

INSPECTION REPORT

FIR ENDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Smithfield, Kirklington, Carlisle

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112420

Headteacher: Miss J. M. Wilson

Reporting inspector: Paula Allison
21420

Dates of inspection: 29th April – 1st May 2002

Inspection number: 195695

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 and Junior
School category: Foundation
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Skitby Road
Smithfield
Kirklington
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Cumbria
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr David Gasgarth

Date of previous inspection: 3rd June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21420	Paula Allison	Registered inspector	Foundation stage Science Information and communication technology Art and design Religious education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11439	Jill Moore	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21666	Andrew Margerison	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs	Assessment
27545	Andrew Scott	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education Music Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other activities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a small primary school with 86 boys and girls on roll. Thirteen children attend a part-time nursery class, which is a recent addition to the school. Pupils are taught in four classes and the headteacher teaches in one class for three days a week. The school is in the village of Smithfield, near Brampton and serves three parishes, taking pupils from nearby villages, hamlets and outlying farms. Over half of pupils are brought in by bus. A large proportion of pupils come from farming families. All pupils are of white ethnic origin. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, but 20 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is about average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average. Overall, attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with what is expected for children of this age.

Last year the school was badly affected by the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. This resulted in pupil and staff absence and general disruption and worry during a long period of time. There was a significant impact on test results and on continuity in school development. Governors are currently in the process of appointing a new headteacher, as the present head is taking up a new post in September.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Fir Ends is a good school where pupils achieve well. In this small school, pupils are well cared for and provision for their personal development is very good. This results in pupils' attitudes being very good. The quality of teaching overall is good. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and governing body. There are some improvements needed in planning for teaching, in the curriculum and in the monitoring of the work of the school, but taking into account the standards achieved and the quality of the education being provided, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well, particularly in English.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good. They enjoy school, work hard and behave responsibly.
- The provision for the youngest children and for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good. The work of support staff in these areas contributes well to the overall quality of teaching.
- Pupils are well cared for. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils learn to respect others and relationships are very good.
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and governing body.
- The quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers know their pupils well and treat them as individuals.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics are not high enough. Higher attaining pupils do not yet achieve as well as they could do, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough. Pupils do not have access to the full curriculum for the subject.
- The quality of teaching can vary from class to class and this is not sufficiently monitored and supported by the management of the school.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across the whole curriculum.

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 June 1997 and has improved well since then. Staff and governors have put a lot of effort into addressing the issues highlighted in the previous inspection. All the documentation needed has been put in place. The curriculum is now much better, particularly in terms of continuity through the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for children in the foundation stage have both been improved. The quality of teaching is better, although there are still some weaknesses in how well teaching and learning are monitored. Standards have improved, particularly in English. In other subjects the achievement of the higher attaining pupils is better, but could still be improved.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	B	C	D
mathematics	A	B	E	E*
science	A	C	E	E*

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The number of pupils in each year group is small and often very small and this means that test results for particular years are not reliable as an indication of school performance. The impact of one or two pupils can be very marked, and so performance can appear to vary considerably from one year to the next. However, the data in the table above show that the standards achieved by 11 year olds in English, mathematics and science have improved since the last inspection, are usually in line with the national average and can be above this. Last year, results were affected by the absence of some pupils in the months leading up to the tests. The school's own targets show that expected results were much higher. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English and science are good. Standards in mathematics are improving, but are not yet high enough. The standards achieved by seven year olds in English are usually good, but those in mathematics and science are often affected by the very few pupils who achieve above what is expected.

Standards in other subjects are at least in line with what is expected, except in information and communication technology, where standards are improving, but pupils do not achieve as well as they could because of limitations in their access to the full curriculum. Inspection evidence suggests that there are particular strengths in art and design and physical education, but some weaknesses in design and technology.

Pupils generally achieve well in school. Children's attainment as they enter the school is broadly in line with what is typical of children nationally. Pupils make good progress through the foundation year and enter Year 1 achieving at least in line with what is expected for children of this age. This progress continues through the school, although sometimes higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might do, particularly in Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs achieve particularly well, as they are given a good level of individual support.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to learn and well motivated. They listen attentively in class and are prepared to work hard on the tasks they have been given to do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave responsibly in class and around the school. They respond well to the high expectations of their teachers and adhere to the school's 'Golden rules'.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respect others and are willing to take on responsibility. Relationships are positive and supportive.
Attendance	Currently in line with the national average. Low figures last year were as a result of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, which restricted movement across the whole area.

Pupils' very good attitudes have a positive impact on the quality of their learning and the progress they make.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	good	good	good

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

Overall the quality of teaching in the school is good. All the teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory. Much of the teaching was good and some was very good. However, the quality of teaching varies through the school, with most of the good and very good teaching taking place in the foundation stage, in Year 1 and Year 6 and in the support work for pupils with special educational needs and information and communication technology.

One of the major strengths of the teaching throughout the school is the quality of relationships in classes. Teachers manage their classes well and set high expectations for behaviour. They teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy competently. Whole class sessions are of good quality; teachers question pupils well and impart a considerable amount of knowledge. Pupils are interested in their lessons, and they gain knowledge, skills and understanding.

Where there are weaknesses they are to do with the quality of planning for tasks and activities. These are still sometimes set for a whole class and do not take account of the range of attainment levels within the class. Neither do they very often encourage independent learning.

With the small classes and the good level of support, the school usually meets the needs of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well provided for. However, in some lessons higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and do not make the progress of which they are capable.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Staff have worked hard to produce a much more structured curriculum that takes account of the mixed age classes. This is working well and provides continuity across the school. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across subjects or for them to learn independently.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good and much improved from the last inspection. Pupils are identified at an early stage and receive good quality support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. In assemblies and religious education lessons pupils learn to appreciate religious values. The school effectively promotes respect for others and good relationships. There is a clear framework for expected behaviour and good attention to pupils learning right from wrong. Pupils gain an awareness of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school takes good care of pupils and does what it can on a daily basis to ensure that pupils are safe and secure. There are good assessment procedures in place and information from this is beginning to be used for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets.

The curriculum for information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements. The school works well with parents. The quality of information provided is particularly good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the work of the school. She knows what needs to be done and plans well for change and improvement. However, there is not enough monitoring and support for teaching and learning through the school, to ensure that all teaching meets the needs of pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very well organised and manages the school effectively. Governors are committed to the school, provide a range of skills and execute their statutory duties very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Systems for tracking pupil progress are developing well and information from the tracking of progress is beginning to be used for target setting.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is very good and there is a clear understanding of the principles of best value. Day-to-day administration is of a high quality.

Overall, the school has sufficient staff and resources to deliver the curriculum, although resources are not yet used efficiently enough for pupils to have access to the full information and communication technology curriculum. The accommodation has been very well developed and maintained and provides a good quality environment for learning.

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 and are well cared for there. Behaviour is good and the school promotes suitable attitudes and values. The school has high expectations of children and they make good progress. Teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of parents feel that the range of extra-curricular activities is not wide enough. A few parents are concerned that the behaviour of individual children has affected their own children and that the school has not dealt with it properly.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views.

Issues raised by parents

- The inspection team agree that the range of extra-curricular activities could be extended, although it is recognised that there are difficulties with the transport of children after school that might affect provision.
- Inspection evidence did not substantiate the views of parents about instances of bullying. The school has done what it can to control the behaviour of individual pupils, but perhaps could explain more effectively what it is doing to parents so that misconceptions do not continue to arise.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are usually above average. Last year's results were badly affected by the absence of pupils and breaks in continuity during the months leading up to the tests. Inspection evidence suggests that standards this year will be in line with the national average, but that progress made by pupils is good. There are strengths in the standards achieved in English, but weaknesses in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1. Parents are generally happy with the standards achieved by the school and with the progress their own children are making.
- 2 The number of pupils in each year group is small and can be very small. This means that test results for particular years are not reliable as an indication of school performance. The impact of the performance of one or two pupils can be very marked and so performance can appear to vary considerably from year to year. However, the data does show that the standards achieved by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are usually good in English and in line with the national average in mathematics and science. In Key Stage 1, competent teaching of basic skills enables most pupils to achieve expected levels in English, mathematics and science, but there is often a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils so few if any pupils achieve above the expected levels in mathematics and science.
- 3 At the time of the last inspection standards were satisfactory. Most pupils attained expected levels but very few achieved above this. The progress made by higher attaining pupils and by pupils with special educational needs were weaknesses affecting standards overall. Since then standards have improved, especially in English. All pupils achieve well in English and standards are consistently good. Recent developments, for example the focus on writing and the good use being made of target setting, have been successful in raising standards. Although there have been improvements, standards are not as high in mathematics and science. The curriculum is much improved and teachers are much better at teaching basic skills and ensuring continuity through the school. However, there are still some limitations in the progress made by higher attaining pupils, especially in Key Stage 1.
- 4 Last year standards were much lower than they had been, but test results were badly affected by the absence of pupils and loss of continuity during the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the area. The school's own targets show that the results the school expected were much higher than those actually achieved. The disappointing performance of a few pupils affected the overall standards. The standards achieved by the oldest pupils were in line with the national average in English, but well below average in mathematics and science. Performance does not compare favourably with similar schools, but this is not a fair comparison. The measure is based on free school meal eligibility and takes no account of the attainment on entry to the school and the levels of special educational need, which can be quite high in some year groups.
- 5 Currently most pupils in Year 6 are working at levels in line with what is expected and a number are working at levels above this. A third of pupils in the current Year 6 have been identified as having special educational needs. This is likely to affect overall standards this

year, but all pupils make good progress. In Year 2 most pupils are working at expected levels, but there is limited provision for them to work at levels above this, especially in mathematics and science.

