

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MILNTHORPE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Milnthorpe

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112184

Headteacher: Mr. A. Blackman

Reporting inspector: Mrs. P. M. White  
23686

Dates of inspection: March 4 – 7 2002

Inspection number: 195097

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: category:	Infant and Junior Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Firs Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria.
Postcode:	LA7 7QF
Telephone number:	015395 62344
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Caron Newman
Date of previous inspection:	June 3 – 5 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23686	Mrs. P. M. White	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage, Science, Art, Design technology, English as an additional language	The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further ?
19430	Mr. T. Hall	Lay inspector		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?
11472	Mr. M. Beale	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
11831	Mr. J. Brooke	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography Religious education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How well the school cultivates the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school serves the village of Milnthorpe which is seven miles south of Kendal. It occupies a spacious site that includes a small community facility and temporary accommodation for a community pre-school group. There are 112 pupils on roll between the ages of four and eleven which is smaller than most primary schools. There is also a nursery where 86 children attend part-time. There are 43 pupils (38%) on the school's register of special educational needs and 7 pupils (6.25%) have a Statement of Special Educational Need. This is above average nationally. Six pupils (5.4%) currently have free school meals, which is below average but school and local information shows that there is a greater entitlement than this. Three pupils speak English as an additional language but none are at an early stage of language acquisition. The attainment of the children on entry to the reception class varies but it is judged to be below average overall. In recent years the school has experienced some staffing difficulties and at the time of the inspection, part-time, temporary or supply staff were teaching the four classes in Years 1-6.

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

The school provides a sound quality of education. The teaching throughout the school has many good features and this is helping standards to rise steadily. The school now needs to enable more pupils to achieve at the higher levels. The children make a good start to their education in the nursery and the reception class. The school is particularly effective in supporting the pupils with special educational needs and the very small minority who speak English as an additional language and this helps them to make good progress. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is good and this enables them to make good progress.
- Standards in writing are improving rapidly.
- The procedures for analysing and tracking the pupils' attainment and progress are thorough and well implemented by the headteacher.
- The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good and the strong support they receive enables them to make good progress.
- The school looks after the pupils well.
- The pupils' attitudes to school are good.
- There is good provision for the pupils' moral and social development.
- Support staff are used very well to support individuals and groups of pupils throughout the school.

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

- The stability of the staffing situation
- Standards in science and history in the infants and in art across the school
- The achievements of the higher attaining pupils.
- The rigour with which the school's management implements planned improvements.
- The way information from assessments is used by some teachers to plan further work.
- The marking of the pupils' work by some teachers.

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

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

The school was previously inspected in June 1997 and, overall, has made satisfactory improvement since then. The pace of planned improvements has been hampered by the unsettled staffing situation that has included the absence of the staff with senior management responsibilities. Nonetheless the

quality of teaching has improved, schemes of work are in place for all subjects and co-ordinators have been appointed. The headteacher and some staff have monitored teaching and learning in English and mathematics and this has positively affected standards in these subjects. The school's assessment and tracking procedures are now good. The governors fulfil all their statutory duties effectively. The indications are, that with a settled staff, the school could continue to improve and develop at a faster pace.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	C	C	C
Mathematics	C	E	D	D
Science	B	C	E	E

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

These results relate to the pupils who took the tests in 2001. They show that by the time they leave the school the pupils achieve average standards in English both when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. In Mathematics standards are below average and in science standards are well below average. At age seven the national test results show that standards in writing are above average and in reading and mathematics they are below average. The number of pupils taking the National Curriculum tests at age seven and eleven is small and this makes it difficult to reliably compare the school's yearly results either with those found nationally or with those in similar schools. Additionally, the school has a high number of pupils with special educational needs and this can adversely affect the overall results. However, over the past three years (1999 to 2001), the school's results have improved in line with the national trend. In the 2001 tests the girls achieved better than the boys in English but there is no significant difference between their performance in mathematics and science. In 2001 the school's targets were exceeded in English and met in mathematics.

Standards are rising, albeit gradually, and the work that the pupils were doing in the inspection shows that by age eleven standards in English, mathematics and science are average. At age seven, their standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average but in science standards are not high enough. The pupils in the Foundation Stage are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in their personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, in the mathematical and creative areas and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are likely to exceed the expected levels in their physical development.

There has been a strong emphasis on improving the pupils' writing skills and the scrutiny of their work shows that standards have risen rapidly. Throughout the school the pupils have sound reading skills and by age 11 their speaking and listening skills are often good. In mathematics the Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of numbers and can work confidently with numbers up to 100. At age 11 most of the pupils can use a range of different methods of calculation. They can also explain many of the processes they have used. In science the infant pupils do not achieve standards that are high enough. This is largely because, due to staff absence, insufficient time has been given to the subject. The upper junior pupils achieve average standards and have a sound factual knowledge but across the school in science, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to take part in practical

work and to carry out their own investigations. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), at the age of seven and eleven are in line with those expected nationally. Standards in other subjects are in line with those expected, except in history in the infants where the pupils' progress and achievements are limited. Across the school the more able pupils could do better in almost all subjects if the work was more challenging.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. The youngest pupils are enthusiastic and eager to come to school. The older pupils are interested in their work; most are well motivated and try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Whilst the behaviour of the majority of the pupils is good there is a significant minority of pupils who display challenging behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall. The pupils are willing to take responsibility and they carry out duties in class and around the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance levels are broadly in line with those found nationally. Most pupils are punctual.

The pupils are proud of the responsibility given to them when chosen to act as monitors or as members of the school council. The teachers and support staff manage the instances of challenging behaviour very well.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with many good features. It has improved since the last inspection when there was less teaching that was good and very good and more that was unsatisfactory. The improvements in the teaching have had a positive impact on the steady improvement in standards in English and mathematics. In English the work is well planned and the teachers make sure that the pupils are clear about what they should learn. The sounds for reading, writing and spelling are taught thoroughly to the younger pupils and the older pupils are encouraged to express ideas and opinions and to write in a range of styles and for different purposes. The strengths in the teaching of mathematics include the way in which the pupils are taught to make up their own sums and to use their knowledge of numbers to solve problems. In science, the teaching of scientific knowledge is satisfactory but there is a weakness in the lack of opportunities for the pupils to carry out investigative, practical work. In the infants science teaching is not consistent. The quality of the teaching in the nursery and the reception class is good. One of the strengths is the good use of questions and talk to promote the pupils' thinking and communication skills. The pupils with special educational needs are taught well, either in small groups or as individuals and this allows them to make good progress. During the inspection, the teaching by the temporary and part-time staff was effective but the scrutiny of work reveals that this has not always been the case. Across the



school, the work planned for the more able pupils is not always sufficiently challenging and this slows their rate of progress.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The Foundation Stage curriculum is of good quality. For the infants and junior pupils, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum but more could be done to improve and extend the work in science and history in the infants and in art across the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good. The school ensures that these pupils receive the help and support they need and this enables them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very small minority of pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good support to help improve their language skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The emphasis on social and moral issues is a particular strength and makes a positive contribution to the school's caring ethos. Provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The level of care provided by the teaching and support staff is good. The school's assessment and tracking procedures are also good.

The local community makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning and the school uses the community facility well to involve pupils and parents in learning together.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The long-term absence of staff with management responsibilities has adversely affected the school's continuing development and the full implementation of some of its educational priorities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are kept well informed by the headteacher, they are supportive of the school and their direct involvement in its work is increasing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's assessment procedures for English and mathematics allow the headteacher and governors to evaluate the pupils' progress and to set appropriate targets for further improvements.
The strategic use of resources	The school's use of its financial resources is satisfactory. It tries to plan ahead to account for variations in budget and expenditure but the unsettled staffing situation presents difficulties. The school currently has a small deficit.

Considerable staffing difficulties over the past two years have slowed the school's progress towards its targets for improvement and efforts to focus on raising standards and striving to improve have not always been rigorous enough.

