

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dalton-in-Furness

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112357

Headteacher: Mr D J Prescott

Reporting inspector: Mr K F Saltfleet
22291

Dates of inspection: 29 April - 2 May 2002

Inspection number: 196435

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Crooklands Brow Dalton-in-Furness Cumbria
Postcode:	LA15 8JH
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Patterson
Date of previous inspection:	23 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22291	Keith Saltfleet	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage English Information and communication technology Art and design Geography History Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9777	David Heath	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupil attitudes values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21193	John Lea	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of the Rosary is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school situated on the edge of the small town of Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria. Its pupils are drawn not only from Dalton but also from the nearby larger town of Barrow, and outlying villages within the parish after which the school is named. Changes in the school's admission policy have made it more open to children outside the Catholic Church, who now represent over 50 per cent of the school's population. Even with this wide intake there is still a strong sense of community and parents are very interested in the progress their children make. The number on roll has increased significantly since the last inspection in 1997 from 85 to 107 pupils in January 2002, although still much smaller than other primary schools when compared with the average size nationally of 226 pupils.

The social economic backgrounds of the pupils are quite diverse and when compared nationally, the proportion of children relatively advantaged in these terms is average; unemployment levels in the area are similar to those in the rest of country. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average and there are no pupils speaking English as an additional language. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average and represents the full ability range. Almost all pupils have attended nursery or playgroup. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (16 per cent) and those with a Statement of Special Educational Need is below the national average. The school admits children to the reception class in the September of the school year in which they are five. Currently there are three children in the school who are under five.

The school's Mission Statement makes its commitment clear: "To provide opportunities for personal and academic growth and to ensure that all involved relate to each other with care, respect and tolerance".

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Our Lady of the Rosary is an effective school, popular with pupils and parents alike. It is a warm and welcoming community in which pupils learn happily and prepares them for the next phase of their education. They are taught well and most pupils attain the standards in English, mathematics and science expected of their age with a significant number achieving a higher level. Standards in reading are particularly good. Pupils are interested in school and show positive attitudes and behaviour and with good all round relationships. It is very well led by the dedicated headteacher who has the good support of a committed, hard-working staff and knowledgeable governing body. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils' achievement in reading.
- The good quality of teaching and pupils' good attitudes and behaviour make a positive contribution to their learning.
- The high quality leadership of the headteacher, strongly supported by the governing body, give a clear focus to further success.
- The school's ethos allows pupils to flourish so that by the time they leave they are mature and responsible.
- Strong partnership with parents and the community make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - reducing the differences in attainment between boys and girls; *
 - providing more challenge for the more able pupils;*
 - making more effective use of information gained from assessment.*
- Extending pupils' writing opportunities and planning in more depth, a progressive approach to teaching drafting techniques.
- Providing pupils with more structured opportunities for investigative work in mathematics.
- Some aspects of information and communication technology.*

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

Areas identified in the school development plan are indicated with an asterisk (*).

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection there have been considerable changes. The school population has grown, the accommodation has improved, and there are more teachers and support staff in the classroom.

All the key issues from the last report have been addressed. Whole-school planning by teachers is now well established. The school's policy and practice for marking has been reviewed. The quality of teaching is better. Teachers share their expertise and celebrate examples of excellent work by pupils. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects to give guidance to teachers on what to teach and when. The time allocated to subjects is now in line with national recommendations. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been sustained. Pupils in the juniors now attain the expected standards in art and design, and design and technology. Provision for information and communication technology in terms of and new computers and software is better, as are standards in the infants. However, there are still some areas for further improvement. Statutory requirements are met in regard to the marking of registers and the information provided to parents. A policy for sex education is in place.

STANDARDS

The children in the reception class settle well into school and make good progress. Almost all the children in this year's class are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. In literacy and numeracy a significant number of children are working on the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum.

