

INSPECTION REPORT

GEORGE ROMNEY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Dalton in Furness

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112234

Headteacher: Mrs. L. McGaw

Reporting inspector: Mrs. E. Parry
2615

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th February 2002

Inspection number: 196433

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cobden Street Dalton in Furness Cumbria
Postcode:	LA15 8SE
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. R. Wearing
Date of previous inspection:	19 th May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2615	Eileen Parry	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Mathematics Music Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9224	Mike Vineall	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17681	Roger Sharples	Team inspector	Design and technology History Science Physical education Special educational needs	
27545	Andrew Scott	Team inspector	English Geography Religious education Art and design	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

George Romney Junior School is an average sized school catering for 230 pupils: 117 boys and 113 girls. It serves the small town of Dalton in the south-west of Cumbria. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is average.

Six pupils have statements of educational need and a further 64 of the children are on the school's register for special educational needs. This is more than is found in most schools. However, many of the pupils are identified at the early levels of need. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds and there are rarely any who speak English as an additional language. Children starting at the school have a wide range of skills and abilities. Attainment for pupils on entry is currently about average but this can and does vary substantially from year to year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school which provides children with an effective education with some significant strengths. The headteacher's very good leadership has created a climate where the will to improve is shared by staff. Teaching overall is good. Standards in most subjects are in line with expectations, above average in English, history and physical education and well above the average in information and communication technology (ICT) and art. Governors fulfil statutory responsibilities and are supportive but do not have a clear and agreed plan for dealing with changes in pupil numbers and subsequent staffing needs. Overall the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in art and information and communication technology are well above average.
- In English, history and physical education, standards are above average.
- The quality of relationships between pupils and staff is excellent and is a major reason why pupils are interested in their lessons, work hard and behave well.
- Teaching overall is good.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school benefits from strong leadership by the headteacher and from the good quality of support from staff and governors.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted.
- There is a very good partnership between parents and the school.

What could be improved

- The governors need to produce a considered plan for the future that takes account of both the budget surplus and the imminent changing needs for staffing in relation to pupil numbers.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress in addressing the one key issue that it was given in the previous inspection and good progress in other areas. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now very good. Standards in the national tests for English, mathematics and science go up and down according to whether there is a cluster of pupils who are more able or have special educational needs. Over time, they are rising in line with the national trend. The accommodation has been improved with an additional classroom, and some new cloakrooms and toilets.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Results in the national tests in 2001 in English were in line with the average for all schools and for schools in similar circumstances to George Romney Junior School based on the numbers of free school meals. In mathematics and science, results were below the average. More children reached the higher standard in 2000, and in 2001 there were more pupils with special educational needs. This is the reason for the difference. There were not quite as many pupils at the higher levels in science as there should have been but in English and mathematics, the numbers achieving the higher level were similar to those nationally. Boys usually do better in mathematics and girls in English but not by any significant amount. Taken over the last four years, standards are rising at a rate that is broadly in line with the national trend. The school has set very challenging targets for the year 2002 because of the extra support from booster classes and because the staff believe that their strategies will work. Current evidence would support the view that this is most likely in English because standards are already on course to be above average and achievable in mathematics and science where standards are average at present.

In art and design and in ICT, pupils are reaching well above average standards because of the unusually high levels of staff expertise in these subjects. In history and physical education, standards are above average through the good quality of teaching. In music, religious education, geography and design and technology, standards are in line with national expectations but all of these subjects are current priorities on the school's development plan.

In general, pupils of all abilities achieve well, although there is scope for further improvement in the subjects that have been rightly identified as priorities for development. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. Pupils who are capable of reaching high standards often do well but some could do more work of their own research and choice.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment.
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy their work and try hard to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are interested in their work and behave well. There are rarely any incidents of poor behaviour and these are quickly dealt with when they occur.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils co-operate well and show initiative and personal responsibility. They are polite but lively; serious and good humoured.
Attendance	Very good. There is rarely any lateness.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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 in the school is good. Lessons are well planned and carefully prepared. Teachers make particularly good use of ICT to present information. A positive feature of teaching is in the interweaving of information across subjects. For example, lessons on history and religious education would also include knowledge in science or mathematics or art. This helps pupils to use their knowledge and to see how it is not separate but useful in other contexts. The excellent quality of relationships in the school creates a good climate for learning. Teachers are able to accept pupils' humorous comments as they are intended and to mix the serious and the light-hearted. These relationships also enable teachers to tell pupils when they are doing well or are making mistakes so that pupils learn from the feedback. Teaching is particularly strong in ICT and in art where the knowledge and enthusiasm of some of the staff help other teachers to teach better and pupils to reach good standards. The very best lessons go at a brisk speed and offer good levels of challenge to all pupils. Those that were satisfactory rather than good were usually at a more modest speed and did not develop pupils' learning as much. Teaching in English and mathematics is good and pupils are given many opportunities to use their skills and knowledge in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs have effectively written individual educational plans and are well supported in class. Whilst, overall, pupils of all abilities are stretched to achieve their best, there are some occasions when those capable of high standards could be challenged more. This is one of the priorities that the school has set itself to achieve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Some subjects are more developed than others but plans are in place for those areas which are not of the quality of others. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is provided.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school has a good range of strategies to support pupils with special educational needs. Extra attention has been given to this since the previous inspection, with positive results.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	At present the school has no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very effectively promoted. Pupils' cultural development is good but there is comparatively less provision for them to learn about the multi- ethnic society which is usual in most areas of England.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Pupils are well supported and cared for as individuals. There are good systems in place to check how well pupils are doing in their studies.

The school has a very good partnership with parents and some make extremely good contributions to children's learning by helping in classes. Homework is carefully planned and provided so that all parents can contribute. Information is given regularly so that parents know what is happening in school. Reports to parents about their children's progress are clear and helpful.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There is a very clear sense of direction and purpose that is set by the headteacher and shared by the senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. All statutory responsibilities are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are very good systems for seeing how well the school is doing. Teachers fulfil their subject responsibilities enthusiastically.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school has a surplus budget but governors have not made any secure plans for the future based on a thorough discussion of possibilities. They have a satisfactory knowledge of best value principles as they apply to education.

At the present, the school has sufficient teachers and support staff for the numbers of pupils on roll. There are sufficient classroom spaces although some are very small. All of the shared areas, such as corridors, craft space and library, are used well as additional teaching spaces. The school is well resourced for all the subjects and resources are of good quality. The building and grounds are well cared for.

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 expects children to work hard. • Teaching is good. • Children are helped to become more mature. • Children make good progress. • Their children like coming to the school. 	<p>There were no significant improvements wanted but a few parents mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being better informed about their child's progress. • Working closely with parents.

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views. Teaching is good. Children enjoy their work, are becoming more mature, are expected to work hard and they do make good progress. Some parents take advantage of the opportunities to help in school and all are welcome. There are good systems to give information about children's progress and teachers make themselves available before and after school for any particular concerns.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results in the national tests in 2001 in English were in line with the average for all schools and for schools in similar circumstances to George Romney Junior School based on the numbers of free school meals. In English, pupils' results at the higher level 5 were slightly better than those nationally but there were more pupils at the lower level 3, reflecting the composition of the year group with more than the usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The previous year had more children who reached the higher level and fewer with special educational needs. This accounts for the sharp rise in 2000 and the equally sharp fall in 2001. There were not quite as many pupils at the higher levels in mathematics in 2001 which made a difference to the overall comparisons rationally and against similar schools. The picture in science was similar. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was almost the same as that nationally, too few pupils reached the higher level to improve the comparisons. Boys usually do better in mathematics and girls in English but not by any significant amount.