**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 like school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The way the school cares for their children.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• They get the right amount of work to do at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• Aspects of the leadership and management of the school, especially the management and support of teaching staff to ensure better continuity during staff absence.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with most of the parents' positive views. Whilst the quality of the teaching has many good features, it is judged to be satisfactory overall. The inspection findings also agree with the parents' concerns about the stability and continuity of learning for the pupils during prolonged staff absence. Inspectors found that the information provided for parents is plentiful and of good quality. Inspectors further judged that the school provided a sound range of out of school activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests show that by the age of eleven standards in English are broadly average, in mathematics they are below average and in science they are well below the national average. At age seven the national test results show that standards in writing are above average and in reading and mathematics they are below average. The number of pupils taking the National Curriculum tests at age seven and eleven is small and the changing size of the cohorts makes it difficult to reliably compare the school's yearly results either with those found nationally or with those in similar schools. Additionally, the school has a high number of pupils with special educational needs and, with small groups of pupils taking the tests this can adversely affect overall results. However, a three-year overview of the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) from 1999 to 2001, shows that the school's results have improved in line with the national trend. In the 2001 tests the girls achieved better than the boys in English but there is no significant difference between their performance in mathematics and science.
2. Since May 2000 the school has experienced difficulties with staff absence and, at the time of the inspection, either part-time, temporary or supply teachers were teaching the pupils in the four classes in Years 1 to 6. It is to the school's credit that standards generally have been maintained and in some subjects, such as in English, they have improved. Nonetheless, the scrutiny of the pupils' work shows that in the infant and the lower junior classes, the inconsistent quality of the teaching has hampered the progress of many of them.
3. The children's attainment varies from year to year but on entry to the reception class, it is generally below average, especially in the areas of personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy. In both the nursery and the reception class the children make good progress so that by the time they start Year 1, the majority have attained the Early Learning Goals in all the areas of learning and in the area of their physical development they are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals.
4. In English, standards in speaking and listening at the end of Year 2 are average but they improve as the pupils move through the school and in Years 5 and 6 they are often good. In the infants, good attention is paid to the teaching of phonics and word attack skills and these are well used by the pupils so that, by the age of seven many of the pupils can read accurately although somewhat hesitantly. By the time they are eleven the pupils can read with much greater expression and about half the pupils in Year 6 are skilful in analysing texts. However, the pupils do not regularly read for information, for example, by using the library, and their research skills are not as high as they could be.
5. Standards in writing have improved significantly over recent times and by the age of seven and eleven the pupils' attainment in this aspect is above average. Additional training has resulted in more focussed teaching and this is having a positive impact on standards. The pupils write for a range of audiences and purposes and by Year 6 they can write a structured, reasoned argument. Handwriting and presentation skills are not secure for a significant number of pupils. For example, many Year 2 pupils are still printing and only around half of the pupils in Year 6 write in a neat, joined script.

6. In mathematics, the pupils achieve average standards but for the more able pupils, this could be higher. By the time they leave the school the pupils have a good understanding of the value of numbers. They can make up their own sums and explain how they arrived at their answers. The older pupils can measure accurately and work with decimals and they can apply their knowledge of numbers to practical problem solving work. Throughout the school, the work planned for the more able pupils is often not challenging enough so they do not achieve as well as they should.
7. In science, the pupils make satisfactory progress in the juniors but standards are not high enough in the infants. The science work done by current Year 6 pupils is better than the Year 2001 test results would indicate. They know about the movement of the earth around the sun and show a sound understanding of how liquids and solids are made up of molecules. The infant pupils do not cover sufficient work and their progress is limited. Throughout the school there are not enough opportunities for the pupils to plan and carry out their own experiments and there is insufficient challenge in the work provided for the higher attaining pupils.
8. Standards in information technology are average by the time the pupils leave the school and they achieve well in some aspects such as in their ability to use the Internet for research purposes. The pupils can send and receive electronic mail and they have sound word processing skills. However, the pupils have too few opportunities to use the computers in their work in other subjects. In religious education, the pupils reach the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the age of eleven. In history in the infants and in art throughout the school standards are not high enough. In all the other subjects the pupils attain the standards expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress.
9. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Learning support assistants work and plan closely with class teachers to ensure the pupils' learning needs are met and they provide good support either to individuals or small groups. The pupils have individual education plans that contain small, achievable targets for improvement and these are reviewed regularly to ensure that the pupils are making good progress.

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

10. Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes to their work are good. This is a similar judgement to the one made at the time of the previous inspection. The majority of pupils are eager to learn and show genuine interest and enthusiasm for their work. In the responses to the parental questionnaire and at their meeting, the majority of parents agreed that their children enjoy school and they believe they make good progress. The pupils are friendly towards adults and are willing to talk about what they are doing in class. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are attentive, willing to join in discussions and are happy to speak out in front of their peer group. The majority of pupils are good listeners and respect one another's views. For example, in a citizenship lesson, the Year 6 pupils discussed the meaning of the word charity and showed maturity in acknowledging the work that many people do voluntarily to help others.
11. The pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. A small minority of parents feel it could be better. Inspection evidence shows that the behaviour of the majority of pupils in lessons is often good, but there is a small but significant minority of the pupils whose behaviour is very challenging. This challenging behaviour is often, although not exclusively, in the classes where there have been frequent changes of teacher, resulting in a lack of stability and continuity for the pupils. Nonetheless, most of the teachers and support staff manage the pupils' behaviour very well. The school's behaviour policy is clear and the school rules are widely displayed. The pupils share in the making of the rules; they know the system of

rewards and sanctions and consequently, they are very aware of what is expected of them. During the past year there have been three fixed-term exclusions.

12. The pupil's personal development is satisfactory overall and has some good features. For example, the majority of the pupils are considerate and respectful of property. Even the youngest pupils know where things belong and are conscientious in tidying away. The pupils enjoy sharing in the daily routines such as preparing for lessons or sharing in class assemblies and willingly take on the role of monitor. The older pupils organise the sale of fruit at break time. The school council is a valuable part of the school community. The elected members meet weekly and membership changes each term so as many pupils as possible have the chance to play their part. In the meetings the pupils listen well to each other and make decisions regarding aspects of school life. For the most part, the pupils play well together and at lunch times they co-operate happily with the midday supervisors who organise games for the younger pupils. When given the opportunity, they can work independently and collaborate well. However, opportunities to carry out investigations and follow their own lines of enquiry are not well developed, particularly in science. Relationships are satisfactory. Most pupils smile readily and are eager to speak first on meeting. They confidently share their thoughts and feelings with staff and they know that, in turn, their opinions will be listened to and valued.
13. The school works hard to promote regular attendance and punctuality. Attendance is satisfactory and most pupils arrive at school on time.

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

14. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection the teaching was good in 20 of the 46 lessons observed. In 4 of the 46 lessons the teaching was very good. The very good teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage and in a lesson taken by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Almost half of the teaching in the junior classes was good. There was one unsatisfactory lesson. The overall improvement in the quality of the teaching has helped to maintain standards. The very good teaching by the special needs co-ordinator has a significant impact on the good progress made by those pupils.
15. Although a significant proportion of good teaching was observed during the inspection, the scrutiny of work indicates that over recent times, there has been some lack of consistency and continuity in the quality of the teaching, particularly for the pupils in Years 1-4.
16. Across the school, the most successful teaching is characterised by lessons where it is made clear to the pupils what it is they are to learn. The lessons are thoroughly planned and the teachers are generally confident and have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subject. They use questions very effectively to make the pupils think and to guide them towards solutions to problems. In a good science lesson with the Year 3 and 4 pupils, questions such as, 'Why do you think that?' and 'How do you think the ice got this shape?' extended the pupils' learning by making them consider their reasons and explanations more deeply. In a good literacy session the same teacher used 'I wonder...' very effectively to stimulate the pupils' interest and to move their thinking forward. The teachers mostly know and manage the pupils well and enjoy sound relationships with them. All the teachers value the pupils' efforts and they work very hard to include every group member in introductory and plenary discussions. They also move amongst the groups as they work, intervening skilfully to help the pupils succeed. In all of the lessons the classroom assistants are well deployed and provide very effective help to individuals and to groups of pupils. In almost all of the classes routines are well established and the pupils move from one activity to the next without fuss. The exceptions to this are where the class has had a variety of different teachers over a short

space of time. In these instances, new relationships have to be formed and expectations and parameters reset, and this can slow the rate of progress for some pupils.

17. In several of the less successful lessons the same work is planned for all ability and age groups and there is insufficient challenge in some of the tasks for the more able pupils. In some lessons and especially in science, the tasks do not allow the pupils to follow their own lines of enquiry and this further hampers the progress of some of the average as well as the more able pupils. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory, it is often because the teacher does not have high enough expectations of the pupils' standards of work or behaviour. For example, in the unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher spent too much time dealing with the disruption caused by a significant minority of the pupils.
18. At both junior and infant level the teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory overall and it has some strengths. The planning, management and delivery of literacy and numeracy lessons is effective and, in particular, the additional support and training for staff has had a significant impact on the improvements in writing and on the pace and content of the mental, oral session of the numeracy lessons. In literacy and numeracy, the setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is also effective and helps the pupils to achieve more. Problem solving activities in mathematics, where the pupils can use and apply their knowledge are now taught and emphasised and this represents a good improvement since the last inspection.
19. Some teachers do not make sufficient use of on-going day-to-day assessments of the pupils in order to plan further work for them at an appropriate level. The scrutiny of the pupils' work reveals an inconsistency in the marking as some teachers do not provide the pupils with a clear view of how to improve. An appropriate level of homework is set for the pupils; this supports and reinforces the work done in class and is valued by parents.
20. The teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. It has a number of strengths, including the effective use of questions and talk to promote the pupils' thinking and communication skills. Together with the good organisation and management of the children and the provision of an imaginative and stimulating range of activities, this enables the children to make good progress. The teachers and the classroom assistants plan the learning activities carefully to ensure that there are opportunities for the children to have access to all six areas of learning. The children make good progress in the basic skills of reading and number work because they are well taught.
21. The pupils with special educational needs are also well taught. The special educational needs co-ordinator, the class teachers and the classroom assistants plan and work very well together. The teachers have a good knowledge of the pupils' needs and set tasks which ensure that the targets in their individual learning plans are met. The small minority of pupils who speak English as an additional language have made very good progress, all speak English fluently and with good understanding.

