

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWLAITHEs INFANT SCHOOL

Carlisle

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112226

Headteacher: Mrs J Massey

Reporting inspector: David Boot
OFSTED Inspector Number 19132

Dates of inspection: 30th October – 1st November 2001

Inspection number: 195688

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Langrigg Road Carlisle Cumbria
Postcode:	CA2 6DX
Telephone number:	01228 607532
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Steele
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19132	David Boot	Registered inspector	Mathematics Equal opportunities	What sort of school it is How high are standards Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed
13450	Jenny Madden	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
4109	Jim Barley	Team inspector	Science Art Information and Communication Technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
18344	David Earley	Team inspector	English History Physical Education Special educational needs	
11848	John Taylor	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Design and Technology Geography Religious Education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Newlathes Infant School is situated to the west of Carlisle. There are currently 177 children on roll, which is about the same as at the time of the last inspection in March 1997 and lower than average for primary schools. Children join the reception year to begin full-time education in the September after their fourth birthday and they transfer to Newlathes Junior School at the age of seven. All the children come from nearby but about three-quarters come from homes outside the school's designated area because their parents want them to attend the school. Most children come from homes where parents work full-time and 13 per cent are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. Whilst attainment on entry varies it is usually average, which is a change from the previous inspection when attainment on entry was judged to be "generally low". However, there are fewer children with special educational needs and fewer potentially higher achieving children than average. This is reflected in the number of children on the school's register of special educational needs, which, at 11 per cent, is below the national average, as is the number of these children who have statements. There are no children from minority ethnic groups and no children speak English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with some very good features. Standards have remained good in reading, writing, science, information and communication technology, art and physical education and they are sound in all other subjects. Teaching and learning are mostly very good, especially in the reception classes. Children are very well behaved and have very positive attitudes to their learning. The curriculum is good and all children are very well included in it. Children's personal development is very good. The school takes particularly good care of its children, it works very well with parents. The school is well led and has made a good improvement since its last inspection. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are good in reading, writing, science, information and communication technology, art and physical education.
- Teaching is very good, overall, especially in the Foundation Stage
- Children make a very good start to their full-time education in the Foundation Stage, where they begin the process of becoming independent in their learning, which is built on well in Years 1 and 2.
- Leadership and management are good; the headteacher provides a very clear direction for the school and is very approachable
- Children are very well cared for, they have very positive attitudes and are very well behaved.
- The school has a very good partnership with parents

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics
- Children's presentation of their independent work

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997 and it has improved well overall. Three issues raised then have all been addressed. The planning and teaching are now more rigorous and challenging for the more able children. The school has developed good procedures for co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate their subjects and the school has schemes of work for all subjects. In addition, standards have improved in line with national improvement in all subjects except mathematics, where attainment has recently dipped. Importantly, the quality of teaching has improved from good to very good. Leadership and management have remained strong despite the fact that the new headteacher has only been in post for just over a year. Many of the other good features have remained strong or have even improved. For example, attitudes, behaviour and personal development are still very

good and the care of children, as well as the school's partnership with parents and children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are now very good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	B	B	B	B
writing	A	B	A	A
mathematics	A	B	D	D

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

Children enter the reception classes with around average attainment and mostly achieve the early learning goals for the Foundation Stage by the time they move into Year 1. By the end of Year 2, National Curriculum test results are good in reading and very good in writing in comparison with all schools nationally and with similar schools also. This has been the trend over several years. However, while attainment in mathematics has been good or very good, it has dipped recently. These results are largely mirrored in the work seen during the inspection when it was judged that standards in reading and writing are both good but standards in mathematics are below that level, although, still satisfactory for the children's age. Attainment is good in science, information and communication technology, art and physical education; in other subjects it is in line with national expectations for the children's age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very positive attitudes to the school; they work very conscientiously, both with their teachers and when they are working independently.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour both in and out of classrooms is very good. Children are polite to adults and to each other.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of all the children is important to the school and it is very good. There are very good relationships between adults and children and also amongst the children themselves.
Attendance	Very good. There have been no unauthorised absences.

The school caters very successfully for all children and achieves very high standards of behaviour. Children are very keen to work hard and get on very well with one another and with the staff. This helps the children to learn. The children's attitude to selecting work and in getting on with it independently is especially impressive.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching in the reception classes is a particular strength of the school. During the inspection, all the teaching in the two reception classes was judged to be very good. There is very effective teamwork between the two teachers and their support staff. Teaching in English, in Years 1 and 2, is always at least good and it is frequently very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of how to teach basic skills in literacy and they manage to do this while making children's work lively and interesting. Overall, teaching in mathematics is sound but this masks some differences. Teachers work very well with their children, they understand the subject and present it in an interesting way. However, expectations of what the children should achieve when they are working independently are not high enough. Teachers very successfully take into account the differing needs of all the children. The teaching of children with special educational needs is very good. Children mostly learn very well as a result of the teaching they receive. As a result of the very positive relationships, children are very interested in what they are doing and try hard, both intellectually and physically.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good in the reception classes and good in Years 1 and 2. The school provides well-planned and interesting lessons to meet the needs of all children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Children are identified in the reception classes and they have very good support. They are fully included in all that is going on.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall. Social and moral provision is very good, children very soon learn the difference between right and wrong. Spiritual and cultural provision is good, through assemblies and lessons in various subjects. Personal development is very good – the very good, early work in the reception classes is very well built on in Years 1 and 2.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This results from a detailed knowledge of each child which is carefully built up as the children move through the school.

The school works very effectively with parents. Links begin when the children first start the school, through home visits. These are then built on successfully so that they are effective in helping children to learn.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It caters particularly well for teaching literacy and encouraging independent learning in many subjects. Literacy skills are used well in other subjects. The school works hard to provide interesting activities for all the children. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for children of this age as well as interesting visits and visitors, all of which help to improve children's work. The school promotes the use of information and communication technology well and this results in good standards. Numeracy skills are less well provided for as some of this provision is not sufficiently focused.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection. The new headteacher provides very strong yet approachable leadership. She is well assisted by a hardworking staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties and has a strong partnership with the headteacher and staff. Governors are well informed about the school and well placed to ensure appropriate development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher leads a thorough evaluation of performance through the use of data and a well-established monitoring and evaluation programme.
The strategic use of	Good; all staff are well deployed and accommodation and resources are used

resources	well.
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The school is well staffed and equipped. The accommodation has been well cared for and is very good. The level of staffing, accommodation and learning resources makes a positive contribution to learning.

The school has good and efficient systems for management which are well established. The headteacher provides a clear direction for further improvement and she is well supported by staff and governors, who work well in partnership together. The school is working very well towards achieving the Cumbria 'Kite Mark' for the Foundation Stage. The school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • Behaviour is good and this is achieved through very consistent application of the school's rules, which are valued greatly by the children themselves. • Teaching is good • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best • The school is well led and managed • The school helps children become more confident, mature and responsible 	<p>At the parents' meeting there was nothing that parents could find to improve. From the questionnaires returned a few parents felt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school doesn't provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons • Parents are not well informed about how their children are getting on • Children get the right amount of work to do at home • They would not feel comfortable about approaching the school.

