

INSPECTION REPORT

HALLBANKGATE VILLAGE PRIMARY

SCHOOL

Hallbankgate, Brampton

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112417

Headteacher: Mrs S Hatt

Reporting inspector: Mrs K Charlton
1718

Dates of inspection: 21 and 22 January 2002

Inspection number: 196349

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hallbankgate Brampton Cumbria
Postcode:	CA8 2NJ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Shaw
Date of previous inspection:	1 and 2 March 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1718	Kay Charlton	Registered inspector	English History Physical education Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well pupils are taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9649	Jean Smith	Lay inspector		How well does the school work with parents?
30781	Wendy Richardson	Team inspector	Science Art Music Religious Education Special Educational Needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils?
14991	Alan Hardwicke	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Equal Opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hallbankgate Village Primary School is situated in the village of Hallbankgate which is close to Brampton in Cumbria. There are 42 pupils on roll aged between 4 and 11. There is significant variation in the size of each year group ranging from one pupil to ten. The number on roll has increased over the last few years and this trend is continuing so that many of the younger year groups have a greater number of pupils than the older year groups. There are two classes. Class 1 is for children in the Foundation Stage (reception-aged children) and those in Years 1 and 2. Class 2 is for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' attainment on entry into the Reception is very varied depending on the year group but overall children's skills are in line with those expected of four-year-olds. A significant number of pupils have joined the school other than at the usual point of entry, and the attainment of the majority of these pupils was below or well below average as they joined the school. Consequently, in the older year groups there is a higher proportion of pupils with identified educational needs than in the younger age groups. Overall, the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average. None of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Fifteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is broadly in line with the national average.

There are two full-time teachers, including the headteacher, and also a supply teacher who works regularly in the school.. All three staff have been appointed within the last five years. A playgroup and day nursery operate within the school building.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with very good features. The quality of teaching is good and overall pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the time they leave the school virtually all pupils attain the expected standards and many attain above this. The headteacher provides strong and very effective leadership and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and in science, particularly in investigative science.
- The teaching is good.
- Very good teamwork ensures that the school continues to improve.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and relationships are excellent.
- It is a very caring school which promotes pupils' moral, social, cultural and personal development very well.
- Its strong links with parents, the local community and partner institutions are strong.

What could be improved

- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage of their education.
- The way in which information about trends and patterns in pupils' achievements is presented so that it is meaningful to a wider audience.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection was undertaken by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), in March 1999. Since that time the school has made good improvement. The standards attained by pupils and their overall achievements, when they leave the school, are much improved, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The planning of the curriculum has improved. The quality of teaching, including the teaching of pupils with special educational needs, is significantly improved and is now good overall. The only area that was highlighted by HMI where further development is still needed is to improve the provision for reception-aged pupils in the Foundation Stage of learning and this is highlighted by the school as an area for improvement for the coming year.

STANDARDS

The school does not publish its results as the number of pupils in each cohort is less than ten. The following is a summary of the inspection findings.

In 1997, when the school was first inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be in need of 'special measures' because standards were very low and few pupils attained the expected levels. Effective planning is now in place and teachers ensure that the work set matches the age and ability of different groups of pupils. This is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning.

In recent years virtually all pupils have attained the standards expected and many have attained above this. In relation to their attainment on entry these standards mean that pupils have made good progress and achieved well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This represents significant improvement in standards over the last five years.

Taken overall, in the Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress and are on course to attain the nationally expected standards at the end of their year in Reception. Girls and boys settle very well and make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and develop good levels of confidence and maturity. They achieve satisfactorily in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative development, and physical development. They make good progress and achieve well in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world. Reading is also developed well. Although children's progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, more can still be achieved.

In Years 1 and 2, in English, mathematics and science, pupils are making good progress and they achieve well in relation to their previous attainment. Most are on course to attain the standards expected by the end of Year 2 and many attain above this in reading, numeracy and in investigative work in science. Pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry and are attaining standards in line with those expected. Many of the younger pupils in this class are on course to attain standards which are above average by the end of Year 6. The progress made by pupils in Years 3 to 6 is very good. It is noticeable how well pupils with special educational needs who have only joined the school in Class 2 are achieving.

The school has reached the targets which it set in English and mathematics for the year 2001 and has set realistic and challenging targets in these subjects for 2002 and 2003. It has also set similarly realistic and challenging targets for science. The school is well placed to achieve them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very Good. The pupils come into school eagerly and are enthusiastic about their learning. They concentrate very well in lessons and during more formal occasions such as assemblies.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are very well-behaved. They know exactly what is expected of them and develop good levels of responsibility for the management of their own behaviour. Pupils are courteous to each other and adults, offering help when they see the need.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. The relationships in the school are excellent and this is a significant strength of the school.
Attendance	Attendance is in line with the national average. The school makes every effort to encourage good attendance. Pupils arrive punctually and there is no unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Very good

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

Overall, teaching is good and this leads to good learning. Out of twenty-seven lessons observed nine were judged to be very good, fourteen good and four satisfactory. Teaching for the reception-aged children is satisfactory overall; for pupils in Years 1 and 2 it is good, and for pupils in Years 3 to 6 teaching is very good. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the overall quality teaching is good. The teaching of reading is very good.

In the Foundation Stage, staff plan conscientiously and many of the activities are effective in matching the children's levels of understanding. Routines are well-established, relationships are excellent and the children learn happily. There are, however, instances where the pace of learning slows because the children are working for too long in activities which they do not choose for themselves. Also many of the 'play situations' do not fully extend the children's learning since they are set up for the nursery-aged children.

In Years 1 to 6, staff are secure in their knowledge of all the subjects of the National Curriculum. In English and mathematics, specific developments that have taken place to introduce the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have had a positive effect. There is now a very systematic approach to teaching literacy and numeracy through the school and this is working well. In all subjects, detailed planning takes account of the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities and this ensures that pupils are successful in their learning. The very good teaching in Class 2 is characterised by the particularly high expectations which are set for the pupils and to which they respond very well.

Pupils identified as having special educational needs receive particularly good support from teaching and support staff, as well as from outside agencies, and this enables them to achieve well overall. Support is particularly good in Class 2.

Staff effectively challenge the thinking of the most able pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, good. It is satisfactory for reception-aged children and good for Years 1 to 6. The curriculum is enhanced by the very good extra-curricular provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall, good. Pupils are considered to be important members of the school community. They achieve well in relation to their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good and for their spiritual development it is good. There is a strong emphasis on pupils learning what is right and wrong. Pupils show respect for other's feelings and beliefs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school supports pupils very well in their learning. This is a very caring school that gives particularly good attention to ensuring the welfare of all pupils. Assessment procedures are good overall.

There is a strong partnership with parents and they are active partners in their child's education. There are very good links with partner institutions, such as the local secondary school and an initial teacher training college. The school is at the heart of village life and links with the community are excellent. All of these, along with the 'family atmosphere', enhance the quality of learning experiences for pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and key	Very good. The headteacher provides strong and very effective leadership. The very good teamwork between the staff, the governors, the parents and the

staff	friends of the school is ensuring continued improvement in the quality of education.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are fulfilling their role very well. They are very committed to the school and are closely involved in its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There is clarity about the strengths and weaknesses in provision. However, the way information about pupils' achievements is presented makes it difficult for a wide audience to understand.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. There is clear financial planning linked to the school's priorities.

The school is well staffed with teachers and support staff. The accommodation is good overall. Although there are difficulties in providing for physical education the school has overcome these well by making use of the village hall. Resources are generally good. The school has rightly highlighted the need to improve those for the reception-aged children. The school is fully committed to the principles of best value and applies these when making decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed • The interesting range of activities • Their children are making good progress • Their children like school • The teaching is good • They are well informed about how their child is getting on • They feel comfortable approaching the school • The school helps pupils become mature • Pupils behave well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work their children do at home • The school's expectation of children working hard • The close working relationship with themselves

The parents hold this school in very high regard and the team agrees with their very positive views. Virtually no concerns were raised. The amount of homework pupils are expected to do is similar to that found in other primary schools. The school does expect pupils to work hard and there is a very good working relationship with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school does not publish its results as the number of pupils in each year group is less than ten. The small number of pupils in each year group, sometimes as low as one pupil, means that there are significant variations in the attainment of pupils on entry to the school. Taken overall, however, pupils' skills are generally in line with those expected of children of this age. A significant number of pupils have joined the school after the usual point of entry and the majority of these have entered the school attaining standards below or well below those expected for their age. Consequently, a higher proportion of older pupils have identified educational needs than is found in the younger year groups.
2. By the time pupils leave the school, they make good progress overall and achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In recent years virtually all pupils have attained the standards expected and many have attained above this. All staff are committed to improving standards and this has had a very positive effect pupils' learning.
3. Taken overall, in the Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress and are on course to attain the nationally expected standards at the end of their year in Reception. Children's' progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but more can still be achieved. This relates to the fact that provision for reception-aged children is not as good as in other parts of the school and improvements are needed.
4. In Years 1 and 2, in English, mathematics and science, pupils are making good progress and they achieve well in relation to their previous attainment. Most are on course to attain the standards expected by the end of Year 2 and many to attain above this in reading, numeracy and in investigative work in science. Pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry and are attaining standards in line with those expected. Many of the younger pupils in Class 2 are well on course to attain above average standards by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Pupils generally make very good progress in Years 3 to 6.
5. Overall, pupils make good gains in speaking and listening through the school. Pupils of all ages, including those in the Foundation Stage, effectively learn to speak and listen in both small group and whole class situations. They listen well in lessons and in all year groups contribute their ideas with confidence. In Class 2, there is careful attention given to the development of a wide vocabulary and most pupils can describe their knowledge of a subject very well. They express their opinions and ideas openly and take notice of others' points of view. They explain clearly the features that contribute to successful public speaking and demonstrated these skills effectively at the school's recent Christingle service.
6. The school places a high emphasis on teaching reading and overall pupils make very good progress. In the Foundation Stage, children develop good understanding about the ways in which to approach a book and the sounds and shapes of the letters of the alphabet. They effectively learn to recognise sounds within words. They listen to stories attentively. By the end of Year 2, most read simple text accurately and with understanding. They understand how books are organised, and they make good use of letter sounds and the pictures in the book to help them read new words. A significant number of pupils read fluently and with expression. By the end of Year 6, pupils show good levels of comprehension and are developing clear ideas about their favourite authors. They indicate that they like reading stories and can use a library effectively to find information from books. They have show appreciation of the underlying ideas in the text and understanding of subtleties, for example, when explaining why something is humorous to one person but not to another. Throughout the school, encouraged by staff who themselves show appreciation of the importance of literature, pupils develop a sense of enjoyment in reading.
7. Overall, writing is developed well by the time pupils leave the school. The school has highlighted writing as a key priority within the school improvement plan for the current year and improvements are taking place. Involvement in a local writing development project is having a very positive effect in securing this. Children in the Foundation Stage learn to write using a consistent letter formation. They suitably learn to