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

22. The curriculum for the children in the nursery and the reception class is of good quality. It is well planned and organised and provides the children with a rich and varied range of relevant activities based on the six areas of learning. The teachers plan the activities thoroughly to ensure that the work becomes appropriately more challenging as the children move through the classes. Despite the well-prepared activities, the nursery classroom is rather drab and uninspiring and much of the equipment is old. Plans to refurbish the area have been drawn up and will be implemented as soon as funds become available. The school has a very good

outdoor environment that includes a safe play area as well as an adventure playground and these facilities make a significant contribution to the children's physical development.

23. The curriculum for the infant and junior pupils is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements in all National Curriculum subjects and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school makes appropriate provision for the pupil's personal, social and health education that includes citizenship, sex education and drugs awareness. The curriculum is broad and balanced and gives appropriate time and emphasis to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Since the last inspection improvement has been made in developing schemes of work for subjects, which now underpin the teachers' planning effectively. The school has detailed policies and long-term planning for most subjects with effective medium and short-term plans to ensure continuity in what all pupils learn from year to year. Units of work are planned according to a two-year rolling programme so as to ensure the delivery of the programmes of study in the mixed age classes. There are some very good examples of planning, particularly in the Reception Class that clearly identify the learning that is to take place, as well as the activities that are to be completed. However, this very good standard of planning is not found for all subjects or in all classes.
24. The planned curriculum is generally well adapted to suit the learning needs of the majority of the pupils except for some of the more able pupils. Their learning needs are not clearly identified and they are not always provided with appropriate opportunities to achieve the high standards of which they are capable. The school has recognised this and has made it a priority of the current school development plan. However, continued staff absence has meant that progress on this has been limited.
25. A high priority is given to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Well-organised literacy and numeracy sessions provide the pupils with good opportunities to develop the basic skills. This is helping to raise standards, particularly in writing. However, the teachers' planning does not always ensure that there are opportunities to write at length in other curriculum subjects. For example, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 are competent at taking and organising notes but they do not use these skills in subjects such as history. A weakness in the organisation of the curriculum is the way the time is allocated to subjects such as history, geography, art and design technology. These subjects are taught in blocks with a lengthy time gap in between. This means that there are long periods when some aspects of the subjects are not taught and the pupils forget much of their previous learning. This was particularly noticeable in discussions with pupils about their learning in geography and history.
26. The school offers a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. There are occasional sporting competitions against neighbouring schools, some musical activities including a steel band and a range of after school clubs including football, gymnastics and Quest. Residential visits for the junior pupils enrich their learning about the environment as well as supporting work in history and geography.
27. The local community makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning. The school makes effective use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum and to strengthen learning. In recent months the school has been visited by the vicar of Milnthorpe and Heversham to discuss the parish records, by a policeman to describe some of his duties and by a solicitor to show various deeds and documents. The school is justifiably proud of its community learning facility which, although at an early stage of development, is beginning to be well used. For example, several parents attend a 'Learning Together Course' and work alongside their children. There are weekly classes in information and communication technology and a community pre-school group operates from the school site. Additionally, a breakfast club and

an out of hours learning club use the school as a base. Visiting teachers and visits to the local high school offer good opportunities for pupils to develop musical and sporting skills.

28. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school quickly identifies pupils who need extra support, and ensures that the full curriculum is available to them. Individual education plans set out clear, achievable learning targets and the pupils' progress towards these targets is regularly monitored. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and have a very positive impact upon the standards achieved. There are only three pupils who speak English as an additional language and none of these is at an early stage of language acquisition. Nonetheless, the teachers and support staff are aware of their needs and provide appropriate support and input where necessary.
29. The school makes good overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the previous inspection. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school provides several opportunities for the sharing of thoughts and feelings and the pupils are positively encouraged to contribute to discussions, especially in assemblies and in religious education lessons when they consider the values and beliefs of others. For example, in assemblies, the pupils have the opportunity to reflect on world issues or the things that they are grateful for. The pupils who visit the Buddhist priory have the opportunity to reflect upon the lives of those who live and work there. The pupils display a sense of awe and wonder when the local Vicar shows them Roman nails excavated in Scotland that are similar to those used for Christ's crucifixion and the youngest children are delighted when they succeed in getting plastic ducks to float correctly. Insufficient opportunities to appreciate the work of famous artists and to listen regularly to a range of music in assemblies adversely affect the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
30. The school's provision for the pupils' moral and social education is good and remains one of the school's strengths. The school rules reinforce the values laid down in the school's aims and raise the pupils' awareness of their importance in achieving a calm, orderly environment where everyone is valued. The pupils know what standards of behaviour are expected of them and their learning is reinforced in personal and social education lessons. The older pupils' social and moral awareness is well developed when they consider ethical issues such as animal vivisection. Their social and moral awareness are enhanced when the pupils support a range of charities throughout the year. This often involves active effort as in the case of the "swimathon" at Kendal pool to raise money for a children's charity. Pupils of all ages act as monitors in classrooms and around the school and the older pupils take responsibility for selling fruit at break times. The pupils' citizenship is fostered through the activities of the school council. Elected members raise issues of concern and act upon decisions. Residential visits provide the older pupils with a rich social experience.
31. The school's provision for cultural development has improved since the time of the previous inspection. The pupils learn about different cultures and religious beliefs through visits to the local Buddhist Priory, as well as from the school's links with friends in Nigeria. Cultural awareness is further raised through the visit of an African storyteller. The school has a thriving steel band that has performed locally and nationally and the choir has performed at local music festivals.

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

32. The standard of care provided by the teaching and non-teaching staff is good and is a strength of the school. Effective child protection procedures are in place and there are clear procedures for promoting the pupils' well being, health and safety. At their meeting the parents expressed



how much they valued the level of care that the school provides for their children and the inspection evidence strongly supports this view. All of the teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities and are kept up to date with child protection issues. The school has good access to educational, medical and social agencies when required and pupils who are unwell are dealt with capably and sensitively.

33. The school has a comprehensive behaviour policy with a wide range of strategies that are implemented consistently in most classes. There are very few instances of bullying, racism or oppressive behaviour but should they arise, they are dealt with promptly and effectively. Similarly, the significant minority of pupils who display challenging behaviour are managed well by teachers and support staff.
34. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and the need for regular attendance is well promoted. Comments on attendance in the school prospectus and in the Governors' annual report to parents are very clear and are a good improvement since the last inspection when these elements were unsatisfactory. The school promotes attendance effectively. However, it is sometimes slow to address unexplained absences, and, for their part, some parents need much prompting to advise the school of the reasons their child's absence.
35. A good range of procedures is in place to monitor the pupils' personal development. With the frequent changes in teaching staff, it can be difficult to maintain stable relationships and a consistently good level of support for the pupils' personal and social needs. However, it is to the school's credit that effective relationships exist between all the adults and the pupils who speak confidently of talking with their teacher about any concerns they may have. For their part, all the staff are alert and responsive to the pupils' personal and social needs. In response to the questionnaires, the parents agreed that the teachers expect their children to work hard and do their best and they further agreed that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. There are good arrangements for the induction of new pupils to the school. Home visits and well-planned introductory sessions take place before the children start school. A happy and confident start to the school day is assured when parents are welcomed into school to help settle the children into the activities. Many of the older pupils also come into school ten minutes before registration time and work at spellings or tables.
36. The school has effective systems in place for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress. These have improved significantly since the last inspection when they were described as weak. Information from formal assessments when the children start in reception is used to identify their individual learning needs.
37. The results of statutory and optional tests in English and mathematics are recorded and analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in individual and group attainment. This information is beginning to be used to improve the teaching and learning, but, for the most part, it is mainly used by the headteacher. The information has helped the school to identify the gaps in the pupils' knowledge and understanding and has partly formed the basis for the booster lessons. Assessment results are used well to form the sets for literacy and numeracy in Years 5 and 6.
38. The headteacher and senior management team have developed a process of target setting. This sets out clear curriculum targets for individual pupils based on prior attainment. However, it is less clear what teachers need to do in the classroom to help the pupils achieve their targets. In other curriculum subjects assessment procedures are not well developed, so teachers often do not have a sufficiently clear picture of what the pupils' already know in order to plan further work. Some day-to-day assessments are carried out through the marking of the pupils' work.