The inspection team agrees with all of the things that parents like about the school. Teaching and behaviour are very good, children are expected to work hard and they become confident, independent learners. Leadership and management are good. The team disagrees with what parents would like to see improved. The range of activities that are provided outside lessons is good for children of this age as is the work they are expected to do at home. The school is very approachable and provides good information to parents about how their children are getting on. These positive factors all help children to learn well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In 1997, children's attainment on entry to the school was judged to be generally low. This is not the case now as, although there is a spread of attainment on entry, it is average overall. There are, however, fewer potentially higher attaining children and fewer with special educational needs than is average nationally. This is confirmed by the school's baseline assessment carried out during the first seven weeks in the reception classes. By the time they leave the reception classes and move into Year 1, children have mostly achieved the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage and are starting on work in the National Curriculum.
2. At the early stage in the school year that the inspection took place, children in the reception classes were making very good achievements in settling into working as a class. For example, very good teaching resulted in a timid girl gaining confidence when given the chance to display and talk to the class about her playdoh birthday cake.
3. There has been an improvement nationally in reading, writing and mathematics over the last three years. The school has kept pace in both reading and writing and has maintained standards above the national level but although attainment has been above the national level in mathematics up to 2000, it dipped in 2001. This is reflected in the National Curriculum test results and in judgements made during the inspection. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests, attainment was above average in reading and well above average in writing. This is a particular success for the school, as improving writing has been one of its priorities for improvement.
4. Currently, children are working at levels above average in both reading and writing. In the National Curriculum test in mathematics in 2001, attainment fell to below average although children during the inspection were judged to be working at an average level for their age. The number of children achieving a level higher than that usually expected for their age in the tests in reading and writing was relatively lower than might be expected given the overall level of attainment. This is because there are fewer potentially more able children in the school. Even so, the number of children achieving the higher level was average for reading and above average for writing. These comparisons in test results are the same in relation to similar schools. Teachers' assessments of attainment in science and judgements made during the inspection show that attainment in science is also above average. There are no significant differences to note in the comparison of achievement between boys and girls.
5. In all aspects of English and in science, children have maintained the good standards reported in 1997 and improved their performance in writing, but they have fallen back in mathematics. In English, children improve their ability to

listen attentively and speak clearly through the many opportunities for class discussions. They become able to read fluently and expressively and write well because there is very good teaching of basic skills. For example, they write stories, letters, descriptions, character sketches and accounts of visits to such places as Hawse End. In mathematics, children are learning basic skills appropriate for their age and building from what they have already learned; for example, children in Year 1 add together small numbers less than 10 and in Year 2 they learn to add together numbers between 10 and 100. In science, a particular strength is the way they investigate and explore scientific ideas as seen in Year 2 work concerning electricity and materials for insulation.

6. Standards in other subjects have also been maintained at a good level in information and communication technology, art and physical education and at an average level in design and technology, geography, history and religious education. Insufficient teaching in music was seen during the inspection for a judgement to be possible. Good standards in art are evident throughout the school in the good quality work on display that is well linked to other subjects, for example, drawings of musical instruments and clay work about houses.
7. Children generally achieve well. There are frequent examples of very good achievement; for example, children achieved very well in a Year 1 music lesson when they learned to recognise sounds. They also achieved very well in physical education when they were challenged to interpret their thoughts and feelings and to represent these in a wide range of ways of travelling. In an English lesson in Year 2, children worked very confidently answering questions, knowing that their answers would be valued. In mathematics, achievement varies. Sometimes it is very good, for example, when children in Year 1 were very interested in learning to add together numbers of sweets. Sometimes, however, it is not good enough when children are not working at a high enough level, as observed for example, when they were playing very simple counting games in Year 1 that they would have mastered before leaving the reception classes.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Children have consistently very good attitudes to their learning, which have been maintained since the previous inspection. This is a considerable strength of the school. Children are keen and eager to come to school and they enjoy participating in questions and discussion, listen carefully to explanations and try hard when faced with a task. They are very eager to talk to visitors about what they are doing and very pleased to share the joy they get in what they are learning; for example, a boy in Year 1 regularly reads at home to his dog because he enjoys reading so much!
9. Overall, the behaviour of children is very good and there have been no exclusions. This very good behaviour in lessons extends to playtimes and lunchtimes, when children get on very well together and with the lunchtime supervisors. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare and the school deals effectively with any problems. Children get on very well with the teachers and

other adults in the school. They are polite and confident with them and mutual respect is shown. Children use resources sensibly, especially when they have 'planned' an activity independently and are using the resources provided very well. For example, children in a Year 1 class shopped in the class room shop very conscientiously using real money. Very early on in the reception classes children learn to have respect for their teachers and each other. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 consistently reinforce this; for example, a Year 1 teacher referred to the school rules in dealing with a problem that had arisen at lunchtime between two of the children. She did this very sensitively but involved the children in a general discussion of how they should behave towards each other.

10. Children's personal development and relationships are very good. The school works very hard to include all children fully and to provide them with appropriate support when necessary. The non-teaching assistants work very closely with the children in the reception classes and the teamwork between the teaching and non-teaching staff is very effective. Personal, social and emotional development is rightly given a particularly high priority in the reception classes. Here, the school lays the building blocks which underpin the successful independent learning. Children are taught at a very early stage to take responsibility for choosing activities from a 'menu' of what the teachers have planned for them. They select activities from the list, then sensibly and conscientiously apply themselves, showing very good levels of concentration for their age.
11. Children with special educational needs receive very good provision and consequently they have very good attitudes and behave very well. They are fully included in all that is going on and the extra provision made for them helps them take part equally throughout. This has a positive impact on their rate of progress towards their individual targets.
12. Attendance is around the national average and there have been no unauthorized absences.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and it is one of the school's strengths. It was mostly good in 1997 and it is now mostly very good. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is particularly impressive: all of the lessons seen were judged to be very good. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is also very good in almost two out of every three lessons seen; about a third of lessons were good and a few lessons were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed.
14. Children mostly learn very well as a result of the teaching. A particular strength of the teaching and learning is the quality of the relationships that exist between the teachers and the children. This is linked to teachers' very good skills in managing the children. That management begins in the

reception classes, where children very soon learn that their teachers are very consistent in applying the school's rules so that they can all feel safe and secure. During a lesson taught by the Early Years co-ordinator, the teacher demonstrated her very good relationship with the class when she explained very clearly to them the consequences of their actions and the need for safety procedures when using the large apparatus in the hall. The very good partnership between the teacher and the teaching assistant was also very positive. These very positive relationships and consistently high expectations of behaviour and good manners, underpinned by the school's rules, continue throughout Years 1 and 2.

15. Teachers know their subjects very well and use this knowledge in the way they present and explain work to the children. In a science lesson in Year 1, children were entranced by the story of a little bear who was afraid of the dark because the teacher read the story in a lively way and used her voice very expressively. She also very skilfully linked this with scientific work on sources of light so that activity had real relevance for the children.
16. The school teaches literacy skills very well so that by the time the children leave they are mostly fluent and expressive readers and can write for a good range of reasons including poems and stories as well as accounts of the visits that they have made, for example, when Year 2 children produced interesting accounts of their visit to the cathedral. The teaching of numeracy skills varies. When teachers are directly involved with their children they use their knowledge very well and expect the children to work at a brisk pace. In a Year 2 lesson, the children worked quickly when counting on in two's in the oral, mental part of the lesson. However, sometimes in Years 1 and 2, children's learning is only satisfactory in mathematics when they are not involved with the teachers and the work they are expected to do is at a lower level and not as rigorous as it should be.
17. Teachers use very good methods to encourage children to work very well independently. Again, the key to the success of this is the very strong foundations laid in the reception classes and skilfully adapted in Years 1 and 2. Children learn very quickly to 'plan' what work they should do. This system encourages them to be interested in their work, to understand what they are doing and how they can improve their work. They are particularly successful in developing their ideas in a range of subjects. Teachers take great care to ensure that children are taught what to do so that when they work independently they can develop this successfully. For example, in an English lesson in Year 1, children's learning was very good in applying their knowledge of sounds to spell words accurately. The teacher explained punctuation clearly and prompted very good thinking with her questions. Subsequently, the more able children were able to continue this very good rate of learning when they wrote meaningful sentences unaided. While being very successful in the teaching of literacy, this strategy is not so successful in mathematics, where the demands of the subject are different and teaching is insufficiently focused on some occasions.