write their names and simple sentences, for example about things they have done in the recent past. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop good understanding about characters within stories and they learn to appreciate the need to have a clear 'beginning' and 'end' when writing a story. They effectively learn about different forms of writing and they develop suitable understanding of spelling and punctuation. Handwriting is satisfactory overall. The school is appropriately focussing on the need to further improve pupils' use of a wider vocabulary, and their spelling and use of a fluent joined script as next steps in ensuring improvement for pupils in Year 2. In Class 2, pupils make very good progress in writing. They learn to write in a wide range of different forms, showing good understanding of differences, for example between play scripts and narrative writing. Pupils fully appreciate the importance of planning out their work in advance and demonstrated this well when using a 'story tree' planner to create some particularly good work about 'The Whistling Princess'. Pupils take care with their work. They present it well for the intended audience showing suitable attention to spelling. Portfolios of work show examples of pupils using vocabulary in imaginative ways, often with an interesting turn of phrase like the queen suggesting to the princess that 'Madam might like to be quiet for once!'

8. Overall, pupils make good progress in mathematics. They achieve particularly well in numeracy where key developments have taken place in recent years. In the Foundation Stage many children learn to count to ten and beyond and are able to work out the answers to questions which require them to use simple mathematical operations, such as addition and subtraction. They know the names of basic two-dimensional shapes. By the end of Year 2, most pupils develop a good level of understanding of numeracy, solving problems with larger numbers, for example when working with money. They can recognise number patterns and produce ones of their own. Pupils acquire a sound base of skills in using shape, measures and data handling. By the end of Year 6, pupils can solve number problems using a variety of mental methods. They add, subtract, multiply and divide both in their heads and on paper and can use calculators effectively to multiply large numbers and check their answers. They show good understanding of 'long division'. Throughout the school, with the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, pupils are showing confidence in being able to explain the ways in which they have arrived at their answer.
9. In science, pupils make good progress overall. They make very good progress in investigative work. Throughout the school, they develop clear understanding of all the areas expected. They very effectively develop their observational skills and their ideas about 'fair testing' since there are many opportunities for them to work practically and note their findings. As they move through the school they are developing a clear understanding about the use of number, tables, bar charts and graphs to present their results and they are able to give reasoned explanations for patterns in data. Pupils make suitable use of information and communication technology as part of science lessons. They are keen to talk about their work in science and indicate that they enjoy the types of activities they do in their lessons. For example, pupils indicate that it was interesting to test different materials and learn about the properties of solids, liquids and gases.
10. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards in information and communication technology (ICT) which are broadly in line with those expected. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain average standards in most aspects of the subject but, in common with many schools, few pupils attain the higher levels in developing their ideas about control technology. Over time, pupils make satisfactory progress. In lessons, they now make good progress and are achieving well. The school was one of the later schools to benefit from the National Grid for Learning (NGFL) grant. In recent times resources for information and communication technology have been much improved and pupils are now making good progress using this equipment. The further development of ICT is a focus in the current year's improvement plan.
11. Overall, in design and technology, history, geography, art, music and physical education, pupils attain what is expected for their age by Years 2 and 6. Pupils generally make good progress and achieve well. There are noticeable strengths in most of these areas. For example, in design and technology pupils develop good understanding of the planning process, and in history and geography they develop particularly good appreciation of the research skills associated with these subjects. In art, pupils show good understanding of some of the techniques used by different artists, particularly the Impressionists. In music, pupils show good understanding of composition, and in physical education they achieve very well in swimming and attain standards above those expected for their age.

12. In religious education (RE) pupils attain standards that are in line with those set out in the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus. They gain good understanding of different religions.
13. Boys and girls achieve equally well in all subjects.
14. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the school and overall achieve well. Those who have joined the school at a later point than is usual achieve very well, with particularly noticeable improvements in Class 2.
15. The last inspection, in 1999, highlighted the need to further improve standards. There has been good improvement since that time in the standards attained by the pupils of all abilities, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils are now achieving well in Years 1 to 6 but more can still be achieved by the children in the Foundation Stage.
16. The school has met the targets which it set in English and mathematics for the year 2001 and has set realistic and challenging targets in these subjects for 2002 and 2003. It has also set similarly realistic and challenging targets for science. The school is well placed to meet them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good. The youngest children settle into school very well and, along with pupils of all ages, clearly enjoy school. Each day some pupils arrive early for breakfast club, which is calm and ordered. All pupils are eager to start their lessons and quickly and quietly get on with their work. Pupils move around their classrooms and school in a calm and confident manner from reception-age onwards. This confidence is evident in learning, where they are happy to attempt tasks without fear of making mistakes. They listen well and are eager to be involved in answering questions about their work. They are happy to explain their work to visitors and discuss what they are doing. The attractive learning environment and the 'family' atmosphere, which is a strong feature of the school, support pupils and enable them to approach their learning feeling safe and secure. The very good provision made available to pupils, in breakfast club, booster classes, after school club, extra activities and residential visits, helps to sustain the enthusiasm they have for the school, and contributes effectively to their personal development. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities. These pupils persevere with work, even if they find it difficult, because of the supportive and encouraging atmosphere.
18. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good indeed. All adults working with them have high expectations, well supported by the school's code of behaviour, and this plays a significant part in encouraging pupils to behave well. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them and they are courteous to each other and adults, offering help when they see the need. During outside breaks, older pupils and younger pupils play well together, sharing games and equipment in a happy atmosphere. Pupils with identified behavioural needs are making very good progress in learning to control their behaviour. These pupils behave well and show increasingly positive attitudes to their work and increasing levels of concentration, as they get older. They try hard and develop good learning habits, a sense of determination and a positive self-image. There was no evidence of inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying, during the inspection and parents are clearly pleased with the strong stand taken by the school on these matters. No pupils have been excluded from the school during the last academic year.
19. Pupils' personal development is very good. Regular 'circle time', that is a time when pupils sit in a circle for whole class discussions, effectively encourages qualities, such as tolerance and self-respect. The weekly celebration assemblies mark notable achievements and encourage pupils' self-esteem. The school council is made up of seven representatives, one from each year group and these change half termly. This gives many pupils the opportunity to discuss issues concerning them such as playground rules. They meet without an adult present and feel free to express their opinions and ideas. Pupils in Class 2 are encouraged to take responsibilities for the day-to-day life of the school, for example by organising the music and resources for assembly. At lunchtime they put out folding tables and benches, collect a trolley, set tables and put out any cold food. This is done quickly amidst happy, sociable chatter and helps to reinforce the family setting of the meal. All pupils respond quickly to the 'waiting signal' given by the cook-supervisor or the headteacher who then lead the start of the meal with a prayer.

20. Relationships within the school are excellent. Teachers and other adults have developed outstanding rapport with pupils. In response, pupils support one another and co-operate very well. For example in a Class 2 history lesson, pupils worked in small groups discussing important facts about the characters of Henry V111's wives. Pupils have a very good appreciation of the impact of their behaviour on others and are tolerant of other people's feelings and values.
21. Attendance at the school during the last reporting year 2000/1 was in line with the national average. During the same reporting year there was no unauthorised absence. The school makes every effort to encourage good attendance.
22. Since the last inspection in 1999 the standards of behaviour and the very positive attitudes of pupils have been maintained. The very good relationships noted between adults and pupils have improved even further. This enables pupils to maximise their learning opportunities.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. Overall, teaching is good and this leads to good learning. Out of twenty-seven lessons observed, nine were judged to be very good, fourteen good and four satisfactory. For pupils in Years 1 and 2, teaching is good, and for pupils in Years 3 to 6 it is very good. For reception-aged children teaching is satisfactory. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science the overall quality teaching is good. Throughout the school, staff work very well as a team with support staff making a significant contribution to pupils' learning. There has been good improvement in teaching since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be only satisfactory overall.
24. In the Foundation Stage, staff plan conscientiously taking suitable account of the school's whole-school planning framework. A good range of topics is undertaken, which effectively broadens children's understanding of the world about them. All adults, including support staff, are clear about the purposes of the activities and their roles and responsibilities and they question the children effectively. Careful account is taken of individual children's needs and many of the activities match the children's levels of understanding. There are excellent relationships and the children's behaviour is managed very well. Routines are established and these are well known so that the children feel safe and secure. However, many of the 'play situations' do not fully extend the children's learning since they are set up for the nursery-aged children. Also, there are occasions where time is not used to advantage. For example, either the first part of the lesson is too long for children of this age or the children work for too long on activities which are directed by an adult. In both of these situations the pace of learning slows since the children begin to lose concentration.
25. In Years 1 to 6, staff are secure in their knowledge of all the subjects of the National Curriculum. There have been clear improvements in the knowledge and understanding of staff since the time of the last inspection, when this was raised as a key issue, particularly in relation to history, geography and art. Also in English and mathematics, specific developments have taken place to introduce the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. There is now a very systematic approach to teaching literacy and numeracy through the school and this is working well. In all subjects, planning is detailed and ensures that the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities are taken into account. This is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning.
26. Lessons are well organised and start promptly. Staff use the beginnings of lessons very well to ensure that pupils are clear about the overall purpose of the lesson; for example they often write the learning objectives on the board and draw the pupils' attention to these. This part of the lesson usually consists of a question and answer time with the whole class involved. At this stage staff present information clearly and question the pupils so that the pupils make clear gains in their knowledge and understanding. This is particularly effective in some of the introductory sessions in Class 2 where pupils' thinking is very successfully extended because of the highly quality of the questioning and the pace of this part of the lesson. In both classes, activities follow which are well matched to the pupils' understanding in the subject. These are carefully thought through so that they interest and motivate the pupils, as happened when pupils in Class 1 were involved in a 'bear game' to reinforce learning in mathematics. There is generally a high ratio of staff to work with the pupils during these activities and in the main a good and

often very good pace of learning is maintained. In Class 2, the teacher sets a very high expectation of pupils and they respond to this in a very positive way; they work hard and show very good gains in learning. Occasionally, in Class 1, because there is not sufficient clarity about the expected quality of the work for those pupils who are not working under the direct supervision of the teacher, they do not give of their very best. Towards the end of lessons in both classes, there is usually a plenary session and this is used well to reinforce learning and set targets for future improvement.