In both infant and junior classes, achievement overall is satisfactory and most pupils attain the expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science. A number of these pupils reach a higher level of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs, make good progress. This represents good achievement in relation to their abilities and is the result of the good teaching and classroom support that they receive.

Although comparisons with national and similar schools are unreliable, due to the small numbers of Year 6 pupils who took the tests in 2001, the school's achievements are highlighted when comparing attainment over the last four years. Results of the national tests for 11 year olds have fluctuated, reflecting the differences in each group. However, the overall trend in English, mathematics and science has been for standards to be broadly in line with the national average. It also highlights the differences in the achievement of boys and girls in English and mathematics. The school's focus on teaching the basic skills ensures that pupils reach the targets set.

Standards are in line with national expectations in art, history, design and technology, music and physical education. Standards in information and communication technology are improving but there are some areas, particularly in the junior classes, which could be further developed. There is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on standards in geography.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The majority of pupils show positive attitudes to their work, to members of staff and to school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school and this has a beneficial effect on learning.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate very well to adults and to each other. They share ideas and work sensibly together. The majority enjoy taking responsibility for jobs around the school and are keen to help with routine tasks.
Attendance	Good. However, a significant number of parents take pupils on holiday in term time.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They work hard and are happy. They understand the effects of their actions on others and show a high degree of respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs. Older pupils are becoming mature, show good initiative and take personal responsibility very well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching throughout the school is good. Almost all the lessons observed during the inspection were either good or better. Examples of very good teaching were seen in all classes. This consistency in the quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the standards of attainment pupils' achieve throughout the school.

A major strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers use a wide range of strategies to keep pupils motivated and behaving well. In the reception class this leads to good learning and gives these young children a good start in school. In the other classes they teach the basic skills in literacy and numeracy consistently well and have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. As a result, the pupils know exactly what is expected of them and they work very hard. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and receive good quality support from the classroom support assistants.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Provision for children in the reception class is good. The curriculum for older pupils is broad and balanced and enhanced by an interesting variety of visits and visitors and meets the needs of all pupils. Personal, social and health education is taught, although currently this lacks the support of a formal scheme of work.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers' planning ensures that work is well matched to their needs. They receive good support in the classroom.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, very good. Pupils develop a set of values, principles and beliefs which help them become mature and responsible. They are encouraged to be independent and to reflect on the result of their actions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff know all pupils well, both academically and personally. Procedures for monitoring behaviour are very good. Child protection procedures are good.

There is a strong partnership with parents who are kept well informed. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good and this makes a very worthwhile addition to their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good and caring leadership and sets the tone for the whole school. He is supported by a hardworking team of teachers and other adults.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory duties well and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are particularly effective in their role as critical friend.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a clear view of its work and analyses what works well and why. There is a need to make more use of the information gained from assessments to further raise standards. Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are good.
The strategic use of resources	The systems for financial planning are very good. The school uses its available resources carefully and matches its spending to the needs of its pupils. It applies the principles of best value well.

There is a good number of well-qualified and experienced teachers, and classroom support assistants, to meet the demands of the curriculum. Learning resources are good in most subjects, although those for outdoor play in the reception class could be improved. The accommodation is in good order and ensures an attractive learning environment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • The progress they make. • The good behaviour and the promotion of good values and attitudes. • Good standards of teaching throughout the school. • All staff are friendly and approachable. • The school's expectations. • The way the school is managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • Homework.