- 6 Throughout the school pupils are gaining confident literacy and numeracy skills. They learn to spell and punctuate accurately and they have a good understanding of number. However, these skills are not developed sufficiently across the curriculum. For example, older pupils do not do enough independent research and thus opportunities are missed for them to develop their reading skills further. Similarly not enough use is made of writing and number skills in other subjects. When given the opportunity, for example when Year 4 and 5 pupils use graphs and measurements in science, pupils prove to be competent. Much more could be done to exploit this in the curriculum generally.
- 7 Standards in most subjects of the National Curriculum are in line with expectations. There are particular strengths in art and design and in physical education, where standards are above what is expected. There are weaknesses in design and technology, as it is not taught to a high enough level. Pupils do not achieve the expected standards in information and communication technology. Although there have been recent improvements in the subject, brought about by the school's employment of a specialist support teacher, pupils do not have enough access to computers for them to gain confident skills. Neither is there an appropriate curriculum in place so that pupils can achieve in all areas of the subject.
- 8 Pupils generally achieve well in the school. As children enter the nursery a number have weak social and personal skills but the good provision in the new nursery class enables them to make good progress in this area and those children who enter the school are better prepared for school than they have been in the past. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school, but overall attainment is broadly typical of children nationally. Assessments made as children enter the reception class show that there are children with well-developed skills, but there are also some with weak skills. Overall there is a tendency for literacy skills to be better developed than numeracy skills. Children make good progress through the foundation year. The good quality of teaching in both the nursery and reception classes ensures that children gain skills and knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning. Most children enter Year 1 achieving at least in line with what is expected for children of this age.
- 9 This good progress continues through the school, although sometimes higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might do, particularly in Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school. This is reflected in the high percentages of pupils achieving expected levels in end of key stage tests. Pupils in Year 6 with special educational needs have made very good progress in English from the age of seven to achieve the targets in their individual education plans and in some cases the attainment gap between them and the rest of their class has narrowed. In mathematics they made satisfactory progress. The difference between the two subjects reflects the school's careful analysis of reading test information and the subsequent action taken to work with specific pupils in small groups. Pupils with behavioural difficulties make good progress towards achieving the targets in their individual plans.
- 10 There is generally little difference between the achievement of boys and girls, but the school does not as yet monitor this sufficiently. There is a tendency in the older classes for girls to achieve better than boys, but more boys have special educational needs. Gifted

and talented pupils have been identified and there are plans for more monitoring of their progress and more specific provision to be made.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 Pupils' attitudes are very good and have improved since the last inspection. They are enthusiastic about their work and enjoy school, and this is reflected in their behaviour, which is now good. Their personal development and relationships are also very good and these, together with their attitudes, are strengths of the school. Pupils show willingness to take responsibility and help freely around the school, for instance ringing the bell between lessons. Opportunities for them to take responsibility and to develop independent learning are, however limited. There is a school council but it is too soon to measure its effect on pupils' social and citizenship skills.
- 12 Pupils learn effectively because of their very good attitudes to work and the skilful class management by teachers. This means that they are keen to finish tasks and enjoy the subjects offered and are fully involved in the life of the school. Pupils are attentive and work hard and enthusiastically. They show respect for each other and adults in school. Foundation stage children settle quickly and soon learn the school procedures and mix well. Parents acknowledge that their children like school, that the school has high expectations for learning, and that their children make good progress.
- 13 Pupils' behaviour is now good and contributes to the calm atmosphere for learning in the classrooms and the sensible way that pupils move around the school. For example, pupils enter assembly quietly, listening to the music being played, and respond well to the opportunities for reflection on their own and others' needs and beliefs. Pupils understand right from wrong and adhere to the school's 'Golden Rules'. Although the behaviour in the playground sometimes gets too boisterous, the behaviour is not intentionally aggressive and incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- 14 A few parents have had a concern regarding bullying. However, this seems to focus on the behaviour of one individual pupil and the school is working quite successfully with this boy to improve his attitudes. The inspection team found no evidence of bullying and most parents are confident that behaviour is good and any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively.
- 15 Attendance figures are lower than at the last inspection but this is almost entirely due to last year's outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The registers are marked, closed and monitored well, and the school works with other agencies such as the education welfare officer whenever it is necessary, to ensure prompt and regular attendance. Children arrive on time and settle quickly to their lessons. An increasing number of parents take children on holiday in term time, but the school does its best to ensure that this is kept to a minimum and that parents fully understand the detrimental effect of absences on children's learning. There was just one fixed-term exclusion last year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 16 Overall the quality of teaching is good, but it is inconsistent through the school. Most of the good and very good teaching takes place in the foundation stage, Year 1 and Year 6 and in support work for pupils with special educational needs and information and communication technology. During the inspection all teaching was at least satisfactory and in over half of the lessons seen the teaching was good or very good. There are strengths in the management of pupils and in the teaching of basic skills. Weaknesses are mainly in the planning for activities that meet the needs of the range of pupils in the classes. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection but there are still some inconsistencies. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching but the quality of teaching and more particularly planning for teaching can vary from class to class. Parents are confident in the quality of teaching and particularly like the way teachers know the children and treat them as individuals.
- 17 Teaching in the foundation stage is consistently good or very good. In the nursery and reception classes teachers plan very carefully to cover all areas of learning. There is good interaction between adults and children, which promotes confidence in children. Teachers in these classes are enthusiastic and imaginative in their choice of activities. As a result children are interested and work at a good pace. In both classes supporting adults make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching. For example, in the nursery the two adults work closely as a team to meet the needs of all the children. In the reception class the effective deployment of other adults enables the teachers to meet the needs of the range of ages of children in the class.
- 18 In all classes in school the quality of relationships and teachers' management of pupils are major strengths. Teachers know their pupils very well and care about them. They have high expectations for behaviour and pupils respond well to the expectations. Classrooms are good learning environments with a positive ethos and calm atmosphere. As a result pupils are attentive and settle to tasks quickly. They take a pride in their work and maintain concentration. Teachers achieve a good balance between supporting pupils and making sure that expectations are clear. This is apparent for example in the Year 4/5 class where the teacher can have a joke with pupils and talk to them in an informal manner, but is very clear about what she expects from pupils and maintains good behaviour and positive attitudes.
- 19 In all classes whole class sessions are good. Teachers have good questioning skills and effectively involve all pupils, despite the wide range of ages and attainment levels. A lot of knowledge is imparted during these sessions. Pupils attend well and gain knowledge and understanding. In a Year 6 English lesson where pupils were working with texts the teacher was very clear what she wanted pupils to learn. She involved all pupils by using open-ended questions and explained the work very clearly. Some good learning was promoted, evidenced by the confidence with which pupils tackled the task they had been given. A good conclusion to the lesson, where pupils shared what they had done and talked about it, ensured that the learning was consolidated.
- 20 Problems sometimes arise in the planning for activities to follow the class sessions. The activities do not always meet the needs of all pupils in the class. Planning has improved since the last inspection. There is now a common format and teachers are usually clear what their learning objectives are. Some teachers share these with pupils so they have an understanding of what they are doing. But the quality of planning is inconsistent, especially in terms of planning appropriate activities, and teaching is not sufficiently monitored so that weaknesses can be addressed and supported. For example, in a Year

2/3 mathematics lesson focusing on measurement of liquids and solids, the teacher had begun very well with a whole class demonstration. She skilfully used questioning to involve all pupils and ensure understanding. However, the group activities were not planned properly and did not provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to consolidate and develop their learning.

- 21 Teachers are competent at teaching basic skills of literacy and numeracy and pupils gain the skills they need. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson the teacher taught pupils how to count sums of money. She carefully explained how to 'keep the big number in your head' and then gave pupils lots of example to work through. By the end of the session they could all confidently and effectively add up amounts of money. The problem in some lessons is that the work they are given to do does not always help pupils to practise and develop their skills at an appropriate level. Sometimes the whole class is given the same task to do but the task does not meet the needs of every individual. Sometimes tasks are too teacher-focused and do not give pupils the opportunity to work independently. This happens in science where pupils are gaining a considerable amount of knowledge and understanding but do not have enough opportunity to develop independent investigation skills.
- 22 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach are usually good. It is because of this that whole class sessions are so effective. There are some weaknesses, for example in design and technology. Teachers do not as yet use information and communication technology enough in lessons, but this is improving. Because the curriculum has been improved there is more continuity in teaching and learning. What is learnt in one lesson is built on in the next.
- 23 Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. The teaching of pupils withdrawn from class to work in small groups on specific activities, generally linked to literacy skills outlined in their individual plans, is effective. The teacher has very secure subject knowledge, and provides a good range of tasks and activities that develop pupils' basic skills effectively. She has high expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour so they try hard and learn well. When pupils with special educational needs are in main school classes teachers' high expectations of behaviour help them behave well. Teachers do not, however, always make effective use of individual education plans to plan group activities in literacy and numeracy. There are references in some teachers' planning to specific pupils and the support they will receive, but this is inconsistent.
- 24 Support staff make a good contribution to the progress pupils with special educational needs make. The teacher of special educational needs has introduced a process of target setting with these pupils so they know what it is they are aiming to achieve next. However, this is in the early stages of development and has not yet had time to have a significant impact on either pupils' progress or the teaching of pupils in other lessons or subjects.

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

- 25 The curriculum of the school is satisfactory overall. It is, however, very much a balance of strengths and weaknesses. To its credit, the school has improved the structure of the curriculum appreciably since the last inspection. New national schemes of work have

been adopted to strengthen each subject. All too aware of the problems of mixed year classes, teachers have also made sensible use of local authority guidelines to try to provide all pupils equal access to the curriculum. In this they have been partially successful. Often, especially in the middle part of the school, teachers' planning does not make enough allowance for the different ages and abilities of pupils. They tend to cater for the average pupils. This results in a stronger level of challenge for lower attaining pupils but the curriculum is often not demanding enough for higher attaining pupils.