2. Taken over the last four years, standards are rising at a rate that is broadly in line with the national trend. The school has set very challenging targets for the year 2002 because of the extra support in place from booster classes and because the staff believe that their strategies will work. Current evidence would support the view that this is most likely in English, and achievable in mathematics and science with the extra support.

3. In the current Year 6, standards in English are above the average. Pupils of all abilities listen carefully and talk confidently. However, there are some differences in the quality of spoken language, with some very fluent pupils who use good Standard English and argue convincingly whilst others are quite confident to talk but have more limited skills. Pupils read well and enjoy reading for pleasure. They can talk about books they have read and discuss their preferences. Lower attaining pupils read competently but with less confidence, often needing to pause before sounding new words out. Higher attaining pupils read with very good expression and understanding. Pupils write efficiently, structuring their stories well, using language imaginatively and improving their work through editing. Pupils read and write well in other subjects but an area which is less well developed is their ability to write factually because there are fewer opportunities for this, predominantly in geography.

4. Overall, pupils in Year 6 are currently working at average standards in mathematics although it is possible that the smaller classes, because of the booster arrangements, could improve this substantially before the end of the year. Higher attaining pupils have good recall of number and secure understanding of decimals and fractions. Lower attaining pupils do not have quite such a wide knowledge, for example in identifying the value of decimal places or more complex fractions. Pupils of all abilities demonstrate knowledge of shapes, space and measures that is at least average. This is shown, for example, in their current topic on angles which they all deal with competently. They all are capable of investigating mathematics such as the work they did on the Twelve Days of Christmas with different levels of ability shown in the detail of commentary. Knowledge of different types of graphs is good although there are some differences in the skill with which pupils interrogate the data. Pupils use data-handling skills particularly well in science where they collect information, enter it into the computer, produce a range of graphs and can ask pertinent questions. Teachers encourage pupils to estimate and measure, sometimes in the most unlikely contexts such as a history lesson on the Celts, and pupils' skills are satisfactory.

5. Standards in science are similar to those in mathematics and are at about average levels. By the age of eleven pupils can talk confidently about a range of scientific facts on the topics they have covered such as electricity or life processes. They show sound skills in investigating, observing, interpreting information and predicting, and have a good understanding of a fair test. Whilst most pupils achieve well, the higher attainers could do better if they were given more opportunity to take on additional and more challenging tasks involving their own research.

6. In art and design, particularly work with clay, and in ICT, pupils are reaching well above average standards overall because of the unusually high levels of staff expertise in these subjects. In history and physical education, standards are above average through the good quality of teaching. In music, religious education, geography and design and technology, standards are in line with national expectations and all of these subjects are current priorities on the school's development plan.

7. In general, pupils of all abilities achieve well, although where the school is still working on the developments mentioned in paragraph 6, there is scope for further improvement. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. More able pupils often do well but sometimes could do better. The setting arrangements combined with the very good quality of the teaching ensure that pupils make good progress in mathematics. The effectiveness of teaching in ICT and art and design means that all pupils do well and reach good standards. However, there are areas where further challenge can be offered, as the school recognises. These occur where there are not enough opportunities for the more able to take control of their own learning through research, for example in science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The excellent relationships seen in this school underpin much of the good practice reported in these pages. Relations between pupils themselves, between pupils and all adults in the school and between the different staff members, all contribute to this judgement. Consequently, issues like oppressive behaviour very rarely surface and bad behaviour, in or out of class, is rarely seen – and if it is, it is readily quelled, sometimes by just a look. The children have great enthusiasm for school and there is an established ethos of quiet attention in class. Pupils often talk quietly and sensibly when they are working on solo tasks or in groups. The pupils are noticeably polite. They have good social skills and speak to adults with a very mature and pleasant confidence. Thus one hears humorous comments in class discussion, not as cheek but as astute observation.

9. Pupils co-operate well and show initiative and personal responsibility. Typical was the sight of two boys working on computers during lunchtime. One was having problems with a complex process. Immediately the other was consulted and the necessary reference made to resolve the problems. Many instances were seen of pupils volunteering to clear up or generally help teachers, even at the end of morning and afternoon school.

10. Pupils are conscious of the impact of their actions on others and a respect for others' feelings was often noted. In working together, or playing, pupils frequently help each other. In class, they listen considerately and that results in often quite personal thoughts and ideas being offered to debate. In the weekly merit assembly, the presentation of a large number of awards was witnessed quietly and respectfully, with real appreciation for the success of others.

11. The excellent relationships, the established good behaviour and good interactive skills all combine to create an ambience conducive to learning and good personal development.

This area seems to have developed even more from the high level reported at the last inspection.

12. Attendance is very good and lateness seems rare, unlike at the previous inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Overall the teaching in the school is good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons and four out of five were good or very good. This is even better than the good quality of teaching reported in the previous inspection and especially commendable given that many of the staff and pupils were ill during the inspection because of a particular virus infection.

14. All teachers plan succinctly but effectively. Preparation for lessons is thorough and all necessary resources are ready. A strength of preparation and of teaching is the very good use that is made of the growing skills and confidence of teachers in ICT; for example, they often use laptop computers and *PowerPoint* to present information very well. Teachers have very clear learning objectives for lessons and these are shared with the pupils so that pupils know what they should learn during the course of the lesson. In all lessons, positive and supportive relationships promote learning. Humour is often an integral part of lessons from both teachers and pupils. Teachers use the confidence that pupils have in these good relationships to provide them with both written and verbal assessments of how well each of them is doing. The information is honest and can be critical as well as complimentary. Lessons are often set at a challenging pace and with high expectations of pupils' response. Usually the lessons that were satisfactory rather than good or very good lacked this briskness, as in a Year 6 mathematics lesson. Sometimes, too much was tackled to achieve quality in the short time available, as in a Year 3 music lesson.

15. A very distinct feature of the teaching in this school is the way that teachers reinforce learning through links to other subjects. Good examples of this occurred in a Year 3 history lesson that also covered mathematics and art, and in a Year 5 religious education lesson on evolution and creation which brought in science and English skills. Teachers explain skills and techniques clearly. This is evidently a strength of the teaching in ICT and in clay work but also appears in the very good teaching in other subjects, such as a Year 4 lesson in physical education where pupils' skills in handling a basketball were improved because of the clear explanation and demonstration of techniques. In a Year 4 science lesson that was overall satisfactory, explanations and demonstrations were good but occupied too much of the teacher's time and gave too little to developing the pupils' practical competencies.

16. Teachers have good knowledge of most subjects. Professional development both from within school and from outside has improved the quality of teaching. This is particularly noticeable in art and ICT where skilful enthusiasts among the staff provide higher than usual levels of expertise and constant support and this is reflected in the quality of pupils' work. Where subject knowledge is less secure, as in geography, design and technology and music, the school has plans in place to improve the situation.

17. Overall teaching in English is good. The literacy strategy has been implemented effectively and pupils are given many opportunities to develop their learning through other subjects, such as science, history and religious education. Whilst there are many good opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in their speaking skills, some pupils need even more practice at responding through speech. Similarly, in writing, good opportunities for writing are balanced by some restrictions such as the use of worksheets in geography. Although there are some good examples of practice, teachers do not always provide enough

open-ended opportunities for higher attaining pupils. Sometimes these pupils do the same work as other pupils and this limits their progress.

18. The teaching of mathematics is good, and during the inspection the majority of lessons were taught very well. The National Numeracy Strategy is fully and effectively in place. Mental and oral work is sometimes taught through conventional techniques where speed of questioning and response are encouraged and sometimes through more imaginative routes such as the games in Year 3 and Year 4. Teaching supports the development of pupils' mathematical skills so that they are able to use them in subjects such as science but more could be done to promote some aspects of measurement through subjects such as design and technology.