The best marking recognises the pupils' achievements and informs them about how they can improve. However, not all the pupils' work is marked conscientiously; in some classes marking is reduced to a tick and a very short comment and the information is not used to plan the next steps in learning.

39. The special needs pupils are assessed regularly so that intervention programmes can be planned for those who are underachieving and to target groups and individuals. These programmes are largely successful because of the good quality of the support assistants who work and plan closely with classteachers.

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

40. The quality of the information provided for parents about the school and about pupils' achievements is good. From their meeting before the inspection and from discussions with a number of parents during the inspection, it is clear that the majority of parents are pleased with what the school provides and achieves. However, the responses to the parents' questionnaire indicate that a very small minority of parents feel that they are not well informed about how their child is getting on, nor do they feel that the school works closely with parents. Inspection evidence does not support either of these views. There are regular newsletters covering all of the activities of the school year as well as information about what the children are learning. A comprehensive school prospectus gives all the relevant information to parents of pupils joining the school and the governors' annual report is well presented and provides a good picture of results, activities and decision making during the previous year. There is a lively Parents' Notice Board in the school entrance.
41. There are ample opportunities for parents to meet staff to discuss any problems or concerns. These meetings are held on an informal 'drop-in' basis, or at the formal consultation evenings. The annual reports to parents are of sound quality and include some pointers for improvement. The contribution of parents to their children's learning is satisfactory. A few parents help in school regularly and many more attend assemblies and concerts. The Parent Teacher Association is strong and run by a small, enthusiastic committee. They organise a range of fun and fund raising events, and donate significant amounts to the school for extra resources.

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

42. The overall quality of leadership and management by the headteacher and governors is satisfactory. This is not as strong a picture as was found at the time of the previous inspection, but over the past two years, the school has experienced considerable staffing difficulties which have slowed the school's progress towards its targets for improvement. The school has no deputy and, due to the long-term absence of staff with management responsibilities, the headteacher has had limited support. However, the two members of staff who currently fill the senior management roles are conscientious and committed and have the potential to help move the school forward and to positively influence school wide improvements. The leadership of the foundation stage and the co-ordination of the school's special needs provision are both good.
43. The headteacher and governors have a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they are aware that the main priority is to raise the standards of attainment for all pupils. However, their focus on raising standards and striving to improve the staffing situation has not always been rigorous enough. During the current difficulties, the headteacher has taken too much upon himself with the result that the progress of several of the school's planned improvements has been too slow. For example, plans to raise the attainment of the more able pupils have yet to be carried out.

44. The key issues of the previous report have been addressed satisfactorily but much of the work has been hampered by frequent staff changes and the long-term absence of the members of the senior management team. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects and sufficient time is now allocated to them. However, gaps remain in the coverage of some subjects such as science and history by the age of seven and in art across the school. The quality of teaching has improved overall but not all lessons take account of the range of abilities within the class and this means that the achievement of the higher attaining pupils could be better. Subject co-ordinators have been appointed but, because of the temporary, supply or part-time nature of several staff members, they are not as effective as they might be. Some monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place according to a planned programme. For example, the headteacher and co-ordinators have monitored teaching in literacy and numeracy across the school and co-ordinators oversee planning in their subjects. The headteacher carries out a thorough analysis of data from national tests and the information is shared with governors. It is also used to set targets for the pupils' learning and has led to the school's recent focus on improving standards in writing. The school has developed good assessment procedures but as yet, not all teachers are using them, nor is the information widely used to plan further work.
45. The governors' involvement in the school's work is satisfactory. They have fully addressed the relevant issues of the previous inspection and are now successful in fulfilling their statutory duties. They have established a number of committees through which to carry out their work and these meet regularly to discuss financial, curricular and personnel issues. They have links with curriculum subjects and make visits to school to focus on specific areas such as information and communication technology. Performance management systems for all staff, including support staff, are working well.
46. The school improvement plan covers a four-year period and sets out the school's priorities along with timescales and success criteria. The inclusion of costs for the proposed developments would increase the plan's usefulness. Subject action plans are a further recent inclusion and a whole-school timetable for their implementation would provide a sharper focus for continued curriculum development.
47. The priorities in the school improvement plan are linked to the budget which is currently running at a small deficit. There is a three year plan to reduce the overspend and this means that the headteacher and governors have to pay due attention to the principles of best value. The school tries hard to plan ahead successfully to account for variations in budget and expenditure but this has been difficult in the current uncertain staffing situation. Grants and monies for specific purposes are used appropriately. For example, the school has made good use of monies to develop a community ICT room that is used by parents and pupils and this is having a positive effect on standards in ICT. Further funds to support the community pre-school facility and to provide an adventure playground have also been used effectively. Specific funds to support the pupils with special educational needs are well targeted and this makes a positive contribution to the good progress these pupils make.
48. The school currently has a majority of staff who are employed on a temporary, part-time or supply basis and the present arrangements for the induction and training of newly qualified staff as well as support for teachers who are new to the school are unsatisfactory. For example, there is no staff handbook and little in the way of a formal induction programme. The school has made good use of the additional training for teachers in literacy and numeracy and this is reflected in the generally successful way these subjects are taught throughout the school. There is a good number of support staff who work very effectively alongside teachers to provide good support in lessons. They also fulfil a very useful role with the pastoral care of the pupils and, in particular, they provide valuable support in helping to manage the challenging behaviour of a significant minority of the pupils.
49. The school accommodation is spacious and well maintained by the cleaner in charge. The creation of a combined Foundation Stage area for the nursery and the reception class as well as

a 'soft area' for a special needs pupil are good examples of how well the school uses the available space but some of the teaching areas are rather drab and uninspiring; for example, the hall and the nursery. The school's resources are plentiful but some equipment is old and could usefully be reorganised or replaced.

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

50. In order to improve the quality of education further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Make every effort to improve the staffing situation in order to provide greater stability, consistency and continuity of learning for the pupils.

(Paragraphs: 2, 15, 16, 24, 35, 42, 43, 44, 71, 75, 86, 91, 93)

- (2) Continue to strengthen the leadership and management of the school so as to ensure the rigorous implementation of the planned improvements in the school development plan.

(Paragraphs: 42, 43, 44, 83, 92)

- (3) Continue the drive to raise standards in all subjects but particularly in science and history in Years 1 and 2 and in art throughout the school by:

- improving the range and quality of learning opportunities in these subjects and particularly by ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities for all pupils to plan their own investigations and follow their own lines of enquiry in science
- enabling subject co-ordinators to monitor standards and the quality of teaching and learning
- providing appropriate staff training to increase teacher expertise and their expectations of what the pupils can achieve.

(Paragraphs: 7, 8, 12, 17, 44, 71, 72, 74, 75, 77, 79, 83, 89, 93)

- (4) Raise the quality of the teaching to the level of the best by:

- ensuring that work planned for the higher attaining pupils is sufficiently challenging
- ensuring that the school has an effective marking policy
- ensuring that the marking of the pupils' work is consistent and gives them a clear view of how to improve
- ensuring that assessment information is used to plan further work.

(Paragraphs: 6, 17, 19, 24, 38, 44, 59, 64, 67, 70, 72, 74, 79, 86, 91)

### **Minor issue:**

- Ensure that new and temporary staff are well supported.

(Paragraph 48)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

46
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25
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### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	20	21	1	0	0
Percentage	0	9	43	46	2	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 two percentage points*

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

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

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	43	112
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	39

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

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### *Attendance*

**Authorised absence**

%
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**Unauthorised absence**

%
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School data	94.6
National comparative data	93.9

School data	0.7
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)***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	4	6	10

*Due to the small number of pupils in the year group, the results of the end of Year 2 tests are not required to be published*

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	5	8	13

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	10	9	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (67)	69 (56)	92 (89)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	12	9	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (78)	69 (89)	92 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

*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	3
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	22.4

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24.3

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	43
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27.8
Number of pupils per FTE adult	14.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	00/01
	£
Total income	396260
Total expenditure	403753
Expenditure per pupil	2605
Balance brought forward from previous year	14575
Balance carried forward to next year	7082



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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	190
Number of questionnaires returned	46

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	46	4	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	43	46	9	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	63	11	2	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	63	5	0	3
The teaching is good.	38	56	0	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	41	17	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	39	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	43	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	35	43	13	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	41	41	9	7	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	48	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	30	14	2	14

## **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**

51. The children start in the nursery in the September following their third birthday. All of them attend part-time. The nursery has 43 full time equivalent children and up to one quarter of them transfer to the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. Home visits before the children start in the nursery and the reception classes welcome parents and children and provide useful information about the school. The visits also help to develop positive relationships between home and school and have a positive impact on the way the children quickly settle into the routines.