- 26 The provision for teaching literacy skills is good and has helped to raise pupils' standards, particularly in reading. A recent focus on writing has also helped to raise standards. The curriculum for the foundation stage is good. It is carefully planned to ensure a balance of experiences and activities across all areas of learning. There is a good emphasis on practical activities and an imaginative use of resources to help meet the needs of all children. The school's provision for physical education is good, particularly swimming and the school makes good use of tournaments at a nearby secondary school.
- 27 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. At the last inspection, targets in pupils' individual education plans were judged to be not specific enough. The school has reviewed its policy and procedures to comply with the new code of practice and, generally, the targets now clearly outline what pupils will be learning and comply with the requirements of the new code. Pupils are becoming more involved in the setting of targets and looking at how well they have done towards achieving their targets in reviews. Pupils are identified early and there are Individual education plans for all pupils on the register of special educational needs, which are reviewed regularly. The careful monitoring of pupils' plans contributes positively to the good progress they make. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all school activities and have equal access to the full range of the opportunities and experiences offered to pupils. However, class teachers are not fully involved in the preparation of individual education plans and do not always make enough use of them in planning lessons.
- 28 There are weaknesses in the curriculum, which have already been identified by the school. The school does not provide pupils with a full curriculum in information and communication technology. The pupils do not have the opportunity to use technology in its broadest sense as in, for example, simulation activity or as a control mechanism. Time on computers is very limited. This means that elements of the curriculum, such as data processing, are under-developed. Opportunities in design and technology are also limited. Teachers do not concentrate enough on the design and evaluation elements of the subjects, to ensure good standards in making objects. Pupils in Year 6 receive a notably thin curriculum in this subject when compared to other subjects.
- 29 The school places more emphasis on English and mathematics than other subjects. This is sensible since it allows the school to concentrate on improving pupils' basic skills. All subjects are taught separately, which is good but there is not enough interaction between subjects to broaden pupils' experiences. In good lessons, teachers instinctively refer to other subjects to make learning relevant. For example, teachers develop pupils' speaking skills when they discuss their performances in sport. However, this is not often the case. For instance, pupils do not develop their use of language and vocabulary by writing enough in history and geography. Little use is made of information and communication technology to support mathematics and science as, for example, in processing data using graphs and charts.

- 30 Whilst the curriculum is satisfactory, it is not particularly stimulating. Teachers rely on schemes of work and do not adapt or enliven them enough to interest pupils fully. There is still a tendency to use mundane activities on worksheets, notably in Years 2/3. This routine work means that pupils are not inspired to do their best. Teachers organise occasional visits to places of interest, which certainly brings learning alive. Recently, pupils have visited the wildfowl reserve at Caerlaverock, a local water mill and the Environment Agency at Penrith.
- 31 The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education on an informal basis is good. Teachers develop good relationships with the pupils, know them well and are able to support them sensitively. At the beginning of the day, for instance, teachers tend to chat to pupils about their own lives. There are planned opportunities for developing social skills, such as team sports and residential visits. The school promotes healthy eating through its science curriculum and a varied diet at lunchtime. However, the school does not provide a comprehensive approach to personal and social education. There are no regular opportunities for pupils to discuss personal or social problems. There is no systematic programme of health education, so that pupils' progress tends to be ad hoc. The school is aware of this and intends to initiate a new programme in the near future.
- 32 The school's provision for spiritual development is good. Assemblies are a special time of each day and pupils respond well to the quiet music played as they enter the hall. Time is given for reflection and pupils are encouraged to think and make their own responses to what is happening. Visiting clergy make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. During the inspection a local vicar animatedly told the story of the lepers healed by Jesus and pupils responded well and thoughtfully. They were able to make links with their own experiences, for example the feeling of being isolated during the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Religious education lessons provide pupils with a good knowledge and understanding of different faiths and what they mean to people. There is also a good emphasis on pupils responding to their experiences. For example, in a Y2/3 lesson pupils were asked to discuss what they would do in certain situations and in so doing were beginning to think about living with a moral code. The teacher carefully asked questions such as 'Why do you think that is wrong?' to encourage pupils to reflect on their ideas about right and wrong.
- 33 The school ensures very good moral and social development for its pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour and are positive role models. Consequently, the pupils are respectful and respond very responsibly in lessons and around the school. The school backs up its expectations with a set of 'Golden Rules', most notable of which involves treating other people, as you would wish to be treated. The pupils are very well aware of such rules and strive to comply. This sets the tone for social interaction. Added to this, the school expects older pupils to be responsible in jobs around the school. Accordingly, pupils perform tasks like operating the CD player in assemblies or tidying the games equipment store with great efficiency. There is an effective buddy system whereby Year 6 pupils help reception pupils settle into school life and support them periodically.
- 34 The opportunities for cultural development are satisfactory. Teachers introduce pupils to the works of famous writers and artists through the normal curriculum. They organise visits to the local theatre and nearby church. They make pupils aware of other faiths and cultures from around the world, yet it is difficult to support this with visits or visitors. The

contribution of music is disappointing. There is very little regular opportunity for pupils to perform in, for example, a choir or recorder group.

- 35 The school's links with the community are good. Pupils occasionally hold services at the local church and vicars often takes assemblies at the school. Local businesses have been instrumental in sponsoring the school's development, especially the nursery. Links with other schools are also good. Staff development benefits from working together with other primary schools in the area. There are close ties with local secondary schools, which provide valuable opportunities for sporting activities, in particular.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 36 The school takes good care of its pupils and has very good relationships with them. There is a purposeful, quiet atmosphere, which promotes learning; the children settle quickly and enjoy school. Relationships are very good and all members of staff know the children well. This coupled with the very good classroom management of children, contributes positively to pupils' learning and development. Pupils care for each other and feel happy to share their concerns with members of staff. Supervision at lunchtime is now in place promptly and management of pupils at lunchtime is part of the school's effective behaviour policy.
- 37 Parents acknowledge that the behaviour around school is now good and that their children like school and that they make progress. They also appreciate the high expectations at the school and that the school works closely with them for the benefit of the children. Pupils' individual needs are met sensitively and the school has done much to diminish the effects of the recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease, which had a profound effect on everyone at the school; for example there is a four day Artist in Residency event planned for pupils as a therapeutic event to heal emotional wounds. The school successfully bid for funding seeing this as a valuable experience for the children as part of the healing process.
- 38 The procedures for child protection are working well in practice; members of staff are trained and understand the procedures. However, the staff handbook and induction for new staff does not contain any child protection guidelines and this was a concern at the last inspection. Child protection and health and safety policies are in place and being followed. Risk assessments are now complete and used well. All fire signs are in place and the equipment is checked annually. The governors monitor health and safety regularly and the school site is secure. There are termly fire drills but fire drill procedures are not displayed in all classrooms and some statutory requirements are not yet fully met. There were no hazards seen around the school and all areas of concern were shared with the school and most were already in the process of being addressed. Standard forms are now used to inform parents of head bumps and the accident book is filled in appropriately.
- 39 The school has good links with the local secondary schools. The on-site nursery serves three primary schools in the area and so many of the children attending go on to other schools. To ensure continuity of care the school has built up good relationships with all of these primary schools. There are strong links with the local church; the vicar regularly attends assemblies and the children visit the church for festivals throughout the year. The school makes good use of links within the community although these are limited because of the rural setting of the school. The school visits local areas of interest to support the

curriculum and there is a link with a school in Norway with the children keeping in touch via e-mail. The school raises funds throughout the year for local and world charities. The school does not have strong multicultural links, but any racist attitudes are quickly stopped and reasoned through to ensure that the children and families realise the implications of what may seem to be a casual comment.