19. A weakness reported in the previous inspection was that pupils with special educational needs did not have sufficiently detailed individual education plans. This has been improved and the plans are now of good quality and are implemented. A good example of this is from the plan of a Year 3 pupil which focuses on making sure that the pupil is encouraged to reply to questions in front of the class. This was very well and sensitively handled so that it was not obvious but so that the pupil was given those opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are also well supported individually and in small groups by teachers and by support assistants.

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

20. The school has a good curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Teachers follow recognised schemes of work for all subjects and this ensures that there is a good structure and systematic approach to pupils' learning. Teachers of parallel year classes plan together at weekly meetings. This means that pupils in each class in the year group receive the same curriculum although teachers have the freedom to present lessons in their own style. The school makes good provision for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Teachers work hard on the basic skills that underpin most areas of learning. The curriculum of some subjects is especially strong. In art and design, for example, pupils receive a rich input of influences of major artists, as well as the opportunity to work extensively with clay.

21. A major strength of the curriculum lies in the way teachers link subjects together. All subjects are taught separately but all are interwoven with aspects of other subjects. For example, in an ICT lesson, pupils word-processed an account of a recent visit to a church, developing their language skills as well as consolidating their knowledge of religion. In an English lesson on factual writing, pupils had to describe how an electrical circuit functions, reinforcing their skills in science incidentally. Teachers are well aware that such cross-fertilisation of ideas gives added relevance to learning and brings dry facts to life. In an art topic, pupils skilfully used fabrics in a wall display to represent the different kinds of houses met in a geographical study of the locality.

22. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school works hard to make sure that extra activities in the school offer opportunities to all. This is particularly apparent in sports activities. Not only is there a variety of games for boys and girls, but they are all open to boys and girls equally. In some cases, access to extra activities is restricted but for very good reasons. The ICT club, for instance, gives priority to Year 4 pupils who do not have computers at home. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum.

23. The school has recognised the different needs of gifted and talented pupils. Teachers have compiled a list of such pupils and have begun to offer suitable provision. For example, two pupils attend enrichment courses at the local secondary school. Another, with skills in expressive arts, was given the lead part in the school play. However, the school does not always plan thoughtfully enough for these pupils in the everyday curriculum, by offering really challenging opportunities.

24. The school day is a little shorter than that of most schools. This results in less time being available for some sessions. Some subjects such as geography and design and technology have limited time allocated to them and therefore pupils do not benefit from a very broad curriculum in these subjects. However, the school compensates considerably with its hefty programme of extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy a wide array of sporting, cultural and cerebral activities, such as rugby, netball, short tennis, chess, choir, computers and French. This is supported by a good range of stimulating visits to consolidate learning and broaden pupils' horizons. Visits during the current year include Carmel Priory, Grizedale Forest and Barrow Dock Museum. Pupils do not at present benefit from residential visits for environmental and other studies, but there are plans to re-establish them.

25. There is good provision for pupils' personal and social education. Teachers do not allocate specific times during the week to deal with such issues. However, they do highlight them in their lesson planning so that they can emphasise them when they arise. For example, pupils discussed the value of friendship in a religious education lesson. Some Year 3 pupils appreciated the importance of working together when supporting one another in an unsupervised group reading session. The school provides good health education. Pupils learn about nutrition and personal hygiene through the science curriculum and pupils in Years 5 and 6 receive appropriate guidance on drugs awareness and sex education.

26. There are good links with other schools which benefit pupils. The headteacher has regular meetings with her counterpart in the nearby infant school. One teacher has responsibility for liaison which has resulted in a programme of visits to ease the transition of pupils. Some governors represent both schools and this adds to useful communication. Teachers share planning ideas with their colleagues at the secondary school. This has helped, among others, pupils with special educational needs. The school has satisfactory links with the broader community. Pupils have helped to design a visitor trail at a local wildlife park. They also visit the variety of local churches.

27. Provision in the school for personal development is very good, as it was at the last inspection. Spiritual values are very well promoted and are encouraged by the quiet attention often noted in class and in assemblies. Real reflection and deep thought was often noted, such as in a history lesson when the pattern in jewellery was brought to pupils' attention and in an assembly when a substantial loaf was produced from a small amount of yeast. The evident satisfaction that pupils have in the high quality products they achieve in art makes a significant contribution.

28. The children are aware of right and wrong because moral values are very well promoted. Such values were a major element of the week's assemblies. Lessons too make a significant contribution. A Year 6 debate on the Elgin Marbles, for example, raised many moral issues as well as cultural and spiritual ones. Pupils obviously care for their environment. A good example is that none of the very good displays around school are damaged in any way.

29. The thoughtfulness for others has already been mentioned and the relationships that are so good. Social values are certainly very effectively promoted. Pupils work well in pairs, on computers for instance. They readily identify with teams and the joy of winning

'Cloakroom of the Week' had to be seen to be believed.

30. Cultural values are well promoted. The many high quality displays around the school frequently cover topics such as famous artists, or other countries such as India, or cultures such as the aborigines. The work on other faiths in religious education, the study of different civilisations in history and other examples in geography, art and music all assist this area. The school has very few pupils from ethnic minority groups from whom it could enhance awareness of multi-cultural issues. This is an area that remains to be further developed despite some good resources and the inclusion of issues, for instance in assemblies.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare in the school are very good as they were at the last inspection. Child protection procedures are well set up and understood by staff. Health and safety procedures are efficiently managed and closely involve the governing body.

32. Behaviour is well monitored, informally on the basis of the excellent relationships, but also formally through such devices as a 'Lunchtime Book' and 'Report Cards' dealing with any lapses. Reward systems are well planned, well used and well understood by the children. The school is very clear on its sanctions and has used exclusion appropriately in the past when a predefined specific offence was committed. The children know where they stand in this school.

33. Attendance is very well monitored, using the computer for analysis and checks. Tight control is kept on all absence, and registers are kept very well.

34. Personal, social and health education is not formally planned or co-ordinated, but all the key elements of sex education, drugs awareness, health education and personal development are effectively delivered through the curriculum, for instance in science. Evidence of this was noted in lessons and from several planning documents. The work going on to qualify for a 'Healthy School Award' also contributes strongly to this area.

35. Systems for assessing how well pupils are achieving and progressing are good. The results of the annual national tests for eleven year olds, in English, mathematics and science, are analysed and any gaps in learning are identified. A range of additional tests is used on a regular basis to establish the level at which pupils are working, for example when the pupils enter the school in Year 3 or to decide on which pupils need extra support through booster classes in Year 6. The information gained from looking at the results of tests is used well to plan future activities in mathematics and English. In science, the assessment system is not yet as secure and information from tests and assessments is used satisfactorily. Assessment in other subjects is at various stages of development and overall satisfactory.

36. Pupils are set individual targets in English and mathematics but when they are asked what they are, they can only remember them in broad terms, for example to improve punctuation. There are some good examples of how the school raises pupils' own awareness of standards, such as a Year 6 physical education lesson where they reviewed their performance by filling in a self-evaluation sheet.

37. Since the previous inspection there has been a very good improvement in the monitoring of the achievements and progress of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils have detailed individual education plans that identify their needs. The class teacher, the support assistants, the special educational needs co-ordinator and the parents review these plans on a termly basis. This review assesses the appropriateness of the pupils'

targets and adjusts them accordingly. The support assistants working with the pupils keep an ongoing record of their achievements and give them good support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. Parents are much more involved in the school than they were reported to be at the last inspection and there is a very good partnership in place. Through the questionnaire and the inspection meeting, parents expressed very positive views of the school. In particular, they felt that the school expects their children to work hard, that teaching is good, that their children are helped to become more mature and that they like school and are making good progress. There were no areas which met strong disapproval but a few parents were unhappy about how well they were informed of their children's progress (11 percent) and about the way the school works with parents (12 percent).