Sixteen parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector prior to the inspection and 33 questionnaires were returned. It is clear that the parents strongly support the work of the school. A minority of parents would like to see a more interesting range of activities outside lessons and homework to be improved. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the parents, although they feel that the range of activities offered outside lessons is good. The school is reviewing its arrangements for homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The initial assessment of children's abilities when they first enter the reception class shows that most start school with average levels of attainment for their age in all areas of learning, covering a wide range of ability. Almost all children have received some form of pre-school experience. Reception groups vary in ability significantly from year to year and in numbers. Almost all the children in this year's class are making good progress and on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. In literacy and numeracy a significant number of pupils are working on the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum.
2. Results in the Year 2001 national tests and tasks show that pupils aged seven achieved standards that were well above average in reading, average in writing and below in mathematics. A comparison with similar schools shows the same picture. Teacher assessments show that standards in science were very high in both comparisons, and in the top five per cent of schools. The percentage of pupils reaching a higher level was well above the national average in reading, below in writing, well below in mathematics and close to the national average in science. Over the past four years, pupils' attainment in tests has varied from year to year. However, during this period they remained close to the national average in writing and well above in reading, with a marked difference in the favour of reading. Standards in mathematics were just below the national average. The variations in standards reflect the differing proportions of pupils with special educational needs in each year group and the number who enter the school other than at the beginning of the reception year.
3. Inspection findings show that achievement for most of the small number pupils currently in Year 2 is satisfactory. They are on course to attain the expected level for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science with a number to reach a higher level of attainment. Standards in art and design, and design and technology, history, music and physical education are satisfactory. There has been an improvement in information and communication technology. This is mainly due to better teaching, resources and the improved curriculum. There is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on standards in geography. From listening to pupils read, it is clear that standards in reading are particularly good throughout the school.
4. The achievement of pupils in Year 6 is satisfactory. In the current class, most pupils are on course to attain the expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science, with a number to reach a higher level of attainment. This compares favourably with the results in 2001 national tests and tasks, which show that standards dipped due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Attainment in English was below the national average and mathematics and science well below. A comparison with similar schools shows the same picture. However, comparisons from year to year with national and similar schools can be unreliable, due to the small numbers of pupils tested and the differences in ability of year groups. The effect of one pupil on a school's percentage measure can be considerable, whereas in a larger school it will be less marked. For example, last year each Year 6 pupil represented approximately 11 per cent.