27. In both classes staff have excellent relationships with the pupils. They encourage a sense of fun and enjoyment in learning and the pupils respond to this in a very mature way. Pupils' behaviour is managed very well. A small number of the pupils, who have identified behavioural difficulties, are making significant progress in learning how to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
28. Staff mark the pupils' work regularly and make helpful comments, often praising their efforts. The system used in Class 2 for marking English work is especially helpful in making sure the pupils know what they need to do to improve. Staff make effective use of resources to support children's learning and visits out of the school are also used very well to stimulate learning.
29. Different types of homework, such as reading and learning of spellings and tables, are given and these effectively support the pupils' learning. The way the homework is organised also helps the pupils develop a good sense of responsibility for their own learning, since they can make choices about how much they will do, for example as they work their way through the different lists of spellings which are available. The school's homework policy meets the expectation set out in the national guidelines. Pupils asked were clear about the policy and indicated that work is set in line with it.
30. The most able pupils are well supported in their learning and, particularly in Class 2, are challenged to attain standards above those normally expected for their age.
31. Pupils identified as having special educational needs receive particularly good quality support from teaching and support staff as well as from outside agencies, and this enables them to achieve well in their learning. This work is organised efficiently and effectively so that all adults work with a common purpose to ensure these children meet their individual targets. This is a significant improvement from the time of the last inspection, when this aspect of the school's work received adverse criticism.

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

32. The school's curriculum is good overall. It is broad and balanced, and meets all statutory requirements. Provision for religious education follows the Cumbria Agreed syllabus. The previous inspection highlighted the need to continue to develop the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6, with an increased focus on skills, knowledge and understanding for each subject. There has been good progress in this area, and the focus on skills in subjects, such as information and communication technology, design and technology, history and geography, is now clearly evident. Policies are in place for all subjects, and lessons are planned using the guidelines contained in the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Staff are very skilled in meeting the needs of the wide range of ages and abilities represented in their classes. Good assessment procedures, small group sizes and well-directed support all ensure that each pupil is given work which suitably demanding.
33. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Provision is made for all six areas of learning but there is not always sufficient challenge in the opportunities given. Satisfactory improvement has taken place since the last inspection in so far as there is now better continuity established with the nursery. However, there is still room for further improvement in this area particularly by ensuring that 'play situations' in the reception class provide clear extension from those organised in the nursery.
34. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is good. It is planned through many areas of the curriculum, such as science and physical education lessons, but is also very well supported through the day-to-day implementation of the school's aims. Pupils are encouraged to consider the feelings of others, and to work together well and share. The school's 'family' ethos is successful in valuing all its members, adults and children alike, and this leads to tangible benefits in the personal and

social development of pupils. Health education is dealt with as part of a comprehensive Personal Social and Health Education policy, which includes health, relationships and drugs awareness. All these aspects are dealt with sensitively, and at appropriate stages in pupils' development.

35. The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good. The school has adapted the national strategies to meet the needs of a small school and this is working well. Classroom assistants are used well during literacy and numeracy sessions and they make a particularly valuable contribution to this work.
36. Much of the school's curriculum is provided through the medium of cross-curricular topics. These are well planned on a rolling programme which ensures continuity for the different age-groups within a mixed-age class. The teachers meet regularly to update plans for these topics, and the focus on a particular subject changes appropriately from term to term to ensure curriculum balance. Since the last inspection there has been greater emphasis on developing skills, and ensuring that opportunities are provided to practise skills in new situations.
37. The school's curriculum is enriched by the very good range of extra-curricular activities which it provides. There are clubs for football, netball, and computers, as well as breakfast and after school clubs. Other sporting clubs are run according to the season. Throughout the year the school runs a series of concerts and performances which make much appreciated contributions to the life of the village. At the time of the inspection, pupils had just taken part in a Christingle service at the village church. Residential visits, such as that recently undertaken to North Wales, are also a valuable addition to the school's curriculum. Visits of all kinds, from walks around the village for Class 1 pupils, to visits to museums in Carlisle and to local castles and other historical sites, all give further enrichment to the school's basic curriculum.
38. Links with local schools and partner institutions are very good. The school is part of the local consortium of small schools, which gives opportunities for sharing ideas and activities, through joint meetings and activities for both pupils and staff. There are strong links with the local secondary school, with visits from staff and by Year 6 pupils prior to transfer. The school also has strong links with the local initial teacher training institution. This has not only enriched the life of the school through the regular presence of students on teaching practice and observation, but also through professional development activities provided by academic staff. The school and college work very well in partnership, and this relationship provides benefits to all involved.
39. Links with the community are excellent. The school is at the heart of village life, and benefits from the wide variety of skills and experience which are represented in the community. The school organises events, such as the Torchlight Parade which has become an important annual event in the village. Concerts and other performances are put on in the village hall. There are very close links to the church and pupils join in services. A variety of local people with particular skills come to the school regularly to help. This significant contribution is exemplified well in the way in which school's grounds have been developed. Not only do they form an attractive setting for the school but also a very good resource for learning. Parents and friends of the school regularly help in a variety of other ways, such as accompanying the pupils on residential visits. The school's new Rainbow Room has also benefited from the skills of a variety of local people, to provide the school with much-needed extra space. The presence of the local playgroup and nursery in the school enhances the school's close link to its community.
40. The school ensures that all aspects of its life are fully inclusive and that all pupils have equality of opportunity. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated into all activities, and the everyday life of the school gives practical expression to the caring philosophy it advocates in its aims. The school has an Equal Opportunities Policy, which gives commitment to equal opportunities in all aspects of the school's life. In the main, this is translated very well into practice although the provision for reception-aged pupils is not as good as other that which is made for Years 1 to 6.
41. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. It is very good for their moral, social and cultural development, and for pupils' spiritual development is good. The school has maintained the overall quality noted in the last inspection. There have been clear improvements in the provision for pupils' cultural development.

42. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well. School assemblies meet statutory requirements, and provide good opportunities to reflect on issues raised. Prayers are said on these occasions as well as at other times during the school day, and the pupils show a good sense of reverence at these times. Opportunities are also taken in lessons for pupils to experience a sense of wonder at the world around them. In an art lesson, for example, Class 2 pupils were amazed by the rich clothes worn by Tudor kings and queens. They discussed what they could see in the portraits, and made perceptive comments. Work in art, design and technology, science and music, also gives pupils opportunities for reflection and for them to consider their 'inner- feelings'.
43. Moral development is very effectively promoted. Parents are pleased with the way the school helps their children become mature and responsible. The whole ethos of the school, and the 'family' atmosphere which it fosters, ensure that consideration is always given to the moral issues of consideration for the feelings of others and a sense of individual worth and fair play. Pupils are clearly taught to distinguish right from wrong. Teachers and other adults set high expectations, and are very good role models. They make clear through their own actions what is expected of the pupils, and pupils readily accept this code. Health education lessons give pupils appropriate opportunities to discuss dilemmas which they may encounter as they get older. Through these they develop their own attitudes towards aspects of life such as drug misuse and smoking.
44. Pupils' social development is also very well promoted. The quality of relationships observed during the inspection was a significant strength. Mutual respect is very well developed so that relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils are very good. Pupils are given regular opportunities to work in pairs and small groups, and they learn to work collaboratively and share their skills for the benefit of everyone. All pupils are aware of those in the school who have specific special educational needs, and routinely include them in all activities, both during lessons and in the general life of the school. School visits and residential trips also provide valuable opportunities for living and working together, and for developing social skills.
45. Cultural development is also very well promoted. Aspects of different subjects provide opportunities to appreciate other cultures, as when art lessons introduce the work of famous artists from around the world. Music lessons also include music from a variety of cultures, and music is used well when pupils enter and leave assemblies. The school's promotion of healthy eating also gives insights into other cultures, for instance when pupils were given Turkish meals cooked by a parent, and when a haggis was 'piped in'. Pupils are given a very good appreciation of their own cultural heritage, for instance by working with a local artist to produce a mural for the local Cumberland hospital, by making a Millennium Mural of hand-prints for the new Rainbow Room and by making willow baskets using traditional methods. A 'Tudor musician' is also visiting the school as part of the current history topic. In Class 2, the headteacher makes helpful reference to her own education in France and also introduces some spoken French into lessons, and this also helps to broaden pupils' understanding of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. The school provides a very good, supportive 'family' environment where the staff know individual pupils very well. This is particularly important for the youngest children, who quickly gain independence in the school environment. Throughout the school all adults work closely together to ensure that pupils are happy and secure and feel valued as individuals. The care which pupils take of each other also helps to make the school a successful and happy community. Parents stress how much they value the high quality of individual care and attention their children receive.
47. The school's procedures and arrangements for ensuring the welfare and safety of its pupils are very good. The school has good health and safety procedures and governors undertake regular risk assessment of the premises. Several staff have first aid qualifications and there are good procedures in place for dealing with playground accidents. The school appropriately follows Local Education Authority guidance on child protection and the teaching staff are well qualified in this aspect. There are good supportive links with external agencies. The school has an effective healthy eating policy. The school cook is an extremely enthusiastic and effective promoter of healthy eating. Pupils' good manners and their caring attitudes to each other, as well as good lunchtime and playground supervision, help to make the midday break a very pleasant and civilised part of the day.