39. The 'Friends' organisation offers much support, including financial support, and brings the school community together for events. Parents help with activities such as reading, swimming and, particularly, with computer work where the additional resource of ICT-skilled parents significantly enhances the pupils' learning in this subject. Parents also provide help with sports coaching which enables pupils to work in much smaller groups and to gain more from their work. Many support their children's learning through homework and teachers often make reference to homework during lessons, advising children to work with their parents on these tasks.

40. Particularly notable are the very good communications from school to parents. The headteacher keeps time free each Monday morning as a 'surgery' when parents know that they can call in without an appointment and discuss any concerns. The teaching staff are regarded as very approachable and accessible. Newsletters are sent out regularly, roughly once a month, to keep parents informed about what is happening.

41. The school provides yearly written reports about each child's progress. These are very thorough, offering full and diagnostic comments upon all subjects, and on personal development. They set targets in the core subjects. They also embrace pupils' self-assessment and parental comments. The common pattern of two parents' evenings is followed but the school has added to this, offering termly, informal meetings for parents to gain insights into the work being tackled by their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and, more recently, a new deputy. Management has been strengthened through the creation of posts for special educational needs and for liaison. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She and the senior management team have a very clear sense of purpose and direction for the school and its pupils founded in the school motto, 'semper optimum' – always the best. This is well reflected and achieved in the life of the school, for example through the quality of the learning environment with its lovely displays of pupils' work and interesting posters, pictures and artefacts.

43. The school has very good systems for monitoring teaching, learning and curriculum development. All co-ordinators play an important part in this process and a rolling programme of release time enables them to take on specific tasks. Because of this programme, some co-ordinators have had time to monitor teaching and learning in the classrooms and some still have this to do. However, all of the co-ordinators share an

enthusiasm for their work and there is a culture of self-evaluation which makes school improvement central to management. The effectiveness of this can be seen in that the inspection did not identify any areas of major weakness and all subjects or areas that could be improved further are already identified in the school development plan and form part of the current priorities for improvement.

44. There is a good working relationship between the governors, headteacher and senior management team. The governing body has improved its committee structure so that it can work effectively through shared responsibilities. Each governor also takes on a special responsibility for a particular subject or aspect so that he or she can report to the full governing body. Some of the governors have undertaken classroom visits and shared monitoring with co-ordinators, for example for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. This gives them a secure knowledge of the school. Statutory requirements are met.

45. Only one issue was identified in the last inspection and that has been dealt with very well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now very good. The school has appointed a co-ordinator. She manages the process of identifying pupils who have special educational needs effectively and advises the school on what needs to happen next. The school takes individual needs very seriously and teachers are careful to take account of pupils' difficulties early on so that appropriate support can be given and further steps, which might lead to statements of educational need, can be reduced. Preliminary plans are in place to modify the current policy and procedures in line with the new guidance and this should be completed before the end of the school year.

46. Financial controls are efficiently handled in the school and the governing body is well integrated into the process. Specific grants are used effectively. For example, the arrangements for staff development, provision for special educational needs and booster classes all have positive effects on the school's provision. The principles of best value are well understood by the headteacher and secretary, but are inadequately understood and practised by the governing body. The school has a surplus budget but no firm plans for spending it. The issue of falling roles and its impact on staffing and provision have been raised at a number of meetings but there has been no formal discussion of alternatives or plans for the immediate future. Governors have differing views and in some cases are placing too much reliance on new house building to provide an increase in numbers and a simple solution to the problem.

47. The school has sufficient teaching and support staff for the numbers of pupils on roll. All subjects are well resourced. The building is clean and well cared for and there have been improvements since the last inspection through the addition of cloakrooms and a new classroom. However, although there are sufficient rooms for the number of classes, some of these are very small. Shared areas, such as the corridor where the ICT suite is situated, the art and craft room, the library, the staff room and even the headteacher's office, are all used consistently to maximise space.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. In order to ensure that the school can continue to offer good quality of provision, the governors and the headteacher need to discuss the issues related to budget, staffing and school population and to make firm plans that take all issues into account.

See paragraph 46.

49. There are no other major issues for the school to address. There are already clear priorities within the school development plan to improve the curriculum for geography, design and technology, music and for the more able. These should continue to form a focus for developments.

See paragraphs 23 & 43.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	16	22	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0	34	47	19	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	230
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	70

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	32	26	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	21	27
	Girls	20	15	22
	Total	41	36	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (93)	62 (83)	84 (95)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	25	27
	Girls	24	19	22
	Total	49	44	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (85)	76 (83)	86 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	229
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	29

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	61.5

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	447902
Total expenditure	402655
Expenditure per pupil	1664
Balance brought forward from previous year	69987
Balance carried forward to next year	115234

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.8
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

Number of questionnaires sent out	230
Number of questionnaires returned	105

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	42	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	48	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	53	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	46	7	1	0
The teaching is good.	65	34	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	43	11	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	31	5	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	27	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	55	10	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	43	44	6	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	48	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	52	8	0	3

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

ENGLISH

50. By the age of eleven, pupils' attainment is above average. This is a similar picture to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils have good skills in listening, reading and writing but their speaking skills are not quite so strong. Pupils achieve well overall because of the good quality of teaching. Teachers structure their teaching thoughtfully and develop very good relationships with their pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy the subject and work hard.

51. The good listening skills of pupils are very much due to the positive atmosphere that teachers create in lessons. Teachers plan lessons to be interesting and explain new learning clearly. Consequently, pupils are always attentive and usually understand quickly. A brainstorming session on the technical language of electrical circuits kept pupils in a Year 4 class highly focused and made them listen intently to one another. Teachers also explain precisely what they want pupils to do and pupils, therefore, readily see what is required and lose no time in settling effectively to independent work. Pupils in a Year 3 class knew exactly how to tackle an exercise on plurals and made very good progress as a result. Teachers use good ideas to stimulate and improve pupils' listening. In a Year 6 class, pupils had to listen to pairs of lines in a poem and suggest what the second rhyming word might be. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are not so good at listening. They often need extra explanations from teachers or support staff. Higher attaining pupils on the other hand understand most things swiftly, because of their good vocabulary.

52. Pupils' speaking skills are competent but not always confident. Higher attaining pupils speak openly and effectively. This is because teachers mostly have high expectations of their pupils and pitch the level of discussion accordingly. One Year 5 teacher expected all pupils to be able to explain the difference between instructional and explanatory language. Teachers are good role models in speaking clearly and expect pupils to follow suit. One teacher insisted that a Year 6 pupil thought of an alternative to 'mental' when describing a naughty girl in a poem. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunity for all pupils to develop their speaking in lessons. Lower attaining pupils and other less confident pupils are often reluctant to join in discussions fruitfully. When they do, they do not speak with sufficient conviction or give telling reasons for their opinions. Some Year 6 pupils, for example, find it hard to say why they prefer certain kinds of reading books. Teachers often tend to ask the keener pupils to respond in lessons and sometimes neglect to include those who are less forthcoming. In addition, teachers do not always plan sufficiently for opportunities for discussion in other subjects.