18. Children use computers confidently to help them in most subjects and this especially supports learning in literacy and numeracy; for example, a Year 2 child was using the computer to organise writing instructions to make a cup of tea.
19. Teachers are very successful in taking account of all the children and their differing needs. Although there are no children who are learning to speak English as an additional language, the school caters very well for those who have special educational needs. The very good assessment techniques in the reception classes are used to identify children who have difficulties in learning. These children are then very well supported by their teachers both in class and through regular specialist teaching. Although there are relatively fewer potentially more able children than might be found on average, the school mostly ensures that they are taught appropriately through organising them into groups and providing more challenging work for them. This has been less successful in mathematics; the school has grouped children by their general capability rather than based on assessments of their ability in mathematics. The school has recognised this and intends to make changes shortly.
20. Teachers use homework very sensibly and make it suitable for the age of the children. They also provide very good quality information for parents so that they can make the most of this opportunity to help their child and so help to improve their work. In Year 1, for example, the teachers have provided very interesting activities that parents and children can do together. These are easily accessible to parents when they bring their children to school and have been explained to parents.
21. The children in the reception classes had only been in school full-time for a very short period at the time of the inspection and were still learning about how to get on in their new class, learning for example, how to understand and use the school's very effective rules. As a result, some of their learning in the recognised areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage was not yet fully effective, despite the very good teaching. This is time well spent and will enable them to learn very well once they are fully settled.

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

22. The school provides a good range of well-planned and interesting learning opportunities, which meet the needs of all the children including those with special educational needs. All the requirements of the National Curriculum, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage are being met.
23. The school has developed very good strategies for teaching literacy. The encouragement of independent learning within the 'planning' sessions is paying dividends for this subject. The strategies for numeracy, however, are not nearly as effective and there is a need for the school to reconsider its use

of the Numeracy Strategy in order to provide a more focused approach to the teaching of numeracy. The skills of literacy are used well in other subjects. Speaking and listening are developed in many areas of the curriculum. In science, for instance, the children were asked to solve the problem of a bear who was afraid of the dark. They were encouraged to discuss why he was afraid and what they could do to solve his problem. Good use is made of the big books used in the literacy hour for such subjects as science and history.

24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Children are identified early and provided with very good and appropriate support to enable them to make very good progress towards their goals. Through its planning and support the school ensures that all pupils are given full access to the curriculum.
25. A good range of appropriate extra-curricular activities including recorder, sports and art and craft groups enhances the curriculum. The school makes very effective use of visits and visitors to the school to enrich the normal curriculum. Wes Magee, a well-known poet, has visited the schools and there have been visits to the Guild Hall, the cathedral and the castle. The local shops are visited regularly for work in geography. The local policeman, nurse and ambulance men are regular visitors to the school.
26. The school makes very good provision overall for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
27. Provision for spiritual development is good, with assemblies making a significant contribution to this aspect. All assemblies contain a period of reflection when the children are asked to think about their own lives and how well they compare to the lives of others. The policy for this area encourages teachers to identify opportunities in all subjects to develop spirituality. They encourage the children to express feelings about art and music and to interpret those feelings in their dance, for instance. In art, the children's attempts at painting in the style of Van Gogh indicate clearly that they had succeeded in feeling as the artist did when he painted.
28. Provision for social and moral education is very good. Pupils are encouraged to know right from wrong from a very early age and the absence of aggression and poor behaviour is an indication of how well the school is doing. The children know and understand the school rules and accept without protest the consequences of any deviation from them. They happily work together, helping each other and taking turns when using equipment. The aims of the school are very clear in these areas and everything that happens in the school further promotes those aims. As the children progress through the school, they take on more responsibilities. All classes have a list of helpers who do various jobs within the classroom but Year 2 children are often given extra responsibilities in assemblies, for instance.
29. Cultural development is good. The school is very aware of the predominately white population of the area and tries to teach the children about cultural

diversity in a subtle but effective way. Displays around the school contain images of children of different origins and ethnicity and books from different cultures are part of the library provision. Children learn about other religions in religious education and there is constant reference to the village in India with which the school is associated. The school makes visits to theatres, museums and churches and has had a visit from a poet and from musicians. During the week of the inspection the older pupils visited a theatre to hear a poet perform his work.

30. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The school keeps records of the children's personal and health development and the very good relationships that exist between teachers and children ensure that the teachers know the children and their families very well. Many issues of a personal or health nature are discussed in often-impromptu circle times.
31. Links with the community are good. Members of the local community, such as the policeman, are regular visitors to the school. There are good links with the local community centre and the local shops are seen as a valuable resource for the curriculum.
32. The school enjoys very good links with other schools in the area. There is increasing liaison with the nearby junior school, which now includes a co-ordinators' meeting to discuss common problems and approaches. The links with other providers of education and child care for under fives is very good and all the schools in the area have worked together to set up an after-school club in the local community centre.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school takes very good care of all its children, an improvement in standards since the last inspection, when it was good. This is the result of the detailed knowledge of each child by his or her class teacher and more generally across the school. Each teacher records details of children's strengths and weaknesses in their academic and personal achievements. This record moves through the school with them, providing an evolving picture of each child.
34. Each child's individual needs are well met as a result of the strategies employed by the school. Children with special educational needs are given very good support by the classroom assistants while at the same time every effort is made to ensure that all other children are working to achieve their potential. Teachers use a variety of methods to ensure that all children have a good understanding of their work, including effective questioning, which challenges their thinking, encourages curiosity and enables them to work independently.
35. The school liaises with a variety of outside agencies, including the speech and language specialists and the physical and medical specialists. This co-operation has been used to very good effect in the case of children with

special medical needs, enabling them to function normally within the school. The school nurse is a valued source of advice and support, providing counselling in addition to her normal duties within the school. The local police constable is a regular visitor.

36. Aspects of health and safety around the school are checked daily by the school caretaker and any necessary action is taken. The governors audit the school premises inside and out each spring term and report their findings to a governors' meeting for action. Between these annual checks, the headteacher and caretaker carry out regular safety inspections. The school has good arrangements for first aid, all members of staff have been trained and a rolling programme of re-training has been instituted. Pupils are well supervised at break times and accidents are dealt with immediately and recorded in the accident book. When necessary a note is sent home to inform parents of the circumstances. Medical checks are carried out by the school nurse and doctor.
37. The headteacher as the designated person responsible for child protection has been trained in the requirements of the new Local Authority guidelines. The staff have yet to be given training on the new handbook but have previously received a basic training and are fully aware of the issues and procedures.
38. The promotion and monitoring of attendance are very good. Registration is efficient and the attendance is monitored daily by the staff and secretary and in detail each half-term. The Education Welfare Officer is involved if any problems are becoming apparent. Because of this vigilance, the school has no unauthorised absence and an attendance rate well above the national average.
39. Monitoring of behaviour and the procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good. Children are reminded regularly about the school rules, which are brief and sensible. Rewards and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour are made clear. Within the classroom teachers have very good management skills allied to high expectations of children's behaviour, as was made very clear in a Year 1 music lesson when, despite the excitement, children made very good progress by the end of the lesson. At lunchtimes, each class has its own lunchtime assistant who knows the children very well; each has been specially trained and can deal with the majority of incidents. However, following each lunchtime session the assistants give teachers a report on anything they feel is relevant to the welfare of the children. Parents are pleased with the overall behaviour of children within the school.
40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting children's personal development are also very good. Records accompany each child through the school, giving a picture of that child built up through classroom observation and independent learning. Circle-time, when each child has the opportunity to voice thoughts and concerns, contributes to the knowledge of each individual and begins when children enter the reception class. The annual reports to parents give a good summary of the personal growth of each child.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents feel that this is a very good school. The vast majority of parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire agree that their children are making good progress in a school that they like. They agree that this is a result of very good teaching in a well-managed environment where children are expected to work hard and be well behaved. In addition, parents say they are happy that the school works closely with them, keeps them well informed and that they would have no problem approaching the school with any problems. They also say that the school provides the right amount of work to do at home and that their children are being helped to mature and take responsibilities. On all these points, the inspection team agrees with parents. However, 15 per cent of parents said in response to the questionnaire that the school provided an insufficient range of interesting activities outside lessons. The inspection team disagrees with this opinion and judges that the school makes good provision in this respect for children of this age.
42. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good, an improvement since the last report, when they were good. These very good links begin when children first enter the school. Each family receives a home visit at the start of the autumn term when parents are asked to complete a questionnaire to ensure that the school is aware of all relevant information about their child. In addition, the school has recently revised their induction policy for new entrants and their parents to ensure familiarity with the staff and classroom before children start school. Children's entry to the reception class is phased over a number of weeks and parents are fully involved in this process.
43. The prospectus is well set out and gives parents a clear picture of the school in a friendly and informative way. Letters and newsletters keep parents up to date with school life and include such items as invitations to curriculum meetings and requests for their help in school. Annual reports to parents are good, providing parents with an in-depth picture of their children's abilities, where they need help and support as well as giving learning targets for the following academic year. Following the report, parents can talk to the staff and make a written response to the contents. Formal meetings on children's progress are held twice a year but parents can talk to teachers or the headteacher at any time when children are being delivered or collected from school. Additionally, parents are given the opportunity to attend assemblies and take part in open weeks. Each year group corridor contains a notice board for parents, giving useful information including details of topic work being undertaken in the current term. Also available is a series of booklets giving advice on how to help children at home with, for example, reading or mathematics. Parents with children who have special educational needs are fully involved in their child's education.