48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. Effective behaviour management around the school, in the playground and during the lunchtime meal ensures that pupils meet the school's high expectations. There is consistent implementation of strategies by all adults throughout the school with effective use of the agreed rewards and sanctions. The school makes it clear to everyone that bullying is unacceptable and pupils understand they can approach their headteacher or class teacher if they have any concerns.
49. The school monitors attendance well and contacts parents immediately in the few instances when they fail to notify the school of their child's absence. There is a positive approach to ensuring pupils attend school.
50. Procedures for supporting and monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. The way in which the school supports pupils' personal development is one of its great strengths. Many aspects of the school's work contribute, such as the excellent relationships, the way in which pupils are valued and trusted and the very good guidance provided in assemblies, circle time and through personal and social education. Pupils' personal development is monitored carefully. Each pupil has a record of achievement, which includes significant pieces of work and in which progress towards agreed targets is noted. There are very close links between the school and the Opengate Nursery, based in the school premises, and also very good links and transfer arrangements with the local secondary school. Parents value these transition arrangements which ensure smooth transfer for their children from one stage of education to the next. They also appreciate the arrangements that the school makes for pupils both before and after school.
51. All requirements for pupils with special educational needs are met. There are good procedures for identifying and assessing the special needs of pupils, and information is used very well to match the curriculum to the pupils' needs by planning learning in manageable small steps or by providing additional support. Teachers and support staff work closely together to monitor and record pupils' progress towards their targets, and good use is made of specialist support when necessary.
52. The school has continued to develop its assessment procedures since the last inspection and overall these are good. The staff have appropriately developed portfolios of assessed work. The process of collecting this information has provided a valuable opportunity for them to work together using the National Curriculum level descriptors and further develop their understanding of the assessment criteria. This has played an important part in ensuring that standards which pupils attain have improved.
53. The school makes good use of information from national and other tests to monitor individual pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, and to identify those pupils who may not be achieving as well as they should. This information is used well to help pupils' improve their progress and to target groups for extra support, for example by giving additional support in literacy. Other assessments, for example of spelling and tables, are undertaken and these also help teachers to 'track' progress of pupils through the school. This assessment information has been used effectively by the staff and governors to aid whole-school planning, but it is not presented in a way that makes it easy for a wider audience to understand. Currently, it is not easy to identify patterns and trends in pupils' achievements over time, especially since the small size of the cohorts of pupils makes comparisons difficult. More effective use of information and communication technology is needed to be able to present this data in a meaningful way.
54. The assessment procedures for those children in the Foundation Stage have improved since the last inspection but they are still not sufficiently well developed. A very useful baseline assessment is undertaken and some attention is paid to recording the children's progress against the 'stepping stones' which lead to the outcomes expected for children as they enter Year 1. However, further clarity is still needed to fully track children's progress through the reception year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Parents hold the school in very high regard. The parents' meeting and questionnaire both confirm parents' enthusiastic support for the school. There is exceptionally high confidence in the school's leadership and management. Parents are very pleased with the good progress their children make, the good teaching and the good range of activities provided outside class. Parents are also very positive

about the way the school promotes good manners, tolerance and responsibility and helps their children to grow in maturity and confidence.

56. The school has a very good partnership with parents. Parents are made very welcome in the school and they value the approachability of teachers and the way in which the school responds to any concerns they have. The school keeps parents very well informed. Parents receive a good detailed prospectus, and regular newsletters keep them informed about school events, visits, after school clubs and dates to be remembered. A governor ensures that school news items are well covered in the local paper. In the rare instance when parents do not feel the school keeps them sufficiently well informed, this is usually due to the inherent problems of the “pupil post”. The school does its best to ensure that information reaches parents, for example by providing all parents with folders for newsletters and reminding them to check their children’s bags.
57. Annual reports on pupils’ progress are detailed and informative and based on teachers’ very good knowledge of pupils. The new report format is very effective; it gives parents a good picture of their children’s strengths and areas for improvement in all subjects. The many perceptive and helpful comments make it clear to parents what their children need to do to improve their attainment. Parents value the termly parents’ evenings held to discuss their children’s progress and targets.
58. Parents have a positive impact on the work of the school. The Friends of Hallbankgate School provide valuable support. The interesting and fun events they organise not only provide useful funds for the school but help to bring school and community closer together, for example the annual torchlight procession is enjoyed by children and community alike. Parents support their children’s work at home by hearing their younger children read regularly and by supporting other homework. The school assists parents to support their children by providing a clear and helpful homework agreement policy and also a useful leaflet about reading. Parents express satisfaction with the school’s homework arrangements. Parents, including parent governors, provide good help to the school in many ways, particularly through their help with trips, transport and sports coaching.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The headteacher provides strong and very effective leadership which gives clear educational direction to the work of the school. Very good teamwork between the staff, the governors, the parents and the friends of the school is ensuring continued improvement in the quality of education and the standards attained.
60. Since the last inspection, policy and practice have continued to improve and particular initiatives, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, have been implemented successfully. Thorough planning of the curriculum now ensures a systematic development of pupils’ knowledge, skills and understanding in each subject and that the wide range of pupils’ needs in each class is effectively met. The school’s performance is being monitored well by the headteacher and governors. Through a range of monitoring strategies, they are clear about the strengths and weaknesses in the overall provision in order to ensure continuing improvement. In general, there is effective use of data relating to pupils’ attainment to track the progress of pupils’ through the school. However, the way this information is presented makes it difficult for the wider audience to fully appreciate the patterns and trends in pupils’ achievements over time. This is particularly important in a small school where information about the standards attained by individual cohorts can be misleading. The school improvement plan has clarity of purpose; gives a clear focus to raising standards further, and is well matched to the school’s needs. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and achieve their best. Everyone in the school has worked hard to improve provision for pupils in Years 1 to 6. The school has appropriately highlighted the development of the provision for the reception children as a priority for the coming year.
61. Governors are fulfilling their role very well. They are very committed to the school and have given freely of their time to help bring about improvements since the inspection carried out in 1999, and also since the 1997 Ofsted inspection which placed the school in ‘special measures’. They are closely involved in the life of the school and ensure that all their statutory duties are fulfilled. Meetings and procedures are effective and governors keep up-to-date so that they are knowledgeable about current requirements for schools. In relation to financial matters, they are very well informed about the budget and make clear

decisions which take account of projected outcomes and whole school priorities. For example, when the literacy and numeracy strategies were introduced, there was targeted spending on resources in these areas. The governors have good systems to check on the school's strengths and weaknesses in terms of the standards the pupils achieve and the quality of teaching and children's learning. As well as checking on the progress of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs, they carry out a regular programme of classroom observations. In this way they are able to make very informed decisions. They are very clear about the need to focus on the reception-aged pupils as a key priority for future development.

62. The aims, values and policies of the school are reflected very well in its work. There is a strong belief that pupils of all abilities can achieve well, and a particular commitment to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are fully challenged and achieve of their best, and this is evident in practice. The school fully meets the requirements for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are valued members of the school community and very well integrated into all activities. Effective support is provided to ensure that they make good and often very good progress towards the targets set out in their individual education plans.
63. There is clear financial planning and the school makes effective use of all of its available resources, including the library. Spending decisions are linked closely to educational priorities and the school is fully committed to the principles of 'best value'. Overall the school is well-resourced, although resources for the reception-aged children are only satisfactory. The high carry forward is appropriately allocated to cover the cost of recent improvements in the accommodation, as well as to provide more resources for the expected rise in pupil numbers coming into reception in the forthcoming year. Specific grants, such as the standards fund, are used effectively. The school works to the principles of best value; for example, comparisons are made with other schools in terms of spending and a range of different tenders is considered before major decisions are made. There is good financial control and administration and the recommendations of the last auditor's report have been acted upon appropriately. Effective use is made of technology both in class and to support the overall management of the school.
64. The school is well staffed. The number, qualifications and experience of the staff effectively match the demands of the curriculum and they are deployed well. The arrangements for the professional development of staff are very good. All staff, including support staff, undertake a significant amount of training and this has a very positive impact on their practice. The school benefits very well from links with other local schools, for example through working on 'The Writing Development Project', and also from its very good links with an initial teacher training college.
65. Significant improvements have been achieved in terms of the accommodation and it is now good overall. There are difficulties in providing facilities for physical education but the school has overcome these well and pupils in both classes have regular sessions when they use the local village hall. Also the physical education programme is enhanced by the provision of swimming for pupils of all ages. The school is clean and cared for well. The garden areas are exceptionally well looked after and significantly enhance the appearance of the school as well as providing very good educational opportunities. There is suitable area for outdoor play and, in the warmer weather, there are good-sized grassed areas where the pupils can play. The outdoor area for children in the nursery has been significantly enhanced in recent years.
66. Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The standards attained by pupils and their overall achievements, as they leave the school, are much improved, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The planning of the curriculum has improved. The quality of teaching, including the teaching of pupils with special educational needs, is significantly improved. However, the main area identified by HMI where further development is still needed is to improve the provision for reception-aged pupils in the Foundation Stage of learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The numbers in brackets after each key issue indicate the paragraphs in which the weaknesses are discussed.

To further improve the standards pupils achieve and the overall quality of education the headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. Improve the teaching and overall provision for the children in the Foundation Stage by:
 - increasing the challenge in those ‘play’ activities which are currently set up for nursery-aged children;
 - ensuring that adult-led activities do not go on too long and there are suitable opportunities for children to make choices about the tasks they undertake;
 - improving the assessment procedures to track children’s progress;
 - improving the resources for the reception-aged children.

(3,24,33,40,54,60,63,66,67-78)

2. Ensure that the information about pupils’ achievements is presented in a way which makes it easy for a wider audience to understand, particularly by making use of ICT to identify patterns and trends in this data over time.