53. Pupils have good reading skills. All pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and can name favourite books and authors, particularly those in vogue like J K Rowling and J R R Tolkien. Pupils appreciate poetry but do not show quite the same interest in non-fiction books. Teachers encourage pupils to read class texts in each lesson which helps pupils to gain confidence. In a Year 3 lesson, one group worked independently on a text, with more able readers helping out the less secure with tricky words. Teachers also use drama when possible and this helps pupils to be more expressive, especially when reading dialogue in stories. By the age of eleven, pupils develop good word skills and have little fear of pronouncing new words. Lower attaining pupils are quite competent but lack a certain confidence. They too can read all new words but need to pause before sounding them out. Higher attaining pupils exude confidence. They read with some style and a healthy understanding. One pupil was very lucid about what a gang-master was in the context of agricultural employment in America. Teachers give pupils ample time during the day to

practise and consolidate their reading. Extra help is also provided to help all pupils try to achieve the national standard level and this is increasingly effective.

54. Pupils write well. They write efficiently in a variety of styles. Teachers encourage pupils to structure their stories, and improve them by drafting and re-drafting. As a result, pupils' stories are well developed in a sequence of actions, although the work of lower attaining pupils tends to be too simplistic. Pupils can successfully create atmospheres like suspense. One Year 6 pupil rejoiced in describing the snakes guarding Tutankhamen's tomb, making it somewhat reminiscent of an Indiana Jones episode. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to think through their writing. They encourage debate which pupils then transfer onto paper in a list of balanced views. Pupils can, for example, argue for and against the carrying of knives in school. However, teachers do not always maximise the opportunities for factual writing. Work, in subjects like geography, often depends too much on illustration and the completion of set tasks. Pupils, therefore, do not benefit enough from these occasions to hone their broader writing skills. However, teachers do promote literature to good effect. Pupils can describe characters in books thoughtfully. "Stig is a really imaginative caveman," wrote one Year 5 pupil. A higher attaining Year 6 pupil produced a very neat and clever mnemonic – Never Eat Cream Eggs Since Sugar Always Ruins You!

55. Teaching overall is good. Teachers plan their lessons well. Teachers are aware of how well pupils learn in lessons and adjust their planning to meet their needs. One Year 5 teacher, realising that the previous day's lesson had been too demanding, sensibly went over the work in the next lesson so that all pupils understood the concept better. In a Year 3 class, one teacher asked a support assistant to help one pupil who had not fully understood previous work, while he worked with the other pupils. Teachers allow for the different abilities of pupils. They set less demanding work for pupils with special educational needs and ensure that they receive as much adult support as possible. This support is sensitive and effective. One group of younger pupils made very good progress in one session when learning to spell words with '-i-e'. However, teachers do not always provide enough open-ended opportunities for higher attaining pupils. Sometimes these pupils do the same work as other pupils and this limits their progress.

56. A real strength in English is its use through other subjects, such as science, history and ICT. This not only broadens pupils' vocabulary but also makes the language relevant. For example, Year 4 pupils were able to develop their descriptive writing following a visit to a church. One pupil referred to the calm and sense of peace. In a history lesson, Year 6 pupils had to debate whether the Elgin Marbles should be returned to Greece. In a mathematics lesson, pupils gained confidence in raising and discussing problems. Pupils are often able to word process their writing to give more impact to their work. Other activities also give pupils the chance to be creative and sometimes whimsical. One Year 5 pupil began a poem entitled 'Homework Blues' with the lines: "Here we go again, 5 x 11 and 11 x 10".

57. The school is developing the subject well. Staff benefit from regular training and there are very good resources to help teachers reinforce learning. For example, teachers use word flash cards to focus pupils' thinking and speed of reaction. There is a wide range of books, but not enough quality modern and classic literature to motivate higher attaining pupils fully. However, the school has recently begun to remedy this. The school has good systems of assessment which clarify particular strengths and areas for development. Teachers keep a good check on pupils' progress in reading and writing, although not specifically on their speaking and listening. The school analyses pupils' performances in national tests efficiently. This has helped to give staff confidence in setting high targets for current Year 6 pupils. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and well organised. She has a good overview of how well the subject is doing although she has had only limited opportunity to observe teaching in other

lessons. The literacy governor works very closely with the school and is a very valuable link between teachers, governors and parents.

MATHEMATICS

58. Pupils in Year 6 are reaching standards that are broadly average. This is a better picture than that suggested by the results of last year's National Curriculum tests which were below the national average because of the composition of the particular year group but lower than that reported in the previous inspection. Extra focus on the National Numeracy Strategy, 'Springboard' mathematics and booster classes, coupled with good teaching, are helping pupils to make good progress. These strategies are enabling the school to set challenging targets for eleven year olds and to have a good chance of achieving them.

59. By Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge of numbers and recall of facts. The highest attainers can write numbers up to a million accurately and identify the value of a particular place. Similarly they display competent knowledge of decimals and fractions. Lower attainers can write numbers up to 10,000 but are less secure with knowing what the value of a particular place is. They can write decimals and simple fractions. Pupils are capable of investigating mathematics such as the work they did on the Twelve Days of Christmas. Different levels of ability are shown in the detail of commentary such as the use of algebra by the more able to make general statements. All pupils have a sound knowledge of the names and properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Current work on estimating angles shows that almost all pupils are working at a level that is in line with what is expected for their age. They know that the angles of a triangle add up to 180 degrees and of a quadrilateral to 360 degrees. The highest attainers can use this knowledge to work out the angles of a regular quadrilateral when given only one of the angles whilst others can do so for triangles. Pupils of all abilities are competent in collecting and analysing data. They use ICT very well to record information and produce line and bar graphs, pie charts and tables of data. As they worked on a spreadsheet, pupils were using simple formulae to speed up calculations.

60. Assessment data from within the school shows that pupils are making good progress in mathematics. Year groups do vary in attainment and this is reflected in the National Curriculum results. In 2000, there were more high attainers and in 2001 more pupils with special educational needs. Generally, pupils are reaching the standards of which they are capable whether they are high attainers or pupils with special educational needs.

61. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are usually good. They are attentive, concentrate and carry out tasks well because the teachers set a brisk pace to lessons and keep pupils' interest high. In the one lesson where pupils worked more slowly and not as hard as they could, it was because the teacher did not keep such a challenging pace to the lesson or such a keen overview of what was happening in different groups. Pupils work by themselves or in pairs and small groups equally well. Their behaviour is usually good and there are constructive and good-humoured relationships between pupils and teachers. When pupils in a Year 4 set, for example, had exhausted all their possible explanations to a problem and still had not offered the answer the teacher was looking for, one said, "because you are a good teacher". The comment was accepted graciously and the work proceeded seriously after a little laughter.

62. The quality of teaching is good overall with a majority of lessons in the inspection being very good, a similar picture to the previous inspection. Teachers prepare thoroughly for their lessons. Very good use is made of the school's ICT equipment to introduce lessons, for example by using laptop computers and data projectors so that pupils see information in a

very well presented form. The system of having two sets in each year group allows teachers to plan for a narrower range of attainment and to match the pace and challenge of activities to the needs of the pupils more closely. In Year 6, booster classes help as well in that the two classes become three and the smaller numbers help teachers to give more individual attention as pupils work independently. Mental and oral work is often conducted at a very brisk pace with high expectations of pupils' ability to think and respond at speed, as in a Year 6 group where the teacher pushed pupils to be more accurate and to work more quickly. In some lessons, mental and oral work is presented imaginatively. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils were given cards with different weights expressed as either fractions or decimals and had to order themselves and their cards from smallest to largest and to beat their previous speed for the task. They did so quietly, quickly, with interest and also with the occasional debate when two cards of a similar value but different forms came together. Timescales for tasks are made clear so that pupils are aware that they need to get straight on with their work. For instance, regular reminders of how much time was to be allowed for each section kept Year 5 pupils working steadily with little time wasted. Resources for practical activities are well organised and teachers give clear instructions about what pupils have to do, as in a Year 3 lesson where pupils had to find objects to balance a kilogram weight. As a result, pupils can begin with minimal help at the start.