44. The school has made considerable efforts to encourage parents to help in the school and a number of parents have recently completed a training course to provide them with an informed basis for helping children in the classroom. Homework, in the form of regular reading and occasional spelling and mathematical tasks, helps to secure the partnership between school and home. Parents are aware of the homework policy, which is given out with the prospectus. An active parent-teacher organisation provides considerable funding for the school as well as giving opportunity for the raising of school issues and holding social events.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection. The present headteacher has been in post for just over a year and she already provides very strong leadership in a very approachable and caring style. The headteacher has built upon the many good systems which were in place when she arrived and is setting a very clear direction for the school. She is well supported by a hardworking deputy headteacher, teachers and support staff. The school has very good relationships established throughout. All children and adults are equally valued and supported. While there are no easily identified minority groups, the school is keen to ensure that all children have full access to learning and have used specific funding well. For example, it provides additional teaching in small groups for children with special educational needs and provides additional health care facilities as well as staff training to help individual children.
46. The school has a suitably rigorous system of monitoring, evaluating and developing the teaching. There are well-defined roles in this for the headteacher and subject co-ordinators and suitable links are made to performance management and in-service training. The headteacher rightly leads the analysis of the school's performance and development through a very useful school improvement plan. She is very thorough and rigorous in her analysis of the school's performance, using a very good range of information and analysing it very clearly. She has improved this process by involving the staff more fully in it. The success of this process can be seen in the recent improvement in standards in writing, which the school identified as an area it wanted to improve. Teachers lead their subjects well and are concerned to further the school's development and self improvement. For example, the Early Years co-ordinator has been effectively involved in the local initiative of working towards the Cumbria 'Kite Mark' for the Foundation Stage. There is a well-established system for teachers to explain their work to the governing body. This helps the governing body to have a good overview of the school's strengths and areas for further development.
47. Financial planning and administration are secure. The school has recently undergone a financial audit carried out by the local education authority. Issues from the previous audit have been satisfactorily dealt with. The school has undertaken a major change recently in taking over direct control of the

administration of its finances. Overall, financial operating procedures are satisfactory with only minor recommendations from the audit relating to the new systems. This is a significant success for the school. The headteacher plans for spending very well and ensures that it supports educational developments.

48. The governing body fulfils all its statutory requirements and is eager to make the best use of all the resources it has available. Governors are very clear about how spending decisions are linked to educational priorities although they are not so clear about how the success of their spending is measured. Nevertheless, there is a strong partnership between the headteacher, staff and governing body which is instrumental in school improvement. The governing body applies the principles of best value well.
49. There is a good range of experience in the teaching staff and they are effectively supported by the non-teaching staff. The teachers and the nursery nurses in the reception classes work particularly well together and this is instrumental in helping the children get a very good start to their full-time education. The school is well equipped and the accommodation has been improved so that it provides very well for the teaching that takes place. For example, the reception classrooms have been improved by using former cloakroom space to make the teaching areas more effective. The school is very well cared for and a great deal of effort goes into making it a very pleasant and stimulating place in which to learn.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve standards in mathematics by
 - Raising expectations of what children will learn in some of the activities when they are not working directly with the teacher
 - Providing a more focused approach to the teaching of mathematics
 - Using assessment information in mathematics when forming groups according to ability

(see paragraphs 3,4,7, 16, 17,23,70,71,72,74,76)
- Improve children's presentation of work by ensuring that the skills they are taught in handwriting lessons are transferred to their independent work
(see paragraphs 68, 74)

The school should also rectify the following minor issue

- It should develop a more consistent approach to marking children's written work, in line with what already takes place in English.
(see paragraphs 68, 74)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	30	6	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	79	16	5	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	177
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	23
Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	40
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	27	31	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	25
	Girls	30	31	30
	Total	56	57	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (93)	98 (97)	95 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	26
	Girls	30	31	31
	Total	55	57	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (97)	98 (95)	98 (98)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	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)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

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	2000/01
	£
Total income	348938
Total expenditure	339122
Expenditure per pupil	1895
Balance brought forward from previous year	7632
Balance carried forward to next year	17448

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	182
Number of questionnaires returned	69

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	23	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	37	3	0	10
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	42	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	39	7	0	3
The teaching is good.	73	24	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	36	6	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	24	6	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	60	35	1	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	79	16	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	27	0	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	36	12	3	16

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

50. Children enter the reception classes following their fourth birthday and assessment, undertaken soon after they start, shows that levels of attainment of the great majority are typical for children of this age in most areas of learning. Approximately half of the children are above average in their understanding of number and, while most personal skills are sound, boys score lower than girls in relationship skills. By the time they are ready to start Year 1 almost all children are likely to achieve the national goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. In the area of personal, social and emotional development many children are likely to exceed the national goals, particularly in independence skills, and approximately 15 per cent are also likely to surpass these goals in mathematics. This is due to the very good teaching. Despite the fact that the children have only been at school full time for two weeks, their achievement is good and in speaking and listening, personal relationships and independence it is very good. Evidence from the current Year 1 shows that, by the end of the reception year children are confident, mature individuals with positive attitudes to learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

51. Personal, social and emotional development is a strength and the quality of teaching is very good. Although, at the time of the inspection, children had been full time in school for a short time they were mixing amicably with others, sharing and following instructions. The development of independent learning skills is particularly impressive. Children are making very good progress in their ability to apply the rules associated with taking part in free choice activities. The very good teaching and quality of classroom support in both reception classes have a significant impact in these areas. This was shown, for example, when children were involved in re-enacting a Christian Baptism and when the sharing of roles developed relationships and co-operation. The progress made by children is reflected in their growing confidence and sensitivity in relations with one another; for instance, they worked well together in response to the challenge of building a train and comparing amounts of sand needed to fill various containers. Children have quickly learned the conventions connected with answering questions, joining in songs which draw the class together and tidying up resources. There are excellent systems of reward, which are used discreetly by teachers and assistants to develop self esteem and pride in what has been achieved.
52. The adults provide very good role models for the children, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps children to understand one another's point of view, when for example, sharing out tasks when organising a birthday celebration in the house corner.

53. Children's personal development is also promoted positively by making sure that the equipment and resources that the children use are readily accessible to them and help them to become independent.

