is supportive and interested in the work of the school but it has not identified a means by which it can formally evaluate the implications of major decisions it has made in the short term and in the long term. Consequently, its long-term strategic planning is not as well informed as it should be. Although it applies the principles of best value to purchases, it does not evaluate enough the outcomes of financial decisions. An appropriate number of experienced and qualified teachers are supported by a well-qualified team of teaching assistants who make an important contribution to the standards achieved, particularly in reading and of children with special educational needs. Classrooms are generally of a good size and good use is made of available space. Resources overall are good and very good in art and design, physical education and design and technology.

## 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>• Their children make good progress</li> <li>• They feel comfortable to approach the school with questions or concerns</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best</li> <li>• Their children like coming to school</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents felt the amount of homework set was too much for the age group</li> <li>• Some parents felt that there was not a range of interesting activities outside of lessons</li> </ul>

Parents justifiably have very positive views of the school. They feel welcomed and involved in their children's learning. Parents feel the school offers their children a good education and provides a caring place for them to learn. Their views about homework and activities out of lessons are supported by the inspection. There are no extra-curricular clubs although the curriculum is supported by a number of interesting visits and visitors. The expectation that children will read at home every day is sound but too many other activities are given each week.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. Standards in **reading, writing, mathematics** and **science** have risen significantly in the last year. Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in **2000** was well below the national average in **reading, writing** and **mathematics**. These results were mostly consistent with those achieved in previous years. Comparison with the results of similar schools showed pupils' performance to be well below the average achieved by those schools in reading and writing and below the average in mathematics. Few children attained at the higher level (Level 3) in reading and mathematics and none achieved it in writing. Results of the tests in **2001** showed a noticeable improvement on previous years, particularly in the number of children who attained the higher level in each subject. Although no comparative information for 2001 was available at the time of the inspection, the school's results were close to the national average for 2000 in writing and mathematics and just below that average in reading. The statutory teacher assessments in **science** show a similar trend with a marked improvement in the number of children judged to have attained the level expected for their age and an improvement on the number achieving at the higher level. This improvement has been brought about by a combination of factors. Since the appointment of the headteacher in January 2000 there has been a clear focus on improving writing which has proved successful, as has the decision to teach children in Year 2 in groups by ability for literacy and numeracy lessons. This also builds on the effective implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Evidence from the inspection shows this trend in improvement is being sustained with the children currently in Year 2. Results showed that there was little significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls.
2. The attainment of children when they start school is well below what would be expected for children of their age. They make sound progress in the Nursery class and good progress overall in the Reception classes. By the end of the Reception year, most children attain the nationally agreed standards in the early learning goals for mathematics, communication, language and literacy, personal and social development, creative development, physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of Year 2, children have built on this good start so that their progress overall by the time they leave the school is good and in some aspects of their work it is very good.
3. More children than is average nationally are identified as having **special educational needs** and in need of additional support. Although this influences the overall standards achieved by the school these children make good progress towards the targets set for them in their IEP. Several children make sufficient progress as to no longer need additional help, although the school keeps their progress under regular review. Pupils who have problems

sustaining good behaviour or concentration are well managed so that they participate fully in activities. The sensitive support children with special educational needs receive enables them to achieve well in lessons.

4. The inspection found standards in **English** to be about that expected for the age of the children. Given the low level of language and communication skills of many children when they start at the school this marks good progress by the time they leave the school. Seven-year-olds speak increasingly confidently and clearly when taking part in small discussions. Most children read accurately, using a range of suitable strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. The more able children read appropriate books fluently and with suitable expression. They write in a range of styles according to the purpose of the task.
5. In **mathematics**, standards were about those expected of children of their age. Given their low levels of attainment when they start school children make good progress by the time they leave the school. Most children have a sound understanding of number processes by the age of seven and use this to help solve problems and explore number patterns. The more able children work confidently with numbers up to 100 while the lower achieving children consolidate their understanding working with smaller numbers. Most children use appropriate measurements to find the length, weight and capacity of a variety of objects. Many children recognise the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes although the lower achieving children are familiar only with two-dimensional shapes.
6. Standards in **science** are below those expected of children by the age of seven. Most children work at tasks at an appropriate level but a number of children show that they have not fully understood the ideas behind the work. Most children have a sound understanding of scientific enquiry through the simple tests that they carry out. They have an appropriate knowledge of living things and of materials and their properties but are less sure about the physical processes aspect of the curriculum. Standards in science have not yet improved enough.
7. Standards in **information and communication technology (ICT)** are in line with those expected for seven-year-olds. They have developed appropriate skills and understanding of all the required areas of learning, including the use of the Internet. Pupils make effective use of their ICT skills in other subjects. Literacy and numeracy skills are also used well to help children's learning in other subjects. Standards in **religious education** have been maintained since the last inspection and are consistent with what is expected in the local 'Agreed Syllabus for religious education'. Children have a growing understanding of world faiths and of how what people believe influences their lives.
8. Pupils attain standards expected for their age in **art and design, design and technology, geography** and **history**. These are improvements on standards reported at the last inspection and reflect good achievement by children given

their general level of attainment when they start school. It was not possible to see enough music lessons or evidence to make a judgement on standards in **music** and **physical education** although children achieved well in the swimming lesson seen.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes to the school are now very good, an improvement since the last inspection when they were good. Pupils are very happy coming to school and enjoy the school day in the enthusiastic and supportive atmosphere. This enjoyment equally applies to children in the Foundation Stage. The start of the school day is orderly and friendly with pupils in Year 2 registering themselves. Pupils settle quickly and quietly to work. During lessons, they are mostly interested and eager to take part and confidently contribute to discussions. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the support they receive and enjoy the tasks they are set.
10. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school has remained very good since the last inspection. Parents are happy with this situation. In lessons, pupils respond to the very good management strategies employed by the staff and the good teaching. During playtimes and lunchtimes, behaviour is similarly very good with no evidence of rough or oppressive behaviour during the inspection. There have been no exclusions from the school during the last academic year. Pupils of all ages, when moving around the school unsupervised do so quietly and purposefully and are clearly proud of the trust placed in them. Children who have behaviour targets as part of their identified special educational needs respond well to the support given so that they take a full and active role in lessons.
11. Relationships within the school are now very good - an improvement since the last inspection when pupils were respectful and polite but found it difficult to co-operate. They now collaborate effectively and in a Year 1 design and technology lesson it was good to see them talking to each other about the task as they worked. These very good relationships are now a motivating factor in learning with pupils feeling confident enough to try new activities in the Foundation Stage and in Year 2 to volunteer suggestions knowing the teacher values their opinion. All children know that the adults in school will value their answers and efforts. The very good relationships pupils have with lunchtime supervisors are based on their knowing them also as playgroup leaders or classroom assistants and as a result, they feel confident and secure.
12. Pupils' personal development is good. They change quickly and independently into their physical education kit in the Reception class, concentrate for the whole session, and respond with confidence to the work. Pupils tidy away after lessons, collect their own equipment during lessons and take messages around the school. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes use the *planning board* to record and choose their activities during sessions. In Year 2, children begin to undertake independent learning. During the inspection a good example of children using their initiative was seen when

a Year 1 pupil noticed that the wrong register had been delivered and used initiative to take it to the other class to exchange it. Pupils collect funds for those children less fortunate than themselves by taking part in such activities as Red Nose Day and delivering Harvest gifts to older members of the local community.

13. Attendance for 1999/2000 was satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average. However, an analysis of figures for the academic year 2000/2001 shows a slight drop in overall attendance and a rise in both authorised and unauthorised absence.

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

14. The quality of teaching is good and makes a significant contribution to the good quality of pupils' learning and to improving standards. Teaching was good or better in 69 per cent of the 36 lessons seen. In 19 per cent it was very good and one lesson was excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection when six per cent of lessons were less than satisfactory and only seven per cent very good or excellent. The teaching of English was very good. Teaching of children in the Foundation Stage was good as was teaching in design and technology and mathematics. Not enough lessons were seen in art and design, geography, history, ICT, music and physical education to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching in these subjects.
15. Teaching of children under the age of six is good. In the Reception and Nursery classes, good planning based on teachers' very clear understanding of what children need to learn ensures that children experience a range of suitable activities. Well-organised classrooms help children to confidently choose activities. The very good relationships established in the classes motivate children to try hard and want to please. Classroom assistants in the Reception classes make a valuable contribution to children's learning particularly in the way they involve themselves with children in role play to help extend children's use of language and to assess their progress. Their involvement leads to children making better efforts, for example, in learning how to control writing tools. Their friendly approach helps children feel secure and happy. The headteacher works well with the Nursery staff to ensure lessons are well prepared and organised. The effective involvement of adults in the Nursery children's activities establishes very good relationships. This increases children's interest in their work and helps to extend their level of concentration for example, when helping children recognise *more* or *less* when sorting objects in a mathematical activity. In both Reception and Nursery classes good use is made of resources to effectively help children gain early skills.
16. One of the main strengths in teaching is the very good relationships between teachers and children. It establishes a purposeful working atmosphere in each class so that children settle sensibly to work. Children contribute confidently as they know that whoever they are, their efforts will be valued. The management of pupils is good. Teachers set high expectations of good behaviour and took appropriate steps to ensure children responded properly. As a result children listen attentively and sustain good levels of concentration in most lessons. When children show signs of disruptive behaviour this is dealt with effectively as in one lesson where the teacher used praise well to encourage appropriate behaviour.