- 40 Pupils' personal development is well supported but there is insufficient time for independent learning. There is a recently formed school council, but it is too soon to measure its effect. Pupils willingly take responsibility and help with many jobs around the school. The mixed age classes are seen as a good way for pupils to develop social skills and make cross age friendships. All pupils mix well together and care for each other. There were incidents of boisterous behaviour seen but none that were malicious. Any incidents of oppressive behaviour are dealt with promptly and effectively, and parents are encouraged to work with the school to improve any negative behaviour. One child was excluded and the correct procedures followed. There are effective booster and extension classes that support children's learning well. There are limited links with industry, which is not surprising because of the location of the school, but governors have made full use of their contacts with local companies to get sponsorship and resources for the school, a good example of this being the alterations required for the development of the nursery.
- 41 The procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. The drop in the attendance figures this year is almost all due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease last spring. The school works with parents to ensure prompt and regular attendance and makes good use of outside agencies to support the welfare of the children and also works closely with parents. Parents are fully involved in the discussions of provision for pupils with special educational needs and get copies of their children's individual education plans. The school is sensitive to the needs of all children and does its best to ensure that no child feels excluded because of their needs or beliefs.
- 42 The school has good procedures in place to check on pupils' attainment and progress. Baseline assessment procedures are used well in the nursery and reception classes to establish what children can do and the progress they make. There are formal tests at the end of each academic year in addition to statutory tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. They constitute a good record of pupils' achievements. The information is used satisfactorily to identify pupils who may need additional support through specialist programmes such as the Additional Literacy Strategy or help from the special educational needs teacher. The school is gradually introducing clear procedures to monitor the progress in other subjects such as science and information and communication technology. However, these are not yet in place across the whole school for all subjects so do not yet form a complete record of pupils' achievement. Consequently, apart from in English, there is insufficient use of assessment to monitor individual pupils carefully so that they can be set targets to improve and develop the standard of their work
- 43 The use of assessment to identify those pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils benefit from sensitive support from the support staff. They have very good relationships with pupils, which has a positive effect upon the progress they make. Procedures for monitoring their progress are good. External agencies such as the Behaviour Intervention Team are involved appropriately by the school to advise and support the provision for specific pupils. Consequently, the school effectively provides the support for pupils with statements of special educational needs outlined in their statements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 44 Parents' views of the school are good. The parents have good relationships with the school. The information sent to them is of good quality, and they appreciate the high expectations that the school has for their children. The parents' good relationships with the school have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Most parents feel that behaviour in school is good and that their children are looked after well.
- 45 A few parents expressed concerns about the school's handling of poor behaviour, but the inspection evidence did not support their views and behaviour in the school is good. However their concerns about the limited range of extra-curricular activities were more reasonably founded. Parents are well informed about their children's progress but the annual reports, although covering all subjects, do not contain a pupils' self-assessment, offering no room for parental comments, and most do not contain areas for home development.
- 46 Parents have several opportunities during the year to visit school and discuss their children's progress and formal parents' evenings are well attended. The homework policy is clearly set out in the school brochure and parents get a clear picture of what to expect their children to receive as homework as they progress through the school, and how they can help with this at home. Parents are encouraged to add comments to the well-used reading diaries that are taken home regularly, especially lower down the school.
- 47 The school recognises the important role that parents play in children's learning and keeps them fully informed. It encourages their involvement whenever possible and appreciates the help that parents give. Because of the school's rural setting many parents live a good distance from the school and, as the majority of pupils are now bussed into school, contact with parents is not easy to maintain. The parents that help in school tend to be in the early years, where they have a very positive effect on learning; many parents go out to work, as their children get older. Parental help on visits and trips is often hard to find but there is a thriving parents' association that provides valuable social occasions for the pupils and community and financial help for the school. There is a relaxed atmosphere in the Nursery and Reception as parents come in to school to help their children remove their coats and settle quickly. Parental help both in and out of school has a positive effect on children's education; pupils can see that their parents value education and learning.
- 48 Parents are kept well informed about what is going on in school, and how they can support their children at home. The excellent prospectus gives much of valuable information on a whole range of school activities, including all subjects taught in school, as well as all the statutory requirements. There are regular newsletters that are well set out and friendly, as is the annual governors parents' report, although this has a couple of requirements missing regarding disabled access to the school. The parents' association discusses with the school where funds are needed and raises money for agreed short and long-term projects.
- 49 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactorily involved in the school. Parents are invited to review meetings and in some cases have a role in helping their child to achieve the targets. However, this level of involvement is developing and the recently introduced home/school diaries are an example of how the school is aware of the importance improving the involvement of parents in their child's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 50 The school's mission statement is reflected well in the emphasis on pupils' personal development and the importance of the individual and the very good relationships. It is this aspect of this small school that often attracts parents and encourages them to bring children from a distance away. Parents are very happy with the way in which their children are cared for as individuals and the attitudes and values the school promotes.
- 51 The school has recently had some disruption caused by staff illness, absence and change. As much of the school population is connected with farming life, last year's outbreak of foot and mouth disease had considerable impact on the school. Staff and pupil absence affected test results, aspects of school development and morale generally. Some families are still recovering and this shows in the worries of some children as they struggle to cope with these difficult times.
- 52 The leadership of the headteacher is good. She provides clear educational direction for the work of the school. She knows what needs to be done and is clearly focused on raising standards and maintaining a good quality of education. She plans well for change and improvement. School development planning is carefully thought through. There are clear and appropriate priorities focused on raising standards. The school has taken effective action in important areas. For example, the focus on writing has had a positive impact on standards. The support for numeracy is beginning to show in the progress being made towards raising achievement. Although development in information and communication technology has been relatively slow, recent investment is bringing about improvements.
- 53 The governing body makes a substantial contribution to the effectiveness of the school. Governors are very well organised and manage the school competently. They have a wide range of expertise and interests between them and use these effectively in the running of the school. They are well trained and thorough and execute their statutory duties very well. They are committed to the school and the local community, they know the school well and are well informed about its work.
- 54 The special educational needs co-ordinator gives good leadership and is well supported by the teacher in reception and the specialist teacher who have been instrumental in developing the provision recently. Improvements in the use of assessment information and the more effective deployment of staff to work with specific pupils or groups has had a significant effect upon the progress pupils make, particularly in English. The governor for special educational needs is well informed about the provision and has regular meetings with the co-ordinator to keep up to date with developments.
- 55 Financial planning is very good. The school employs its own financial support services and this is very effective. The finance committee monitors the budget very carefully and forward planning is good. A carry-forward has been built up over the last few years in order to cover the school for the fluctuations in roll numbers. Currently the school has fewer than usual pupils in school and has used extra money to maintain staffing and resource levels. Day-to-day management of the school is very good. The secretary is efficient and personable and provides high quality administration.
- 56 The headteacher analyses performance data in detail and uses this information to help bring about changes in the curriculum. Systems for tracking progress are in place and

developing well. The school is moving towards setting targets and this is working effectively in English, particularly in Key Stage 2. However, it does not yet involve all teachers as well as it might. Sometimes targets are set but they are not reflected in teachers' planning.

- 57 Monitoring processes are in place. The headteacher and school's adviser have undertaken observations, but this is limited by the time the headteacher has to carry it out and the lack of involvement of co-ordinators. There is not enough regular monitoring and support of teaching and learning and this has led to inconsistencies, for example in quality of planning, that are impacting on standards. In her current role as Year 6 teacher for three days a week in an outside classroom, the headteacher is not able to monitor the work of the school on a daily basis to ensure quality is maintained and morale stays high. Co-ordinators do not have the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning or to take responsibility for standards in their subjects.
- 58 Staffing is adequate for delivery of the curriculum. There are small classes that make it easier for teachers to cope with the mixed ages. There is a good level of support staff making a valuable contribution to the quality of the teaching, especially in the foundation stage and in support for special educational needs and information and communication technology.
- 59 Learning resources are satisfactory and are usually well used. The classroom accommodation is spacious for a school of this size and is well maintained. The grounds are also kept well and there is a safe fenced area where the under fives can play safely. This is an improvement from the last inspection. There are well-advanced plans for an adventurous trail to be built to enhance the children's opportunities to develop physically during safe exploratory play.
- 60 The children have benches outside so that they can play quietly or read if they wish at break and lunchtime. There are plans for a larger quiet area to increase the options that children have for relaxation. The covered way outside the classrooms next to the playground has increased the facilities outside – as a shelter from light rain - and also provides a useful shield against the sunlight on that side of the building. The school is adept at targeting funding opportunities and their long-term plans for the buildings and grounds enable them to make the most of any funding available.
- 61 The governing body manages its premises responsibilities well and is now addressing all the health and safety issues on the site. The buildings and grounds are well maintained and managed to a high standard.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue to develop the quality of the school's provision and to raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) Ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can in all subjects, but especially mathematics, by:
 - improving the quality of planning in all classes, so that it is clear what different groups of pupils are to learn in each lesson (*paragraphs 20, 23 and 92*);
 - making sure that the work teachers give to pupils is more carefully targeted to pupils' attainment levels and therefore is sufficiently challenging for them and effective in helping them to learn (*paragraphs 2, 21, 83 and 8*).

- (2) Raise standards in information and communication technology by:
 - increasing the amount of time pupils spend working with computers on a daily basis (*paragraphs 7 and 118*);
 - putting in place a curriculum that delivers all the National Curriculum programmes of study for the subject (*paragraphs 7 and 118*);
 - making better use of current resources to help teachers deliver the curriculum efficiently and effectively (*paragraphs 22 and 117*).

- (3) Ensure that there is more consistency in the quality of teaching and learning through the school by:
 - ensuring that procedures for tracking pupils' progress and setting and monitoring targets are shared by all teachers and governors, so that weaknesses are apparent and can be addressed (*paragraph 42*);
 - developing procedures for monitoring and supporting teaching and learning so that they are more rigorous and effective in bringing about improvement (*paragraphs 57*);
 - giving co-ordinators more scope for taking responsibility for standards in their own subjects (*paragraphs 57, 9, 99 and 114*).

- (4) Improve the quality of the curriculum by:
 - planning topics so that there is more opportunity for pupils to develop their basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and information technology across the curriculum (*paragraphs 29 and 79*);
 - changing the nature of some activities so that pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and gain some independence (*paragraphs 30, 40, 97 and 113*).

(Many of these issues have already been identified by the school and are part of the current School Improvement Plan.)

Other issues which should be considered by the school

- Improving achievement in design and technology, especially in Key Stage 2 (*paragraphs 7, 28.104 and 108*).
- Putting in place a more structured approach to pupils' personal, social and health education (*paragraph 31*).
- Extending the range of extra-curricular activities (*paragraphs 34 and 124*).
- Ensuring that all procedures for health and safety procedures are in place (*paragraphs 38*).
- Improving the amount and quality of time the headteacher has for making her presence in the school felt on a regular basis (*paragraphs 57*).
- Continuing to improve communication with parents to avoid misconceptions about how the school is dealing with issues (*paragraph 47*).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

29

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

15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		7	11	11			
Percentage		24	38	38			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	7	86
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	14

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	3	8	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	11	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	91 (92)	91 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	10	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (92)	100 (92)	100 (92)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	3	8	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	9	6	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (80)	55 (80)	82 (80)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	9	6	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (87)	72 (87)	82 (90)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	86
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)	4.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.9
Average class size	21.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28.25

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	22
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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	1	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	2001
	£
Total income	280555
Total expenditure	284130
Expenditure per pupil	2631
Balance brought forward from previous year	18513
Balance carried forward to next year	14938

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	100
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	31	10	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	49	5	2	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	67	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	56	13	0	13
The teaching is good.	41	49	10	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	54	10	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	36	13	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	38	54	8	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	28	38	31	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	26	46	15	10	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	62	10	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	8	31	23	13	25