5. However, by comparing attainment over the last four years more reliable conclusions can be drawn about pupils' achievements. The rate of improvement over the past four years in the national tests for 11 year olds has fluctuated, reflecting the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each cohort. The overall trend in English, mathematics and science has been for standards to be broadly in line with the national average. However, an analysis of the school's performance highlights two areas of concern. Firstly that there are significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls; boys in English, girls in mathematics, and that in order to raise standards further there is a need to provide able pupils with more challenging work. The school has recognised this and is working hard to address them. The inspection team fully endorses the points for action in the school development plan. Indeed, there is some evidence from teachers' assessments that this is proving successful, particularly in number of pupils in Years 2 and 6, who are expected to reach higher levels this year.
6. Standards are better in art and design, and design and technology, again due to the improved teaching and curriculum. In history, music, and physical education they are also in line with standards expected of pupils aged 11. Standards in information and communication technology are improving but there are some areas which could be further developed. There is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on standards in geography.
7. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational need achieve well. They have the very good support in lessons of classroom support assistants, who work in very close partnership with class teachers to meet pupils' specific learning needs. Pupils regularly meet the targets set for them in their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Since the last inspection behaviour in lessons has improved and this is helping to improve standards. Pupils are keen and eager to come to school. Throughout the day their behaviour is good. In the dining room and playground it is clear that good relationships exist between pupils. During lessons, they show interest, maintain their concentration and respond well to the teachers' questioning. A good example was seen in a design and technology lesson when they enjoyed discussing the purpose of packaging and how the words and design influence the buyer.
9. There were no incidents of bullying or inappropriate behaviour witnessed during the inspection. In the current school year there has been one fixed period exclusion. Pupils are respectful to adults, use their initiative and take personal responsibility very well. The older pupils are encouraged to be good role models and they help their younger schoolmates by means of a 'buddy' system. The school forum meetings give the older pupils very good opportunities to discuss school issues. For example, they discussed how to improve behaviour in a mature manner and show that they are well on the way to becoming responsible citizens.
10. The majority of pupils have good levels of attendance and in the last school year, attendance was above the national average, but almost half the children have lost valuable time by their parents taking them on holiday during the term. Pupils arrive at school early and lessons start on time. The recommendations from the previous report on the completion of registers and meeting the statutory requirements with regard to attendance have been addressed.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. With the exception of the Foundation Stage, classes are of mixed ages and abilities with an average size of 30 pupils. Planning and classroom management of these wide ranges of age and ability are challenging. Teachers rise to this and in the lessons seen the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Twenty-six out of the 27 lessons seen during the inspection were good or better, a quarter of which, were very good. Examples of this very good teaching are seen in all classes. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when 13 per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory and the number of good and very good lessons was lower. Weaknesses in teaching in the previous inspection were related to inappropriate classroom management, planning, lack of knowledge in some subjects, low expectations and slow pace. The quality of assessment was variable and in some cases marking was not informative. This is no longer the case. Whole-school planning by teachers is now well established. The school's policy and practice for marking have been reviewed. The support and assistance that the teachers give to each other have a positive impact on the quality of teaching. All staff have very high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard. Pupils live up to these expectations.
12. The improvement in teaching in the school is significant. This is because of the good quality of the monitoring of teaching and learning, particularly by the headteacher. It also reflects the enthusiasm with which all staff have tackled recent changes and the way in which they work together for the benefit of all pupils. Pupils' behaviour in all classes is invariably good and in almost all lessons they listen well, try hard, and co-operate together in a sensible and constructive way. To a great extent this is because teaching standards have improved since the last inspection.
13. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good. There are two part time teachers in the reception class. They have the very good support of an experienced nursery nurse and together they make an effective team. Their teaching is based on the clear understanding that young children need to develop communication and thinking skills, to formulate ideas and opinions through first-hand experience. Talking to children develops their vocabulary, and activities such as role play develop their personal and social skills. Their enthusiastic, supportive and patient approach enables the children to be confident in their learning. Children's learning is highly active and consequently all work hard and show good levels of concentration and independence for their ages. Parent volunteers and students on placement are organised very well by teachers and give extra support so that children particularly in their language and mathematical development, are able to work in very small groups and receive a good proportion of individual attention. Because of this good teaching almost all children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals with a significant number of pupils working on the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum in English and mathematics.
14. Throughout the school, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers have worked hard to implement both strategies with learning objectives firmly focused on pupils' needs. Strategies such as the regular use of shared texts in the literacy hour and the wide use made of books for research are very effective in promoting more advanced reading skills, particularly for the older pupils. Numeracy lessons have good mental warm-up sessions clearly focused on improving pupils' mental agility.

15. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach although there are some identified areas in information and communication technology where their expertise could be improved. They use the correct technical terms and language to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of each subject. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics and science, where technical language is used accurately. For example, in literacy with the older pupils, identifying persuasive devices such as rhetorical questions and concessions such as "After all, doesn't a successful business rely on the good will of its customers" and "How wrong I was".
16. Teachers introduce lessons well, and use questioning skilfully to consolidate pupils' previous learning. They share their objectives with pupils and at the end of the lesson talk about what they have learned. Teachers use time and resources very effectively so lessons move briskly with the effect that pupils remain involved in their work and have to think and work hard for sustained periods. Classrooms are stimulating places in which to learn with well-presented displays of pupils' work around the school, which add colour to the learning environment.
17. The most effective lessons are planned creatively with good interaction to build on pupils' curiosity. This holds their attention and promotes enthusiastic and enjoyable learning. Teachers plan activities that allow pupils to work in groups of various sizes and consequently pupils co-operate well together and collaborate on the work set. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Opportunities to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects through information and communication technology are sometimes missed.
18. The quality of day-to-day assessment is good. Teachers monitor the pupils' work well and give support and advice, as needed. Teachers mark pupils' work in an encouraging and supportive manner. Homework is used to supplement and support work done in class. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs. Their work is planned to match their individual targets and good use is made of support staff. Sometimes this support is individual but usually pupils are taught as part of a small group and this is good practice and aids inclusion.