17. Where teaching is very good the teacher's subject knowledge is used very well to give clear explanations. For example, in an English lesson in Year 2 the teacher's very good knowledge of letter combinations helped children to extend their knowledge of how certain letter combinations evoke certain sounds such as *splish* and *splash*. In most lessons, teachers show a good understanding of what is to be taught and they are confident to use new equipment to enhance children's understanding. For example, in ICT lessons, teachers' clear explanations showed a good understanding of the programs being used and helped children, particularly the more able to work independently on the computer.
18. In the best lessons planning is very good. Consequently lessons are well structured and flow at a good pace. This helps children work at a good pace and produce appropriate amounts of work. The good planning of most lessons develops the plans devised for each subject well for individual lessons. The objectives of the activity are shared with the children so that they have a clear understanding of what it is they are to achieve. How the work will be adapted for the different abilities within the class is usually identified so that all children benefit from the lesson. Teachers take account of the contents of the IEPs of those children with special educational needs when preparing activities. As a result, these children take a full and active part in lessons. Planning more suitable activities for children's ability is a major advantage of the placing children into groups according to their ability in Year 2 for English and mathematics. In mathematics, for example, the teacher of the lower ability group was able to pace a lesson better so that all the children were actively involved in all parts of the lesson. As a result, no children felt unable to contribute nor were any children given work without enough challenge.
19. In the very good lessons, teachers have high expectations of what children can do. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 1, the children responded well to the teacher's expectations that they would discuss a story sensibly in pairs. They talked animatedly remembering to use sentences correctly. Through good use of questions teachers also challenge pupils to think as well as ensuring all children are involved. For instance, in an English lesson with Year 2, children were prompted to retell the story as the teacher carefully spread the questions around to ensure all children were required to answer.
20. A lively and interesting delivery captures the imagination of children in many of the best lessons. Most teachers use their voice well to create a suitable atmosphere or to enhance the telling of stories. For example, in a mathematics lesson with Year 1, the teacher used a puppet and hushed voice to engage children's interest so that they listened quietly and attentively. By imaginative use of the puppet, good explanations were given so that the children had a much clearer understanding of counting backwards. Teachers ensure that the pace of these introductions is sustained so that children's interest is held. Tasks are clearly explained so that children know what is expected. The more able children usually settle to work independently. When relevant, good use is made of demonstrations of techniques. For example, in a design and technology lesson children explained why it was important to use a hole-punch in the correct way as the result of a clear demonstration by the teacher. In other lessons, particularly English, teachers provide a good model for handwriting. This encourages children to achieve similar standards.
21. A feature of most lessons is the very good use made of the support staff and other adults. This enables the teacher to focus attention on the groups most needing support or on a key activity. Children with special educational needs benefit particularly from the support of classroom assistants who ensure children understand tasks, guide them with their work and ensure that they maintain good levels of concentration. The learning support assistants also play an important role in helping children achieve the targets in their IEPs.

22. Good use is made of assessment of children's work both during lessons and through marking. This helps teachers to plan suitable activities for each day. A good example of this was seen in a mathematics lesson when the teacher amended the original plan in the light of children's difficulties the previous day. In lessons, teachers support groups to see how well they are doing and offer guidance when needed. At the end of the best lessons, a short discussion is used well to consolidate what children have learned and to assess how successful they have been. Teachers rarely refer to the lesson objectives to help children assess for themselves how well they have done, which would improve the quality of the teaching even further.
23. In most lessons, resources are well organised so that children have what they need to hand. Very good use is made of some resources in the introductions to lessons, such as the artefacts to support a story being used in a science lesson. This helps to give children a better understanding of what is being studied. Good use is made of ICT in many lessons. For example, understanding of the styles of different artists is enhanced by children's attempts to draw in the style of artists such as Lowry using a suitable program. Mathematical skills are improved by the use of program requiring a speedy response.
24. Homework is set in each class. Children are expected to read every day and to complete another task. Although parents generally support this, many feel it is too much for young children. Inspection evidence supports this view. Reading each day is appropriate but children are expected to do other work too often each week.
25. Although teaching overall is good there were some weaknesses in a few lessons. Planning is not always clear so that the lesson occasionally lacks the necessary pace and rigour for children to learn effectively. When setting work for children the teacher does not always follow the activities planned and this results in work that is not of sufficient challenge. This occurred in a science lesson, particularly for the more able who finished quickly and were given an undemanding colouring activity. The planning indicated more demanding tasks could have been set. In this lesson, the worksheets provided did not help develop the more able children's thinking about the topic. Teachers are not always aware of what all children are doing. In some lessons, children on the edge of the class lose concentration when they are not fully engaged in what is happening. In a few lessons, some groups do not work with sufficient concentration because they are left unsupervised for too long. This sometimes means that opportunities to develop children's understanding are also missed. The short discussion at the end of lessons was not always used effectively to assess the progress children had made or to give children feedback on how well they had done. A disadvantage of children moving to work in groups arranged by their ability was noted here as in some lessons teachers did not have sufficient time for this as children had returned from the other class. A few lessons did not start promptly.

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

26. The school does all that it is required to do in teaching all the subjects of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. It is very successful in providing a broad range of very well planned and balanced learning opportunities. These meet the needs of all pupils very effectively, including those with special educational needs. Teachers have worked hard to make good links between the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. The school works very hard to ensure that all children have equal access to all the subjects of the National Curriculum and have equal opportunities to succeed in them. Even though boys



outnumber girls the school provides for them all equally and there is no significant difference in their attainment.

27. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented and this is significant in helping to raise standards. Good provision is made for children to use their literacy and numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in geography, Year 1 children listen to stories about journeys and Year 2 children write interesting accounts about Buddhism. In history they begin to appreciate different points of view when they use their literacy skills to read and interpret Christopher Columbus' diary. Year 2 children use their mathematical skills in history and geography. For example, they sequence the development of old and new household objects in learning about the passage of time and work with maps using coordinates. In science children produce graphs about eye colour. Children use computers to develop skills in spelling and number work, enhance their artwork and to help with understanding of work in geography. Examples of these were seen Year 2 where children used computers to produce artwork after the style of Jackson Pollock and in Year 1 where children used digitally produced photographs in their map work.
28. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good. These pupils have full access to the curriculum and receive very good support, particularly during literacy and numeracy lessons. Children usually work alongside their peers but have additional guidance from teaching assistants. In some sessions pupils work on activities designed specifically to meet the targets set in their IEPs. Teachers and assistants are careful to ensure that the children do not miss out on work when they are withdrawn for additional support. The special educational needs co-ordinator works closely with teachers to produce well-written IEPs. Targets are clear, as are the criteria for judging how successful children have been. These are reviewed at regular intervals, at least once a term, progress analysed and new, relevant targets set.
29. The school has very well planned schemes of work for personal and social education and for education about citizenship. These are linked well with other subjects of the curriculum so that children's understanding is enhanced. For example, in art and design children talk about the choices they make and in design and technology they learn to share tasks within a group. Children learn how to communicate using ICT and extend their understanding of the wider use of computers. In religious education, children learn that different people have different beliefs and forms of worship. In science and physical education, children learn about hygiene and healthy life styles. The school does not have a formal programme of sex education. Appropriate information is provided when questions arise and children are encouraged to develop respectful and caring attitudes to themselves and others. Education about the uses and abuses of drugs and about healthy lifestyles is soundly taught through the personal and social education programme and in science.

30. Although children do not have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular clubs the school provides a wide and stimulating range of visits outside the school in order to enrich the curriculum. These include visits to such places as The World of Beatrix Potter at Bowness, a cruise on Lake Windermere, Abbott Hall Museum, Kendal and the Aquarium of the Lakes. In a similar way, the school welcomes visitors into school. These include such people as a storyteller, puppeteers, former teachers, musicians and an artist in residence. Good use is made of the local community to enhance children's learning. They study the local area and visit a local supermarket as part of their work in geography. They visit the local church and Buddhist temple at Conishead Priory, in their work on religious education. The school maintains useful links with local businesses. For example, a local firm supported Year 1 work in the design and production of shoes. Representatives of the local community such as the police, railway police, fire brigade, a dentist and a postman come into school to work with the children. The school makes very good use of a nearby swimming pool. This excellent provision enhances the physical education programme. The school maintains good links with partner institutions. There are close links with a local playgroup who use the school premises. This enables staff, parents and children to maintain close contact. The school liaises closely with the neighbouring infant and junior school in order to enhance the continuity of children's learning and to ensure that children move smoothly onto the next stage of their education. Although part of the swimming lessons take place at lunchtime there are no other sporting or musical clubs such as a choir to develop children's interest and abilities.
31. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development has improved, as it was unsatisfactory at the last inspection. Provision for cultural development has improved from satisfactory to good and that of moral and social development has been maintained at very good.
32. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily throughout the school. Collective worship meets legal requirements and offers sound provision for spiritual development. For example, pupils are given opportunities to reflect on how to show caring and kindness. The school fosters children's imagination particularly through the teaching of art and religious education and sometimes uses music for the spiritual dimension that these subjects can offer. For example, in religious education children reflect on the Buddhist festival of Kathina and on their own inner life through relevant stories and poetry. By studying events, stories and traditions of world faiths, particularly Buddhism, in religious education children become familiar with the values and beliefs of others. They have a growing understanding of why Christians pray and that the way they lead their lives is based on the teaching of Jesus. Work in such subjects as art has given children an appreciation of the wonderful aspects of the world such as plants and flowers when they make observational drawings. When thinking about those people who are special, children were engaged in the challenging task of making a patchwork quilt about those special in school.