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

- 62 The nursery class is a recent and valuable addition to the school, and thirteen children attend it in the mornings. The facility is a shared one and some children attend and then leave to go to their own local primary schools. The teacher has worked hard to set the nursery up and she and the nursery nurse make a good team. They have very good relationships with parents and have built a happy environment in which children thrive. Planning is very thorough and meets the needs of all the children in the class. They are provided with a wide range of experiences and activities. Imaginative use is made of the limited space and resources that are being built up gradually. There is a good balance between teacher-focused activities and child-chosen experiences, although occasionally the teacher over-estimates the concentration span of some of the children, especially during extended whole group sessions. With consistently good teaching, children make good progress and leave the nursery well able to cope with life in a reception class. Parents are very pleased with the quality of provision in the nursery.
- 63 Currently thirteen reception age children share a class with six Year 1 pupils and are taught by one teacher in the morning and another in the afternoon. Teaching is consistently good or very good and support staff and volunteer parents make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching. Provision is much improved from the last inspection, when there were some weaknesses in provision for the areas of learning. Planning is thorough, imaginative use is made of resources, there is good pace to lessons and teachers are enthusiastic. Children make good progress and most leave the foundation stage with the skills, knowledge and understanding expected of children of this age.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 64 Children enter the nursery with a wide range of personal and social skills. Some are well adjusted and confident. Some find it difficult to cope with relationships and need a lot of support. Adults are very supportive and work together well to meet the needs of all the children. But they also have high expectations and children soon learn what is expected of them. Relationships are very good and this helps children to make friends and learn to share and take turns.
- 65 Despite making good progress in the nursery, a few children enter the nursery with weak personal and social skills and still need a lot of support. The very good relationships in the reception class help them to learn to get on with others. The high expectations of all the adults provide a good framework for children to learn right from wrong and behaviour is good. Routines are well established and children are confident in the classroom. They are beginning to listen to each other as well as their teacher and other adults and they get on with the tasks they have been given to do. The pace in lessons helps keep children interested, although sometimes their concentration levels are stretched to the limit as teachers try to meet the needs of older pupils in whole class sessions.

Communication, language and literacy

- 66 There is an emphasis on language and literacy in the nursery class and children make good progress. Most recognise their own names and are successfully learning initial sounds. These activities are well supported by parents as children take 'homework' sheets home.

Children listen to and respond to stories. They take part enthusiastically in role play, for example in the current 'passenger ferry'. Adults interact very well with children, developing vocabulary and extending understanding. For example, the teacher supported two children who had decided to get off the 'ferry' and pack their cases ready for a holiday on an island.

- 67 Literacy skills are very well taught in the reception class. Children make good progress and enter Year 1 with skills in line with what is expected. Meticulous planning and very good deployment of adults ensures that the needs of all children are met. A mixture of whole class sessions and small group activities helps reception children to learn at an appropriate level. The supporting adults make a valuable contribution to the learning of reception children in literacy lessons. Children have a good knowledge of initial sounds and many can use this to read three letter words. They sequence a story and act out a story, showing a good understanding of events and characters.

Mathematical development

- 68 A range of carefully planned practical activities help children in the nursery to gain an understanding of mathematics. They sort and count and play with shapes. They join in with number rhymes and songs. Many can count to ten and beyond. Adults use every opportunity to extend children's use of mathematical language and this helps children learn. Many use words such as 'bigger' and 'smaller' correctly.
- 69 Numeracy sessions in the reception class are very well organised and adult support makes a valuable contribution. For example, in one lesson there was whole class number work and children joined in with number rhymes and songs and recognising numbers. Then groups were supported as they sorted coins and used coins practically in the class shop. Mathematical skills are not as advanced as literacy skills but many children reach the levels expected by the time they leave the reception class. They count to twenty and have a good understanding of the value of numbers to ten. They are beginning to add numbers correctly. They sort and use coins and recognise simple shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 70 In the nursery, children are provided with a range of experiences and activities that help to develop their understanding of the world about them. The nursery environment is imaginatively arranged to provide displays that encourage children to look and explore. During the inspection children learnt about floating and sinking through practical activities with a range of objects in the water tray. The whole class session, where children identified 'floaters' and 'sinkers' based on their experiences, demonstrated that most children had gained in understanding of what happened to specific objects in water. One child was able to explain how they made a boat sink by 'filling it with people'.
- 71 In the reception class children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. The classroom is a lively place with lots to interest and involve children. Imaginative use is made of resources to ensure that children are involved in practical activities and experiences. Planning is difficult in the mixed key stage class, but the teacher thinks it through carefully to ensure that the needs of all children are met whilst they follow similar topics. Most foundation stage children reach the goals set for them by the time they enter Year 1. During the inspection they learnt about plants and how they grow. Most could name the main parts of plants and sorted and talked about the seeds or 'pips' they found in fruit they were chopping up for a fruit salad. Computers are used well in the reception class and children gain confident 'mouse' skills.

Physical development

- 72 Not a lot of evidence of physical development was observed during the inspection because bad weather made it possible to use the outdoor play area for only a short time and there is limited space for physical activity in the classroom. Children do have physical education sessions in the hall and they have the opportunity to run, jump and climb. A range of tools and equipment is available for children to use and they are well supported by adults in their management of these. Physical skills develop well.
- 73 Physical development is well taught in the reception class and the teacher skilfully manages the lessons to meet the needs of the youngest and the oldest in the class. Careful instructions, challenging tasks, a good pace and clear expectations of behaviour ensure that lessons are worthwhile experiences and promote good quality learning. Children move around the hall confidently, aware of others as they do so. They build sequences of movements and perform them well. Their attainment in physical development is at least in line with what is expected and with many children is above this.

Creative development

- 74 In the nursery, children have the opportunity to take part in many creative activities. The adults are imaginative in their use of resources, For example, children were helped to use marbling to make 'floating' pictures. This caused a lot of excitement and children clearly enjoyed the experience of using materials in this way. There are plenty of opportunities for children to draw and paint and model. They sing songs and play musical instruments. They take part in imaginative role play.
- 75 In the reception class all aspects of creative development are well provided for. The teacher and other adults are enthusiastic and imaginative and pupils are encouraged to express themselves whenever possible. Children sing songs from memory and join in with actions to songs. They explore sounds, both those they can make themselves and those they can make with musical instruments. They move imaginatively to musical sounds. They learn about artists and make their own pictures exploring a range of media, such as crayons, paint and other materials. The reception class gives children a good basis in creative work that they can build on in school. More than this, they are keen to try things out and confident in what they do.

ENGLISH

- 76 Over the last three years, pupils' performance has exceeded the national average in reading and writing by the age of seven and in English by the age of eleven. The current pupils in Years 2 and 6 are attaining standards that are in line with national averages. However, care has to be taken when comparing specific year groups due to the small number of pupils involved and the variable numbers of pupils with special educational needs. For example, in the current Year 6 a third of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. Overall, pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the emphasis teachers place on developing their basic skills, and the very good support they receive from support staff in lessons and special needs teachers in withdrawal groups.
- 77 The majority of pupils in Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 achieve the expected level in their speaking and listening. The majority of the oldest pupils are very good listeners who

follow their teachers' explanations closely, responding eagerly to questions with full and thoughtful answers. They readily engage in conversation about their work with each other and adults. Higher attaining pupils are very confident in expressing their opinions and express their ideas clearly and fluently.

- 78 Standards pupils attain in reading are usually good. By the time pupils are seven, they read a broad range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction with good understanding and developing fluency. Most take reading books home regularly and are well supported by parents. Teachers go to great lengths to make sure pupils are regularly heard to read individually in addition to class-reading sessions at various times of the day and throughout the week. This approach makes a positive contribution to the development of their reading. Higher attaining pupils are fluent confident readers. They use punctuation well to give expression to the reading and talk about the plot in the story and say what they think will happen next. Although the majority of pupils do not read with the same expression and fluency, they are competent readers. They use a range of skills to understand what is happening in a story and to work out unfamiliar words and are familiar with the use of non-fiction books. Most pupils use the contents page and index confidently.
- 79 By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils have achieved the nationally expected level. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their reading relative to their attainment on entry to school. This is partly because of good teaching in withdrawal sessions that concentrates on teaching pupils different ways of working out unfamiliar words by using the pictures and letter sounds. The teaching of reading overall is satisfactory and pupils have developed sound attitudes to reading. They take books home from school each day, but do not always read them. Pupils keep a reading journal, but they are not heard to read very regularly and the choice they make of books is not monitored closely. Most pupils are competent readers, but although higher attaining pupils are fluent and beginning to develop the more complex skills of inference and deduction, most pupils are not very confident and lack fluency. Most significantly, pupils' skills in research are not well developed, which reflects the limited opportunities pupils have in subjects such as history and geography to research topics and work independently on their own work.
- 80 Pupils' attainment in writing at age seven is good and pupils achieve well in this aspect of the subject. Pupils write in logical sentences and apply their knowledge of letter sounds when spelling words so most pupils spell accurately and any errors are logical. Higher attaining pupils in Year 1 write confidently in sentences using full stops and capital letters. By the end of Year 2, pupils' presentation of work is good because the teacher has high expectations of presentation and make sure in most of their work that pupils use headings and dates. In some activities, pupils are expected to use a pen, which helps them develop their own style of handwriting. They can write in a range of styles. Higher attaining pupils use powerful verbs and adjectives well, which adds dynamism to some of the creative and imaginative writing. Average attainers' writing is less colourful, but they are beginning to understand and use description in their writing to describe characters and settings. Pupils with special educational needs write legibly and on occasions use simple punctuation appropriately to organise their work, but the support they get in lessons and when they withdrawn for specific work means that overall they achieve well although their attainment is below that expected of their age. The emphasis placed on developing writing style, presentation and basic skills of spelling and grammar in Years 1 and 2 is built on effectively as pupils move through the school.