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

52. The quality of teaching is good overall. The good range of opportunities and activities provided for the children's personal, social and emotional development ensure that the majority of the children make good progress. They make particularly good progress in developing their independence and self-confidence as they make choices, organise themselves for the activities and clear away sensibly. They develop good attitudes to school and are keen and enthusiastic to take part in all the activities on offer.
53. When the children first start in the nursery they soon settle into the routines. For example, they respond quickly and well to the 'tidying up' music. This is developed further in the reception class where the children also listen and behave well. They follow instructions and persevere with their tasks for a good length of time. The reception children make good use of a class activity board to 'sign themselves in' for activities; they know what is expected of them and respond very well to the good classroom organisation. They know where to hang coats and bags and are very able when dressing themselves for physical education or outdoor activities.

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

54. The children start in the nursery with below average skills in communication, language and literacy but they make good progress in response to the good teaching they receive so that by the end of the reception year the majority achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. In the nursery the children share books about creatures that come from eggs. Almost all of them hold the books correctly and many of them are beginning to use picture clues to aid their understanding. The children's early reading skills are further developed in the reception class through 'Big Book' sessions and the use of taped stories. Good questioning skills by the teachers and nursery nurses help the children to recall the story in the correct sequence. The role-play areas encourage the development of the children's language skills, especially when adults join the children's play in the 'Milnthorpe Hospital'. In the reception class the children's writing and phonic skills are developed further. The teacher skilfully uses a Mother's day card as a focus for shared reading and to stimulate learning of rhyming words. In this session, several of the children were skilled at recognising initial letter sounds and using these to build and to read simple words.

#### **Mathematical development**

55. The quality of teaching in the mathematical area of learning is good. The nursery staff organise and plan a range of activities so that the children gain good experience in learning how to match, count and organise by size. The nursery teacher uses the water play area very effectively to teach the children to count, match and order to five, using plastic ducks and an

appropriate song for added interest. The children also use computer programmes effectively to consolidate their number recognition and counting skills. In the reception class the children use bears of different colours and sizes to make repeating patterns and to learn the correct vocabulary of position such as next, after, and before. In both the nursery and reception classes, the teachers use songs, rhymes and counting games to help make the learning of numbers fun as well as to learn to count on and back

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

56. Good teaching and a well organised curriculum with a balance of activities ensures that the children in both the nursery and the reception class make good progress in this area of learning. The children gain good early ITC skills as they use the computer to ‘fix’ a variety of problems encountered by Thomas the Tank Engine. They show good control of the mouse as they click and drag items on the screen and a few of the higher attaining pupils know how to change from one program to another. The nursery children build a range of models using construction toys and in the reception class, the pupils build models of the church and the school out of recycled materials as part of their topic about where they live. The nursery children are beginning to understand about floating and sinking as they play in the water and they can also talk about some of the less familiar creatures that hatch from eggs such as crocodiles, turtles, snakes and penguins. A range of visitors talk to the children about their jobs within the community. Most recently these have included visits from two police officers and a doctor and nurse.

### **Physical development**

57. The children make good progress in their physical development and, as a result of the good teaching and the very good facilities available within the school, they are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning by the time they start in Year 1. The school has recently re-organised the accommodation so the nursery and the reception class are together as part of a newly created Foundation Stage area. This means that both classes have full access to a secure outdoor play area as well as the school’s adventure playground. The children enjoy riding a variety of wheeled vehicles and use a selection of small apparatus such as hoops and balls with increasing skill and control. The children’s co-ordination and their awareness of space and of others are well developed when playing outside and teachers and support staff are successful in providing the children with suitable challenges to reinforce their learning. The children cut, glue and thread as they work at a range of focussed activities.

### **Creative development**

58. The children are taught well and make good progress in their creative development. In both classes there are many opportunities for them to express themselves through painting, drawing and making collage pictures and models. In the nursery good links are made with the children’s learning about plants as they observe and paint daffodils. The teacher used bulbs and cut flowers, in bud and open, in order to widen the children’s experience and to stimulate their interest and this resulted in good quality paintings from almost all of the children. The children were also successful in using colourful handprints to decorate Mother’s Day cards. Modelling materials are well used in both classes to produce figures, shapes and decorations. There is also a selection of musical instruments that are frequently used outside so that the children can explore the sounds freely. The children respond well to music and songs, rhymes and poems and music is used effectively in the nursery as a signal to pack away the activities.

## ENGLISH

59. Inspection evidence shows that, by the ages of seven and eleven standards in English are average. The literacy levels of many pupils entering the school are low and from this low base they make satisfactory progress overall. However, the rate of progress is uneven with accelerated learning taking place for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The use of booster groups is having a marked impact on the pupils' attainment towards the end of Year 6 and the younger pupils, who receive additional literacy support in small groups also make good progress. The pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language make good progress. A contributory factor to this good progress is the very effective use that is made of classroom assistants to support the pupils with special educational need, either within the classroom or as part of a withdrawal group. However the achievement of more able pupils is not as high as it should be as their needs are not planned for sufficiently well.
60. Standards in speaking and listening are average overall but they improve as the pupils move through the school and in Years 5 and 6 they are often good. Some of the older, more able pupils are able to engage in meaningful debate and argument. In Years 1-4 progress in speaking and listening is slower because in these classes some pupils do not listen attentively to adults and many find it difficult to listen to one another. Some launch into speech before they have heard and understood the question. Others listen passively and do not participate actively either in responding to questions or in discussion. Guided reading groups are helpful in promoting speaking and listening skills because teachers and classroom assistants pose questions that require reflection and inference.
61. By the ages of seven and eleven standards in reading are average. The more able pupils in Year 2 read accurately although with varying degrees of fluency. Their understanding is sometimes adversely affected by a limited vocabulary and some technically competent readers do not have the skills to explore beneath the surface of the text to seek any meaning beyond the literal. Most pupils enjoy books and understand terms such as 'author' 'illustrator' and 'title.' They enjoy sharing texts during the literacy hour. The more able pupils in Year 6 read fluently and with reasonable expression. They are able to discuss their reading preferences and talk about their favourite authors. About half the pupils in Year 6 are skilful in analysing texts. This was demonstrated well in a good lesson when they read and explored a text about the 'Loch Ness Monster.' They recognised the use of alliteration and many of the pupils could explain the purpose of different punctuation marks. The average and below average pupils use a range of strategies to help them establish meaning and often self-correct words that they have not understood. Most pupils use dictionaries confidently and teachers consistently reinforce these skills. However, library and research skills are not as strong as they should be. The library does not contribute to the development of such skills and some of the books are outdated and in need of replacement. Although some pupils have reading diaries, the home school reading relationship is not well developed and many journals do not have regular entries from parents.
62. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in writing are above average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in writing are improving at a fast rate. Improving writing has been a recent whole school focus and many of the staff have received training. Together with effective additional literacy support across the school, and the smooth running of the literacy hour, this has had a positive impact on standards in writing. The pupils write for an increasing range of purposes and audiences. They write letters, stories, diaries and notices. In Year 2, most pupils use their phonic knowledge well to help with the spelling of words and a few are beginning to use simple punctuation in sentences. Some of the higher attaining pupils produce clear, descriptive and imaginative writing, which is appropriately punctuated. Some are beginning to use connecting words effectively to join ideas.

63. The literacy hour is having a significant impact on the development of the pupils' grammatical knowledge and their understanding of language, especially in Years 3 – 6. The school has identified the need to improve writing and the resulting, more focused teaching has been effective in raising attainment in this aspect. The most able pupils have a good understanding of how to write narrative, produce informative factual pieces and to write imaginative poetry. They write on such diverse subjects as My Ideal Bedroom and Aliens from Space and structure arguments on whether vivisection should be allowed. Pupils write formal and informal letters, reports, stories and persuasive writing. They write riddles, amusing limericks and interesting poems with images such as a shark portrayed as an efficient killing machine and the ocean described as a silver continent. They have a good understanding of the purpose of re-drafting writing and many are developing skills such as note taking to good effect. Handwriting and presentation skills are not secure for a significant number of pupils. For example, many Year 2 pupils are still printing and only around half of the pupils in Year 6 write in a neat, joined script. All classes have regular handwriting sessions and teachers emphasise direct letter joins and general points of neatness. However the time spent does not always produce good outcomes.
64. The overall quality of teaching in English is satisfactory with some good features in the teaching in the juniors. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is very effective. Where the lessons are most successful, the teachers plan them very well, giving a clear explanation of the ideas being taught and providing good models on which the pupils can base their own work. This was evident in a very good Year 3-4 lesson where the teacher discussed the writing of a poem about wild animals. She shared her thoughts, explained the creative process pupils would work through and produced an amusing and effective poem. She also provided useful writing frames as additional help for those who needed them. The poems written subsequently by the pupils were equally thoughtful and accurately constructed, paying very close attention to the strategies illustrated by their teacher. In the best lessons there are good relationships between teachers and pupils. The pupils know very well what is expected of them and in return, they know that their views and contributions will be valued. Where the teaching is less successful, the more able pupils are insufficiently challenged and this hampers their progress. Teachers mark the pupils' work offering encouraging remarks; on occasions the use of praise is rather indiscriminate and the comments are not accompanied by any suggestions as to how the work could be improved. Whilst this approach does much to build self-confidence, it does not contribute to on-going improvements in the standards. The teachers do not provide many opportunities for pupils to use their developing literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example they do not maximise opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects such as history and geography.
65. The co-ordinator has worked hard to raise standards in the subject and particularly in the aspects of reading and writing. Targets are set for pupils so that they can take responsibility for their own learning and these are working very effectively in the Year 5/6 class. The co-ordinator has worked closely with the Local Authority's advisory teacher and she now has a clear view of what needs to be done to raise standards. Assessment in English is thorough and rigorous and the results of statutory and optional tests are analysed carefully. The data is used effectively to plan learning and to set targets for both groups and individuals. The teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress in reading and writing but there are no effective records for speaking and listening. Resources in English are very good with a very good range of high quality books for use within the literacy hour.