33. Pupils' moral development is very well promoted throughout the school. Worship has a moral dimension and moral messages are given to pupils through, for example, the stories presented which incorporate issues of hasty judgements of others and forgiveness. Teachers discuss with pupils the standards of acceptable behaviour and the reasons for them and moral development is carefully and consistently reinforced within the personal, social and health education programme. Some stories, such as *Dogger*, help them consider the feelings of others by understanding how they would feel. When they compose prayers children ask for help in showing kindness to one another and in keeping others safe from danger. Particular use of drama in assemblies has reinforced the need to be honest and children's responses show that they have a good understanding of what is right and wrong behaviour and why.
34. Provision for social development is very good. The school is a very orderly community where pupils greet each other and visitors in a friendly manner and pupils are helped to develop an awareness of how to relate to people in different circumstances. They understand the importance of rules that allow all to live in harmony and each class has made its own set of rules that is accepted by all. Work in the personal and social education programme has enabled children to discuss friendship and understand whom especially cares for them and who in our society shows care for all of us. Their writing in religious education has incorporated friendship recipes and how to treat others as in the story of the *Good Samaritan*. Although there are no extra-curricular activities, the school encourages a range of friendship groups and offers pupils opportunities to take responsibilities; for example, Year 2 children are involved in register responsibilities to all classes and the headteacher allocates tasks to other year groups which are suited to their age. In addition, there is a system of merit awards and rosettes for special kindness to others to achieve. Children are encouraged to show care for their local community when they sing carols for local senior citizens at Christmas and donate produce to them at Harvest Festival time.
35. Provision for cultural development is good. All pupils are encouraged to appreciate and celebrate their own culture through the work of a variety of artists and by listening to and appreciating classical music. Celebrations are used well. For example, when the school was 50 years old and on World Book Day when children experienced bedtime stories with hot chocolate and biscuits. Regular assemblies celebrate children's birthdays. Children visited artists at work in the local Grizedale forest and invited them to visit the school and share their knowledge of art techniques with Reception classes. In addition, pupils become familiar with a range of famous artists and the artefacts from other cultures. For example, there are displays of work inspired by African and Aboriginal art. Pupils learn about different types of music of other countries such as the use of drums in African music. In physical education, they enjoy Morris dancing typical of Britain and that celebrated in other countries such as Brazil. In learning about the festivals of Islam such as Eid-UI-Fitr, children appreciate why they are celebrated and special to a religious group of another culture.

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

36. The school takes very good care of its pupils; this is an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. All pupils are well known throughout the school to their teachers and the support staff. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are very good. Potential problems are recognised at an early stage and sorted out as quickly as possible. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises with a wide range of outside agencies including the speech therapist, support unit for complex difficulties and the hearing impaired unit. Classroom support assistants are used well to support groups and individuals in the classroom.
37. Health and safety around the school is regularly monitored in a general way by teachers and the cleaner-in-charge and, more specifically, once a year by the headteacher and governors. The school has good arrangements for first aid including a fully equipped first aid room. Pupils are well supervised whilst at school and great care is made to ensure pupils leave school only when their designated adult arrives to collect them. The school has a personal, social and health education policy in place written with a clear focus on the safety of children. There is, however, an issue of the permeating and widespread smell coming from the Year 1 toilets, which has eluded the best efforts of the school to solve. This seriously detracts from the pleasant learning atmosphere the school is at pains to create. Child protection is well developed with a policy providing good guidance for the staff supported by regular training and updates.
38. The promotion and monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. The school rewards those pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance. Attendance is monitored and parents are contacted by telephone when pupils fail to appear for an unspecified reason. During the spring term of 2001 the school wrote to the parents of all those pupils who had been absent for more than 20 sessions. This led to an excellent improvement in their attendance. This exercise will be repeated during the autumn term of 2001. Registration is handled efficiently and registers are kept up to date.
39. Behaviour monitoring and the procedures for promoting behaviour are very good. Strategies are based on a sensible policy, which defines the school's approach and lays out procedures. This underpins the very good behaviour of pupils in the school. In the classroom, potentially disruptive pupils are handled effectively ensuring that lessons run smoothly. The inspection took place early in the school year when it was clear that teachers and classroom assistants were taking every opportunity to remind pupils of the high expectations they had of their behaviour. Those pupils who find it difficult to behave consistently well are supported by specially made up booklets to help them progress to a more routine set of classroom behaviours. Staff consistently record their concerns about behaviour and any incidents which may occur. These are noted by the headteacher and action taken as necessary. Parents have no worries about the school dealing appropriately with any issues, which may arise.

40. Procedures for assessing children's attainment and progress are very good. Teachers make an assessment of children's skills when they enter the nursery and plan for their individual and group needs. The use of assessment is particularly effective in the reception classes and records provide evidence of how the information is used. When these children are assessed at the end of the Foundation Stage there are now clear indications as to how well children are expected to perform in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2. Plans are made to provide additional support so that children will do as well as they can. In lessons, progress is monitored and assessments are used to plan what needs to be learned next. Records are detailed, clearly identifying strengths and weaknesses. Analysis of pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests is used to discover strengths and weaknesses and these are remedied. The headteacher is keen to track reading levels monthly enabling teachers to have early warning of any problems so they can take steps to solve them. Those children with special educational needs are identified early and appropriate support provided. As improvements are made children may be removed from the special educational needs register. Their progress is monitored by the co-ordinator and new targets set for their individual education plans when they are ready to move on. Assessment is also used well to identify children who are higher attainers and this has been successful in helping group children in Year 2 for literacy and numeracy lessons.
41. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The school makes every effort to accentuate the positive aspects of each pupil's life by highlighting their personal skills through assemblies, rewards and celebrations. Pupils' personal progress is recorded from their time in the playgroup attached to the school through to them leaving the school and moving to the junior school. Close liaison with the junior school ensures that pupils are familiar with their new school and its teachers before they move. Complete records are passed over to the school and teachers from the schools liaise to make sure each pupil is well known to their new teachers.

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

42. Parents feel the school is very good. They are most pleased with the teaching, feeling their children are making good progress because of working hard to achieve their best. Parents also feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. Their children like the school, which is helping them become mature and responsible.
43. Parents also say they are kept well informed about their children's progress and that the school works closely with them. Behaviour, they feel, is good in a well-led and managed school. Parents are less sure that children get the right amount of work to do at home and are unhappy about the range of activities provided outside lessons by the school. The inspection found that parents have a good knowledge of the school and agreed that pupils are getting a little

too much homework and that some out of school clubs could help further develop pupils' experiences.

44. The school has very effective links with parents. This is an improvement since the last inspection. These good links begin when children first enter the school nursery. Members of the staff visit parents and children at home to ensure the school has as complete a picture as possible of each child. This helps parents and children get to know about the school. Pupils' entry is phased in over two to three weeks and parents are fully involved in this first experience of their child's life at school.
45. The prospectus is well set out and gives parents a clear picture of the school. Letters and newsletters to parents are informative and keep parents up to date with school life including the curriculum for the following term. Annual reports to parents are satisfactory giving a clear picture of each pupil's achievements and abilities. Parents are given the opportunity to have a formal meeting with teachers in October and June. They are also able to talk to them informally at the beginning or end of each school day, an opportunity which helps increase the partnership between parent and teacher in the child's education. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed when there is cause for concern and kept well informed and involved in reviews and the setting of targets. One child's parents commented on how pleased they were with action taken by the school to help with their child's problem.
46. The school has made considerable efforts to encourage parents to help in the school but this has been largely unsuccessful for reasons that are not entirely clear. Parents are consulted by the school on some issues such as homework and the formation of an After School Club. As a result, the school has applied for a grant to set up a club that will be run in the school under the direction of a committee of parents. The school has yet to take action on the recent consultation on homework. However, those parents spoken to take pride in their involvement with reading and other homework. They are provided with booklets in which to comment on their child's progress and other matters of concern. Where parents support their children's homework this has a beneficial effect on their child's learning.

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

47. One of the main reasons for the recent improvements made by the school is the very good leadership of the headteacher who is clear about what needs to be achieved in order to raise standards. By personal example, hard work and commitment to the school the headteacher gives purposeful leadership. Consequently she has the respect, trust and confidence of staff, governors and parents. Since her appointment in January 2000 there has been a significant improvement in the school's results in the National Curriculum tests. This has enabled the headteacher to initiate changes and to support staff through national initiatives such as the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the performance management of teachers. The success of the school's aims in providing a caring place for children to learn where they grow into mature individuals as well as in raising standards is evident through the work in classes.

48. The development of subjects is successfully delegated to co-ordinators who are well organised and provide good and, in some subjects, very good leadership. They have very successfully developed high quality planning for each subject as well as devising very good systems for assessing children's attainment and recording their progress. The recently introduced monitoring procedures ensure that each subject is regularly evaluated by lesson observations, reviews of teachers' lesson planning and, only in some subjects, looking at samples of children's work. Consequently co-ordinators are clear about the priorities for their subject. There is, however, little delegation of other management roles to staff and the school has not appointed a deputy headteacher. Although this does not currently affect the smooth running of the school it does leave it vulnerable should the headteacher be absent for any length of time.
49. The governing body supports the work of the school and conscientiously endeavours to fulfil their required role. Sensibly organised committees provide the governing body with good opportunities to discuss many important issues. The work and discussions of these committees and of other important discussions is not adequately reflected in the minutes of the governing body meetings. Notable omissions include records of discussions and decisions to approve the school budget, the school development plan and important staffing issues such as the decision not to appoint a teacher for the nursery class. The absence of a record of these decisions in the minutes or in the school development plan means that there are no formal strategies for the effective and rigorous evaluation of the effects of these decisions on the work of the school.
50. Many governors visit the school regularly or are involved with the day-to-day work of the school. This gives them a sound understanding of what the school does well. They fully discuss the targets in the school development plan but they do not have strategies clearly set out in this plan to help them effectively evaluate decisions they have taken. This is exacerbated by the absence of the implications of key decisions, such as that not to appoint a deputy headteacher, that affect the longer-term development of the school. Consequently governors do not have a clear enough understanding of what could be improved.
51. The school development plan sets out proposed developments over a three-year period although it omits issues important to the running of the school. The decisions on staffing are good examples of this. An annual management plan develops the key targets well but it does not include the action plans produced by the subject co-ordinators. The targets for development that are included in the plan are appropriate and focus on raising standards and improving what the school provides. The school is generally successful in meeting these targets. These aspects are straightforward to evaluate through observation of work completed or by examination of National Curriculum test results. There are no criteria for judging the effects of some of the decisions that have no such clear ways of judging success. An example of this is the decision to appoint a special educational needs co-ordinator rather than a deputy headteacher. Although this post is clearly successful there has been no formal evaluation as to what benefits have been gained from the post and whether there are any disadvantages to having no deputy headteacher. They rely too much on the headteacher for information to help evaluate these issues. Together with the staff, the governors are committed to continuing to develop the school and they have the capacity to succeed and make the necessary improvements.
52. Financial planning overall is sound. The headteacher provides the governing body with a draft budget that takes account of the needs of the school for the coming year and utilises the resources which are available. Longer term planning has been less secure as a substantial amount of unallocated money has been allowed to accumulate. Although the governing body explained what a large proportion of this money was intended for there is no record of this in the school improvement plan or governing body minutes. A substantial part of this surplus has been used to

support staffing in the current year as the funds available have declined due to falling rolls. This was not, however, the main reason given for the accumulated surplus. Although the governing body discuss the implications of a falling roll there is no clear strategy identified in the school improvement plan to manage the expected reduced budget. This needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency to avoid the need to make significant decisions during the financial year as happened this year.