(60,53)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	14	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0	35	50	15	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	42
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	21

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	156987
Total expenditure	137861
Expenditure per pupil	3447
Balance brought forward from previous year	1505
Balance carried forward to next year	20631

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 38.1

Number of questionnaires sent out	42
Number of questionnaires returned	16

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	31	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	75	25	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	38	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	38	0	6	6
The teaching is good.	69	31	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	38	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	38	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	31	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	38	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	100	0	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	38	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	81	19	0	0	0

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

67. Provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is made in the mixed Reception and Years 1 and 2 class. Children are admitted to the class at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five years old.
68. Children's attainment on entry to the school is very varied but overall their skills are in line with those expected of four-year-olds. A few children have limited personal and social, language and literacy and mathematical skills but equally a few have well-developed skills in these areas.
69. In Reception the children settle very well and quickly gain in confidence. Taken overall, they make satisfactory progress and are on course to attain the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory but they can still achieve more.
70. Since the last inspection satisfactory improvement has taken place. Much improved links between the work undertaken in Reception and the work of the day nursery, which operates each afternoon in the school premises, ensure that there is a smooth transition for children into Reception. The reception-aged children now use the nursery's facilities for part of each morning and this also has helped to establish more coherence in the provision for the Foundation Stage. Assessment procedures have improved but they still have not developed far enough. A very useful assessment is undertaken as the children enter the reception class and some attention is paid to recording the children's progress against the 'stepping stones', which are used nationally as a guide to gauge children's attainment and progress. However, the present method does not present a sufficiently comprehensive picture. Overall, further improvement is still needed in the Foundation Stage.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

71. Teaching is very good and children achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development. They often exceed the expected outcomes by the time they enter Year 1. The children's attitudes to their learning are very good; they are keen to come to school and respond well to adults and each other. The staff very effectively encourage the children to feel at ease in their surroundings and this enables the children to contribute their ideas and express their feelings openly. For example, they happily tell their news and talk about what makes them happy and sad. The staff work very well as a team. They provide good role models for the children to follow and teach the children to be very caring and considerate towards one another. Relationships are excellent and children behave very well. Staff speak to children very calmly, making consistent use of the school's behaviour policy. This is very effective and children learn about what is right and what is wrong. The children learn sensitivity, for example, in learning how to care for plants and animals. They wait patiently in order to take turns to use equipment and they show respect for each other and resources. In the main, they persevere well, for example when reading, but occasionally they lose concentration when they are either in the whole-class situation or involved in adult-initiated tasks for too long. Children co-operate well in groups and are taught very good manners and social skills. They effectively learn about different cultural and religious events, such as Harvest Festival, and learn respect for those of different backgrounds from themselves. The children are taught prayers, such as the grace said before meals, and they join in with them reverently. They make good gains in personal independence. For example, they learn to wash their hands, go to the toilet and dress and undress for themselves. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to make choices about the activities they undertake and the resources which they use.

Communication, Language and Literacy

72. Teaching is satisfactory overall and mirrors the quality of children's learning. Children's achievements are satisfactory and most are on course to attain the early learning goals. However, they can achieve more, particularly in early writing.

73. Children learn to communicate with others satisfactorily. They enjoy sharing their experiences and also participating in role-play. For example, when playing in the Tudor kitchen they use their imagination and make up their own stories. However, much of the learning in the role-play area is not sufficiently structured to fully extend the thinking of children of this age. The children listen attentively to well-told stories such as 'The Bear', and enjoy whole-class story time, using 'Big Books' and answering questions well. Strong emphasis is placed on learning to read. Staff see this as a high priority and give a lot of individual attention to ensure that children's skills are built up in a systematic way. Staff work well with parents to help develop the children's skills in early reading. All children enjoy looking at books and sharing them in whole-group situations as well as on an individual basis. Most develop a good knowledge of the sounds and letters of the alphabet. They effectively read simple text, pick out familiar words, follow the story and make a good attempt to work out new words for themselves. Most make good use of the pictures in the story to help them to predict what might come next. Children develop writing satisfactorily. They learn to write with suitable letter formation and to write simple sentences, for example about things they like doing. They show good understanding of initial letter sounds but are less clear about using their phonic knowledge to write sounds within and at the end of words, in order to write their own words. Generally, children have too few opportunities to extend their writing through play situations. Taken overall, staff have implemented the National Literacy Strategy taking reasonable account of the reception-aged children. However, there are occasions where the children begin to lose concentration either because the first part of the lesson is too long for children of this age or because during the middle part of the lesson they are working too long on adult-directed activities. At other times the children are not challenged enough by 'play' activities which are aimed at the nursery-aged children.

Mathematical Learning

74. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Children make satisfactory progress but more can still be achieved. The children respond well to the initial stages of lessons, for example when singing the rhyme, 'Sing-a-song of Sixpence' as part of a session about coin recognition. However, sometimes the introduction is too long for these younger children. Regular practice in counting numbers both forwards and backwards occurs as part of everyday events, such as when they line up for lunch. This has enabled the children to gain confidence quickly in using numbers from one to ten, with a significant number of children who can recognise and use numbers beyond this. The children learn about simple mathematical operations, such as early addition and subtraction, and generally their skills in calculation are in line with those expected. Early work on shape, space and measure is undertaken and the children know the basic shapes and can compare the sizes of different things, for example when they measure the height of each other. Overall, however, there are too few opportunities to extend children's learning through well-structured play situations. In the main, staff question the children well, but on some occasions, 'play situations' do not sufficiently extend this understanding because they are aimed at the nursery-aged children. Also some of the adult-directed activities, such as the coin recognition game, go on for too long and the pace of children's learning begins to slow.

Knowledge and Understanding of The World

75. Teaching is good and children achieve well and develop a good understanding of the world about them. Many are on course to attain above the levels expected by the end of the year. Good use is made of a wide range of topics and resources, including visits out of school and visitors to school, to develop the children's ideas. The children successfully explore and investigate. They learn about the features of living things, and natural and man made objects, through carrying out simple experiments. For example, they grow seeds and bulbs in the school garden, and compare the properties of different materials used to build the houses of 'The Three Little Pigs'. Children effectively learn to question why and how things happen, and this is supported by the careful questioning of the staff who encourage the children to extend their learning through investigation. For example, when the children indicated the ways in which they might test materials to find out which ones are waterproof and which are not. Their skills in designing and making are successfully developed using a range of materials and equipment. For example, they have made calendars and models from a wide range of construction and junk materials. The children's skills in information communication technology are effectively developed. They are able to use the computer. They have good mouse control and can operate a number of programs, for example, to paint pictures and match words. They effectively learn to operate a programmable toy. The children can

distinguish past and present, for example, when they discuss the difference between old and modern buildings. This learning was made very real for them on a walk round the village, where they went to see each other's houses and noted the different materials with which they are made. Overall, good use is made of the locality so that children learn about the immediate environment, and they also learn about the wider world. They effectively learn about the cultures and beliefs of different people. The school's excellent links with the community support this area of learning very well.

Physical Development

76. The progress which children make in their physical development is satisfactory overall based on satisfactory teaching. This is an area where children can still achieve more. They learn to move their bodies imaginatively and with increasing control through music and movement sessions. However, in part because of the constraints of the accommodation, there is a tendency for these activities to be over-directed for children of this age. Nevertheless, the children demonstrate satisfactory co-ordination and can stop and start their movements. They have developed a reasonable awareness of space and others. During outdoor activity there is a good balance between those activities initiated by the adult and those initiated by the children and there is a suitable range of small equipment and toys to use. Balancing and climbing are developed but much of the equipment is not well matched to the needs of this age group and consequently does not always present the level of challenge that is needed. In most activities children gain good understanding about the importance of keeping healthy. When making objects, children are able to manipulate tools and malleable materials with an appropriate amount of control. They use tools with a good level of control and are able to cut shapes accurately with scissors. Children handle these and other tools safely. They build a variety of models by fitting together different types of construction materials. Fine manual skills and hand-eye co-ordination are practised regularly through the use of small equipment and the children demonstrate good control of objects such as pencils, crayons and paint brushes.
77. The reception-aged children use the nursery outdoor area. This is well organised and provides good opportunities for learning, although there are some constraints about its use, particularly in the afternoons, when the nursery children are in session.

Creative Development

78. The progress children make is satisfactory in their creative development and this is the result of satisfactory teaching. The children explore sounds when playing percussion instruments and by using body actions such as clapping when they are responding to music. They listen carefully and copy loud and soft sounds, and they develop a good sense of rhythm. Staff effectively teach the children a good range of songs and nursery rhymes and the children sing them confidently. Suitable opportunities are provided for the children to use their imagination in role-play but this is not always sufficiently challenging. They learn about the colours of paint and can mix them appropriately to produce different colours for their pictures. Different techniques, such as printing, are effectively taught and different materials, such as cloth and paint, are used to make pictures. Children respond well to what they hear, touch, smell and feel, as when they used a 'wax-resist' technique to create a picture of 'scudding clouds'. They use an appropriate range of tools to make models and shape and mould clay. Staff encourage the children well and organise a range of worthwhile experiences. Taken overall, however, pupils' imaginative response is limited since they are not able to make sufficient choices about the materials and the equipment they wish to use. This is because most of the equipment is not easily accessible to the children.

ENGLISH

79. Overall, pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well by the end of Years 2 and 6. In Year 2, standards in reading are above average and standards in writing are average. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in English. Pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school and are attaining the level expected of pupils of this age, with a noticeable strength in reading. The school has introduced the National Literacy Strategy and there is now a very systematic approach to teaching literacy throughout the school. In recent years virtually all pupils

have attained at least the levels expected by the time they leave the school and many have attained above this. Younger pupils are also achieving well. Many are on course are attaining above average standards for their age and are well on course to attain above average standards by the time they leave the school.