## MATHEMATICS

66. By the age of seven and eleven the pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with the national average for their age group. This is a similar judgement to the one made at the time of the last inspection. Since that time, improvements have been made in the teaching and learning in Attainment Target 1 (Using and applying mathematics) and also in the planning for the subject which is now good. Substantial improvements have been made in the way the pupils' attainment is assessed and a range of tests is now used.
67. In the most recent tests the number of pupils achieving level 3 at age seven was below average. The number of pupils achieving level 5 at the age of eleven was well below average. This is because there is still a lack of challenge in the work planned for the higher attaining pupils and they are not achieving as well as they should. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls and all the pupils make satisfactory progress overall. This includes the pupils with special educational needs.
68. By the age of seven the pupils know and can use the vocabulary of number successfully and they confidently use terms such as smaller than, total and subtract. They make 100 using two numbers that are multiples of 10 and use apparatus to help them to add three two digit numbers totalling less than 100. They know how to create their own addition and subtraction sums using numbers up to 10. Almost all of the pupils have a sound knowledge of a range of common 2-D and 3-D shapes and they can measure reasonably accurately in centimetres and metres. By the age of 11 most of the pupils can work confidently with numbers and are able to use a range of different methods of calculation. They are also able to explain many of the processes used in their calculations. They have a good knowledge of place value and can explain what each figure is worth in numbers with up to three decimal places.
69. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. In the best lessons the teachers ensure that all pupils are involved in the discussions. They have high expectations of success for the pupils as well as in the quality of the finished work. In most lessons the pupils are clear about what they are going to learn but when this is not the case the quality and the quantity of completed work deteriorates. Deadlines for completion of the work and the good use of open-ended questions are other good features of many of the lessons. In a Year 6 lesson on data recording the pupils achieved more when the teacher used open-ended questions to guide and extend their thinking. This ensured that many pupils made better progress in plotting more difficult numbers on the graph. For example, number 357 on an axis marked in 50s. In another successful lesson, the teacher gave the pupils a deadline and a range of options for their calculations and reminded them that although there are many ways to calculate an answer, some methods are easier and quicker than others. In some of the less successful lessons the time allowed for the tasks is too short and the pupils have too little time to practise the required skills. In other less successful lessons, learning for the more able pupils is adversely affected through a lack of sufficiently challenging activities. Questions targeted specifically at this group and extension activities to stimulate and stretch them would enable them to achieve much more.
70. The quality of the teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection and it is now good. It is based firmly on the National Numeracy Strategy, which has been implemented effectively. The headteacher is the subject co-ordinator and he has worked hard to analyse test data and to monitor teaching and learning in the subject. As a direct result of the monitoring, the school has taken expert advice on developing the mental oral session of the National Numeracy Strategy. There has also been additional training in order to support the several members of staff who are new to the school. The results of tests and assessment are used to highlight areas for further development and to group the pupils by ability in Years 5 and 6. However, the

information from daily assessments of the pupils' work in class is not widely used by teachers to plan further learning. The resources to support teaching and learning in mathematics are adequate but some pieces of equipment are old and in need of replacement.

## SCIENCE

71. Inspection evidence shows that in the current Year 2 standards are below average and by the end of Year 6, standards are average. Standards have fallen since the time of the previous inspection when they were judged to be above average for most pupils. The school has experienced on-going staffing difficulties over recent years, which has resulted in a lack of continuity and stability in learning for some pupils. This has adversely affected their rate of progress, particularly in Years 1-4. The scrutiny of past and present work in Years 1-4 reveals only a small amount of recorded work in the subject. Additionally, evidence from the work scrutiny, lesson observations and discussions with the pupils indicates that there are insufficient opportunities for them to carry out their own investigations and to follow their own lines of enquiry (Attainment Target 1). Consequently, standards in this aspect are below average across the school. The pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language are well supported and this allows them to make good progress according to their ability. It is to the credit of the teachers in the Year 5 and 6 classes that some of the lost ground is recovered in order to secure average attainment by the end of Year 6.
72. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have investigated what needs to be done to do to keep the body healthy and this includes work on recognising some of the major parts of the body as well as the dangers of misusing some medicines. Their work on materials includes testing the 'squashability' of modelling clay and play dough and learning about the reversible and irreversible changes in some substances such as chocolate, jelly and water. They have also begun to learn about movement and electricity as forces and many of them can create a simple circuit. The recorded work in Year 2 shows limited opportunities for the pupils to think through the scientific processes and present their findings in independent pieces of writing. Much of their work is worksheet based or teacher directed with little evidence of them being able to present their findings independently as tables, charts or diagrams.
73. In the juniors the pupils develop their scientific skills and understanding. For example, in a lesson taken by an advisory teacher, the Year 4 pupils were able to predict which part of an ice hand would probably melt first and a few of the higher attaining pupils could give well thought out reasons. The higher attaining pupils are able to apply their previous learning to new situations when, for example, they can say that the melted and the frozen ice should weigh the same and that it is only the shape that has changed. The Year 6 pupils show their understanding of a fair test when they plan an experiment to investigate how much air is trapped in different soils. Almost all of them know that the quantities of water must be the same and that carrying out the test more than once should provide more accurate results. However, many of the pupils could not give reasons as to why the soil samples needed to be dry at the start of the investigation.
74. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory. Of the three lessons observed, all were at least satisfactory and in the Year 3/4 class, the teaching was good. The teachers' planning of lessons is detailed and thorough and clearly identifies what the pupils are to learn. The learning objectives are returned to in the plenary session in order to assess how successful the learning has been. A strength of the lessons, and especially where the teaching is good, is the quality of the teachers' questions which challenge the pupils and make them think more deeply about what they are doing. For example, good questions during the lesson with the Year 3/4 class helped the pupils to understand that liquids take the shape of the container and that, as the

ice melted, it would lose its shape. Other good features of this lesson were the ways in which the teacher enthused and motivated the pupils through the use of praise, deadlines and challenge. The majority of the pupils responded well and this resulted in good levels of learning. Less successful teaching and learning take place when the task is tightly directed by the teacher and the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged with opportunities to devise their own experiments, choose materials independently or decide on their own methods of recording. Across the school, the marking of work in science is generally inconsistent and in some cases unsatisfactory. For example, there is scant evidence of oral feedback to the younger pupils and the work of the older pupils does not contain comments that will help them to improve their work. The use of information and communication technology is not widely used to support work in science lessons.

75. Planning in science is based on the national guidelines and is delivered as part of a two-year programme so that skills and knowledge are taught progressively in the mixed age classes. However, because of the frequent changes of teacher in some of the classes, continuity in learning has not always been assured and consequently, this has adversely affected the progress of some pupils. Science has not been a main priority of the school development plan for some time and as a result, the subject's profile throughout the school has not been high. The co-ordinator has a science action plan but this has only recently been devised, and some of the priorities within it have still to be addressed. For example, although there has been some monitoring of teachers' planning, the co-ordinator has yet to evaluate standards, either through the scrutiny of pupils' work or the observation of teaching. A sound range of resources that are updated and renewed from the subject's annual budget supports planning and teaching in science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