53. Grants, particularly those made available through the Education Action Zone, and funds for special educational needs are used to good effect for the purposes for which they were provided. There is a sound understanding of the need to ensure “best value for money” in providing resources. At a practical level expenditure and operating costs are closely monitored but at a more strategic level the governing body is not yet evaluating the educational outcomes of all its spending strategies. Taking account of the available resources, the improvements made by the school and the quality of education provided, the school provides good value for money.
54. Financial and school administration are sound. Office routines are well organised and appropriate financial controls are in place. The efficiency with which the school office is run enables the staff to concentrate on the central purpose of teaching pupils and developing their learning. Computers are used effectively to support administration. Although the secretary is responsible for placing and processing orders, the headteacher manages the day-to-day administration of the school budget. As the school does not purchase the support services of the local authority finance department this places an additional burden on the headteacher.
55. The school has an appropriate number of experienced and qualified teachers to deliver all aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Children at the Foundation Stage are taught by suitably qualified teachers in the Reception classes and by experienced and trained nursery nurses in the Nursery class. There is no co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage but the headteacher maintains a regular overview of the work in the Nursery, spending two days a week teaching there very successfully. Teachers are supported by a well-qualified team of teaching assistants who make an important contribution to the standards achieved, particularly in reading and of children with special educational needs. Staff development, appraisal through the successful introduction of performance management of teachers, and induction of new staff are effectively organised.
56. The school buildings are well maintained by the governing body, although many ceilings show the effect of damp and the toilets near Year 1 classes are extremely smelly. Classrooms are generally of a good size, with some being very spacious. Good use is made of available space with small rooms available for reading and other group work as well as a suitably stocked library from which the older children regularly borrow books and mathematics games. Resources for supporting teaching and learning are good overall. They are very good in art and design, physical education and design and technology. The school has a suitable number of computers and available grants are to be used to increase the number available. The school has benefited from resources provided by the Education Action Zone. Examples of this are the Interactive Whiteboard; help with creating writing corners and resources for role-play. The Action Zone has also helped provide other opportunities children would not otherwise have had, such as working with an artist on a visit to Grizedale Forest.

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

57. The school should:



- Raise standards in science by:
  - planning activities in lessons that consistently challenge pupils' thinking (*paragraphs 6, 25*)
- Improve the governing body's understanding of the needs of the school and of the implications of their decisions by:
  - recording all decisions made by the governing body, particularly approval of the annual budget and the school development plan;
  - including implications of major decisions in the school development plan so that they can be rigorously evaluated against agreed criteria;
  - developing strategies by which the governing body can monitor the effects of their decisions and the progress of the school development plan;
  - implementing strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of the management of the school budget. (*paragraphs 47,48, 50-53*)

#### **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Review the amount of homework set each day. (*paragraphs 24, 42*)
- Consider ways of providing children with activities outside of lessons (*paragraphs 29, 42*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	17	11	0	0	0
Percentage	3	19	47	31	0	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 three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	152
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	70

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19	65

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	31	24	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	20	25
	Girls	15	16	21
	Total	38	36	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (64)	65 (59)	84 (86)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	21	19
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	31	35	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56 (59)	64 (67)	60 (57)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

## Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	99
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

## Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26

### Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	215

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60
Number of pupils per FTE adult	22

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.3

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.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
	£
Total income	457746
Total expenditure	446181
Expenditure per pupil	2493
Balance brought forward from previous year	39043
Balance carried forward to next year	50608

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	181
Number of questionnaires returned	123

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	28	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	79	20	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	32	1	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	27	12	3	4
The teaching is good.	77	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	35	2	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	20	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	24	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	40	8	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	60	29	2	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	31	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	25	16	7	19

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

58. At the time of inspection the Nursery children had just begun to start school with a few starting each day. The first day of inspection was their first day too and there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about the present standards in the nursery. Some work was provided from the previous year but this was limited, as most had been taken home in line with the school's policy that children take work to share with their families. The Reception children had been in school for just two weeks and were still getting used to the new class routines. Teachers have to complete the baseline assessments of what children know, understand and can do when they enter school, within six weeks and therefore some time was being used for this activity during the inspection. As it was so early into a new academic year, the samples of work provided by the Reception year related to that of the previous year. Evidence from teachers showed that last year, children's attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage was typical of that expected for this age. The majority reached the early learning goals and the faster learners were working at the early stages of the National Curriculum
59. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Improvements have been made in the quality and use of assessment. Children are tested soon after they enter school and very good use is made of this information to help teachers' planning. The school has worked hard to implement the new Foundation Stage curriculum with the result that it provides a curriculum of high quality which is beginning to help raise the standards children achieve.
60. Teachers' assessments show that when children enter the Reception year, despite the work in the nursery, attainment is usually much lower than might be expected for their age. Over the years, attainment on entry has varied but often it was low and last year, in a group of 50 children, only one child had some knowledge of letter sounds, two could read a few words and several could recognise their own name. Later, it was found that in this group there were 50 per cent of children with special educational needs. A new programme of teaching letter sounds was introduced to the Reception classes last year and this has helped improve the situation. By the end of the year, almost all of the children knew all the letter sounds, average readers were at levels appropriate for their age and the above average children were working at the early levels of the National Curriculum. When teachers tested their reading ages the more able children had reading ages that were above that expected for their age. Very good systems for identifying children with special educational needs mean that concerns are noted early and appropriate support provided. As a result these children make good progress.
61. The same programme was used in the Nursery last year and teachers expect attainment on entry for Reception children to be better this year. However, some observations of baseline assessments being undertaken during the

inspection show that although the faster learners are at an appropriate level expected for their age there are many others who are not. Children are still having difficulties controlling a pencil and many of their drawings are at a level expected for a three year old. Many do not have the words to describe what they have drawn or compose a caption for the teacher to write but some make marks although few are recognisable letter shapes. In the numeracy activities, more able children count to ten and identify which set has more or less objects and match two identical shapes but many others have great difficulty and cannot complete the tasks.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

62. The ten children who had just started the Nursery at the beginning of the inspection showed confidence at leaving parents because they had already met the nursery staff on home visits and their parents were friendly towards staff and had a positive approach to starting school. With support from the adults children take an interest in the *planning board* where they can select from the activities provided. Children readily involve themselves in the play and experiment with such activities as sand, play dough and small construction toys. The children in the Reception classes are becoming familiar with the new routines and are confident in using the *planning board* to select their first activity although some need reminders about what to do when they move from one activity to another. They show confidence when trying new activities such as using headphones to listen to sounds and matching the sound to some picture cards. They are forming good relationships with one another and readily co-operate in role-play in the home corner. Every day children socialise for snack time and Nursery children show confidence in selecting a drink from the refrigerator, choosing from the selection of snacks provided and enjoying them in a group, sometimes talking about their play. Many have attended the playgroup, which is next door to the Nursery so this routine is familiar to them.
63. The quality of teaching for this area of learning is good in both the Nursery and the Reception classes. Although there is no regular nursery teacher the two nursery nurses are very experienced and show a good knowledge of the provision needed to enable children to reach the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. As Nursery children show interest in the activities the adults talk with them about what they are doing and this is effective because they become more confident, begin to relate well to others and spend longer experimenting and exploring new materials acquiring new knowledge and skills. The nursery nurses work well as a team and have a consistent approach to the children, which makes them feel secure and happy in the classroom. In the Reception classes the lesson planning is good and clearly shows what children are expected to learn. The activities are explained carefully resulting in children having a good understanding of what they have to do and even at this early stage in the term they were able to get on with the tasks without constantly looking to adults for help. In all classes of the Foundation Stage, the adults have already established very good relationships

with the children which makes them want to please their teachers by trying hard and they delight in sharing their successes.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

64. Using language for communication is seen as a high priority in all classes of the Foundation Stage. Those who have attended playgroup are more confident at speaking in the Nursery but responses are often just one word and some children are still at the stage of listening to adults but reluctant to make a response. Many of the Reception children have had a year in the Nursery and they use language for practical purposes to express their wants and needs as well as in taking turns and making comments about what they have heard. Teachers are still at the stage of reinforcing these skills after the long holiday break but it is evident that children enjoy listening to stories, singing songs and rhymes they have heard and recreating roles and experiences. It was too early for adults to introduce Nursery children to work related to linking sounds and letters but it is planned for later in the term. Children are becoming more aware of how letters and sounds link together and some were able to say the sound of the initial letter of their name. Teachers of the Reception year had begun to assess what children know, understand and can do but this was at a very early stage. Some children found it hard to talk about their family and drawings showed that many had fewer skills than would be expected for their age. In one class, the majority were unable to compose a caption for a drawing but there were some who could do this and make attempts to write letters although these were not legible. Evidence from last year's work showed that overall, children's attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage was typical of that expected for this age. The majority reached the early learning goals and the faster learners were working at the early stages of the National Curriculum. Given the low starting points for these children their progress was very good.
65. The quality of teaching of this area of learning is good in all classes. Work is competently planned and shows that teachers have a good knowledge of this aspect. Teachers organise the activities well and plan carefully for the new knowledge and skills they want children to learn. Support staff are well briefed and have a good understanding of how their involvement helps children to make good progress. The best progress was always made when children had an adult working with them. The adults manage the classes well and children are becoming more aware of what is expected of them and how their behaviour needs to be good so that others can get on with tasks. Most children show good attitudes and behaviour but when they get excited they still have to learn about controlling their voice and actions. Teachers are very conscientious and provide homework for the Reception children. This is mainly worksheets with some other tasks as an alternative. There is too much of this type of work and it is unsuitable for the age group.