80. Pupils' speaking and listening skills improve well as they move through school. Pupils of all ages listen carefully in lessons and contribute ideas with confidence. They show respect for each other's ideas. Older pupils can describe clearly their knowledge of a subject, for example, when explaining what they know about the various history topics they have studied. They are prepared to express their opinions and ideas openly; for example, when older pupils explained how disagreements and quarrels may cause upset. Particularly good progress is made in developing skills in speaking and listening through 'circle-time', which is organised as part of the personal, social and health education programme. Older pupils also show very good levels of confidence in speaking to a large audience, for example when reading about 'the big, bad wolf' in a whole-school assembly and when speaking at the Christingle service at the local church.
81. A strong emphasis is given to reading and overall pupils make very good progress. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a good sense of enjoyment in reading. They learn to read simple text, such as 'The Bear', with accuracy and understanding. They understand that different books are organised in different ways and can explain that some are story books and others give information. They learn to use a range of strategies to help them make sense of the text including using letter sounds and the pictures in the book. The more able pupils read fluently and with expression and are good at predicting what might happen next in the story. In Year 6, pupils show good levels of comprehension and are developing clear ideas about their favourite authors. There is appreciation of the underlying ideas and subtleties in the text. Pupils can explain clearly why they like certain books. They give informed reasons for their choice, for example that they appreciate how the character is feeling. They can also refer to what they consider to be successful use of writing techniques by the author, for example when one pupil explained why she thought a particular adjective was particularly effective. Pupils use a library, indexes, glossaries and contents pages effectively to retrieve information. Overall effective use is made of the library.
82. Writing is developed well by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils of all ages are benefiting from the school's involvement in a local writing development project, and the extra attention is being given to writing since it is a key focus within the school development plan for the current year. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop sound understanding of writing in simple sentences, a good understanding of the need to include different characters to make a story interesting. Handwriting is satisfactory. Most pay good attention to letter formation and present their work effectively, although few develop a fluent joined script. Spelling is also satisfactory, and improving as a result of the strong focus that is currently being given to this aspect. Pupils effectively learn about different forms of writing, for example, when making posters they know that a punchy caption is essential. However, too few pupils develop confidence in using a wide vocabulary. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' writing is developed very well. Pupils further develop their understanding about the need to write in different styles for different purposes and show good understanding of this in their work. Progressively they learn to draft and redraft their work in order to achieve a final copy. Spelling and punctuation are generally good, and pupils usually apply this in their work. Care is taken with presentation and handwriting is generally good. Pupils use vocabulary in imaginative ways. For example, in some of the writings of a prisoner, they describe how they feel in a dungeon where there is 'a horrible, unbearable stench'.
83. Teaching is good overall. There is very good teaching in Class 2. Throughout Years 1 to 6 there is very good teaching of reading. Teachers give a good focus to this in all lessons; pupils receive a significant amount of individual attention from adults in learning to read, and there is a well-thought-out approach to encouraging pupils' independence in reading. Teachers build their planning appropriately on the National Literacy Strategy and all lessons are carefully planned. Staff are very secure in the subject and use the technical vocabulary associated with it well, for example when describing parts of a word and grammatical structures. The introduction to lessons is usually good, and particularly in Class 2, pupils benefit from what is often a very pacy question and answer session, for example when building up words such as 'circumference' and 'circumnavigation'. Effective use is made of resources, especially the 'Big Books' in Class 1. Good attention is paid to the wide range of levels of understanding in the classes and activities are set which are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. In general, pupils try hard and concentrate very well throughout the lesson. They respond particularly well to the high expectations

which are made of them in Class 2. Occasionally, in class 1 there is not enough clarity about the expected quality of the work, particularly of written work, for those pupils working away from the direct supervision of the teacher. At such times the pace of learning begins to slow. Plenary sessions are generally good and used appropriately to re-inforce learning.

84. Teachers and support staff work very well together. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class and make at least good progress and, often very good progress in Class 2, towards the targets in their individual learning plans. Pupils know that teachers and other staff expect good behaviour and pupils are very well behaved throughout the whole lesson. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and these support teaching and learning very well, for example when staff and pupils enjoy a moment of humour together.
85. The management and co-ordination of the subject are very effective. Both full-time teachers work together on subject development. They have achieved good improvement since the last inspection and have clear ideas about the next steps forward. Resources are good and the library is used effectively to support learning.
86. The use of information and communication technology effectively supports the work undertaken in English, for example it plays an important part in helping pupils in the process of drafting and re-drafting their work. Teachers make good use of other subjects, such as history, to develop pupils' skills in literacy.

MATHEMATICS

87. Overall, pupils of all abilities make good progress, with very good progress made in Years 3 to 6. Standards in the current Year 6 are average, with a noticeable strength in numeracy. Standards in the current Year 2 are also broadly in line with those expected, but with above average standards in numeracy. The school rightly gives a strong emphasis to this area of number work, and this is reflected in the results it achieves. Overall, pupils are achieving well in relation to their previous attainment. Over the past few years many pupils have attained above average standards in mathematics by the time they leave the school. Many of the younger pupils in the present Class 2 are also attaining above average standards for their age. They are well on course to attain above average standards by the time they reach Year 6.
88. By Year 6, pupils can work out calculations in their heads, understand the value of numbers, including decimals and fractions, and produce graphs and charts to represent data. They can find the perimeters of simple shapes and areas by counting the lengths of squares, and understand the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Their understanding of basic number concepts is particularly strong. They show confidence in handling numbers in a variety of situations, and can carry out operations such as multiplying and dividing when solving mathematical problems. They are familiar with fractions, decimals and negative numbers, and can carry out both mental and written calculations appropriately. Pupils have satisfactory understanding of shape, space and measures.
89. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress overall. The teaching of numeracy is a strength, so that pupils are confident and assured in handling simple counting operations, and in recalling addition and subtraction facts to 10. Many are able to work with bigger numbers, and particularly when using money, can work out more complex problems. Most can recognise number patterns and sequences, and choose appropriate methods for solving addition and subtraction problems. Pupils' work seen during the inspection also shows that they have covered a broad curriculum. This includes simple mathematical investigations, work on common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes, measurements of length and mass, and graph work. In a lesson seen in Class 1 during the inspection, the teacher worked with the whole class on the floor, adding the contents of two sets. Pupils were drawn into the activity very well, and showed good use of mathematical language.
90. A scrutiny of pupils' previous work shows good coverage of all aspects of the curriculum and that pupils work steadily through each topic, at a good pace. The standard of presentation generally improves from term to term and is generally good.

91. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good in Class 1 and very good in Class 2. In the both classes, working relationships are excellent. Routines are well-established and lessons proceed in well-structured stages.
92. In Class 1, the teacher is good at using questions, and is careful to discuss ideas with pupils, and check on their understanding. This approach is effective in giving pupils time to think through their ideas, and in supporting them in developing and using mathematical vocabulary. They are given opportunities to choose methods for adding, and counting, for example when sorting sets of objects. The full involvement of a support assistant and the good partnership between adults ensure that pupils of all abilities are fully included in the work. Generally, time is used well, but there are a few occasions when the pace of work drops, and pupils' involvement wanes, particularly when the pupils are working without the close supervision of the teacher.
93. The very good quality of teaching in Class 2 was characterised by high expectations and a constant drive for pace and 'push' in lessons. One of the lessons seen exemplifies these qualities very well. In this lesson, which was leading into work on fractions, pupils were 'halving' and 'doubling' to solve number problems. The teacher showed good subject knowledge, and explained concepts very clearly. She used questions skilfully to draw out pupils' ideas and check their understanding. The particularly high quality of discussion and interaction between teacher and pupils, and among the pupils, kept everyone involved, and a spirit of friendly competition was used to maximise interest and learning. The use of these very effective teaching strategies, the very lively pace of work, and good adult support, all promoted very good learning for pupils of all abilities.
94. The National Numeracy Strategy is now well established, and teachers use the three-part lesson structure well. Teachers have effectively adopted the practice of discussing what they want the pupils to learn during the lesson, and then looking back at the end of the lesson to ask if the planned objectives have been achieved. Pupils are encouraged to explain what they have done during the lesson, and what they have learned. Teachers are good at assessing their pupils' understanding, and modifying their planning as a result of their assessments. In marking pupils' books teachers often include helpful comments, to guide pupils in their next steps in learning. The small group sizes, and good levels of adult support in the school also make good contributions to the continuity of pupils' learning.
95. Discussions with pupils and observation of lessons showed that the great majority enjoy mathematics and have positive attitudes towards their learning. The lively approach, and engaging teaching style adopted throughout the school have the effect of communicating enthusiasm for the subject, and a sense of fun and enjoyment.
96. Numeracy skills are well promoted in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are shown how knowledge of mathematics can help their understanding in other subjects. In a Class 2 science lesson, for example, pupils used bar and line graphs to show the results of an investigation into heat-loss very effectively. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are used appropriately to support their learning in mathematics and this is noticeable in the database work undertaken in both classes.
97. The subject is very effectively managed by the two full-time teaching staff, who have achieved good improvement since the last inspection. They have updated the policy and scheme of work to take account of national guidance, and the school has realistic priorities for the development of the subject. Although the subject does not feature specifically in the current School Improvement Plan, the school has challenging and yet realistic targets for the numbers of pupils achieving expected levels in the standard assessment tests taken by pupils in Year 6 for the coming years. Resources for the subject are good. They are well organised and readily accessible, and of generally good quality.

SCIENCE

98. Pupils' achievements overall in science are good and their achievements in investigative science are very good. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress overall and achieve well in relation to their previous attainment. Most reach the standards expected by Year 2 and many exceed this in scientific investigative work. In Years 3,4,5 and 6 pupils achieve very well and by the end of Year 6 pupils are currently attaining average standards. This represents good achievement compared to their previous attainment. Many of

the younger pupils in this class are currently attaining above average standards for their age. They are well on course to achieve above average standards by the time they reach Year 6.