63. Pupils' have good opportunities to use mathematical skills and knowledge in some but not all subjects. For example, science and mathematics are linked together as pupils collect information, such as finding averages of temperature readings and interpreting graphs of data they have collected. These are often presented well through using the computer to record information. In history, pupils create time-lines and in geography they map co-ordinates accurately using the more complex six figures. Since there is little design and technology, pupils have only limited opportunity to measure in practical contexts.

64. The subject co-ordinator is giving a strong lead to developments. He has had some opportunities to monitor teaching in classrooms and this, together with the detailed analysis of data and pupils' work, gives him a good overview of what is happening and what needs to be developed.

SCIENCE

65. The results in the 2001 tests for eleven year olds are below the national levels but evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that this was a temporary lowering in the standards, because of the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that year group. Teachers have predicted that the results in the 2002 test will show an improvement. Currently, the standards of pupils' work in science are in line with the national expectations. The introduction of a scheme of work based on national guidelines is having an impact on the way that activities are taught using practical investigations and this is improving the progress the pupils are making in their scientific knowledge. The progress that pupils make is satisfactory and this should improve further when a thorough method of assessing the pupils' achievements across the classes is introduced.

66. By the age of eleven pupils have a sound base of factual information. They can talk confidently about a range of scientific facts, for example that the leaves of a plant convert sunlight into food, and they are able to remember that the process is called photosynthesis. They can describe the benefits and drawbacks of the effects of friction, such as that air resistance helps slow down a parachute but also makes it more difficult for cars to travel at speed. They show sound skills for investigating, observing, interpreting information and predicting in their current work on how temperature affects the rate of dissolving and they can give good answers to what is required in order to make a test fair. At the end of the lesson,

pupils were able to say that salt takes less time to dissolve in hot water than in cold water. The more able pupils extended this by making sensible predictions of what the effect on the rate of dissolving would be if the temperature of the water were to be reduced even further. Pupils constructed a line graph to interpret their results.

67. Current lessons show that pupils are making steady progress in their learning in science. In Year 4, pupils explored the methods by which solids can be separated from liquids using filter paper and kitchen roll, and arrived at a decision that the filter paper was more effective. When completing work on food chains, a pupil correctly identified that sunlight is necessary to make the plant grow, that the ladybird eats the plant, and that the bird eats the ladybird. In another rather creative example, the pupil stated that the snail eats the plant and that French people eat snails! Pupils in Year 3 understand the difference between materials that are opaque, translucent and transparent and are able to give examples of where these properties are used in everyday products, such as the transparent quality of glass in the windows of the classroom.

68. The teaching observed in science lessons ranged from satisfactory to very good. Overall, taking account of pupils' work and knowledge, it is good. The increased use of investigations as outlined in the national guidelines makes good use of practical activities to motivate the pupils to make predictions, as in the lessons on the properties of materials in Year 3. Before they started the activity the pupils were asked to say how many pieces of paper they thought would block out the light from a torch. Pupils were fascinated to find out whether their predictions were correct. In the very good lessons the teachers used probing and challenging questions to make pupils think, as in Year 4 where the pupils were asked why they could not use a sieve to separate the solid from the liquid.

69. When pupils are arranged in groups and allowed to devise an experiment, they show high levels of interest and concentrate well on tasks. When the teacher performs the investigation and the pupils get little opportunity to get a 'hands-on' experience, then the understanding of what they are studying is not as secure and pupils lose interest in the activity. In Years 3, 4 and 5 the progress of the more able pupils is limited by the fact that the follow-up work to the investigations does not fully extend the development of their scientific knowledge and there are limited chances for them to develop independent research skills. In Year 6, the use of information gained from a detailed analysis of the previous years' test results and the opportunity for the pupils to access the *revise wise* program on the computer are effective in focusing appropriate targets for their lessons.

70. The management of the subject is good and the co-ordinator is already aware of the need to reinforce the use of practical investigations as an integral part of science lessons and to establish a method of monitoring pupils' progress as they move through the school.

ART AND DESIGN

71. Pupils' ability in art and design is well above national expectations. The school has continued to develop the subject since the last inspection and the quality of pupils' work has improved. Pupils are especially effective in the use of clay. The school gives a high profile to art, as can be seen in the impressive displays of pupils' work in the school.

72. By the age of eleven, pupils have a very good knowledge of art and artists. Teachers introduce pupils to an interesting variety of major artists so that they appreciate different styles. These range from the pointillism of Georges Seurat to the formal portraiture of George Romney himself. Pupils are alive to the distinctions between the dreamy jungle pictures of Henri Rousseau, for example, and the stark reality of Lowry's matchstick men and

industrial landscapes. Teachers ensure that art permeates most areas of curriculum. As a result, pupils know the importance of precision when drawing diagrams in geography or gauging proportion in the façade of a Tudor house. Pupils have a strong knowledge of terminology. Pupils know, for example, that the watery binding agent for pieces of clay is called slip.

73. Pupils possess an impressive range of skills because teachers generally have very good knowledge of the subject and high expectations of their pupils. They explain new techniques very clearly and enable pupils, through the use of sketchbooks for example, to hone their skills. Pupils have an eye for detail. This is very evident in their observational work. Those in Year 3, for instance, produced some very accurate pastel pictures of molluscs with sensitive colouring and shading. Year 4 pupils showed similarly effective skills when drawing fruit bowls brimming with fruit. Not only were botanical features, like pineapple leaves, keenly noted, but so was the crazed surface of the vase. Teachers constantly seek ways to broaden pupils' experiences. Pupils in Year 5 handled computer art with dexterity and impact. Some of their own interpretations of 'The Snail' by Matisse were vibrant with colour and shape. Teachers also use influences from around the world to inspire pupils. Consequently, pupils really enjoy the variety and concentrate hard to become accomplished. Pupils in Year 6 were meticulous when stippling aboriginal designs in vivid primary colours.

74. Pupils have advanced skills in working with clay. The subject co-ordinator is a potter and enthuses colleagues and pupils alike. At the basic level, younger pupils can cut shapes from thin slabs to create sea-life, such as sea-horses, fish and octopuses. They then colour them accurately. In the same way, pupils in Year 5 produced a bright display of world flags which is a central feature in the main hall. Teachers show pupils how to develop simple shapes into works of art. Pupils in Year 3 began with basic leaf shapes and then turned them into wonderful layered vases, bowls and flower shapes. They dangled some of the smaller ones in a lively mobile. Teachers bring other subjects alive through art. Year 4 pupils were left in little doubt what Tudor houses looked like after constructing very detailed model houses. Pupils made their own little bricks, cut small strips for beams and used a fork to create the right feel for a thatched roof. Teachers make sure that pupils put emotions into art. Pupils in Year 6 created tear drops, agonised smiles and looks of bewilderment in their Greek tragedy masks. These pupils use detail well. They even worked clay into fine strands to represent hair and etched the ribs of the leaves in the laurel wreaths.

75. The teaching of art is, therefore, very good. Teachers work hard to make the subject highly focused, enjoyable and a fundamental part of learning. Pupils fully appreciate this and need little bidding to apply themselves whole-heartedly. The subject co-ordinator is the driving force and is always ready to help colleagues when necessary. Supported by other staff, he shows the value that is put on pupils' work in powerful displays, which help to make the school a stimulating learning environment. He also runs an art club for older pupils in which pupils can perfect more skills. These pupils produced, for example, a striking tile tableau featuring painted figures and symbols from Ancient Egypt. The comprehensive resources ensure that all pupils can develop necessary techniques, including printing and lino cutting.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

76. During the week of the inspection no design and technology lessons were observed because design and technology shares time with art and the focus for this half term is art.