- 81 By the age of eleven, pupils' writing is neat and legible with many pupils developing their own style. Pupils use a broad range of punctuation, spell accurately and clearly understand grammatical structures. In addition, the majority of pupils construct their work develop ideas carefully, organising it into paragraphs. These strengths in their writing reflect the strong emphasis placed by the teacher in the Year 6 class on developing pupils' basic skills and gives them a secure basis upon which to build. Higher attaining pupils have a secure understanding of how to vary the style and organisation of written work depending on the purpose of the work and they write entertaining and imaginative stories using a broad range of vocabulary that captures the reader's attention. Most pupils write well in different styles as exercises or tasks in English lessons, but in other subjects such as history they do not demonstrate the same ability to use and vary the vocabulary and language depending on the task or audience.
- 82 English is taught well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school, relationships between adults and pupils are very good and teachers manage pupils very well so they behave very well, listen attentively to their teacher and respond well to the tasks they are given. Whole class parts of lessons are good and effectively develop pupils' knowledge of letter sounds and basic skills of handwriting, punctuation and grammar. Teachers have consistently high expectations of presentation so written work is generally dated, given a title and carefully written in neat legible handwriting. In addition, pupils in Year 1 benefit from a high level of support from the class teacher so they make good progress in developing their reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well when they are withdrawn to work with specialist staff. In these sessions, their individual learning plans are used very effectively to plan activities. Lessons are brisk with a number of short tasks so pupils' concentration is maintained and they consistently try hard to do what they are asked. Pupils in the upper classes of the school also make good progress in reading and writing significantly helped by the good teaching they receive in their extra lessons for literacy. However, in Years 2 and 3, pupils make satisfactory progress. The significant difference in the pace of learning between the different classes is the planning of lessons to take account of pupils of different abilities within the group parts of lessons
- 83 Since the last inspection, the school has adopted the guidance in the national strategy for literacy as the basis for planning, but not all the teachers follow it on a weekly or daily basis. Although some planning identifies what pupils in different year groups will do it does not consistently identify what pupils of different abilities will learn. Consequently, although expectations in lessons are very clear and instructions explicit so pupils understand what they have to do, the group tasks do not always give pupils enough opportunities to practise and develop their skills at an appropriate level. The individual plans for pupils with special educational needs are not used effectively in main school lessons to plan group activities so the work done in withdrawal sessions is not reinforced or built upon. Teachers' response to pupils in lessons is good with positive encouragement mixed appropriately with guidance and support. However, the lack of clarity in the overall objectives for the group tasks limits teachers' ability to mark pupils' work consistently so they know how well they have done and how they can improve.
- 84 The effective teaching of the basic skills of English such as punctuation, handwriting and grammar is not reinforced sufficiently in other subjects. For example, in history and geography, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise these skills, particularly in the upper years of the juniors. This has a negative effect on pupils' ability to research and

to write in different styles for a range of purposes or audience. Where information and communication technology is used to support literacy, tasks are appropriate, but not enough attention is paid to planning carefully how these resources can be used systematically in lessons.

- 85 The subject co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the standards pupils achieve and has lead the subject well, being the driving force behind the initiatives the school has put in place to improve standards in, for example writing. In addition, she has overseen the good development since the last inspection of procedures to assess and monitor pupils' progress. The detailed analysis of this information is in its early stages so the school's targets for pupils' in Years 2 and 6 are optimistic, but generally reflect the progress pupils have made over recent years. However, this effective work has not been supported by regularly and focused observation of teaching, pupils' work or teachers' planning. This is partly due to limitations of time available to do this work, but as result, the shortcomings in planning identified by the inspection and the effect that this has on pupils' progress have not been identified. Staffing levels for teaching English are good. The appointment of experienced staff to work with and support the provision for pupils with special educational needs has enhanced the staffing for the subject. Resources have been developed well since the last inspection to support the national strategy for literacy.

MATHEMATICS

- 86 By the age of eleven, pupils' attainment is broadly average. Pupils are competent especially in number, but they are less confident in using their knowledge to solve problems independently. This is a similar picture to the findings of the last inspection, although attainment has fluctuated since then. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment is below national expectations. Virtually all pupils achieve an average standard but no higher attaining pupils reach the expected higher standards. This represents a weaker picture than at the last inspection, despite standards being on a par with the national average over the last three years. Not all teachers plan their work with sufficient regard for the different abilities of the pupils. As a result, many pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, do not have enough challenge in their learning and opportunity to develop their own skills.
- 87 Pupils' ability in number is satisfactory throughout the school. By the age of seven, pupils are able to add and subtract numbers up to 20. They are beginning to work with higher numbers and can round numbers up to the nearest 10. They appreciate how numbers can form patterns. In sequences, such as 0, 4, 8, __, __, 20, 24, pupils can complete the missing numbers. They are helped by a basic knowledge of multiplication. They can tell the time using hours and half hours. Nearly all pupils have a similar ability, which means that lower attaining pupils are achieving well, whilst higher attaining pupils are not. By the age of eleven, pupils' skills in number are efficient. They are mostly confident with their times tables and this enables them deal successfully with work such as long multiplication, for instance 476×14 . They understand what prime numbers are and how numbers can be factorised. They have a sound grasp of fractions and decimals, although they are not always sure of their comparative values, for example that $\frac{1}{4} = 0.25$. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are less secure especially with their times tables and this can undermine their calculations. Higher attaining pupils are more confident and can, for example, work with numbers to two decimal points.

- 88 By the age of seven, pupils can handle basic measurements and appreciate different aspects of shape. All pupils can measure lines and record their findings in centimetres. They can sort different containers into capacities of more or less than one litre, by careful measuring with water. They can define two-dimensional shapes like squares and triangles by the numbers of their sides and angles. By the age of eleven, pupils have satisfactory skills in this area. For example, pupils can not only measure angles within triangles but can construct triangles following set data. Similarly, they can draw shapes such as a rhombus and parallelogram on a grid. They can rotate such shapes to find a mirror image. Pupils know how to calculate areas and perimeters of regular and irregular shapes. Lower attaining pupils have similar skills, but higher attaining pupils are stronger. Their knowledge of geometry, for example, extends to include obtuse and congruent angles.
- 89 Pupils do not have well developed skills in handling data by the age of seven. They are not used enough to sorting information and recording findings in tables and simple graphs. Older pupils have more satisfactory skills. They can put data into Venn diagrams and record results of surveys in block and line graphs. Pupils in Year 6, for example, drew a good graph to show the timings and stops during a train journey. Pupils understand the concept of probabilities but are not familiar enough with the specific scale of probabilities, i.e. from 1 – 10.
- 90 Pupils do not have enough ability to solve problems in mathematics mentally. Much of their learning involves written activities and teachers do not encourage them enough to think for themselves. In a Year 2/3 lesson on capacity, pupils were much more engrossed in pouring water than predicting possible outcomes. When asked to predict, many pupils were inaccurate. Year 5 pupils are beginning to understand how to multiply two digit numbers, but struggle because they do not have the habit of estimating what the answer might be and double-checking their answers. Year 6 pupils are more efficient. They set their working out correctly and know various strategies for multiplication and division. Even so, mental agility is not as strong as it could be. In a revision test, a number of pupils struggled to solve 8.7×10 and express 250 centimetres in metres.
- 91 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers provide pupils with a sound level of basic skills. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils throughout and these motivate the pupils and ensure good behaviour. However, teaching is more effective in Years 1 and 6. Here, teachers have good expectations of their pupils. They use interesting topics to heighten pupils' concentration. For instance, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher introduced number rhymes when counting with coins. As a result, the pupils enjoyed the activity and their learning was strengthened. Teachers provide learning strategies for the pupils so that they can solve problems for themselves. In these classes, teachers are more prepared to adapt their approach to allow for the different abilities of pupils. The Year 1 teacher asks a range of questions so that all pupils are able to answer and gain understanding and self-esteem. The teacher in Year 6 motivates higher attaining pupils with work on interpreting co-ordinates in quadrants, for example.
- 92 Teaching elsewhere in the school is less effective, particularly in Years 2/3. There is too little attempt to plan sufficiently targeted work. Consequently, pupils in the mixed year classes mostly do the same work. This is detrimental to higher attaining pupils, who do not have enough challenge. Sometimes, teachers provide work that is uninspiring. The preponderance of worksheets, for example, in Years 2/3 does little to galvanise pupils. Teachers tend to direct pupils too much in their learning and do not check that all pupils have understood thoroughly, before they start work. In a Year 4/5 lesson, the teacher

encouraged pupils to continue with their work on long multiplication without assessing how much they had remembered from the previous day. A number of pupils were clearly still uncertain and this hampered their progress.

- 93 There is a sound structure to the curriculum and the school has used guidance from the local authority to try to overcome the problems of mixed year classes. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. There has also been a distinct improvement in the systems of assessing pupils' progress. However, the school does not yet make full use of this information to give pupils clear, demanding but achievable targets in their learning. In addition, the school has still not wholly addressed the issue of providing sufficient challenge for all pupils, especially higher attaining pupils. The head teacher has monitored teaching but has not yet had the opportunity to make teaching consistently good. The co-ordinator does not monitor pupils' progress or check colleagues' planning effectively so that issues can be dealt with as they arise. Indeed, the co-ordinator lacks the determination to address problem areas and so be instrumental in improving the standards of pupils' work.