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

19. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is based on the Early Learning Goals with good coverage of the six areas of learning. Routines are well established and there is a good balance between activities children choose for themselves and those which are led by adults. The quality and range of learning opportunities for infant and junior pupils meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum and reflect the aims and values of the school. Religious education is taught in line with the requirements of the Catholic Church. All pupils, throughout the school, have a range of opportunities planned to meet their interests and aptitudes. Visits out of, and visitors to school play an important part in this approach.
20. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and currently under review in light of the new Code of Practice. Individual education plans are in place. These are used by teachers in their everyday planning, ensuring that work is focused and relevant to pupils' individual needs. This good support by teachers and classroom support assistants means that the majority of pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

21. The school has effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. However, for both infant and junior pupils there is room for more opportunities to use extended writing, including drafting techniques, and to use and apply mathematics. Planning in all classes follows the relevant framework guidelines and meets the needs of pupils in mixed age classes. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects, with a cycle for review. These are supported by informative medium-term plans based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. Short-term planning identifies clear learning objectives with a range of activities to ensure inclusion for pupils of all abilities. These are substantial improvements since the last inspection. The school development plan recognises the need to extend the current provision for information and communication technology.
22. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school. There is a range of clubs for pupils to play sports such as football, netball and cricket, and also dance and drama. There are also opportunities for pupils to receive instrumental music tuition in recorder and guitar. Older pupils take part in residential trips, for example, to York and Howtown, near Ullswater. There are good links with the other schools in the local cluster. Useful links with secondary schools assist in the smooth transfer of pupils at 11.
23. Personal, social and health education is taught, but currently lacks a formal scheme of work. Health education, including the awareness of drugs is covered in the school's science curriculum. In sex education, issues are dealt with sensitively as they arise; pupils in Year 6 have a more formal programme. This is an improvement on the last inspection when the school was not meeting its statutory obligation in this respect.
24. There are effective links with the local community, which make a useful contribution to pupils' learning, for instance, banner making for the Dalton Castle celebrations and carol singing at Christmas. The Parent Teacher and Friends of the School Association make a substantial contribution to the school in terms of financial support through fund-raising and social events. A good example is their contribution to resources for information and communication technology.
25. The school provides a very good foundation for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education based on its Catholic values. Pupils develop a set of very good values, principles and beliefs. All the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school is helping their child to become mature and responsible. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good, for example, through lessons such as music, science and art. Assemblies also play a very important part in this aspect of the life of the school with an emphasis on Catholic beliefs. Pupils develop a sense of belonging to a whole-school community, celebrating and appreciating each other's contributions and achievements.
26. The school has a very strong link with Our Lady of the Rosary Church and the parish priest is a regular visitor. Pupils attend Mass on feast days and they distribute harvest gifts to senior citizens in the community. At Christmas the older children visit a local home for the elderly to entertain the residents with carols. Visitors to the school include the police and fire service. Pupils' cultural development is good. They are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions and those of others through looking at other faiths, visits out of school, and subjects such as art, geography and music and supporting charities such as CAFOD.