99. Pupils attain in line with what is expected for their age in the areas of the National Curriculum associated with life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. They produce a particularly high standard of investigative work using increasing scientific skills of observation, prediction, testing their theories and recording in detail what they have found out. As they progress through the school they communicate their findings by drawings, diagrams, bar charts and graphs, and by short and then finally longer reports that are well thought out. All their recorded work shows a developing understanding of science. They can identify patterns in data, give reasons for their conclusions and sometimes use information and communication technology to record results. Pupils' developing knowledge of scientific vocabulary is evident, for example when older pupils explain the differences between solids, liquids and gases. Their understanding of materials was also demonstrated well as they discussed the most appropriate materials to use when manufacturing items such as a bird table. During the inspection, younger pupils went into the village to survey materials used in building and discussed their advantages and disadvantages, showing a very good level of understanding for their age. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their science lessons and make good progress overall.
100. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good overall. It is very good in Class 2. The school has focussed very effectively on the key issue from the last inspection of developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in science. Teachers' subject knowledge is now very secure and there is a good balance of activities undertaken in lessons. Teachers know their pupils very well and are able to capture and sustain their interest. They plan exciting activities and make their pupils enthusiastic about science. The very good link with an initial teacher training college provides really good opportunities for effective learning, for example the joint activities which were undertaken by the school and the college in 'bug week' provided activities which significantly motivated the pupils. Planning is carefully thought out so that questioning and tasks are matched to pupils' different abilities. This ensures that every pupil has the opportunity to make progress at their own rate, building up their knowledge and understanding in science. Learning is also effective because teachers use questioning well to establish how much pupils have remembered from earlier lessons and to ensure they understand the scientific vocabulary they will be using. In Class 2 the teacher sets a particularly high expectation of the pupils and this has a very positive effect on the rate of children's learning.
101. Teachers devise excellent links to other subjects, for example younger children worked with a musician to devise a 'bee dance' when studying insects in science week. Links to the school topic on the Tudors are also evident as pupils research building materials that would have been used in that period. The cook also makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning by devising healthy eating menus which teach the value of good nutrition and match the science topic when appropriate. The school has devised interesting resources in the grounds, such as a pond and willow tunnel and pupils have the opportunity to study growth at first hand by examining frogs and tadpoles, planting seeds or bulbs or examining 'mini-beasts'. All these imaginative contributions give very good support to the teaching of science.
102. The school has high expectations of behaviour and consequently behaviour is very good. Pupils' attitudes to work, their ability to co-operate with one another, hold discussions and respect each other's views, are key factors in the high quality of their investigative work. They concentrate well in lessons and listen to their teachers showing interest and enthusiasm for the subject. This leads to deepening scientific understanding and increasing knowledge of relevant vocabulary.
103. The subject is very well managed and overall there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The teachers plan together and long and medium term plans are carefully linked to provide good working documents. Assessment is administered well and the information used to guide future work. The levelled portfolios of work ensure that teachers' judgements when assessing work against the National Curriculum criteria are secure. The quality of the outdoor environment, good resources in school and the access to extra adult expertise and help from the college enhance the quality of teaching and learning in science, which particularly in investigative work.

ART

104. Pupils' achievements are good overall and they attain what is expected for their age by Year 2 and Year 6. There are noticeable strengths in some work observed, for example Impressionist style work by older pupils and the high quality use of colour in some paintings undertaken by pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, enjoy art and make good progress.
105. In Years 3,4,5 and 6, work observed included pencil, paint and collage. Pupils work from a variety of starting points, including direct observation, studying the work of famous artists, and their own imagination. Pupils are taught about the work of artists, such as Van Gogh. They are very confident to offer opinions about their own and others' work. In Years 1 and 2, there is evidence in the portfolio of the effective use of different techniques to produce 'wax resist' pictures, paintings, drawings, leaf prints and calendars with collage designs. There is also investigative work where pupils have learned about the effects of using 'hot' and 'cold' colours.
106. Only one lesson, which was in Class 2, was seen during inspection and in this teaching was good. Pupils were encouraged to give constructive criticism about work begun the previous week. They were genuinely interested in each other's work and made perceptive comments on how their work could be improved. Teachers and support staff gave effective support and ensured that everyone was fully included. Support staff were well-directed and made a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, for example by encouraging the pupils to look at the detail on Tudor portraits in order to focus their observations and improve their own technique. Throughout, pupils sustained their concentration and worked productively. They discussed their work happily, commenting on the appearance and characters of the people they were drawing.
107. Teachers' planning is effective. It is firmly based on the National Curriculum and good use is made of the nationally recommended scheme of work. Good links are made to other subjects being studied. A variety of techniques and processes in art is covered and assessment opportunities are highlighted. The portfolio of past work gives some indication of art work pupils have experienced, but this could now be usefully extended to give opportunities to work with a wider range of media and further extend the study of famous artists and their work.
108. The subject is managed effectively. Resources are good and suitable links are made with information and communication technology. For example, it is evident from the planning that the portrait work is to be followed up by pupils taking 'photographic portraits' using the digital camera.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. No actual teaching of design and technology was seen during the inspection, but evidence from other sources, such as talking to pupils and teachers, and looking at work done earlier and at the teachers' planning, enabled overall judgements to be made. By the time they reach the ends of both Year 6 and Year 2, pupils achieve standards that are typical for their age. Progress is good, particularly in the development of pupils' skills in planning.
110. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, they have learnt a wide range of design and technology skills. They have been involved in practical activities which entail shaping, cutting and joining different materials. They learn to relate the properties of materials to their function, and to carry out simple tasks involving designing, making and evaluating objects. For example, in a topic about homes in Class 1, when pupils designed and made owls' houses, they effectively considered issues such as the owls' needs and the materials best suited to the task in terms of colour, shape and size. This work gave the pupils opportunities to cut, glue and paint, and they evaluated the finished product in a thoughtful way.
111. By Year 6, pupils have continued the process of developing their skills through further cross-curricular topic work. Work on designing and making a model lighthouse, mud bricks that might have been used in Egyptian times, and water clocks has been undertaken recently. In talking about these activities pupils show that, by the end of Year 6, they have made good progress in understanding the design process. Their skills in planning are well developed.

- 112. Teaching is good overall. Teachers present the work in a stimulating way, so that it appeals to all pupils. Skills are taught in a systematic way, so that pupils can use what they have learnt in real situations. There is good attention given to the planning aspect. The cross-curricular approach ensures that pupils see how the work is related to other subjects, as when measuring materials, or assessing their strength. The work undertaken provides valuable opportunities for the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy.
- 113. The practical and enjoyable nature of much of the work ensures that pupils of all abilities find it absorbing and challenging. Teachers ensure that pupils are aware of safety issues, and they learn to handle tools and materials carefully.
- 114. The subject is effectively co-ordinated by the two full-time teaching staff. They work well together to ensure that the subject has an appropriate place in the curriculum, and that skills are taught progressively. The school has a good range of resources which enable all aspects of the subject to be taught effectively. Tools and other resources are well cared-for and readily available when needed. The school's good ratio of adults to children ensures that potentially harmful materials and resources can be used safely.

GEOGRAPHY

- 115. It was not possible, during the course of the inspection, to see any geography lessons taught. Judgements were made on the basis of pupils' previous work, work in displays around the school, discussions with pupils and teachers and a consideration of teachers' planning. As a result, standards are judged to be in line with those expected nationally at the ends of Year 6 and Year 2. Pupils have well-developed research skills and use these very effectively when studying geography. Overall, pupils work hard and achieve well.
- 116. As they move through the school, pupils are given a series of worthwhile experiences, usually as part of well-constructed and planned cross-curricular topics. In Class 1, for instance, pupils learnt about the Great Fire of London. Whilst much of the work was historical in nature, the pupils also looked at a map of the British Isles in order to find London, and to compare its location with that of the local area. They discussed how long it might take to get to London and the teacher made good use of the pupils' own experience when some said they had been to London. This work also gave pupils opportunities to use geographical language, such as island, capital city, river and country.
- 117. Pupils' skills are further developed in Class 2 through more in-depth studies of the local area and places further afield. By Year 6, pupils are familiar with the features of the locality and they talk knowledgeably about issues related to environmental pollution. By Year 6, pupils locate countries on a map of the world and have an awareness of the weather patterns associated with such countries. They can also indicate how features of the landscape affected life in different historical periods, for example when they refer to the effects of the flooding of the river Nile on the life of the Ancient Egyptians. Most pupils can make use of four-figure co-ordinates when using maps.
- 118. The quality of work seen and the teachers' planning shows that teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations. They expect their pupils to do their best, to work neatly and to complete their tasks. Because the work is presented in interesting and stimulating ways, pupils enjoy their tasks in geography, and develop positive attitudes to the subject. The school organises frequent visits into the immediate vicinity and to localities away from school, including residential visits, such as the one to North Wales. These visits bring geography to life for the pupils and enable them to develop an understanding of the characteristics of different places, as well as their similarities and differences to their home. Cross-curricular topics, such as that on Egypt, give pupils good opportunities to develop their understanding of environmental change and sustainable development.
- 119. The two full-time teachers work well together on all aspects of subject management. Topics are well planned on a rolling programme, which ensures that skills and knowledge are taught progressively in mixed-age classes. Lessons are clearly planned, not only to provide for pupils' activities, but also to ensure the best deployment of classroom assistants, so as to give appropriate support to all. This approach ensures that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in all activities.

120. Resources for geography are satisfactory overall, although a few are rather old. They are stored centrally so as to be easily accessible, and are well organised and labelled. Pupils use ICT effectively to both present and find out information in geography.

HISTORY

121. During the inspection, two history lessons were observed, one in Class 1 and one in Class 2. Judgements of pupils' attainment and achievements are also based on talking to pupils and a scrutiny of their work. Consideration was also given to teachers' planning and record keeping.
122. Overall, pupils achieve well in history and attain the standards expected for their age. They achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 showing particularly well- developed skills in research. Pupils of all ages are knowledgeable about the periods they have studied and are enthusiastic about the subject.
123. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop good understanding of chronology and timelines. They note the implications of change over time. For example, through a study of old and new items in a kitchen they realise that many kitchen improvements are due to the invention of electricity. Pupils observe well. A good example was, when they noted the differences between old and new buildings in their own village by making reference to the weathering effects on the stone as an indicator of the age of the building. Pupils are knowledgeable about important events in the past, for example about 'The Great Fire of London, and talk with conviction about the fact that the fire spread very quickly because the houses were made of wood. They effectively develop a questioning approach to the subject by being encouraged to find out things for themselves.
124. In Years 3 to 6, pupils further develop their understanding of chronology and learn about key events of particular periods through topics, for example on the Ancient Greece, the Tudors, Egypt, the Aztecs and the Vikings. The pupils talk about these with enthusiasm and can describe significant features from most of them. They are beginning to draw some links and identify differences between these periods. They give some reasons for changes that occur and are very able to explain that, depending on their particular circumstances, different groups within that society would have very different experiences. They did this well recognising that in Tudor times some children would go to school whilst others would not. Pupils' learning, has often been significantly enhanced by first-hand experiences, such as a visit to Tullie House to study the Egyptians or the burning of their model Viking boat in a nearby field. Pupils show good skills in research and they are beginning to combine information from different sources and appreciate that not everyone has the same views about events in the past.
125. Teaching and learning are good. Staff work together very well as a team to ensure effective co-ordination of the subject. The history curriculum is well planned and provides an interesting and worthwhile programme for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. The way in which the school has planned the units of work for pupils of different ages and abilities ensures that there is continuity in pupils' learning. Staff show a good level of interest in the subject and this helps to motivate the pupils. Visits and visitors are used well to enhance teaching and learning. There is good emphasis on using resources of all kinds to help make the subject real. There is also good use of books to support the development of research skills. For example, packs of books, including fiction and non-fiction, are built up in levels of difficulty so that the pupils have a ready source of information both in class and also to take home. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to support the work undertaken in history. Overall, the subject is co-ordinated very well with continued good improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards in information and communication technology which are broadly in line with those expected. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain average standards in most aspects of the subject but, in common with many schools, few pupils attain the higher levels in developing their ideas about control technology. Over time, pupils have made satisfactory progress. It is now good in the lessons and pupils are achieving well. The school was in one of the later phases to receive the National Grid for Learning grant which has helped schools to upgrade their equipment and also provided extra

training for staff. The further development of ICT is a focus in the current year's improvement plan. During the inspection, pupils were seen working at the computers for a variety of purposes and good use was being made of information and communication technology as a tool for learning in other subjects, as well as being a subject for study in its own right.