76. No lessons in art were observed during the inspection but from the scrutiny of the pupils' past and present work, together with discussions with staff and pupils, it is possible to judge that standards of work in art are below those expected. This is similar to the judgement made at the time of the previous inspection. Some work has been done to ensure that the required skills are taught progressively through the introduction of a scheme of work to guide teachers' planning. There has also been some training in the use of sketchbooks and in planning to work with clay. However, there has only been minimal improvement since the last inspection.
77. The work of both the infant and junior pupils shows evidence of learning about colour mixing using paints, crayons and pastels. However, across the school it is evident that opportunities to work with a wide variety of media and in two and three dimensions are very limited. Similarly, work in the style of other artists is not represented either in the pupils' work, or in displays around the school. Consequently, the majority of pupils in both the infants and juniors, make limited progress. Nonetheless, all the pupils are enthusiastic when discussing their drawings and are proud of their work on display.
78. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 draw and paint as part of their work in other subjects. For example, they produce a collaborative display to illustrate the story of Pocohontas. The Year 3 and 4 pupils learn how to mix colours to create different shades and they use their skills satisfactorily in their paintings of winter trees. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils have completed string and leaf prints which involve mixing and overlaying colours. Most of the junior pupils have a sketchbook and by the end of Year 6, the pupils use these satisfactorily to plan drawings and patterns including some effective geometric, monochrome designs.
79. In the drive to raise standards in the core subjects, art has not had a high profile in the school curriculum and, during the recent problematic staffing situation, there has been no co-



ordinator. As a result, there has been no monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and no formal assessment of the standards the pupils attain. This has had a negative impact on any efforts to raise standards in the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

80. Three lessons were observed during the inspection, these were with the Year 3 and 4 class and with the Year 5 and 6 pupils. These lessons, together with scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with the co-ordinator and with pupils indicate that the year groups are involved in a variety of design and make projects and that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 they attain the expected standards in design and technology and make satisfactory progress in the work that they do in most aspects of the subject. This reflects some improvement since the time of the last inspection when standards by the age of eleven were judged to be below average. However, in Years 1 and 2, there were limited examples of pupils' finished work on display and discussions with the pupils suggest that the planning stage is less well emphasised in the infant class.
81. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 talk about their work with enthusiasm and some understanding. They enjoy making things and talk about how they often plan their work through drawings and diagrams but that this is not always the case. Food technology is an important aspect of the work with both the younger pupils and the pupils with special educational needs, who work in small groups to plan, prepare and make sandwiches. The Year 3 and 4 pupils talk confidently about their designs for a purse and their planning work shows their understanding of the suitability of certain materials. They are further able to label a sketch showing how the finished article will be fastened. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 show their knowledge of joining materials as they make a rigid structure that will support a heavy weight. In producing their structures, based on a cube, almost all of them show how they are able to adapt and improve their work in order for it to be fit for the purpose. In the junior classes there is some lack of planning for the pupils to develop their designs and plans using mechanical and electrical components such as pulleys or motors and, in this aspect of the subject, progress is unsatisfactory for all pupils.
82. From the evidence available the quality of the teaching in design and technology is satisfactory overall although in one of the lessons seen the teaching was unsatisfactory. The majority of the junior pupils are given opportunities to plan their work, to select from a variety of materials, and to consolidate their skills. They all have sufficient opportunities to record their ideas and to evaluate their finished work. In the lesson with the Year 5 pupils the teacher drew the groups together frequently to share good practice and to evaluate the strength of the structures. This enabled them to learn from each other and to achieve success. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher spent too long dealing with the challenging behaviour of a small group of pupils and this slowed the pace of the lesson and adversely affected the learning of other pupils in the class.
83. Since the previous inspection the school has adopted the nationally produced scheme of work and the required skills and knowledge are taught according to a rolling programme of topics so that the required skills can be taught progressively in the mixed age classes. However, short term planning in the subject does not make clear how the level at which the topics are taught will meet the needs of the range of age and ability within each class group and especially the higher attaining pupils. The co-ordinator oversees planning and offers advice to colleagues. There is an action plan for developments in the subject but, as yet, no plans to evaluate the school-wide implementation of its priorities. Resources are generally satisfactory with the exception of a selection of mechanisms to help models to move in different ways.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

84. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress and their attainment in geography is in line with that expected nationally. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards by the age of eleven were judged to be below those expected nationally.
85. The pupils in Year 2 enjoy following the travels of “Barnaby Bear”, a soft toy, who is taken on holiday. The pupils plot his journeys on a world map and they can locate many of the countries successfully. They can identify a range of seaside features and explain their advantages and disadvantages. They are then able to apply their knowledge in discussions about an ideal holiday resort. Most pupils display a mature and knowledgeable attitude during the discussions and can describe their reasons as to why they think that Morecambe is not an attractive option! With the help of a large scale map, a few of the more able pupils, are beginning to understand and are able to explain how the building of a low railway viaduct prevented Milnthorpe from continuing as a port. The Year 4 pupils can identify a number of reasons for a settlement being established and can talk about some of the features associated with a community. They plot where they live and accurately record their journey to school. By the age of 11 the pupils know the main features of a river such as source, estuary and mouth and can describe some of the different ways that rivers are used. The older pupils can place Milnthorpe on a map of the United Kingdom and they can locate several major cities, rivers and mountain ranges.
86. The overall quality of the teaching is judged to be satisfactory, although in the two lessons seen during the inspection the teaching was good. However, this good quality of teaching is not reflected in the pupils’ recorded work, which is variable in quality and quantity. There is evidence of some over reliance on worksheets and wide variations in the quality and frequency of the marking. Evidence from the scrutiny of work supports the view that the unsettled nature of the staffing situation has had a negative effect on progress in the subject, especially in Years 1-4.
87. In a good lesson with the Year 4 pupils, the teacher used questions skilfully during a discussion on settlements and this extended their learning about why certain places were settled long ago. She used also used aerial photographs to good effect so that during the task, almost all the pupils were successful in providing at least five reasons for why people chose to settle in certain places.
88. The co-ordinator is new to the role but has already developed a structured approach to the planning and delivery of the units of the rolling programme. She is eager to see the subject develop and is working to improve the subject with additional resources and in service training. The geography curriculum is supported by local visits and for Years 5 and 6, a residential visit to Arnside and the study of a contrasting area at Barrow-in-Furness.

## **HISTORY**

89. The junior pupils attain sound standards and make satisfactory progress in history. For the pupils in Years 1 and 2, their attainment is below the expected standard and their progress is limited. This represents a decline in standards since the last inspection when attainment at the ages of seven and eleven were judged to be satisfactory. The evidence from the scrutiny of work reveals little recorded work in the subject in Years 1 and 2 and from talking to pupils their learning and knowledge of the past is not secure.
90. After a visit to a local Tudor hall, the Year 4 pupils are able to compare life in Tudor times with aspects of their own lives. They understand and can comment on how clothes of today

appear to be more comfortable than in those days. They write thoughtful pieces about Henry VIII when discussing his many wives, and are able to compare and relate the moral conventions of the early sixteenth century with those of today. The Year 6 pupils develop a sound knowledge of the Ancient Greeks and of life during those times. They understand that life in school was hard, and “not as good as their school”. The pupils display a sound recall of information from previous learning about the Greeks and use a range of research skills to develop their knowledge. They discover such facts as the pupils had to study from sunrise to sunset and that at age seven, the boys and had to learn 26000 words from Homer’s Iliad.

91. The quality of the teaching in history is satisfactory overall and the two lessons observed in Years 5 and 6 had some good features. The teachers are enthusiastic and their collaboration and teamwork provides a better quality of learning for all the pupils. The good organisation of the lessons and the grouping of the pupils by ability in order to study aspects of Greek life mean that almost all pupils make some good progress. The teachers also make good use of the classroom computers to aid research and to provide information. Whilst no unsatisfactory teaching was observed in history, the scrutiny of work presents a contrasting picture of both attainment and teaching across the school. These contrasts are more marked in the classes that have experienced a range of teachers over recent times. Teacher expectations are often too low and more opportunities could be provided for the pupils’ to produce their own writing. There is also evidence of a lack of challenge in some of the tasks and the quality of marking is inconsistent and does not show the pupils how they might improve.
92. Work in history is planned according to the school’s cycle of topics. The co-ordinator is very new to the role and is eager to see the subject develop. There is a subject action plan with appropriate and relevant priorities but most of these have yet to be addressed. As part of future developments in the subject, the school could usefully find ways to renew and extend the resources.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

93. The majority of the infant and junior pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally. This judgement is similar to that made at the time of the last inspection for the pupils aged seven but, by the time the pupils are eleven, standards are not as high as they were. This is mainly due to the unsettled staffing position that has left some staff unable to reinforce and link the skills learnt in the computer suite to other areas of study. However there have been improvements in the subject and these have generally resulted from the recent upgrading of resources and additional training to develop the teachers’ skills and expertise in the subject. In some aspects of their work in information and communication technology, the pupils’ skills are better than those expected, for example in their ability to use the Internet for research purposes. In some other aspects of their work however, progress has not been so rapid and the pupils have too few opportunities to use the computers in their work in other subjects.
94. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils have satisfactory basic skills and are achieving well. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils are provided with well-structured opportunities to become familiar with a range of information and communication technology. Consequently, they make sound progress and achieve the standards expected of seven-year-olds. Many pupils can load programs from within the computer and close them down when they have finished. They learn to use the keyboard and mouse with control and understanding and operate a range of programs effectively. The younger pupils develop basic keyboard skills, showing they can operate the caps lock and spacebar and they learn to use a word processing program to revise text and construct sentences about jungle animals. By Year 2 the pupils are able to use a program to create delightful pictures of themselves and classmates. They can skilfully program a robot to

follow given pathways and they practise mathematical calculations by manipulating numbers on the computer screen.