Communication, language and literacy

54. Children are beginning the early stages of reading and writing. They show much enjoyment of the expressive way in which stories are read to them. Teachers are very good at including children in the stories by encouraging them to respond to questions, events and characters and predicting what might happen next. Some of the pictures in the '*Baby Bear's New Nose*' story were used extremely well in this manner and also in linking early reading skills with what was happening in the illustrations. Many are beginning to show interest in the process of reading as they come to realise that written words have meaning and start to recognise familiar words, including their own names. The focus on words beginning with the letter 'm' was especially successful in this respect. Children were excited about reading words such as *monkey*, *mouse*, *make*, and *mix* and adding some of their own such as *microphone* and *magnet* to the list. Many are keen to copy their names and concentrate hard and show emerging skills when tracing number and letter shapes.
55. Teaching is very good and achievement has already reached very good levels in the development of listening and speaking skills. Teachers and their classroom assistants use clear and appropriate instructions and seize every opportunity to improve these skills, when for instance, children respond to specific commands in physical education lessons, or react to class action songs, stories and rhymes. Many activities are rich in opportunities for children to improve and extend speaking skills, which they readily turn to in their play and learning. They do this when, for example, placed in situations such as looking after babies in the home corner when negotiations about tasks are required, or when responding to events such as the daily calendar and stories like *Pulling up the Turnip*. Secure knowledge of the curriculum for children in the early years, a clear understanding of teaching phonics and basic literacy skills and lesson plans which are carefully focused upon building on what children already know and understand are features of the very good teaching.

Mathematical development

56. Children experience a wide range of counting games and practical activities such as sorting and matching. Most are able to say and use number names in order in familiar tasks, when for example, counting candles on birthday cakes and checking to see if there is a place for them in a particular learning activity. Mathematics is presented in an interesting and amusing way that appeals to young children as they begin to learn about the relationships between numbers. For instance, in group work they sort buttons in various ways, investigate the number *two* and find a missing number when counting. A feature of the very good teaching is the match of activities to the abilities of the

children, which illustrates the high quality of ongoing assessment and its use in supporting achievement. This was seen for instance, in the lesson about similar pairs and in the previous work done at differing levels about shape and pattern. Good progress is made in oral and mental number work. Children show enthusiasm in counting games and teachers use these extremely well to promote mathematical language such as *bigger, smaller, missing, number, figure, more and less than*.

57. While the achievement of the majority of children is good, the achievement of a minority of approximately 10 per cent in each class is very good. These children are confident with number up to at least 20, can find answers to one more or one less and use mathematical skills to solve simple problems such as ordering numbered figures correctly to complete a puzzle. Teaching and learning are successful because teachers use a wide variety of methods such as finger games, rhymes, registration activities, pictures, stories, interesting activities and attractive equipment to reinforce understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. The majority of children enter the reception classes with a sound knowledge and understanding of the world. They build on this knowledge through tasks such as the daily weather calendar, feeding the goldfish, looking in detail at classroom plants, studying animals such as snakes, building and constructing objects and using computers to support their learning. They learn about the properties of materials with activities using water, sand, modeling clay and talking about why certain objects are made from particular materials. Interesting activities enable them to develop their knowledge and understanding. For example, children acquired scientific insight into the origins of sound in the lesson about loud and quiet noises when they were introduced to different instruments and sang well-known rhymes using these dynamics. Children make good progress in using simple tools and techniques. For example they drew around templates accurately, cut out the shapes and mounted them when making puppets for a model about a Church Baptism. Their learning was supported very efficiently by the classroom assistant who, while explaining techniques, encouraged them to perform all the tasks in making the finished model. In this activity there was a high level of challenge and requirement for children to think for themselves. Many children are confident in using computers to support their learning. They are a popular choice during activity time when children make good progress in using *doodle, draw and construct* programs. Many are skilled in manipulating a screen marker to select lines, shapes and colour to produce pictures. Children began to know about their own culture and beliefs in the lesson about a Church Christening. Very good teaching skills were shown as children's interest was directed towards widening their vocabulary with words such as *font, baptism, promise and vicar*.

Physical development

59. Most children move with confidence, imagination and in safety in lessons in the

school hall. The very good teaching results in most of them making good progress in learning about the importance of space for themselves and others. They use items of small equipment, such as hoops, confidently to support their learning. An impressive feature of physical education lessons is the continuity in learning. For example, vigorous activities were balanced with resting periods when children had a chance to talk about *warming up* and their *heart going bump bump* and the importance of exercise. They are also introduced to simple games and begin to learn how to play fairly. Almost all children are able to deal with buttons, zips and clothing when changing and show increasing control when handling tools, objects, construction and pliable materials.

Creative development

60. The quality of teaching is very good and children make good progress in developing creative techniques and use a wide range of media such as paint, pencil, dough, glue and card in their creative work. They illustrate stories they have heard, colour carefully, keeping within boundaries with increasing skill and expressing their ideas and images in patterns and painting; for example, when painting the markings on different species of snakes, portraits of family members and animals. They are fascinated by the patterns which result from rolling paint-coated marbles and talk enthusiastically about what these look like - for instance, tyre marks on a wet road. They showed good levels of creativity during the lesson when the picture imagery of shiny stones was introduced to encourage the use of senses, imagination and relaxation. Children were totally absorbed in thinking and describing the images conjured these conjured up. .
61. The quality of teaching in the reception classes is very good. There are no significant weaknesses. The strength of the teaching is reflected in the achievements of the children. Despite the short time they have been coming into school for full days, their achievements are good and likely to become very good as routines and practices become more securely established. Lessons are planned very carefully and new learning is built firmly upon what children already know and can do. The efficient and consistent assessment enables teachers to match tasks and activities to meet the individual needs of the children. Classrooms are interesting and exciting places in which to learn and the regular changes in the learning areas provide fresh challenges to maintain children's enthusiasm for school, exemplified by the recent introduction of the series of *Bear* books. Relationships are very good and this helps children to feel secure and try new experiences. The teachers and support staff work very closely as a team and there is consistency between the classes. The Foundation Stage curriculum is fully implemented and the very good teaching makes sure that all children are included in every activity.
62. The co-ordinator for early years has very good management and leadership skills. She is clear about how to ensure that the best possible foundations are laid for the National Curriculum. A current initiative she has instigated is the school's involvement in Cumbria's 'Kite Mark' award, which recognises

excellent practice in the early years of learning. Detailed and structured action plans are currently being implemented to improve even further the current extensive learning opportunities for children through play activities and to encourage parents to be more involved in children's learning. Very good progress is being made to achieving these goals.

ENGLISH

63. Children have mostly achieved the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy for the Foundation stage by the time they leave the reception classes and move into Year 1. By the end of the school attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing is above national expectations. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection in speaking and listening and reading and an improvement in writing. These standards are part of an overall improving trend in reading and writing, shown by National Curriculum test results over the last four years. Over the past two years the school has been successful in increasing the percentage of children who achieve at the higher level. It has worked hard to improve standards, particularly in writing, and has in place very effective strategies for teaching English. The National Literacy Strategy has been thoroughly implemented. The school is successful in providing work which is suitable for children of different abilities, including those with special educational needs. A significant factor in the improving standards achieved by the school is the quality of teaching, which is never less than good and is mostly very good. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.
64. As they move through the school most children increase their skills in listening attentively. This is helped by the many opportunities teachers provide for them to develop this skill. For example, when all the class are gathered together for discussion and in assemblies, they learn how to listen with concentration. In Year 1, for example, the teacher controls children very well so that they behave very well and listen very carefully in order to identify initial and final sounds in work on phonemes. Because relationships are very good most children speak with assurance and show that they understand the points under discussion. For example, in Year 2 work on questioning, children explained their ideas confidently because the teacher values and respects their contributions. This helps to reinforce their understanding.
65. Most children enjoy reading and are eager to improve. By the end of the school, most children read fluently and with expression. This is enhanced by teachers' very good knowledge of how to teach the basics and their own example in making reading lively and interesting. For example, children in Year 2 confidently use a range of strategies such as phonics, the use of pictures and text, when meeting new or unfamiliar words. Teachers carefully assess children's progress in reading and keep comprehensive records which help them to ensure that children are challenged at appropriate levels. This is also supported by the records which are shared with parents when children take books home. For example, in Years 1 and 2 teachers write comments

which ask parents to help with specific aspects of a child's reading when they take books home. They invite comments in return from parents. This helps to ensure consistency, which contributes to the good progress most children make with their reading. Most lower achieving children work hard to improve their skills but read much more hesitantly and with less understanding. These children are helped to make progress by the way in which the teachers very carefully arrange work which is suitable for their abilities. For example, in Year 2, lower achieving children made good progress because the teacher provided extra support in their work on phonemes. The school makes good use of its wide provision of reading books in order to extend the skills and independence of higher achieving children. By the end of the school these children confidently describe plot and characters, use prediction and explain their preferences in reading. They confidently explain the library system and know clearly how to use index and contents in order to locate information.