No judgement can therefore be made on the quality of teaching. There were too few examples of pupils' work to make a secure judgement on the standards in the subject but what was seen was about average.

77. Pupils in Year 4 have made pirate puppets from different materials and those in Year 6 made a shadoof, using various methods of joining materials, for example sellotape, blu-tack and string. In Year 3 pupils have designed a picture frame and in Year 5 they have made pan-pipes from bamboo tubes and wrapped the tubes together with different colours of wool. The best example of planning a design and then producing it was in a Year 4 class, where the pupils made robots that operate using a sliding mechanism. Design skills are used effectively in art. There are a number of high quality objects on display around the school that have been designed and made from clay, for example model houses and tiles.

78. The subject co-ordinator has recognised the need to extend the range of design and making activities that are available to the pupils. The recent introduction of a scheme of work for each of the classes, based on national guidelines for the subject, will improve these opportunities. The school has recognised the need to improve design and technology and it is a priority on the current school development plan.

GEOGRAPHY

79. By the age of eleven, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. This shows little change since the last inspection. The school has recently made the development of geography a priority, but any changes have yet to have any significant impact.

80. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge and skills. Teachers have a good rapport with their pupils which results in very good behaviour and concentration. Teachers introduce topics effectively and use good resources so that pupils can appreciate other cultures. For example, from large photographs, pupils in Year 4 were able to learn quickly of the lifestyle in an Indian village. Music and local artefacts also helped to set the scene. Whilst pupils can describe activities like tea-picking, they are less secure about deducing information. Pupils in Year 6 can give some details of life in Egypt, yet do not provide a lot of detail. They refer to the different fruit and vegetables in that country, but do not say what they are. Teachers do not develop these skills enough through focused discussion. Lower attaining pupils, especially, often miss out initially on clear understanding of issues. Teachers have to work hard during group work to clarify matters.

81. Pupils gather and present information appropriately. They produce tally charts of preferred local supermarkets, for example, and show overall findings in simple graphs. They understand six-figure co-ordinates on maps and can draw diagrams to show how water supplies work. However, pupils tend to work at similar levels and teachers do not provide challenging enough work to meet their different needs. This is particularly the case for higher attaining pupils, who do not have enough opportunity to study independently at their own pace. They produce neater written work and illustrations but that is all. On occasions, pupils use their own initiative to unearth information. One pupil downloaded a photograph of Indian life from the Internet at home. However, teachers do not make independent research a key part of regular learning.

82. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. Teachers follow a nationally approved scheme of work and plan work together across year groups. This ensures that pupils receive appropriate learning opportunities. However, the school does not allocate a lot of time for geography. As a result, teachers do not always have the chance to develop topics fully and this inhibits learning. Year 6 pupils, for example, struggled to recall the names of

major rivers that they had studied the previous term. Teachers do blend geography in with other subjects, which gives an added perspective. For example, a study of the river Nile linked naturally with pupils' work in history on Ancient Egypt. Teachers do not, though, make the most of other similar opportunities. They do not ask pupils to write in depth and so improve their factual writing. Similarly, there is not enough scope for pupils to use their computer skills in fact-finding.

83. The school is beginning to develop the subject sensibly. The new co-ordinator has already revised the subject policy, re-organised resources and started to analyse pupils' work. At present, teachers do not have a good enough view of pupils' skills and knowledge, because there is no efficient system of assessment.

HISTORY

84. During the inspection only two lessons were observed because of timetable restrictions. Further evidence on the achievements of the pupils was gained by talking to them, studying the work in their books and from the good quality displays around the school. This information suggests that, as at the time of the last inspection, standards are above the national expectations by the age of eleven and that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

85. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good knowledge of time lines and are able to place events, such as the Roman invasion, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Tudors in the correct chronological order. They can describe in detail events based on their study of World War II, for example, features of the blitz. A more able pupil talked about the story 'Goodnight Mr. Tom' and how it described the trauma suffered by the children caught up in the evacuation. Pupils are able to state how the Romans invented features such as central heating and built long straight roads. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils discussed elements of classical Greek architecture, for example how Ionic pillars have influenced the ideas and designs found in modern buildings. Pupils in Year 3 looked at pictures of artefacts, for example jewellery from the Anglo-Saxon times, and showed appreciation of the type of design synonymous with this period.

86. In the two lessons that were observed, teaching was good. Teachers had prepared interesting and detailed research information and made it clear to pupils what they were going to learn. Pupils showed real interest in the content of the lessons and gave well thought answers to the questions asked by the teacher; for example in a lesson on Ancient Greece, pupils could say why the Parthenon was built. In this Year 6 lesson pupils were preparing to debate whether the Elgin Marbles should be returned to Greece. In the Year 3 lesson, the teacher provided very good support to a pupil with special educational needs which enabled the pupil to be fully involved in expressing views as part of the class discussion. The school makes good use of visits to local places of historical interest, such as Carmel Priory and the Dock Museum in Barrow in Furness to extend the pupils' experiences. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their independent and expressive writing skills in history, for example writing a letter home about their 'visit' to Egypt and in reproducing their versions of Howard Carter's diary. Artistic skills are used effectively to illustrate a range of historical events, such as the Blitz in World War II.

87. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is keen to develop a portfolio of examples of pupils' work and to increase the range of artefacts used in lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

88. Pupils quickly acquire basic skills in Year 3 and make good progress throughout the school. In each year group, pupils reach standards that are above national expectations and many are well above the standards for their age.

89. By Year 6, pupils are competent with word processing. They can operate the computer for creating screen art and for combining graphics and text. Pupils can do simple searches on compact discs and more complex searches of database programs. They know that the Internet is a powerful tool for searching for information as well as a quick way for emailing messages to friends. During the inspection, pupils were learning how to input data and how to use a formula as a short cut to calculate arithmetical problems using a simple spreadsheet.

90. Pupils in Year 5 used both a compact disk and the Internet to search for information on topics. They knew how to get started and also how to restart when the computer 'froze'. They displayed a good level of ICT vocabulary and knowledge, for example when they talked about what a search engine is and does and which search engine they were using. By the end of the session, they were able to conclude that the Internet is more successful because it has access to a much wider range of information than can be contained on a compact disc. In Year 4 pupils were developing their ideas about painting in the style of Lowry by experimenting with colours and shapes on the computer. In Year 3, pupils were replying to emails from friends. In all these activities, the pupils worked hard but with relaxed concentration. They listen to instructions and watch demonstrations carefully. They are keen to learn and ask pertinent questions. All work with good levels of co-operation and of persistence. An example of this was when a more able pupil in Year 4 imported a picture with a landscape orientation which he wanted to rotate to portrait. Having experimented with all the possibilities he knew, including the 'help' function, he asked another pupil for help and they sorted the problem out between them without recourse to adult help.

91. The school gives a high profile to ICT. All of the staff have attended courses to improve their skills and knowledge and there is an unusually high level of confidence in ICT. Many lessons, for example science in Year 5, begin with presentations and explanations using *PowerPoint*. Data projectors are used particularly effectively at the start of lessons in the computer suite. In Year 4, for example, the techniques for importing pictures into text were meticulously explained and demonstrated so that when pupils went to work by themselves they were able to start the program and begin their work independently. ICT is well supported by parents and friends who are also skilled so that pupils often have several adults to turn to when they meet a problem. Consequently problems are quickly dealt with and pupils waste little time waiting for help.

92. A positive feature of extra-curricular activities in ICT is that priority is given to those Year 4 pupils who do not have computers at home so that they have a better chance of keeping up with those who can, and do, practise on their own computers.