### **Mathematical development**



66. In the Nursery class children are offered a range of mathematical experiences through play. They are beginning to sort objects and some put groups of animals in 'fields' because they are the same colour or the same type. They are using number language, for example, 'one', 'two', and 'how many' and 'big' or 'small'. They recite number rhymes to develop an understanding of number and have numerals around the room as well as those they can handle. The use of some computer programs is helping them recognise numbers and small quantities and as they make objects with play dough they count how many there are. At snack time they successfully select one or two items to eat and know that one drink is one carton of milk. In the Reception classes children choose activities from the *planning board* such as the computer when they count the number of objects they move around the screen and in the home corner when they lay the table, providing one item for each person there. During the inspection the teacher was assessing their ability at observing groups of objects and determining which was more or less. The more able children did this by looking but others had to count the objects and some were unable to find out at all. When shown four shapes only the more able children selected two that were the same. Many found this difficult. Children observed two groups of teddies and, by counting, some were able to say how many altogether but many found this difficult. The majority could count to five and some could go beyond to ten or more. This group could remove three teddies from a group of five and say how many were left but most were not at this stage. Samples of written work provided from the previous year of Reception children showed that, overall, children's attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage was typical of that expected for age, with the majority reaching the early learning goals.
67. Overall, the quality of teaching in this area of learning is good in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Teachers' competent planning and the way they introduce the sessions shows they have a good knowledge of the subject and what type of activities will enable children to gain new knowledge and skills. Many opportunities are provided for children to learn through play and adult involvement assists the progress children make as they are skilled at questioning to probe understanding and extend thinking. In one Nursery/Reception class, children were discussing what was happening in a picture about supermarket shopping and such questions as, "What might mum be saying?" and "Why is dad looking like that?" encouraged responses of their own shopping experiences and what happened in supermarkets. However, much of the written work seen of the previous Reception year showed too much use of worksheets because teachers are concerned about having records of what children can do. Although records are necessary this need only take the form of teacher's assessments of children engaged in practical activities as they do need lots of purposeful play and practical mathematical activities at this stage. The overuse of worksheets should be discontinued.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

68. Owing to the time in the new school year and teachers' focus on assessments of children's attainment on entry, there were few opportunities to observe the

teaching of this area of learning. There was sufficient evidence to show that children have opportunities based on first hand experiences that encourage exploration, observation, prediction, discussion and decision-making. Children enter the Nursery with a very limited basic knowledge. However, such activities as water and sand play help children discover that sand feels different when mixed with water and can be used imaginatively with small world objects to create stories. They experiment at filling bottles with water and controlling its flow as they pour it into a smaller container. They experiment with the mouse to try and make changes on the screen of the computer. In their role-play they discover how to use a telephone or a cash register when others buy items. By the Reception year they have a basic general knowledge and understand more about the place where they live and what has happened to them since they were babies. They can name parts of the body and some parts of a plant. They have greater control of the mouse and some are using the computer with greater confidence and recognise letters on the keyboard. Children were seen to select resources to construct and build and had made simple maps of their home area showing the park, houses, school and garage. They talk about events in their lives past and present and what is happening to members of their family.

69. Few activities were seen of the teaching of this area of learning so no overall judgement is made of the quality of teaching. However, planning of sessions and discussions with teachers show that in all classes children have a place to learn with a wide range of activities indoors to stimulate their interest and curiosity. The Nursery shares an outdoor area with the playgroup and relies on the shared equipment being put out each day. The Reception classes have no designated space as yet but this is planned. Adults support children well in investigating their surroundings.

### **Physical development**

70. There was no opportunity to see children engaged in the imaginative development of outdoor play although evidence shows that it is planned for in the Nursery. As there is no designated space for Reception children outdoors their activities take place in the hall. They show awareness of the needs of others in the space around them. In the one lesson seen children made very good efforts and their movements were well controlled. They showed confidence as they moved with co-ordination. Individuals were keen to demonstrate their skills. In other activities, children show developing skills in cutting and sticking, making models and objects. By the Reception year they can use writing implements but at the beginning of the year often lack the skill to use them well for such tasks as writing and painting. This improves by the end of the Foundation Stage.
71. There is no overall judgement of the quality of teaching but in the lesson seen it was very good. Time was built in for changing clothes and many children coped with this well independently. Effective use was made of a musical instrument to direct when children were to stop and start and they responded

well. The very good relationships and management of the class resulted in good behaviour, children moving safely and following directions carefully. The teacher made good use of demonstration but children found it difficult to find the appropriate word to describe jogging. Supporting adults were deployed well and provided good role models for the children. Particularly good use was made of the teacher's voice, which kept the session calm and orderly.

### **Creative development**

72. Children start from a fairly low level of skill when they enter the Nursery and make good progress throughout the Nursery and Reception years. At the beginning of the year, they use paint that is already mixed at Nursery and by using brushes or their fingers they explore the medium. Children experiment with inks on blotting paper creating baskets of flowers. By the Reception year, they have greater control of tools and they explain the characters in their paintings. They are particularly good at role-play, largely due to the way that adults support and extend the opportunities. They cut and stick using a range of materials to make collage pictures. Children know the names of percussion instruments and handle and play them correctly. They are learning how sounds can be changed and respond to what they hear. Much enjoyment comes from singing songs they have memorized to the accompaniment of instruments they have chosen. All classes have a music corner and children experiment with sound. In the Nursery they use a range of instruments that shake but have a wider range at the Reception class to compose their own simple tunes.
73. The quality of teaching is good. Particular strengths are in the valuing of children's ideas and not expecting them to reproduce someone else's picture or model. The enthusiasm of adults in the role-play of the house or shop is infectious and children are eager to sell the adult goods from the shop or make a dinner in the house. Particularly good use is made of talk, which extends their vocabulary and knowledge.
74. There is no co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage and the work in the Nursery is overseen by the headteacher who works there part-time. This limits the school in monitoring the work of the Foundation Stage in a similar way to that in which it monitors the National Curriculum.

### **ENGLISH**

75. By the end of the Year 2 children's attainment in reading, writing and speaking and listening is in line with national expectations. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection in reading and writing and an improvement in speaking and listening. It is consistent with the 2001 National Curriculum tests which show a marked improvement when compared with the results for the previous three years. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress by the time that they leave the school.

76. The improvements in attainment are a consequence of the very hard work by all staff and the very effective strategies the school has in place for the teaching of English. The National Literacy Strategy has been thoroughly implemented. The school has in place very comprehensive systems for assessing children's work. These are used very skilfully to set clear school, group and individual targets for improvement for all children, including those with special educational needs. The arrangement for teaching English in classes according to ability in Year 2 has helped to improve the attainment of children of all abilities. The school has improved its resources of reading schemes, library and class reading books since the last inspection in order to extend learning opportunities. Participation in the Early Language Support and Family Literacy schemes has helped to raise standards. The work of the classroom support assistants in Years 1 and 2, both in and out of classes, has also contributed to the raising of standards. A further significant factor in improving standards achieved by the school is the quality of teaching. The overall quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and mostly it is very good. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.
77. Many children come into school with limited speaking and listening skills. As they move through the school, most pupils increase their skills in listening attentively. For example, during assemblies or when responding to the comments of staff and peers in role-play most children listen carefully. They speak increasingly clearly and confidently when, for example, Year 2 children describe their favourite part of a story and Year 1 children respond to the suggestions of others in small group discussions on sentences.
78. Most children enjoy reading and are eager to improve. By the end of the infant stage most children read with understanding. For example, Year 2 children confidently explain the plot of a story and describe characters to visitors. They read accurately and know how to use a range of strategies such as letter sounds, the use of pictures and the meaning of the text when meeting new or unfamiliar words. Higher achieving children read fluently with expression and know how to use contents and index when locating information from books. Lower achieving children work hard to improve their skills but read much more hesitantly and with less understanding. Most children make good use of their reading skills in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, Year 1 children read about holidays in the past in their work in history. This extends their reading and enhances their understanding of other subjects.
79. As they move through the school, children extend their ability to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. They write stories, letters, lists, accounts, diaries and poems. By the end of the infant stage most children's writing is logically sequenced and meaningful. For example, in Year 2 children write useful book reviews or reflect on their impending move to a new school. Many children are beginning to use writing frameworks effectively in order to bring structure to their writing. More able children write imaginatively and for example, in Year 2, work on retelling traditional stories, using speech marks consistently in dialogue. Most children develop their ideas in sentences, punctuating them accurately with capital letters and full stops. However, the

school is aware of the need to provide further opportunities for children to include interesting and imaginative vocabulary in their writing. Most children spell simple words correctly and higher achieving children spell more complicated words accurately. Lower achieving children do not spell accurately and show difficulties in the co-ordination of their handwriting. By the end of the infant stage most children's handwriting is usually legibly formed, consistently sized and joined.