66. Teachers work hard to sustain children's interest in their speaking and listening, reading and writing. The eagerness they generate helps children to raise their standards of work. For example, the visit of a poet to work with children increased their enthusiasm for their work in literacy and helped them to produce some imaginative writing. Children read and write about the many visits they make out of school to such places as the castle and Tullie House Museum. Throughout the school, teachers mount attractive displays of children's work. These and other informative displays encourage children to use and develop their reading skills. For example, in a Year 1 class mathematics area a written notice encourages children to learn about two-dimensional shapes. Notices to children indicate who is to be responsible for registers on a particular day. Teachers make very good use of children's literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in a Year 2 religious education lesson children increased their speaking and listening skills when they listened to and discussed a story from the Hindu religion. This enhanced their work in literacy and helped to increase their understanding of religious belief. Year 1 children withdrawn for special educational needs were helped to increase both their writing and mouse and keyboard skills when they wrote and printed sentences using the computer. The school has an attractive and well-resourced library. This helps to stimulate interest in reading and is well organised to help to improve children's research skills. Teachers plan their work very carefully and, as seen in a Year 1 lesson on phonemes, when lesson objectives are shared with the children, they are helped to increase their knowledge because they know what is expected of them.
67. The school makes very good provision for children with special educational needs. Where necessary, group and individual educational plans relate very clearly to children's aptitudes and needs. Children are identified at an early stage and receive help with reading writing, speaking and listening in class and through regular withdrawal for specialist help. The special educational needs co-ordinator keeps close links with class teachers and parents so that children are supported consistently. She assesses children carefully and keeps very thorough records of children's progress. This helps her to provide work which is suitable for children's abilities so that they make very good

progress. She has a very good knowledge and understanding of how to teach basic skills. For example, during a lesson with a first year group, children's knowledge of phonemes and simple words was enhanced because she used very clear explanations and organised children and materials very efficiently. She used on going assessment very well in order to guide children on the next steps to take and maintained a brisk pace to the lesson so that children worked hard.

68. As they move through the school children extend the range of their writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. This is helped by teachers' very good subject knowledge and by the very effective use they make of the National Literacy Strategy. By the end of Year 2, most writing is logically sequenced and meaningful. This is enhanced by teachers' provision of useful model frameworks, including, for example, the use of traditional stories in Year 2. Teachers mark children's work regularly and provide useful and supportive comments which recognise children's strengths and show them how to improve. For example, in Year 2 the teacher's comments reminded one child to use capital letters at the beginning of a sentence and congratulated another child on having done so. Teachers generally have high expectations so that, for example, as children move through the school they are challenged to spell simple words correctly in Year 1 and by Year 2 many children successfully attempt more difficult spellings. However, the school is aware of the need to improve handwriting. Although handwriting is usually neatly presented in handwriting books, when children write independently their writing is often inconsistently sized and positioned and less well presented. By the end of Year 2 higher achieving children consistently punctuate their work accurately, including the use of speech marks and question marks. They are encouraged by teachers to make their work interesting by using words imaginatively. For example, writing in Year 2 about a haunted house is enriched by the use of words chosen for effect. Although lower achieving children have difficulties with their spelling and their work is less well structured, because teachers manage them well and use praise effectively they are generally very keen to improve their work.
69. The subject is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator provides good support to colleagues and has played a significant role in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. She carefully monitors teaching, planning and children's work in order to assist in raising standards. She has a clear understanding of what the school needs to do in order to further raise standards. The use of information and communication technology makes a positive contribution to learning; for example, through reading 'living books' such as *Winnie the Witch* and in word processing writing.

MATHEMATICS

70. Children have mostly achieved the goals set for them in the Foundation Stage curriculum when they move from the reception classes to the Year 1 classes. Since the last inspection, the school's results in National Curriculum tests at

the end of Year 2 have been above or even well above average until 2001, when they dipped to below average. This dip was due to a larger number of children achieving within the expected level but on the lower side of it. There are usually fewer children than average who achieve the higher level at the end of Year 2 but this is because the school has fewer potentially more able children. The work children are doing currently is generally average for their age and it shows they are making sound progress overall. However, this still represents an overall deterioration in performance and there is scope for the school to improve the quality of some of the learning in mathematics.

71. Despite this situation, there are times when the children learn and achieve well. This is when they are being directly taught and continuing to work with their teachers. This happened in a lesson in Year 2 when the teacher explained how to add together two numbers between 10 and 100, such as 22 and 13. He showed the children very clearly how to do this and then helped some of them who were not quite sure when they tried it for themselves. These children learned very well and the teacher made sure that they understood why they were doing the work by showing them at the end of the lesson how they would be able to use the same method with bigger numbers. However, the children who did not work with the teacher then went on to practise something else independently and the immediacy and pace of their learning dropped.
72. Further examples of how children directly involved with their teachers learn at a much faster rate than those practising what they have been taught independently were seen in both classes in Year 1. The two teachers both explained to their classes how to add numbers together, showing them useful methods based on the strategies recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy. The lesson taught by the school's mathematics co-ordinator was very clear and engaged the interest of the children by counting and adding together the number of frogs in a pond. The less able children then continued to learn well when the teacher helped them to add numbers together by making their own pond of frogs. However, the other children did not immediately practise what they had been taught and while their learning was sound it was not well focused on what had recently been taught to them. Some children, the following day, were working independently at a lower level and were largely consolidating work appropriate to children in the reception classes; for example, completing jigsaws, making simple repeating patterns with beads and playing the game 'Snakes and Ladders'.
73. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is sound but there are some very good features. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes and children listen very well to explanations. Children are confident to suggest answers to the whole class and they listen well to each other. This leads to very good learning, as there is a suitable emphasis on rapid, correct answers. In a Year 2 class, the children were very eager to answer and to get the answer right to please the teacher's glove puppet who liked correct answers only and showed its pleasure and displeasure to the

delight of the children. The teacher's very good relationships with his class and his class management ensured that the lesson was rigorous as well as enjoyable. Teachers understand very well the mathematics that they teach and they try very hard to couple this with ideas that the children will find interesting.

74. The children have learned good habits in the reception classes and they work very sensibly when not directly involved with their teachers. However, teachers' expectations of what children should achieve when they are working independently are not high enough in Years 1 and 2. The analysis of the work that children have written indicates also that while some work is at an appropriate level for the year group other work is at too low a level. At these times the children are not achieving well enough.
75. Children with special educational needs are well supported in lessons. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, an extra adult was available to help the children who were given practical tasks to help them understand the numbers up to 100.
76. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator, who has visited all classes and has already analysed the children's answers to their National Curriculum tests in 2001. She is aware of certain aspects of teaching that the school needs to improve. Currently, the school does not make appropriate use of all of its assessment information in mathematics. Children are taught in three groups according to their ability, which is in line with methods recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy. However, the school allocates children to these groups based on their general, and particularly linguistic, ability. Hence, some children are in the wrong group for their mathematics lessons. This limits their learning. This school has already recognised this and has plans in place to rectify the problem. The use of information and communication technology makes a positive contribution to learning; for example, through understanding about turns when using the floor robot and in solving mathematical problems presented on the computer screen.