93. The quality of teaching is very good. The subject benefits from the clear leadership of the co-ordinator, the support of a knowledgeable deputy headteacher and staff who have all been trained and are happy to use computers. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge is good. They are all enthusiastic and prepare their lessons well. An example of this was a Year 3 lesson where pupils had been emailing contacts in another school. The teacher had checked who had replies and personally sent emails to all those who did not have one so that no one was disappointed and everyone had something to read and to reply to. A strength of the teaching in ICT is that every lesson has a purpose and no time is wasted on low level tasks such as typing in a corrected piece of writing. Computers are used effectively to support learning in all subjects, often touching more than one subject at once. Even in

physical education, data loggers were used to collect and monitor information on changes to light and heat in the hall and to produce graphs.

94. Since the last inspection, the resources of the computer suite have been improved and extended via other ICT resources such as laptops and digital cameras. A new development is a data logger which has just been acquired to strengthen the area of ICT related to controlling and monitoring events. Effective staff development has been undertaken and assessment procedures have been introduced.

MUSIC

95. Because of timetables and teacher illnesses, it was possible to see only two full music lessons; one was in Year 3 and the other in Year 5. Other evidence was obtained from listening to singing in assembly and from the extra-curricular recorder lessons. From this evidence, it is likely that in class music lessons, pupils are reaching standards that are in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum.

96. Pupils throughout the school sing hymns in unison and sometimes in two parts. They sing enthusiastically and with a clear tone. The Year 5 pupils were composing a sound poem to support their work in history about the blitz in World War II. They had prepared a word plan and decided on sounds to represent such features as the approaching planes, sirens, or fire engines. The actual musical skills involved were quite low since they were simple percussion effects but pupils followed the word plan carefully and were quick to point out anyone, pupils or teacher, who missed out a section. The teacher brought in some musical terminology which was new to some pupils and familiar to others. Words such as *legato*, *piano*, *forte* and *staccato* were considered to see which was most appropriate at particular points.

97. In Year 3, pupils following a broadcast programmes sang songs well. The percussion work following a graphic score presumed a degree of skill that most of the children did not have. When the whole class worked together, the performance was held by the teacher and by the skills of a few pupils who have additional music lessons. Some of the groups could not manage to read the score and perform at once and there was not enough time to develop these skills further. However, they tried hard and clearly enjoyed the activity.

98. Teaching in class music lessons was satisfactory. Planning shows that the teachers are giving pupils a balanced experience of music making. However, teachers are not as confident in teaching music as they are other subjects.

99. Some pupils have recorder and instrumental lessons where they work at above average levels. They read conventional notation accurately and perform pieces in several parts with skill.

100. There is no co-ordinator for music on the staff but the part-time music specialist is supporting developments by working in classes with teachers to provide ideas and greater confidence. This is one of the priorities on the school development plan that is currently in force.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. Pupils' attainment in physical education is above the standards expected nationally which is better than reported in the previous inspection. In the lessons observed, pupils made good progress in the development of their skills in a range of activities.

102. By the age of eleven, the majority of the pupils are competent swimmers and a number of them are members of local swimming clubs in Ulverston and Dalton. In a Year 4 lesson held at the local leisure centre, all the pupils showed that they could swim competently. The class was divided into two groups with the teacher taking the more able while the swimming instructor concentrated on the stroke technique of the others. Pupils reach good standards in movement, games and gymnastics. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, they were able to transfer a sequence of movements, including a balance and a jump, onto the apparatus. They displayed good skills in holding a stable position on the narrow balancing bar. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed good progress in their development of ball skills in using a bat and ball and in a basketball lesson. In a well-devised warm-up session at the beginning of the lesson, pupils controlled the bouncing of a ball as they knelt, stood or sat. They displayed good dribbling skills and could throw with accuracy to a partner. Pupils were able to maintain a rally when hitting a table tennis ball to one another. In an after-school football club, pupils dribbled with close control and could shoot when the ball was moving, even in the wet conditions.

103. The quality of teaching ranged from good to very good. The common factor in all the lessons seen was the very good use of a warm-up period at the beginning of each session. The teachers asked the pupils the purpose of this activity and pupils were able to respond by stating that it was to get their muscles stretching in preparation for exercise. The high level of pupil performance is a direct result of the high expectations of the teachers. Very good use is made of the pupils' demonstrations to enable the rest of the class to appreciate the standard expected, for example 'the puppet on a string' activity in a Year 3 lesson assisted the pupils in appreciating the upright position they must take when Scottish dancing. Because of the good pace generated in the lessons, the pupils showed good concentration and a real interest in trying to improve their individual performance. Following a Year 6 lesson, pupils filled in a self-evaluation sheet in order to assess their performance during the lesson. All the activities in physical education are well supported by a very good range of high quality resources.

104. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic member of staff. Good use is made of local facilities and there is good parent support for the activities, such as helping with the football club and escorting the pupils to their swimming lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

105. Levels of attainment are satisfactory. By the age of eleven, pupils' knowledge and understanding are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This finding is the same as that of the last inspection. Teachers ensure that pupils encounter a good range of religious issues but do not always expect enough work from the pupils.

106. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of Christianity and other religions by the age of eleven. Teachers plan their lessons sensibly so that pupils can build up a systematic knowledge. Teachers highlight moral and social issues, often using bible stories such as the Good Samaritan. As a result, pupils clearly appreciate the value of charity and friendship, for example. One Year 3 pupil described a friend as "someone who listens to you". Teachers show the relevance of religion in everyday life. Pupils, therefore, know that Orthodox Jewish people will eat only kosher meat and that Christians use candles to help them to reflect on issues. Teachers use resources effectively to emphasise contrasting accounts and to promote discussion. A video on evolution helped pupils in Year 5 to draw comparisons with

the biblical version of the creation. Teachers use more hands-on resources to bring the subject alive. Year 6 teachers provided a Jewish Shabbat meal, complete with kibbush cup and specially made bread. Consequently, pupils appreciated the sense of occasion and the symbolic aspects of the meal.

107. Despite this, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils. Much work revolves around class discussion and not enough on consolidation through writing and illustration. By the age of eleven, pupils can present facts reasonably well, such as the variety of biblical plagues. However, their knowledge can be patchy. Pupils cannot, for example, recall many of the Ten Commandments. They do not express opinions readily, even on simple matters. One Year 6 pupil commented on a Christmas card he had made: "I chose this design because it looks Christmassy." Teachers in Year 4 do expect more from their pupils. They insist on quality of detail, including correct terminology. As a result, pupils wrote at length about a recent church visit, mentioning features like pulpits and stained-glass windows. One Year 5 teacher is caring about detail and also the quality of pupils' presentation. Pupils, therefore, produce accurate bible stories and neat drawings of, for example, symbols of Sikhism.

108. The teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers develop a sociable, caring atmosphere in classrooms which encourages pupils to have a relaxed approach to the subject. They sometimes invoke a sense of spirituality. One teacher counterbalanced the richness of the Shabbat meal with a prayer for the starving children around the world. However, there is a more matter-of-fact feel to most lessons. Sometimes, teachers are keen to keep to the planned timing of their lessons and do not develop all opportunities for pupils. This tends to disadvantage lower attaining pupils, who are often allowed to take a back seat in class discussions. The lack of formal assessment procedures means that teachers do not meet the needs of individual pupils enough. This is especially true of higher attaining pupils who do not benefit from enough opportunities to work independently at their own pace.

109. Teachers are able to acquaint pupils with a variety of Christian centres of worship and a Buddhist temple. However, there is little opportunity, within striking distance of the school, for pupils to fully appreciate other faiths, such as Islam and Judaism through visits. The school has done well to improve the quality of resources and there is now a good range of artefacts to support learning.