SCIENCE

- 94 Standards in science are improving, especially in Key Stage 2. At the time of the last inspection standards were satisfactory but there were weaknesses in the curriculum, especially in investigation skills and there was underachievement amongst higher attaining pupils. The curriculum has been improved and now provides more continuity in learning through the school. Pupils gain very secure levels of knowledge and understanding across the whole science curriculum. There has been a focus on developing skills in investigation that has resulted in higher standards. However, there are still too few pupils in Key Stage 1 reaching higher than expected levels. Development in the subject over the last year has been limited because of various factors, but the co-ordinator knows what needs to be done and has clear plans for the future, which with support she should be able to achieve.
- 95 Results of teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the school is good at making sure as many pupils as possible reach expected levels, but few pupils achieve above this. End of Key Stage 2 tests show that standards by the time pupils leave the school have improved. Results were disappointing last year, but standards are usually above the national average. Most pupils achieve the expected levels and a good proportion achieve above this. Pupils throughout the school achieve well, especially in gaining knowledge and understanding of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as they gain this knowledge alongside their peers and they are usually well supported in lessons. There are some weaknesses in the development of and use of investigation skills and this can affect the higher attainers, as they do not gain the independent skills they need for them to achieve at higher levels.
- 96 A much improved curriculum, well planned to take account of the mixed age classes, has ensured that pupils experience all aspects of science. Pupils tend to work at a high level and this benefits all pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils know about materials and their properties; they understand how solids and liquids change when heated or cooled. Year 4 pupils use filters and sieves to separate liquids and solids, they know about life processes and keeping healthy. Year 6 pupils have an impressive knowledge and understanding across a wide range of science. They know about plants and habitats, they understand

terms such as 'soluble' and insoluble' and they have worked with electrical currents and experimented with air resistance. Pupils' attitudes to science are very good. They are interested and attentive. They respond well to being asked for their ideas.

- 97 Investigation skills are improving but pupils do not gain them securely enough for them to be able to use them sufficiently independently. A common format for carrying out and recording experiments has improved the way in which this aspect is taught and pupils do have opportunities to carry out investigations. For example, Year 2 pupils have investigated magnets and worked with shadows. However, in Key Stage 1 these tend to be very teacher-orientated and there is little opportunity for pupils to work by themselves and make their own choices. In Key Stage 2 pupils carry out a range of investigations and they record their findings in different ways. Not enough of this work is carried out independently.
- 98 Teaching in the subject is usually good, mainly because of the quality of whole class sessions. In a Year 4/5 lesson the teacher built carefully on pupils' prior knowledge of the process of evaporation and extended this to discussion about how we are aware of vapours. There was a good use of questioning and scientific terms and the work was well related to pupils' everyday life. Pupils usually have a range of experiences and activities provided for them. In a Year 1 lesson pupils made models of plants and labelled them. This was a good practical activity to consolidate their knowledge of parts of plants. Pupils talked confidently about 'roots', 'petals', 'stems'. There is however a tendency in some classes for the same activity to be given to all pupils, despite the range of ages and attainment levels. This does not give more able pupils the opportunity to work at a higher level.
- 99 The co-ordinator has appropriate plans for the future development of science in school. She wants to take part more in analysis of test results and make target setting more effective in raising standards. She understands the need for more focus on pupils developing investigation skills through the school and hopes to have more opportunity to monitor and support teaching and learning in classes.

ART AND DESIGN

- 100 Good standards are achieved in art and design. This is the result of confident teaching supported by the expertise of the co-ordinator and the positive attitudes of pupils. At the time of the last inspection there were good standards in the subject in Key Stage 2 but some weaknesses in younger classes. Improvements to the curriculum and better planning have made good standards more consistent through the school.
- 101 The good teaching and attitudes that characterise the subject were seen in the Year 4/5 class where the teacher was very carefully teaching the skills of capturing movement. By demonstration and involvement of pupils in observing movement, the teacher effectively conveyed these skills. Pupils were then given the opportunity to experiment and try out what they had been taught. Pupils were enthusiastic and not afraid to have a go, even though their first attempts were not as good as they wanted them to be. With the positive support of adults, pupils evaluated their work and refined and improved it. By the end of the lesson they had produced some good quality work. In a Year 2/3 lesson pupils were working at a similarly high standards, trying to achieve proportion and accuracy in their drawing of people.

- 102 Work in pupils' folders and on display shows that pupils throughout the school are provided with a range of experiences. In Year 1 pupils use paint and crayons confidently. In Year 2 and 3 they work with pastels and paints, mixing colours to suit a particular purpose. Years 4 and 5 have explored printing and worked with a range of materials. Portraits undertaken by Year 5 pupils demonstrate a high level of skill and mastery of media. Pupils have some experience of looking at the work of different artists. Work in three dimensions is not as confident as other aspects.
- 103 The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and provides a good level of expertise. She supports teachers well in their planning. The school has its own scheme of work, which provides continuity through the school, development of skills and links with topics. Recently teachers have been using non-statutory guidance to help them deliver the National Curriculum. They are now at the stage of evaluating this and combining it with their own scheme.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 104 It is not possible to judge properly how well pupils attain, because there is not enough evidence of their work. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment is broadly average in terms of making, but less secure in the design element. For older pupils, this design element is almost totally lacking and pupils rarely evaluate their own work. The lack of finished articles, especially for pupils in Year 6, shows weak provision and casts doubt over pupils' knowledge and skills. This suggests a sharp decline since the last inspection.
- 105 By the age of seven, pupils can make simple objects. In Year 1, for example, pupils can cut out a figure of Humpty Dumpty from card. They attach arms and legs with paper fasteners to make a jointed figure. In Year 2, pupils show similar cutting skills and acquire basic stitching skills. For example, they cut out cloth from a given pattern and stitched it together to produce small jackets, for the Pied Piper. They have also produced a room layout in a shoe-box, using card to make furniture and fittings. Pupils do make preliminary drawings but they are very vague and do not contain details such as labels. Pupils begin to evaluate their work effectively. One pupil said, 'I could have added more windows', after contemplating his shoe-box room.
- 106 The picture for older pupils is complex. Pupils in Year 3 do exactly the same work as those in Year 2. Therefore, whilst they receive a reasonable grounding, the standards of their work are those expected of Year 2 pupils. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 receive a satisfactory curriculum and they are able to design torches for elderly people, pop-up pictures and money containers. Their preliminary designs are sound. For example, they can specify possible materials and fasteners for money containers such as leather and zips. They can draw a cross-section of a torch, but only higher attaining pupils produce ideas to help older people like, for example, a clip to attach the torch to a zimmer frame. Some pupils have original ideas. One pupil suggested a kangaroo shape for a money container so that the pouch could be used to store the money. However, there is little evidence that pupils select their own materials and tools for making. There is too little evaluation of their own work so that they can learn from their successes and mistakes. Pupils in Year 6 have done virtually no work in design and technology during the current year. It is the school's intention that they study the subject after their national tests, but this will be too little, too late.

- 107 The teaching of design and technology is unsatisfactory. The teaching of younger pupils is satisfactory and ensures that pupils receive a reasonable diet of work. However, overall, teachers do not insist on enough detail or quality in pupils' work. They do not insist that pupils think through designs carefully. Consequently, pupils' plans are casual and vague. Teachers do not encourage pupils to reassess ideas and outcomes, so that future work will benefit. They do not give pupils the opportunity to select their own tools for jobs, and so develop a more independent approach to learning.
- 108 The school has a disappointing attitude towards design and technology. There is a good curriculum, which gives teachers useful ideas for projects, but it is only partly followed. Not enough time is allocated to the subject. There is not enough monitoring of the subject to check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils' achievement is inconsistent throughout the school. Resources are in short supply and do little to support effective learning.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

- 109 Pupils' standards of attainment in geography and history by the age of seven and eleven are in line with national expectations. Pupils make sound progress in learning the skills, knowledge and understanding in both subjects and have a secure knowledge of different periods of history, places around the world and physical features such as rivers and mountain environments. Schemes of work have been introduced since the last inspection based on the recent national guidance. However, the school has not developed systematic procedures for ensuring that the schemes are used as the basis for planning opportunities for all pupils to use and develop their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.
- 110 By the age of seven, pupils have a secure understanding of time. When they are talking about life and events in the past such as the Tudor period, they use words such as 'today' and 'before', 'old' and 'new' correctly. They know that places change over time and that people's lives change too. For example, they compare the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times. Pupils understand that information about the past can be found in a range of sources such as paintings and most pupils comment on what they can see in context of the time. Higher attaining pupils explanations of what they can see is telling them about life in the past. In geography, most pupils know the main continents of the world and can use an atlas to locate specific places on a map. Pupils understand that countries around the world have different climates, and how this affects what people wear, what food they eat and how they live. They know why people travel abroad to different places for holidays and what these places have to offer such as entertainment, leisure activities and sports.
- 111 By the age of eleven, pupils know the difference between countries and continents. Most pupils can name the continents and different climatic zones around the world. They have a secure understanding of how climate affects the lives of people. The emphasis placed by the teacher in the upper years of the school is on physical aspects of geography so pupils have a very secure understanding of physical features of the landscape such as rivers. They know how rivers are formed and how they shape the landscape. However, their appreciation of how human activity affects these features and the environment around them is not so well developed. In history, pupils have a secure understanding about some civilisations from the past, such as Ancient Egypt and the Romans and particular periods in British history such as the Tudors. They understand how life for people

changes over time as conditions and facilities for people develop. For example, they know the effect that the invention of steam trains had upon the ability of people to travel quickly from place to place.