SCIENCE

77. Children have mostly achieved the early learning goals for knowledge and understanding of the world for the Foundation stage by the time they leave the reception classes and move into Year 1. Standards in science overall are above national expectation by the end of Year 2, especially in such important elements as experimentation and exploration. This is consistent with the results of teacher assessments this year and similar to the findings of the previous inspection.
78. By the time they leave the school at seven most pupils have experienced all the elements of science. They are particularly good at investigating and exploring scientific matters such as an electric circuit or how different materials make better insulators. They are able to record their findings in a variety of

ways. This was seen in a Year 2 class where the children were given all the elements to make a circuit that would light a bulb. After a great deal of trial and error and with some appropriate intervention by the teacher, all the pupils succeeded. They were then able to record their results using drawings and words.

79. Children are developing a good understanding of the need to make experiments fair. This was even seen in a Year 1 class which was investigating the best light source for a teddy's bedroom. The teacher suggested that each of the volunteers should try a different light source in the "cave" but the children suggested that this would not be fair and that each volunteer should try all the light sources.
80. They are able to name the parts of the human body and of a plant. They understand that living things need light, food and water to grow and they know the life cycle of butterflies and frogs.
81. The children have experimented and investigated materials and their properties and have a good understanding of how some materials can be changed permanently and others changed back. They also know that different materials have different uses.
82. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are well prepared to enable maximum learning to take place and there is a good balance of teacher input and children's activity. Teachers are particularly skilled in asking appropriate questions to advance learning and to draw out what pupils already know. They allow sufficient time for the children to find out for themselves but also know when to intervene with a question or with a suggestion to ensure that the learning is continuous. The teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to offer challenging activities which engage and sustain the children's interest.
83. A Year 1 teacher was particularly skilled in putting the science lesson into an appropriate context for the children and used a big book used in the literacy hour as the main stimulus. She read the story of the little bear who was frightened of the dark and immediately captured the children's interest. She was able to maintain this interest and to generate a great deal of enthusiasm for the task by informing the children that their task was to solve Little Bear's problem. She then had no difficulty in persuading the children to try hard to find out which was the best light source for the bear's bedroom. Again her preparation was very good, which enabled the lesson to flow freely and enabled the children to remain focused.
84. In both of the lessons seen the attitude of the pupils was very good. They listened well to each other and to the teacher and showed a willingness to work together to find solutions to their problems. They showed a good capacity for concentration and effort and displayed an obvious pride when they were successful in their efforts.

85. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the subject and has produced a full and detailed scheme of work which teachers will find very useful. Plans indicate appropriate possibilities for the use of information and communication technology but it was not possible to see this in operation during the inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

86. It was possible to observe only one lesson of art but evidence from children's work in the classrooms and around the school indicates that, by the age of seven, standards are above national expectations, which is similar to the findings of the previous report.
87. Pupils use a wide range of different media including paints, crayons, pastels, clay and other materials. They explore different techniques when using these materials to achieve a particular effect. For instance, in the only lesson observed, children were exploring the use of tissue paper layered on coloured sugar paper to create a night sky. Pupils start to learn to mix colours at a very early stage so that even in the reception classes the painting is clean and of a good standard. Pupils learn about other artists and create their own work in the style of these artists. Children were very successful in capturing the style of Van Gogh and produced some very vibrant paintings in his style. The computers are used well in this area as well and the children have produced computer-generated patterns in the style of Mondrian. Observational drawings of nature or musical artifacts are another well-developed area.
88. As only one lesson was seen there is no overall judgement on the quality of teaching or on the children's attitude to the subject. However, in this lesson with a Year 1 class the teaching was very good. The teacher provided a wide variety of pictures of night skies for children to look at and through very skilful questioning was then able to move the lesson on to teaching them how a night sky could be achieved with tissue paper. The children remained interested and keen because of the very good relationships that they enjoyed with the teacher and the good subject knowledge that the teacher possessed.
89. Art is well promoted in the school and children's well displayed work helps to create a stimulating place in which to learn and to demonstrate the value placed on the work and on the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. By the end of Year 2, children's attainment is in line with the levels that children of this age are expected to achieve. Children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys. As no lesson in this subject was observed, evidence for these judgements is based upon scrutiny of curricular planning, discussions with teachers and children and analysis of models and written work.
91. By the age of seven, children have a sound understanding of following design plans to produce a model. Samples of work show good progression in these skills as children move through the school. This was seen, for example, in the use of templates to make shapes and pictures in early Year 1 to the techniques used in Year 2 when adding colour and glaze to clay models. There is an

- appropriate emphasis on basic making skills in Year 1. Measuring, cutting, joining and shaping techniques developed in the reception year are successfully built upon when more refined skills such as weaving and sewing are introduced. Children sew with wool and thread onto cards, binca and hessian with increasing accuracy and skill. In their work they begin to understand the differing qualities of materials and learn to select suitable ones for particular tasks; for example, the best quality for paper engineering when making a model skeleton. By the end of Year 1 children use a wide range of tools in their work and know how to evaluate what they have done and how it might be improved; for instance, they evaluated clay models of their houses, one of which was windowless and another from which the garage was missing.
92. Older children select the correct tools and techniques, measure, mark out, cut, shape and assemble materials for models such as Christmas Tree decorations and Shadow Puppets. Their models are increasingly the result of their own ideas and experiences; for instance, in developing finishing techniques for clay pots and other models. At this age they improve their evaluating skills by taking apart simple models and finding out about how they are joined together, the type and quality of the materials used and how they are made to move.
93. Throughout the school construction kits are used widely to teach the various stages in design and technology. This enables children to learn about incorporating wheels, hinges, levers and motors into designs. It also facilitates the use of design and technology in other areas of the curriculum, such as building a working lighthouse in science in connection with work about electricity circuits.
94. A well thought out scheme of work has been developed and the subject is well researched. Planning is detailed and clear about what children are expected to learn. Assessment is being used satisfactorily to track children's progress, evaluate the quality of the curriculum and inform future lessons. There are opportunities for the use of information and communication technology to make a positive contribution to learning although it was not possible to observe this during the inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

95. By the age of seven, children attain standards in geography typical of children of this age. In map skills and geographical understanding of the local area they attain above this level. Children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. As no geography lessons were observed, judgements are based upon scrutiny of curricular planning, discussions with teachers and children and analysis of written work.
96. By the end of Year 2, children have a good understanding of the meaning of *plan* and *map*. They have learned to match pictures of objects and street scenes to relevant plans. The use of colour coding in this work indicates a secure understanding. This has been extended to knowledge of maps and

their uses. For instance, children know how to use and draw one to plan a route such as *Red Riding Hood's* journey to Grandma's cottage and their own journey to school. Almost all children show skill in using grid references and direction to locate places on real and imaginary maps. They understand the use of symbols and how to use a key to read a map, when, for example, locating treasure on an imaginary island and when drawing a plan of a model village they have constructed. Most are able to match an old aerial photograph of the immediate locality with the corresponding street map and identify the changes that have taken place since then.

97. During discussions with children most showed they could locate where they live on a map of the British Isles and name the countries of the United Kingdom. They know the names of some other countries such as the United States, France and Spain and know that travelling to them involves sailing or flying over large stretches of water.
98. Studies have been made of contrasting localities such as rainforest and Antarctic regions and children have learned how weather and location change the things people can grow and the things they can do. Practical experiences are regularly undertaken to consolidate classroom learning. For example, children take walks around the immediate locality and visit places such as Hawes End, Caldbeck and St. Herbert's Island. The children's booklets produced as a result of visits show good achievements in mapwork and the use of geographical skills to solve problems such as those involving orienteering.
99. Resources for geography are good and there is a well-structured scheme of work that makes sure children's that learning is built securely on what they already know and can do. A very good feature is the many opportunities provided for children to study geography in real life situations which are relevant to their interests, age and abilities. The use of information and communication technology makes a positive contribution to learning; for example, through the link between mathematics and geography in using the floor robot.