80. Most teachers have very good subject knowledge. They use this well to explain clearly to children so that, for example, children in Year 1 develop their understanding of how to use capital letters and full stops in sentences. In Year 2, the teacher supporting lower achieving children uses her knowledge of the text to help children to extend their vocabularies. Most teachers have a very good understanding of how to teach basic skills, so that for example, children in Year 1 model their handwriting on the teacher's and quickly learn to recognise letter combinations. Teachers make good use of the Literacy Framework in their planning so that they and their children know clearly what is expected. When they share the lesson objectives with children, as for example in work on familiar texts in Year 2, children are helped to understand what they have to learn. Most teachers are very skilled in presenting work that is suited to children's differing abilities. For example, in Year 1, higher achieving children use the computer efficiently in order to extend their spelling skills, whilst lower achieving children are given work to reinforce their skills in following words from left to right across the page.
81. Teachers control children very well so that pupils usually behave very well and work hard. Occasionally, when some teachers become involved with one group of children, the pace of work of some children in other groups begins to slow down. Teachers generally have high expectations. For example, Year 1 children respond positively when they are asked to discuss their work independently with other children. Occasionally children are given unchallenging work such as colouring in. This does not, for example, extend their knowledge and skills in letter combination. Teachers make very good use of classroom support assistants both in and out of the classroom. These provide thorough and well-planned support for children of all abilities and for example, enhance their work in role-play and reading. Teachers use on going assessment very well in order to ensure that children build securely on previous knowledge and to help teachers with planning. For example, a Year 2 teacher adapted the way in which she taught letter combinations following her assessment of children's understanding in the previous lesson. Children's work is marked regularly and most teachers' comments are supportive and helpful in advising children what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. This helps to raise standards. When this is not done children are less clear about how they can make progress. Relationships are generally very good. This helps to enhance children's confidence and eagerness to work. For example, in Year 2 children are confident to retell a story because they know that the teacher will respect their contributions.

82. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and provides very useful support for colleagues. She works very hard to organise the subject and to monitor teaching and learning. She has a clear understanding of what the school needs to do in order to raise standards and has played a significant part in the improvements the school has made.

## **MATHEMATICS**

83. Although standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection in 1997 test results show that there has been an improvement in the last year. Overall, pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age. Given the general low levels of attainment when children start at the school, they make good progress in their mathematical knowledge and understanding by the time they leave the school at the age of seven.
84. While some children with special educational needs do not reach the standards expected for their age, they make good progress. Where IEPs identify targets for improvement in mathematics these are usually successfully achieved as the result of the extra support children receive. The decision to group children according to their ability in Year 2 for mathematics lessons has been beneficial to these pupils. For example, in a lesson with the lower achieving group the teacher was able to match the oral mathematics session closely to what the children needed to do in order to consolidate learning in a previous lesson. The pace of questioning and activity helped these children to learn more effectively as their attention was more clearly focused.
85. Most seven-year olds are competent in using numbers up to 100. They know that the place a digit has in a number indicates its value, although the lower attaining children are not always sure about this. Although the work is recorded accurately on worksheets, children do not always have enough practical experience to help reinforce their understanding of this work. Pupils add and subtract numbers involving tens and units. The more able do this successfully while the less able have limited success when adding a single-digit number to a two-digit number. Children begin to understand multiplication through looking at number patterns and counting on in regular units such as 2, 5 and 10. The more able begin to record simple multiplication sums. There is little evidence of pupils developing an understanding of division. Children develop a suitable knowledge of different types of measurement. They record the time using both analogue and digital forms of recording. The more able children calculate what time it will be one hour later. Children acquire an appropriate vocabulary to compare measurements through classifying objects as *tall, long, wide, high, heaviest* or *lightest*. They measure distances using metres and centimetres, weigh objects and find out how much containers will hold. The children in the more able set identify the properties of different two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes while the children in the other set recognise the common two-dimensional shapes. Although the more able children recognise right angles in shapes there is little evidence of other work on angles.

86. The last inspection identified a need to improve children's ability to use and apply their mathematical knowledge. This issue has been addressed, partly through the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. The more able children respond well to these challenges. They explore number patterns, such as looking at odd and even numbers, finding quick ways to add 9 and discover numbers given information such as "more than" or "less than". Lower attaining children find it harder to apply their knowledge to different situations and consequently are less successful with the activities provided.
87. The overall quality of teaching is good and this has a beneficial effect on children's learning. The introduction of grouping according to ability in Year 2 has helped teachers to focus work more closely to the needs of the children. As a result, the more able children have activities which extend their knowledge while the lower attaining children have more time to consolidate their learning. This has been one reason for the improvement in standards over the past year. Planning for individual lessons is based on a published scheme which teachers adapt well in the light of their assessment of what children have achieved. This also ensures that activities are suitably planned for the different levels of attainment. A good example of this was seen in Year 1 where the teacher set more appropriate targets and activities for a lesson. In the best lessons, teachers tell children clearly what it is they are expected to learn. This helps children know what it is they will be doing. In some lessons, teachers do not always follow parts of the planning, such as not using suggested resources, which would have benefited children's learning. Teachers' good understanding of what they want children to learn is noticeable in the clear explanations they give. These ensure children clearly know what they are to do and through careful questioning teachers know which children need extra help.
88. Teachers generally make good use of resources. For example, in a Year 1 class the teacher had well prepared written statements so that children could write in the appropriate numbers as the teacher carefully encouraged children to "count on" to make a larger number as an early introduction to recording addition. As a result, children had a good understanding of what they would do and the more able worked independently and successfully at the tasks set. Teachers use a range of successful strategies to maintain children's interest in the oral number sessions. With the younger children, number songs successfully help children build their understanding of counting back while the older pupils respond well to a game of number bingo where they need to quickly identify numbers up to 100. Classroom assistants are used very effectively to support children, particularly those with special educational needs. This ensures that these children understand the task and work with sustained concentration. During group activities some teachers are not always aware of what some groups are doing. As a result children do not maintain their concentration and become restless as no adult is there to help keep them on task and take opportunities to help develop children's knowledge. For example, a group sorting shapes did not gain as much as they could have done from the activity as they worked unsupervised and opportunities to question why they had made choices were missed. In some lessons, the short discussion at the end of the lesson is not used effectively to find out what children have learned and to give children an understanding of how successful

they have been by comparing what they have achieved with the lesson objective.

89. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been a significant factor in the improvement in standards. The curriculum is very well planned and is well supported by very good assessment procedures. These ensure that teachers know what it is the children need to learn so that they can better plan their lessons. Planning is linked very well to the work of children in the Foundation Stage. Good use is made of ICT in lessons to help develop children's mathematical knowledge. For example, in Year 1, children used a program which required a quick response to simple addition sums. This helped to improve children's accuracy and speed in answering questions. Resources for supporting teaching and learning are good. These are used well when giving explanations. However, in some activities children do not always have apparatus that would help clarify their learning, for example, when looking at recording numbers as tens and units. A well-qualified and experienced teacher effectively leads the subject. The co-ordinator has started to monitor the teaching and learning in mathematics although this is at an early stage of development. Lessons have been observed, planning and records scrutinised but the co-ordinator does not see samples of children's work often enough. There is a clear Action Plan for developing the subject in the current year but this is not included in the school development plan and has no identified criteria for evaluating the success of the targets set.

## **SCIENCE**

90. Standards in science are just below those expected of children of their age by the time they leave the school. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection although there have been improvements in pupils' ability to conduct investigations. Given their attainment when they start school children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress by the time they leave the school in their understanding of scientific ideas. .
91. Through the development of planning sheets teachers help children to conduct investigations into aspects of their work in science. These sheets help children to plan their experiment, identify how the test can be made fair, predict possible outcomes and provide a way to record results. Good examples of this were seen in the work children undertook in a test on bouncing balls, in their investigation into whether the size of a boat affected the speed at which it travelled and investigating if magnets would still work through different materials. The more able children have a good understanding of the need to make tests fair and make sensible predictions as to what might happen. Other children know about fair tests but need help to put it into practice.
92. By the age of seven, children know that humans need food to stay alive and that some foods make a healthier diet than others. Most children know the difference between living and not living, although some of the lower attaining children are not secure in their understanding of this. Their knowledge of life cycles is improved when they sequence pictures to show the life cycle of a plant or a butterfly. The more able children have a good understanding of different materials. They know that they can be in various states such as solid, liquid or gas and observe carefully how some



materials change when heated, for example when melting chocolate or boiling an egg. These pupils know that materials can change shape through actions such as stretching or twisting. Although other children have experienced the same work their understanding is not as secure. Children have a more limited understanding about physical process such as sound and light, forces and electricity.

93. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. Planning for individual lessons is clear and develops the themes set out in the plans for each half term well. This ensures that children develop a systematic understanding of ideas. In a few lessons, teachers do not follow the planning closely with the result that children are not provided with tasks of sufficient challenge. Teachers' knowledge of what is to be taught is generally sound and this helps them provide good explanations about the topics. Teachers use resources effectively to capture children's attention and sustain their concentration. For example, when looking at healthy foods, children in Year 2 followed the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* closely because the teachers had models of all the foods. They were fully involved in the story as they placed each model in healthy or unhealthy categories. Not only did children enjoy the story, they were interested in talking about why foods were healthy. When resources, such as ICT, do not work efficiently teachers sensibly adapt the lesson to focus on what it is they want children to learn and achieve this by a different means. For example, when the Interactive Whiteboard failed to operate the teacher returned to class and set about building a graph of children's eye colour on a chart. This ensured that children maintained their focus of recognising similarities and differences between themselves. Children concentrated well on this task and worked quickly to produce a pleasing result. In most lessons teachers manage the lesson well. There is a sensible balance between teacher explanation, well chosen questions and pupil activity. Sometimes the children are confused when the teacher does not use precise vocabulary. In some lessons the activity provided does not give children enough challenge in making them think through the ideas. For example, when classifying foods children were asked to complete a worksheet when a more suitable activity that involved children making decisions about foods was available. Children who finish quickly, mainly the more able children, are not provided with further activity to develop their knowledge and understanding. For these children colouring the worksheet was not a task of any significant challenge.
94. Very good assessment procedures are linked closely to a very well planned curriculum. Planning for the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage is linked well together. These ensure that teachers have a secure knowledge of what children have learned and helps them to improve the planning for topics and individual lessons. ICT is used effectively to support children's learning in science. For example, in Year 1, the Interactive Whiteboard was used effectively to show how information they had gathered on the colour of their eyes could be recorded using different types of graph. This helped children further their understanding of different uses of information technology. It also helped with developing and using their mathematical understanding. A good level of resources, including consumable items, is available to enable children to conduct investigations. A well-qualified and experienced teacher provides

very good leadership to the subject. Teaching and learning in science is sensibly monitored through observation of lessons, scrutiny of teachers' planning, looking at samples of children's work and analysing assessment information. The clear Action Plan for developing the subject in the current year is not included in the school development plan and has not identified criteria for evaluating the success of the targets set.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

95. Only one lesson was observed in this subject but there was a considerable range of work available to show that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. By the time children leave the school, standards are at least typical for children of this age and in some aspects children do better. Children produce some good work in this subject. Observational drawing of flowers is of good quality and when children are inspired by the art of other cultures, such as African and Aboriginal they make very good efforts to create their own representations in those styles. They have been interested too in the work of European artists and the techniques they use. For example, Year 1 children were introduced to the work of Van Gogh and discussed his style of using small strokes in his painting. As a result of this, when making portraits using paint or pastel, they used his technique with some good quality outcomes. Additional learning opportunities are provided to enhance the subject. For example, a class of Reception children visited Grizedale Forest for a day to work with a local artist who then came into school to work with the children. This resulted in work of a high standard, which is to be used in a display in the town.
96. The school values the artwork of all children whatever their ability and displays a selection of pupils' work in frames. Children with special educational needs take a full part in this subject and samples of their work show that they have worked carefully often using great detail in their creations. Support staff were observed encouraging children and by talking about the task they extended their understanding and kept them interested. Each year a child from Year 2 receives a cup for the most outstanding artist and a selection of their work is framed.
97. No overall judgement about the quality of teaching can be made as only one lesson was observed but in that lesson teaching was good. The work of Lowry had been discussed in a previous lesson and children were interested in the characters he used and how he depicted them. In the previous lesson, a colour wash had been prepared and this paper was now ready for children to create their own representations in the style of Lowry. Children are acquiring new knowledge and skills as they ask and answer questions about their work and develop ideas. The children's enthusiasm has spread to home and one child's parent has researched the subject on the Internet and offered the school information and prints of Lowry's paintings. The teacher's input has enabled children to improve their work. For example, buildings are drawn smaller at a distance.
98. The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has held the responsibility for three years and has worked hard to improve standards and

extend assessment. This has improved since the last inspection. Assessments are recorded once children have undertaken two or three pieces of work and the information is used to adapt or repeat some aspect of a lesson or to plan additional support for those children who have shown that they need it. Some assessments may lead to changes in the yearly planning when discussed with all staff. The co-ordinator meets with the relevant governor and keeps them up to date on developments in the subject, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. There have been opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe lessons and she has provided feedback to teachers on any improvement that would extend pupils' learning. Resources for the subject are very good and include cultural artefacts from around the world.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. At the last inspection standards in design and technology were judged to be unsatisfactory but this is not the case now. Overall, standards by Year 2 are typical of those seen in other schools but there is also work of a high standard.
100. Children in Year 1 have designed and made shoes of very good quality. Using lathes from a local factory and a wide range of excellent materials they designed a shoe and made it with a decorated finish. Some are quite exotic and show the influence of Eastern cultures. The inspiration of stained glass windows resulted in the use of a silk painting technique and children created a flower design and transferred this onto silk using paint and an outliner. The fabric could be held to the light and made children wonder at the effect. Particularly good work has been happening at Year 2 to design a playground. To do this, the children were taken to a local park to try out equipment. They discussed their likes and dislikes about the equipment and made models of what they liked including those with moving parts such as a roundabout and swings. During the inspection they were working hard to make a piece of equipment from a given design and found this task more challenging than they had anticipated.
101. Standards have improved because the co-ordinator has planned activities for the scheme of work that children find exciting such as designing and making a healthy sandwich and working in small groups to make a bus. The buses showed variety and were well constructed with good finishing techniques. At the last inspection, the making of a jack-in-the-box was criticised because they all looked the same but the examples seen this time were varied, used more than one type of material for construction and finishing techniques had enhanced the finished product. Occasionally, weakness in the subject arises when less attention is given to the design aspects of an activity and the lesson mainly emphasises the making aspect. This was the case when children in Year 1 were learning to assemble and join components to make a body with moving parts. Although they completed the task well and were successful in making a simple moving figure, the body parts had been prepared previously and heads had the faces of characters from the reading scheme books.

Although children accepted this some said that they would have liked to design their own character.

102. There are plans to involve the children in developing the school outdoor area by linking this subject to the design aspect of art. Children are to work with artists in school to create mosaics and decorated pebble areas and then will design and make a new area outdoors.
103. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The way that the subject is introduced and explained indicates that teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and they make clear what they want children to learn. The very good relationships between teachers and children are a motivating force for learning. Children want to please their teachers and make good efforts. Safety aspects are emphasised and teachers manage the classes well. This leads to children who listen attentively and then know what to do. Occasionally, when some children are restless and less keen to be involved it is handled well by teachers. They deploy supporting adults effectively, particularly with children with special educational needs. This keeps them interested. Occasionally, the pace is slow and other activities detract from that planned. A difficulty was observed in a Year 2 class where the teacher was trying to interest children in two subjects at the same time as coping with swimmers coming and going. Those engaged in the design and make assignment did their best but were sited near the door which was distracting since they were engaged in tasks on the floor. The teacher provided good input but had insufficient time to give to this activity, which was more challenging than children had expected.
104. The management of the subject is very good. There is an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has taken care to link the work of the National Curriculum to that planned for the Foundation Stage resulting in children who have a good foundation laid for this subject when they start work at Year 1. As a result the planned work shows good continuity from nursery to Year 2. Assessments are clearly linked to the units of work. However, the co-ordinator's plan for development of the subject indicates that assessments could be even better and she has rightly assessed the need to continue to improve the designing aspects. Resources are very good and well organised, easily accessible to both teachers and pupils. There has been no opportunity yet to monitor the teaching and learning but the school has a rolling programme for this task and the co-ordinator has planned for it.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

105. During the inspection only one lesson was seen so it is not possible to give an overall judgement on teaching. However, from discussions with teachers and scrutinies of children's work and planning children's attainment by the end of the infant stage is judged to be in line with what would be expected for children of this age.

106. As they move through the school most children develop sound skills in asking geographical questions. For example, when Year 2 children compared conditions in Barrow and Bardsea. Children, in Year 1, begin to express views on local environmental features when they indicate their likes and dislikes about the school. They begin to use their mapping skills when they use digital photographs to locate staff on maps of the school and learn to distinguish between side views and plan views. By the end of the infant stage, most children know and use simple compass directions and understand the uses of different kinds of maps such as street, information, world and route maps. They identify places at different distances from the school at local, national and international level. More able children present their work neatly and produce clear descriptions and sketches. Lower achieving children do not write as clearly and their work is less well presented. In their study of a local park, children begin to understand about land use and consider environmental issues such as litter. As they move through the school, children extend their use of geographical vocabularies. For example, they become familiar with such terms as *valley*, *mountain* and *cliff*. Children, in Year 2, know about the life styles of people in places such as Italy and India.
107. In the one lesson seen in Year 1, the quality of teaching was very good. The teacher's very good knowledge about maps was very clearly explained so that children's learning was enhanced. She controlled children very well and organised materials and resources efficiently so that children behaved very well and worked hard. Her high expectations of children's involvement ensured that they collaborated effectively in their work on maps of the school and began to understand the use of maps. She prepared work which was suited to the differing abilities of children so that they were able to access geographical ideas at their own levels of understanding. The subject is well planned and co-ordinated. Staff are well supported and the co-ordinator has a clear idea of how the subject is to develop in order to raise standards.

## **HISTORY**

108. During the inspection it was possible to see only one lesson. However, from discussions with teachers, scrutinies of children's work and teachers' planning the findings of the inspection are that by the end of the infant stage attainment is in line with what would be expected for children of this age.
109. As they move through the school most children increase their understanding of chronology. For example, in Year 2 children date events in the life of Florence Nightingale and understand the sequence of time in their families from great grandparents to the present. Children in Year 1 compare fire-fighting techniques in the past with those of today and know about events in the lives of people such as Grace Darling and Samuel Pepys. In their work on features and objects associated with seaside holidays children in Year 1 begin to identify differences between ways of life at different times. In some interesting work on the Arawak tribe and Christopher Columbus children in Year 2 show that they understand that historical events can be viewed from different

perspectives. The work of Year 2 children on Queen Elizabeth 1 indicates that they know how to discover about the past using historical sources. They ask and answer questions about the life of Florence Nightingale and in work on the Gunpowder Plot begin to recognise why people did things and to see that there are consequences for their actions.