127. In Class 1, pupils learn the basic operations of switching the computers on and off, loading and saving work, and controlling the computer by means of the keyboard and mouse. The school has developed a good range of appropriate software so that pupils enjoy using the computer, and quickly learn how it can help them with their work. Pupils use the computer to write, draw pictures and play games. They know how to change the size and colour of text, and how to combine text and pictures. They have also had opportunities to use the Roamer programmable toy, giving it a series of commands in order to produce pre-planned movements.
128. In Class 2, pupils continue to develop their skills. They use the computers to support their work in other subjects, for instance in a mathematics lesson about halving and doubling numbers, pairs of pupils worked very productively at the computers. They made good use of the 'Braindrainer Maths Quiz', which provided an enjoyable and challenging opportunity for them to extend their mathematical understanding. By Year 6, pupils have a wide range of experiences and are able to use the computer to present information and to exchange information and ideas with others in a variety of ways, including through the use of e-mail and the internet. Their ability to control events, and sense physical data using ICT is less well developed. Overall, however, pupils make good progress.
129. Throughout the school pupils talk about the activities they undertake with enthusiasm, and all say they enjoy using the computers. Pupils are also encouraged to work independently, and they invariably concentrate and work productively, even when not closely supervised by an adult. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' social development, and to the development of their skills of independence and self-motivation.
130. Teaching is good overall; some very good teaching was seen in Class 2. Teachers show good subject knowledge, and are skilful at integrating information and communication technology with work in other subjects. Computer skills are now being taught in a systematic and progressive way across the school, and the use of Computer Work Sheets is effective in enabling pupils to carry out basic tasks without the teacher being present.
131. The subject is well organised and the teachers have been ingenious in organising the resources to make best use of limited space. The school now has good resources for the subject and the school takes ensures 'safe' access to the internet. There has been good improvement since the time of the last inspection.

MUSIC

132. Achievements overall are good, and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain the standard expected for their age with noticeable strengths in composition. Pupils throughout the school enjoy singing and they showed this when they spontaneously and enthusiastically sang some of the songs they had performed at their Christmas concert. Apart from this, live singing was only heard during the inspection in assemblies. Nevertheless, this was wholehearted and tuneful.
133. No music lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6 but discussions with pupils and observation of a school video show that standards in singing are what would be expected at this age. Recorded work, shows very good examples of music that the pupils have composed, for instance to illustrate the poem 'The Ning Nang Nong'. Pupils in Class 2 know the names of many orchestral instruments, recognise notes and know about rests. They can talk about their likes and dislikes in music; they talk knowledgeably about composition work they have produced, and they say that they enjoy instrumental lessons with a visiting teacher.
134. In the music lesson observed in Class 1, where the teaching was good, pupils effectively used their voices and 'body percussion' to make louder and softer sounds in response to the conductor. They practised reciting the Tudor rhyme, 'Pease Pudding Hot', in two parts in order to develop the skills required to sing

in 'rounds'. They knew the meaning of the 'Ring a Roses' rhyme and performed this with enjoyment. The teacher has made a good link to the work pupils are studying in history and a picture of Tudor children playing in a street was used very well as a focus for musical composition during this lesson. Pupils used voice or percussion to replicate sounds and, with the teacher's help, gradually built up a 'sound picture'. They controlled their instruments well, enjoyed making a recording and evaluated very well so that they improved their first attempt before recording their final performance. They offered opinions indicating which instruments might better mimic sounds such as the bowling of hoops or riding on hobbyhorses. They respected each other's suggestions and this led to an improvement in performance. Pupils with special needs are fully included, and supported when necessary, so they also achieve well.

135. Teachers' planning is carefully undertaken and music often links successfully to other themes being studied. Singing and composition are taught throughout the school and older pupils have the opportunity to learn the keyboard or recorder on a weekly basis with a visiting teacher. Performing skills are encouraged well by the annual concert, together with the termly instrumental concerts. Older pupils enjoy their instrumental lessons and welcome the chance to show their new skills. Planning is firmly grounded in the National Curriculum. Visiting musicians are used effectively to extend pupils' understanding. For example, a visiting bagpipe player 'piped in the haggis' at a special lunch, and Tudor musicians with authentic instruments are visiting as part of the current topic work. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about such events and these strengthen their interest in music.
136. The subject is managed effectively. Resources are satisfactory and the teaching of instrumental work is good preparation for the wide musical opportunities the school has recognised that pupils will have when they move to their next stage of education.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. Pupils make good progress and overall attain standards in line with those expected for pupils of this age. In all activities pupils show good co-ordination and control. By the time they leave the school they attain above average standards in swimming, and pupils in Class 2 show well-developed skills in critical evaluation.
138. Pupils have opportunities to undertake all the areas of activity outlined in the National Curriculum and overall they achieve good gains in learning. Most pupils have established a good level of co-ordination and control of their movements and show awareness of space and others. In physical education lessons, pupils sustain energetic activity and are able to explain the effects of exercise on their bodies. By the end of Year 6, they are developing sound knowledge and understanding of a range of games activities and can explain, for example, the importance of marking an opponent and using different techniques to gain possession of a ball. Most pupils demonstrate the ability to plan ahead and they show that they have some good ideas. Pupils' skills in evaluation are satisfactory in Class 1. They are well-developed in Class 2, where there is a significant focus on pupils checking how their movements look to an observer and how they can be improved.
139. Teaching and learning is good overall. The teaching seen in Class 2 was very good. Planning is undertaken conscientiously and often there is useful reference at the beginning of lessons about the overall aim of the session and at the outset of the lesson the teacher ensures pupils are clear about its purpose. There is a good focus on the development of specific skills. Staff spend time explaining how these can be developed and the pupils are prepared to practise to improve their performance. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and staff manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. The pupils are enthusiastic about taking part in physical activity. Resources are organised and used effectively. There is suitable attention given to the importance of safe practices. Staff dress appropriately for physical education and in this way set a standard for pupils, who in turn dress appropriately. Good use is made of the time available with a suitable focus given to warming up and cooling down. Staff are prepared to help pupils' understanding by demonstrating techniques themselves and they often use other pupils as a model. In the lessons seen teachers praised the pupils' efforts and the pupils responded to this well. In Class 1, however, there was limited use of evaluative criteria to indicate why particular movements were successful, whereas in Class 2, these were made more overt and this had a particularly positive effect on pupils' learning. Because the pupils in Class 2 were so clear about the ways in which

their performance was to be judged, they were able to refine their movements and as a result produce improved outcomes.

140. Co-ordination is effective. Planning is carefully organised and resources and accommodation are adequate although the school has to make use of the village hall to provide a large indoor space. Very good provision is made for pupils of all ages to go swimming. Extra-curricular clubs, such as the football and netball clubs, enhance the provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. Although only two lessons were seen, displays of work and a scrutiny of pupils' past and present work indicate that pupils are attaining the standards expected for their age in relation to the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils' learning is good overall and those with special educational needs are well supported so that they also achieve well. Religious education teaching and coverage of the syllabus have improved since the last inspection and the opportunities for the pupils to learn about different cultures have been widened.
142. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach the expected standards. They effectively learn about the Christian religion. very strong links with the village church support their learning about customs and practices associated with Christianity. For example, when making 'Christingle candles' for the service, which took place at the church on the Sunday before the inspection, pupils learnt about symbolic meanings, such as the red ribbon on their candles. They learn about Jewish beliefs and customs, and know that the Torah is a special book like the Bible and that Jewish people worship in a synagogue. They are given the opportunity to handle a Jewish prayer shawl, kippah (skull cap), yad (pointer) and read a Jewish prayer. They have taken part in a Jewish Sabbath meal. All of these opportunities help to enliven the pupils' learning about the Jewish religion and help them realise the significance of different events to Jewish people.
143. By the end of Year 6, pupils gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of religions. Pupils in Year 6 are at the level expected for their age. In Years 3,4,5 and 6, pupils know about the creation story and that it is in the Old Testament. They recall the names of some of the disciples and they know about some of the famous saints who feature in the Bible. They know that the Bible contains the Old and New Testaments and that the story of Jesus' life is recorded in the latter. In a lesson on 'navigating' around the Bible, pupils worked in pairs and were successful in locating parts of the Bible, for example the gospels, or 'Genesis'. They then read a chapter or a verse out loud showing clear understanding for their age. They are familiar with many stories and events in the Bible and are keen to talk about the school's link with the local church.
144. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use precise language in their discussions with pupils and increase pupils' vocabulary connected with different religions in a structured way. Teachers' questioning is good and they are sensitive when encouraging pupils to respond. Assemblies are used well to underline Christian values, which are applied to the daily life of pupils in the school. There is a reasonable element of reflection in the work but this area is less well developed. There are good links to other subjects and the teaching of literacy is particularly well developed through religious education. For example, in their lessons about the Tudors, pupils learn about the differences between Protestants and Catholics and why Henry VIII annoyed the church by divorcing or beheading his wives in order to secure an heir.
145. The subject is well managed. Assemblies to support Christian and moral teaching are thoughtfully planned and support the family atmosphere and ethos of the school. Work is carefully marked and assessments planned for by teachers. Religious education lessons make a significant contribution to moral teaching. By sampling meals from other countries, for example a vegetarian meal for Divali or a Jewish picnic for Sukkot, pupils' understanding in religious education is enhanced.