HISTORY

100. During the inspection only one history lesson was seen so it is not possible to give an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, evidence from scrutinies of children's work and teachers' planning, discussions with teachers and children and from the one lesson seen, indicates that by the end of Year 2 attainment is in line with what is expected nationally. The school meets the statutory requirements for the teaching of history.
101. The school goes to great lengths to make teaching lively and interesting so that it has relevance and meaning for the children. For example, children in Year 2 visit the castle and cathedral and begin to learn how and why people in

the past acted as they did. Children in Year 1 use artefacts, photographs and role-play in costume when they learn about education in Victorian times and compare it with the present day. As they move through the school, children improve their understanding of chronology when they recognise the difference between old and new toys and arrange a variety of household utensils in chronological order. Children in Year 1 understand how artefacts from Victorian households were used and compare them with their modern equivalents. They compare medieval and modern understandings of cleanliness and hygiene and make thoughtful sketches and written descriptions. Children in Year 2 begin to describe and explain major events in the past. For example, they produce clear and succinct accounts of the political and religious conditions surrounding the gunpowder plot. They begin to show an insight into the lives of different groups of people when they describe the living conditions of poor people in the past. In their visits to places such as the castle and cathedral children make use of the digital camera and incorporate their photographs into their own books, where they describe and explain aspects of medieval life studied.

102. In the one lesson seen the quality of teaching was good. The teacher made good use of picture clues to sustain children's interest in the story of Guy Fawkes. Her lively delivery ensured that children were engrossed in the story and most of them understood the events and were curious about the roles of the people involved. The school has a good supply of resources, supplemented by artefacts loaned from a local museum. It makes good use of them in order to engage children's interest and deepen their understanding of the past.
103. There are opportunities for the use of information and communication technology to make a positive contribution to learning, for example through word processing, although it was not possible to observe this during the inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104. Evidence from children's work and from talking to teachers and children indicates that standards for information and communication technology are above national expectations. This compares well with the last inspection when the status of 'Information Technology' was different.
105. By the time they leave the school at seven, most pupils are able to use a word-processing program including word art and clip art. They are able to insert pictures and graphics into their printed work. They are able to use simulation and adventure programs where they have to make decisions and follow the consequences of those decisions. They are able to programme a robotic toy to make it follow a predetermined path and are able to use the Internet to find out about things and to communicate with each other. They make good use of a digital camera for recording visits and events and are able to insert these images into their writing. The children are all confident in handling the equipment, and are familiar with using a mouse and drop down menus. In conversation with children about the subject, they demonstrated good attitudes and displayed a good understanding of the wider use of the technology outside school.
106. Good use of information and communication technology is made in supporting the work of those pupils identified as having special educational needs. The co-ordinator is an able, enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher who is doing much to promote the subject throughout the school. He has recognised the need for staff training to run along side the ever-developing hardware and software programs.

MUSIC

107. It was only possible to see one music lesson and therefore no overall judgements have been made.
108. However, in the one lesson observed the pupils had very good attitudes and participated in the lesson with enthusiasm mainly because of the very good teaching. The activities were varied and sustained the children's interest. The behaviour was very good throughout the lesson and the children were willing to express their opinions about the sounds that they heard and were willing to listen to others. They took turns in using the instrument and were quick to applaud each other's efforts.
109. Music is an important element in school assemblies. The children listen to the music playing as they enter and leave the hall and sing well accompanied by a guitar. They sing with enthusiasm, careful to make the mood of singing appropriate for the words, thus making a contribution to the spirituality of the occasions. The music in Years 1 and 2 builds well on the musical experiences that the children have in the Foundation Stage.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. In the aspects of physical education seen during the inspection, dance and games, attainment was above national expectations. It is not possible to give an overall judgement on the quality of teaching because too few lessons were seen.
111. Most children understand the need for warming up and cooling down at the beginning and end of lessons and link this with elements of scientific work on the human body. They perform these activities efficiently so that most children are prepared for rigorous exercise and its conclusion. This is because teachers use clear explanations and ensure that lessons begin and end appropriately.
112. Most children make effective use of space as they travel and show a good awareness of direction and level. This was enhanced, for example, during the Year 2 dance lesson, by the teacher's very good understanding of different forms of travelling and by his very clear explanations. Teachers observe children's performance very closely and are skilled in analysing children's strengths and weaknesses so that they can advise them on how to improve. Most children in Year 2 responded imaginatively, for example, to the subsequent challenges presented by the teacher to express their moods and feelings according to the theme of the lesson. Similarly, children in Year 1 improved their techniques of stick control and throwing skills following the teacher's observations and discussions of their work.
113. Demonstrations by teachers and children are used well to improve performance. This was seen during the dance lesson when children moved with high standards of control and poise after being given very good opportunities to watch others and reflect on how they might improve. In Year 1, the teacher highlighted ball control and throwing skills, using good examples from children in class. This contributed to the good standards they achieved during the lesson. Relationships are very good. This enhances the confidence of children. In Year 2, for example, children sensitively interpreted music in dance because they knew that their efforts would be valued and celebrated. In the games lesson, the high quality of relationships enabled children to work independently and to collaborate well in using and sharing equipment. Teachers' control is of a high standard and lessons are usually conducted at a brisk pace so that children generally behave well and work hard and exercise rigorously. Occasionally when explanations and demonstrations are too long the pace of the lesson slows and children begin to cool down.
114. The range and quality of resources is good. These are readily accessible and well used. The subject is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator plays a positive role in developing the subject throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

115. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Most children attain levels which are in line with the expectations of Cumbria's Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Children with special educational needs are well supported in the subject and make good progress. For example, in a Year 2 lesson about Hinduism, the very good quality of adult support made sure that a pupil with special educational needs had equal opportunities to participate in the lesson. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys.
116. By the end of Year 2, most children can name important events in the Christian Church's year such as Easter, Whitsun, Advent and Christmas. They have visited local places such as Carlisle Cathedral and the Salvation Army Citadel and made comparisons of how these are used as places of worship. A majority know the names and purposes of the main features inside a church such as the *pulpi, lectern and font*. In the reception year, they learn about baptisms and develop a good understanding of this celebration through acting out the ceremony. Older children have learned about the value of gifts such as *friendship, generosity and love* and talk confidently about their experiences and feelings. Some are beginning to learn about other religions such as Hinduism and appreciate that many people have different beliefs.
117. The quality of teaching is good and often very good. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the syllabus and prepare interesting lessons; for instance in the lessons in the reception classes about Church Christenings and being helpful, and the Year 1 lesson based upon the story *Badger's Parting Gifts*. In the latter the teacher showed very good questioning and discussion techniques when sharing the meaning of the story with the children. They acquired knowledge and understanding as they learned that the most precious gifts are those which cost nothing. A Remembrance Sunday wreath and poppies created much interest when they were introduced in another Year 1 lesson. Good teaching skills and management of pupils made sure that war was discussed sensitively and the giving of something precious related to children's own experience, such as the gifts they receive from parents. The Hindu story about Rama and Sita and the festival of Divali gave Year 2 children an insight into the beliefs of other cultures. In this lesson resources were effectively used to support children's learning. There was evidence of very good relationships, particularly in the teacher's and classroom assistant's support of slower learners. Religious education lessons are used very effectively by teachers to improve basic skills, particularly listening and speaking.
118. The co-ordination of the subject has improved significantly since the last inspection. A scheme of work is in place which has been carefully written to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and the school's needs. Assessment procedures, which were reported as being underdeveloped in the last report, are now securely in place and are being used to measure current attainment and plan for future achievement. Resources are good and plans

are in place for the subject leader to have the opportunity in the near future to judge the quality of learning in religious education throughout the school.