- 112 Teaching in both subjects is satisfactory. All teachers have secure subject knowledge, which they use effectively in the opening of the lesson and in the whole class discussions during which pupils are interested and enthusiastic. The pupils ask pertinent questions, put up their hands to answer questions and behave well. Pupils' positive attitude to both subjects is also shown by the good quality of presentation by pupils of their work. This reflects the emphasis placed by teachers on developing pupils' awareness of what is expected of them in lessons and way these expectations are consistently reinforced. However, because teachers tend to take pupils through activities step by step, lessons are not briskly paced and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to think out and plan their own work.
- 113 This is linked to lesson planning. Long term planning indicates that the scheme of work is taught and pupils are provided with an adequate range of experiences in lessons to learn the required knowledge in order to achieve national expectations. Visits and visitors are carefully planned so they make a good contribution to reinforcing pupils' understanding and enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils in Years 6 went to a river in Appleby and were able to see the features they had been studying in the classroom. However, very little attention is given to varying the difficulty and range of activities provided for pupils of different ability, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. There is too much reliance on worksheets in lessons, particularly for the oldest pupils, which affects the pace of pupils' learning. As a result, the higher attaining pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their understanding beyond the majority of their peers.
- 114 Some links are made with other subjects including art and design and information and communication technology, but these are limited and there are few opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills by, for example, writing about their ideas and expressing opinions. Similarly, opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills and information and communication technology skills are not planned for which limits pupils ability to use and apply the skills they are taught in these lessons. Marking of pupils' work is variable. Overall, not enough attention is given to informing pupils what they do well and how they can improve their work
- 115 The co-ordinator for geography leads the subject satisfactorily. She has not monitored pupils' work or teaching, but she has a clear idea of what needs to be done through the subject action plan. Procedures for assessing how well pupils are doing have been developed but these are not currently being used across the whole school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 116 Provision for information technology was weak at the time at the last inspection. There were limitations in resources and planning. The school had recognised this and improvements have been made, but progress has only been slow. Standards are not as high as they could be, because pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop skills and use them confidently across the curriculum. The curriculum does not currently meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

- 117 There has been considerable investment in hardware and funds have been used wisely to ensure that every classroom is adequately supplied with computers. However, the computers are not yet used effectively, mainly because teachers are not aware of their potential as a tool for learning and are insecure in their teaching of the subject. There have been problems since the last inspection with continuity of co-ordination and with starting teacher training.
- 118 During the last year governors have invested in the services of a support teacher who has worked very hard and effectively to move development of the subject forward. She has got computers operational and shown teachers how they can be used more effectively to support other subjects. She provides good quality teaching and has ensured that pupils gain some basic skills and teachers know how to use these in other subjects. This is beginning to have considerable impact on pupils' learning, but is inefficient. She is part-time and temporary, so her role as co-ordinator is not as secure as it might be. She is only able to work with a few pupils at a time, and working in classrooms alongside other lessons taking place is quite distracting for all pupils.
- 119 Pupils are developing some skills and are reaching expected standards in some areas of the subject. For example, Year 1 pupils use drawing programs to make their own pictures. Year 2 pupils work with text and pictures. In Key Stage 2 pupils are developing their use of text and graphics, for example in presenting poetry in an appropriate way. Pupils use e-mail facilities to send messages. They learn to use the Internet to find out information. Year 6 are beginning to use 'Power Point' to put together their own presentations. However skills are still weak. Pupils do not have enough time at computers to develop confident skills and are not using their skills sufficiently in other subjects. There are gaps in the curriculum, for instance the school does not use control technology or spreadsheets. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are keen to learn and interested in the work they are given to do. However, they are not yet gaining independent ways of working and do not automatically use computers appropriately to support their learning.
- 120 The school is well aware of the weaknesses in information and communication technology and with investments made this year has moved forward considerably. However, if pupils are to reach the standards expected, development must be faster. There is keen governor interest in the subject and there are hopes that eventually it will be possible to create a computer suite in school. In the meantime the school is looking at ways of using current resources in a more efficient way and ensuring that teachers are given the training and support they need to deliver the subject more effectively.

MUSIC

- 121 Pupils' attainment by the age of seven is satisfactory. It is not possible judge attainment for pupils by the age of eleven, because there was too little evidence of their skills during the inspection. This makes comparisons with the last report difficult. However, any progress since then will be at best satisfactory.
- 122 Pupils have satisfactory skills in performing music by the age of seven. Pupils in Year 1 recognise how sounds can be made and changed, and know how use their voices in different ways. Pupils know what sounds percussion instruments make and which would be best to accompany a story. One pupil wanted to use a scraper to represent the brakes

of a big blue jeep, for example. Pupils in Year 2 can sing familiar songs with some accuracy. Although they enjoy singing, they do not sing with gusto. They sometimes lose concentration and this weakens the rhythm of their singing.

- 123 There was very little evidence of the overall musical ability of older pupils. Some benefit from learning to play instruments like the violin, clarinet and saxophone from visiting specialists. At present, though, these pupils are not confident enough to play together or perform in school. There was not enough evidence of pupils' abilities in appraising or composing music.
- 124 The quality of teaching seen was satisfactory. Few teachers have expertise in music. Those who are not confident make reasonable use of the available course work and recorded music to help overcome this. Teaching of the very youngest pupils is good. The good rapport with the pupils and the high expectations of behaviour and commitment produce enthusiastic and responsive pupils. For example, they handle instruments confidently and responsibly. Elsewhere, relationships are also fine but the teaching is less dynamic and focused. Teachers introduce suitable musical influences but do not insist enough on the quality of performance. For example, teachers do not correct pupils enough when they are making errors in their singing. Therefore, pupils tend to consolidate existing skills and do not make good enough progress.
- 125 The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The new course has partly helped teachers to overcome their own uncertainties in music. However, the school has not done more to provide much needed staff training. The co-ordinator is well aware of pupils' progress in music, but there is no whole school impetus to raise attainment. There is little evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and, as a result, the school has no immediate plans to make needed improvements. There is some opportunity for pupils to perform as in, for example, end of term productions, but not much on a regular basis, as in assemblies. Resources are barely satisfactory. The portable stereo system does not give very good quality sound reproduction. In addition, the percussion instruments are limited in range and not in good condition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 126 Pupils' attainment is above average throughout the school. This shows a distinct improvement since the last inspection. Although the subject lacks leadership, the teaching is usually good and this motivates the pupils to perform well.
- 127 By the age of seven, pupils have good abilities in games, dance and swimming. They have good hand-eye co-ordination when throwing and catching a ball. They can direct a ball accurately through the air, and bounce balls efficiently to a partner. These skills enable them to play games like rounders with some success, although they are only beginning to understand the rules of the game. In dance, pupils are controlled and expressive in their movements. Even the youngest pupils respond to music sensitively, as when pretending to be a plant growing from a seed and ultimately withering. Pupils are confident swimmers for their age. Virtually all pupils can swim at least 5 metres and several can swim up to 100 metres. One pupil can reach 200 metres.
- 128 By the age of eleven, pupils maintain good levels of attainment. In games like rounders, pupils have a good eye for the ball. They strike the ball cleanly with the bat and, when fielding, often catch crisply. One pupil even caught a ball off a ricochet. They run at pace

to try to score rounders but they are not always alive to the rules of the game for maximum success. Pupils benefit from the school's policy of giving all pupils swimming lessons from Year 3 upwards. Almost all pupils can swim at least 25 metres with many swimming capable of very much further. Approximately three-quarters of the pupils have already achieved their bronze award in the pool. Pupils' skills in athletics are less well developed. Although they put a lot of effort into running, they do not have the technique to sprint effectively. Their throwing skills and long jumping are sound but lack consistency and control. Overall, pupils thoroughly enjoy all activities and their commitment is good.

- 129 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers exude confidence in their own abilities and this motivates the pupils. To provide additional expertise, at least one parent helps with football training and Year 6 games. Teachers are organised in their planning and arranging equipment. This means that lessons can get off to a smooth start and pupils are active for as long as possible. The good rapport between teachers and pupils results in the pupils not only behaving sensibly but being eager to succeed. These expectations pay dividends. The teacher of Year 1 pupils encouraged them to reach high as they moved to music around the hall. As a result, one pupil said she felt like a bird, flying through the air. Teachers encourage and praise pupils often, and this moves the pupils to try harder. Sometimes, though, teachers do not insist on the right technique for running or catching and the lower attaining pupil, in particular, do not then make as fast progress as they might.
- 130 Sport has a high profile in the school curriculum. Pupils have a wide experience of activities within the curriculum, including outdoor pursuits at residential centres. On Wednesday afternoons, most pupils play sport at the same time and this gives a very positive atmosphere. Teachers have gained skills and confidence from recent training. The hall is rather limiting for games but the large field allows for a good range of activities, despite the poor drainage. There is no specific co-ordinator to help develop the subject further, but the head teacher provides clear direction and leadership, among her many other responsibilities. There are some opportunities for sport outside lessons but these are not consistent enough to be an effective provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 131 Religious education is taught well in the school and pupils gain a good level of knowledge and understanding. They learn about religion and are also given opportunities to reflect on their own experiences, meeting the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The subject fits in well with the overall ethos of the school, with its emphasis on respect for others.
- 132 Pupils learn about religions, gaining knowledge of festivals and stories from different faiths and an understanding of what these mean to people. In Key Stage 1 pupils listen to Bible stories and learn about festivals, such as Christmas and Easter. In Key Stage 2 pupils look at religions in greater depth, for example learning about Hinduism and the festival of Diwali. In the Y4/5 class pupils learnt about the Bible as a library containing different genres of writing. They showed a good understanding of how the Bible is organised and how it is used by Christians to help them live their lives.
- 133 Pupils also learn from religion. Year 1 pupils talked about being a good friend and recognising good in others. In the Y2/3 class pupils were faced with moral dilemmas and were encouraged to talk about problems. They showed an understanding that some

questions in life are difficult to answer and demonstrated an awareness that some things are right and some are wrong. In the Y6 class pupils considered what they valued and how different things are precious to different people. This was providing a sound base for understanding values in religions – the idea of ‘sacredness’.

- 134 Teachers are very sensitive in their teaching of the subject and show a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. The Y2/3 teacher challenged pupils’ thinking as she asked them to consider moral codes that underlie decisions they made. The Year 6 teacher shared with the class some of the things she values and this provoked a good level of thoughtful discussion. Pupils are positive in their approach to the subject. They are confident in relationships in the classrooms and are willing to share their thoughts and ideas. They show a respect for others and listen attentively to their teachers and other pupils.