95. In Years 3-6, the pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have a secure understanding of ICT and they have the skills expected of pupils of their age. Almost all pupils can use the computer to organise and reorganise text. They begin to develop the skills of redrafting and are able to replace selected words in a given text with synonyms. Some older pupils can use cut and paste techniques and move text using drag and drop procedures. The Year 3 and 4 pupils can access the Internet by logging on and successfully searching for information. The Year 3 pupils can send and receive electronic mail. In Year 5 the pupils show great expertise when investigating a database about planets. They enter accurate information and pose appropriate questions in order to complete the investigation. The pupils are able to search a given database for information and in Year 6 they have a very good knowledge of how information technology is used in the home and the environment. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 also have some experience of graphic modelling.
96. The overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory. Most teachers use regular ICT lessons to good effect to teach and demonstrate the appropriate skills and these are often reinforced before the next lesson. Whilst there is some evidence of teachers providing opportunities for pupils to use the computers in other subjects, this is not as extensive as it could be. When this is done it is usually very effective. In mathematics for example, some younger pupils use the computer as an extension activity to provide further addition and subtraction practice. In English, the more able pupils' understanding of different writing styles was extended very successfully. In a good lesson with the younger pupils in the juniors, the teacher made very good use of the computers to support the pupils' learning in literacy. She provided opportunities for pupils to write and edit poems about 'misunderstood' animals providing quality support and feedback as necessary. The pupils' attitudes to learning in ICT are very positive. When working in pairs at the computer they collaborate well, treat equipment with respect and are very well behaved
97. There is sound curriculum leadership in information and communication technology. The headteacher, in the absence of the co-ordinator, is continuing to manage the rapid development of the subject which has increased since the siting of a community ICT suite in the school. The new computer suite provides an excellent resource. A clear policy and scheme of work inform teaching and learning in the subject effectively. A good programme of professional development is being established and this is enabling staff to manage the pupils' learning effectively. Assessment and record keeping systems need further development.

## **MUSIC**

98. The pupils' attainment in music is in line with what is expected nationally for pupils at age seven and eleven. There has been a marginal decline in standards since the time of the previous inspection when standards at age eleven were judged to be slightly higher. Standards in instrumental playing and composition are good across the school and all the pupils make satisfactory progress. The school no longer has a permanent music specialist but it makes effective use of the skills of a visiting teacher for the junior classes.
99. The pupils sing a range of songs reasonably tunefully with a developing sense of rhythm and extend their compositional skills steadily. The Year 1 and 2 pupils are able to maintain a constant beat and follow their class teacher carefully using untuned instruments as part of a class orchestra. In the lessons observed in the juniors the pupils made satisfactory progress. The number of pupils who are learning to play orchestral instruments or who are members of the steel band make very good progress in their musical skills and knowledge. A significant

number of pupils learn to play these instruments in two bands, one for beginners and another more advanced group. The music they produce is of a high quality and the band justly deserves its local and regional recognition and popularity.

100. The junior pupils develop their compositional skills well. For example, in one lesson the pupils devised their own sounds to represent different aspects of a journey through space. They used broken chords and discord to represent the unknown and to simulate meetings with alien creatures. They made good use of the pentatonic scale to compose their own tunes.
101. The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory with several good features. For example, lessons are very carefully planned to include all the elements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Only one music lesson was observed in the infants but in that lesson the class teacher and the classroom assistant used all opportunities to develop the pupils' musical skills. The teachers make very good use of praise and evaluative comments and this allows the pupils to improve the quality of their compositions or performances. In the junior lessons, good strategies to keep the pupils on task and well-motivated are used well so that the pupils gain confidence and achieve success. A highly skilled part-time music specialist takes all of the lessons in the juniors. He uses his musical talents well and has made a significant contribution both to the maintenance of standards and the pupils' enjoyment of the subject.
102. The pupils' musical experiences are enhanced by opportunities to take part in school and community activities such as visits by the choir to sing in a local nursing home and performances by the steel band at national level. There are some missed opportunities to further extend the pupils' skills and knowledge. For example, both their musical knowledge and their spiritual and cultural development would be improved by listening to a range of music in assemblies.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

103. The pupils' standards in physical education are in line with the standard expected nationally. The pupils are provided with a broad range of physical activities that includes dance, gymnastics, games and outdoor and adventurous activities. In addition, the older pupils have regular swimming lessons. By the time they leave, most Year 6 pupils are confident swimmers who can swim at least 25 metres. Overall standards are similar to those found at the last inspection although standards in some aspects of the subject are now higher than they were. The majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress in achieving to the best of their ability.
104. The infant pupils know how to build up a sequence of movements and they can create a pattern of jumps, balances and different ways of travelling. They show a good understanding of sequences and confidently add new movements to those learned previously. They demonstrate good skills involving take-off, jumping and landing. The Year 6 pupils show a great deal of enthusiasm and a good level of skill as they practise and use a range of passing and receiving techniques in basketball. Many pupils move with good control and they are able to use their whole body well to mark their opponents or to shield the ball before shooting.
105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons the teachers are enthusiastic and well organised, expectations are high and demonstration is used well to highlight improvements and to increase the level of challenge. In a lesson with the Year 6 class, the teacher kept the lesson fast moving and his clear explanations and points for improvement ensured that the pupils made noticeable progress in performing a sequence of accurate throws. Both the pupils and the teacher shared their delight and surprise at the successful results.

106. All of the teachers use warm-up and cool-down exercises effectively and they make sure that the pupils know the reasons for them. Games lessons are brisk and well planned and have a clear focus on specific skills and improvement in performance. Occasionally some pupils do not co-operate with their teacher and some time is lost through repeating instructions and practising simple routines. Lunchtime play leaders show a good ability to enthuse pupils, praising and encouraging their efforts when they use balls or skipping equipment. There is an outstanding range of fixed outside climbing and balancing equipment. The use of these facilities is making a significant contribution to pupils' good levels of physical skill.
107. The headteacher is currently acting as co-ordinator and he is enthusiastic and well informed about recent developments in the subject. A clear framework has been developed to indicate how each aspect is to be covered during the year and there is a detailed subject development plan. Extra-curricular clubs are provided in a range of sporting activities and very good links are maintained with the local high school with the use of their facilities for extra clubs. The school has a good range of resources for the subject.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. The pupils' attainment is in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus and across the school the pupils make satisfactory progress. This is a similar judgement to the one made at the time of the last inspection. Throughout the school, the pupils have a sound understanding of the major world faiths and they are able to explain some of the differences and similarities associated with them.
109. By the end of Year 2 the pupils are able to ask relevant questions associated with their work and to build on their previous experiences and visits. This was particularly noticeable during a lesson led by the local vicar. This lesson was a follow-up from the pupils' earlier visit to the church, when documents and artefacts were studied and drawn. The pupils were able to recall the visit in some detail when a chalice and a plate were shown in relation to the Easter story. In addition to Easter, the pupils know many of the special celebrations in the Christian calendar such as harvest and Christmas. They have a good knowledge of the events surrounding the creation and record that "God used his powers and then needed a rest" when making the world. After visiting a local Buddhist priory the pupils can explain why they took off their shoes in the temple.
110. The younger junior pupils know what it means to be a Buddhist after their visit to the Priory and are able to compare life there with their own lives. They act out the story of Buddha in a play and write thoughtful prayers based on what they have learnt. They have an appreciation of the story of Palm Sunday and Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Their understanding is revealed in the writing of one pupil as, 'He didn't want to look special but He had something special to say to everyone'. The pupils in Year 6 write their own 10 commandments and are able to link many of the original ones to life in school. Their rules include, 'never talk when the teacher is talking', 'be thoughtful to one another' and 'smile'. The older pupils know that light plays an important part in the festivals of all religions as they learn about the customs and ceremonies associated with Hanukkah, Advent, Christingle and Diwali.
111. The quality of teaching in religious education is satisfactory. In a lesson with the Year 5 pupils the teacher extended the pupils' learning successfully as she linked an example from literature with the life of Jesus and the issues of good and evil. Through this the pupils were able to appreciate that truth is an important aspect of life. In almost all of the lessons the teachers are effective in encouraging the pupils to reflect upon the lives of religious leaders and upon their own lives and actions, in school and at home.

112. There is an enthusiastic co-ordinator for the subject and she has reviewed aspects of the teaching in religious education in order to produce detailed guidelines of the work to be covered in the mixed age classes. The guidelines are clear and help to ensure progression in learning as the pupils move through the school. Additional resources have been purchased to support the teaching in religious education and these are stored and labelled for ease of access and use by staff.