110. In the one lesson seen in Year 1, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. In this well planned lesson the teacher made effective use of a selection of items of clothing associated with seaside holidays. This helped to stimulate the interest of the children and helped them to sustain their concentration. The co-ordinator works hard to ensure that the subject is well organised and well planned. She supports colleagues well and has a clear understanding of how the subject is to be moved forward in order to improve standards.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. As it was very early in the school year, it was not possible to see a wide range of evidence in order to make a clear judgement on standards of work. Nor was it possible to see enough teaching of ICT to judge the quality of teaching. From the evidence available and the limited amount of teaching seen it was clear that children achieve standards that are about those expected of children for their age. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. During their time at the school children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their understanding of computers and in their ability to use them.
112. By the age of seven, they know the names of the different parts of the computer. They open programs and know how to save their work for future use. They write labels using word-processing – changing the type and size of font used - and record work, for example in science, neatly and clearly. This is particularly helpful for those children who find it difficult to present work tidily. They use an appropriate program to paint pictures, linking this well with work in art to try and draw pictures in the style of Lowry or Jackson Pollock. By giving instructions to a programmable model they control a sequence of events when they successfully plot a route for it to follow. They find out information using the Internet and enter relevant data from their work, such the colour of their eyes as part of a science topic, onto a suitable program. They understand that the computer can help them produce information in different ways. For example, the data on eye colours was presented as a pictogram, block graph and pie chart. This fascinated children. They import pictures taken on a digital camera into relevant work.
113. Although only a limited amount of teaching was seen, that which was seen was at least satisfactory. As a result of the training they have received, teachers are confident in the use of computers and associated resources. For example, teachers in Year 1 confidently used the Interactive Whiteboard as part of their science lessons to show children how the information they had gathered could be recorded in different ways. Although excited by the activity children behaved well, taking turns as appropriate. They behaved particularly sensibly when the equipment failed and the teacher had to use alternative methods of recording their findings. When introducing new ideas teachers confidently explain how to operate a program. By asking questions and asking children to demonstrate techniques teachers keep children involved and check how well they have understood the task. Children listen attentively to these explanations, although one or two children at the back of the group become restless, as they do not feel fully involved. Teachers are not always aware of what these children are doing.
114. When working on the computer in other lessons children show good control over the keyboard and in using the mouse. Generally, they work together sensibly in pairs or small groups although occasionally one member of the group dominates the activity, particularly when the teacher does not check often enough what the children are doing and how well the group is working. Teachers use computers well to support work in other subjects. In English, children use word-processing to present work neatly as well as using games, which help to develop their reading skills. In mathematics, several programs effectively support children's learning of number facts, encouraging them to respond quickly with their answers. Keeping weather charts on the computer supports work in geography and, by building maps using a suitable program, children link control in information technology with an understanding of maps.

115. The curriculum is very well planned so that children learn the necessary skills systematically and are given suitable opportunities to use them. Planning identifies how information technology can be used in other subjects and identifies appropriate resources. Teachers keep detailed records of what children have achieved and use these effectively to help plan the next stage of children's learning. There is a wide range of suitable resources including computers, lap top word processors, programmable models and the Interactive Whiteboard. Some of the computers are now dated and the school has plans to use available grants to replace these with up to date computers. Every class has at least one computer which is linked to the Internet. The subject is effectively led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. Although the subject has not been recently monitored it is included in the planned programme of monitoring subjects for the current school year.

## **MUSIC**

116. No judgement is made about standards in this subject or the quality of teaching. It was not possible to see any music lessons due to the constraints of the school timetable and no written work was available for scrutiny as there is in most subjects. Children had only been back in school for two weeks after the summer holidays and were still getting used to new classes and routines resulting in difficulties in them remembering previous work or talking about it. However, teachers' planning, discussions with staff and records of assessments and reports show that the subject is taught regularly, complies with the requirements of the National Curriculum and that standards have been maintained since the last inspection when they were typical for the children's age.
117. Some singing took place during assembly sessions and children's responses to music played at that time show that children enjoy listening and some know the names of composers and understand that they write the music played. At present there are no learning experiences such as recorder groups or choir to enhance the subject.
118. The management of the subject is good and this is based on the work of the previous co-ordinator who has just left the school. All staff discussed new initiatives and the units of work were reviewed when the Foundation Stage curriculum was introduced last year. This has ensured progression in the subject. Regular audits of resources have resulted in the school having a very good range of percussion instruments and other resources such as books and pictures to assist teachers and make lessons more interesting. When teachers have identified a lack of security in the teaching of some aspects of music the co-ordinator has worked alongside resulting in more confident teachers who are better informed. Teachers assess the children's work and there is evidence to show that these have informed the planning of lessons or identified where support is needed for an individual. The subject has been monitored and evaluated recently by observing lessons, scrutinising planning and



assessments and talking with children and staff. This report indicates that the subject is planned well, activities are of good quality and overall teaching is good. A weakness identified for improvement is the need for more time for children to explore with instruments before selecting which to use when composing tunes in response to stimuli. The co-ordinator has identified that this would enrich the children's experiences, as they would be likely to create more complex musical compositions. The current music co-ordinator has not had enough time to make an impact on the subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

119. During the inspection an insufficient number of lessons was seen in order to give an overall judgement on attainment or the quality of teaching. However, attainment in the two gymnastics lessons seen in Year 1 was in line with what would be expected for children of this age. The attainment of children in the one swimming lesson seen in Year 2 was very high.
120. In the Year 1 lessons seen, children used a range of different ways and directions of travelling using their feet. Most children moved with control and balance. They began to make use of space effectively and showed that they know about the importance of warming up and cooling down. Most children listened attentively and responded promptly to the teachers' instructions. In the Year 2 swimming lesson, most children were very confident in the water. They moved through the water showing poise, balance and confidence, using the actions of various swimming strokes. Almost half the children in the group observed were beginning to propel themselves through the water for short distances. Most children floated very confidently both with and without swimming aids.
121. The quality of teaching in the lessons in Year 1 was good. The school had not been able to use the hall for physical education before these lessons and the teachers were successfully laying the foundations for children to move safely and to behave well. They showed good subject knowledge, ensuring that children warmed up and cooled down effectively and used clear explanations to enable children to improve their skills in travelling and using space. However, teachers did not always take advantage of opportunities during pupil demonstrations to describe how the quality of movement might have been enhanced. Relationships were good so that children were confident to use a variety of movements because they knew that their efforts would be valued. Lessons were conducted at a good pace so that children worked hard and exercised rigorously.
122. During the swimming lesson in the shallow pool, the quality of teaching by the instructor supported by the teacher was outstanding. The instructor's exceptional subject knowledge and very clear instructions enabled children to make excellent progress. Very high quality relationships and control by both teacher and instructor ensured that children enjoyed the lesson and worked enthusiastically and safely. The instructor observed children very closely in

order to advise them individually and as a group how they might improve. His organisation and management were excellent. This led to children's confidence in the water being enhanced and to the very high standards achieved throughout the lesson. As in the previous inspection, swimming continues to be a strength of the school.

123. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable. She works very hard to organise the very well planned subject and to support colleagues. She is very enthusiastic and committed to improving standards. The co-ordinator has a very clear idea of how the subject should develop in order to raise attainment.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

124. Overall, the standards children achieve in this subject are typical for their age and meet the requirements of the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection but there are improvements. The work relating to other cultures, faiths and beliefs were judged as not being well developed and relying on the use of worksheets. This is not the case now and standards in the work on aspects of the Buddhist faith that culminated in a visit to Conishead Priory are better and reflect children's interest, enthusiasm and good efforts. Some particularly good factual accounts were written about their experiences and feelings about the visit and they had written their own rules for it. They have a good understanding of the symbolism used.
125. As well as Christianity, children are knowledgeable about other world faiths and by Year 2 have a growing understanding that the lives of members of religious groups are influenced by what they believe. During Year 1 and Year 2, children are encouraged to respect and value others and to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. The work in this subject is linked to that of personal, social and health education in *Circle Time* activities when children sit in a circle and talk about their feelings, think about themselves, understand what they have learned from their experiences and what is right and wrong. During the inspection this aspect of the subject was linked well to collective worship sessions.
126. Children extend their understanding of the purpose of group celebrations. They are familiar with Easter and Christmas celebrated by Christians, regularly celebrate birthdays at assembly times and know about those of Islam, such as Ramadan and the Buddhist festival of Kathina. During the inspection, older children were exploring the use of rules and experienced making their own class rules so that all could work in harmony.
127. Overall, the quality of teaching is sound and sometimes it is good. Teachers have established very good relationships with children, which makes them keen to be involved and make good efforts. When telling stories teachers use their voice to good effect and most children listen in rapt attention, which enables them to make good responses and understand the feelings of characters in the story. Lessons were less successful when they lacked

challenge and failed to inspire children. For example, lessons planned to give children experience of rule making used mainly discussion and some sessions were split between a short session in the morning and a later one in the day. In some lessons, the time was too short altogether and this needs attention if the planned scheme of work is to be fully covered and work of some depth provided.

128. The management of the subject is good but the co-ordinator is on maternity leave at present and her work is being overseen by the headteacher. The topics taught in the Foundation Stage areas of learning have been closely linked to the targets set in the locally agreed syllabus so that continuity is well established. A strength of the management has been the consultation with teachers to establish where weaknesses lie and how they can be remedied. This resulted in improvements to work on other cultures, faiths and beliefs. Assessments are undertaken and show how well children have understood the topics, relating closely to the expectations of the local syllabus. The monitoring and evaluating of the subject has not yet taken place owing to the co-ordinator being absent but it is planned for Summer 2002. The subject has some good artefacts but the co-ordinator is aware that they need extending to provide for the changes that result from the new agreed syllabus.