27. The school promotes a strong moral ethos through topics, discussions and stories. Teachers help pupils to develop a clear sense of right and wrong. Circle time and the school forum are used to help pupils to consider various aspects of morality. In addition there is a class code and a school code of conduct. These arrangements help to create an environment in which self-respect, care and concern for others are paramount.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. The school has good procedures in place for the care of its pupils. Its strong ethos of care and understanding successfully creates an environment which contributes to the personal development of pupils of all abilities, by teaching them to respect other people's feelings and to care for each other.
29. Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are in place. Attendance registers are well kept and up to date and the majority of pupils arrive at school in good time for the start of lessons. All this being said, a number of parents take family holidays during term time. The school has taken a positive stance on this issue. Governors have written to parents about the importance of not missing school and, to counteract the effect, the children concerned are given extra work to avoid them falling behind.
30. The school behaviour policy is very well implemented and teachers are supported by the responsible attitude adopted by many of the older children. Members of the school forum have contributed to the school's code of behaviour. Pupils and parents agree that the school deals very effectively with any reports of bullying or oppressive behaviour. Some children have transferred to this school because of its good reputation in the town.
31. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are good. Assessment is used to guide curricular planning. The next step is to make more effective use of this information in order to target areas for improvement and to benchmark pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
32. The headteacher is the named person with responsibility for child protection. The policy follows local authority guidelines and any concerns are referred to the appropriate agency. There is good support from the school nurse through routine medical checks for the new intake and to assist with sex education of pupils in Year 6. A comprehensive health and safety policy is in place and the school receives good support from the bursar who carries out an audit and prepares risk assessments when required. An example of good practice is the risk assessment completed before a residential visit. There are two teachers who are trained first aiders and all the staff recently attended a course provided by St Johns' Ambulance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the strong links with parents and carers. Parents are especially pleased with the way that the school expects children to work hard and to achieve their best. A substantial majority of parents agree that they feel comfortable in approaching the school. The school has an open door policy for parents and many parents enter classrooms at the start and end of the school day so there is a good opportunity for informal contact.

34. Parents are kept well informed by the annual governors' report, the prospectus, and regular newsletters. Annual pupil reports to parents are well detailed and informative but they do not show targets for improvement. Parents have good opportunities to assess their child's progress at the termly consultation evenings.
35. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good and this makes a very worthwhile addition to their children's learning. They are encouraged to help in school and they help with activities such as listening to readers, helping in art classes, football practice sessions and with trips out of school. Parents are encouraged to express their views on school issues such as parking arrangements or long-term plans for school improvement. The school receives substantial financial support from events organised by the parent teacher association.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. The headteacher, overall, provides very good and caring leadership and sets the tone for the whole school. It is clear through the returned questionnaires that parents appreciate the headteacher's qualities and support the aims and values of the school. He provides clear educational direction and receives a high level of support from the governing body. He is well supported in this, by a good team of teachers and other adults. All share the school's aims, which reflect the expectations of what pupils should achieve. There are good relationships and equal opportunities for all. Since the last inspection there have been many improvements designed to raise standards further, and move the school forward. The way in which the headteacher has tackled the important areas for improvement has been particularly effective. For example, observing teachers in the classroom has improved the quality of teaching and learning. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects which give guidance to teachers on what to teach, and when.
37. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and has four main committees with delegated powers. Governors are frequent visitors to classrooms and have links with specific subjects such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. The governing body's overview of financial management is very good and plays an important part in decision making. They make good use of funds particularly in terms of staffing and accommodation and have a good strategic overview of the school.
38. In addition to his classroom responsibility, the headteacher co-ordinates at least two curriculum areas. Nevertheless, the curriculum is properly monitored by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. There is recognition that the co-ordination role should be extended further when the time is right. Appropriate procedures for the professional development of staff are in place and closely linked to the school development plan although there is no induction policy for teachers new to the school. Currently, the school is not in a position to be a provider of Initial Teacher Training.
39. The school has procedures for evaluating its performance and the performance of pupils. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school are in place and give useful information for setting individual and group targets and tracking pupils' progress. The next step is to make sure that this information is used to best effect to provide an appropriately high level of challenge for all pupils.
40. Educational priorities are very well supported by careful financial planning. The school development plan is central to the school's work. Key objectives and priorities

are identified and these are linked to costings, to ensure that the best strategic use is made of resources. The finance committee meet regularly with the headteacher and bursar to review spending. The recommendations of the latest audit are in place. Day-to-day financial administration by the school secretary is good. The good use of new technologies enables easy access to current budget information. The school uses additional money from specific grants effectively, and for their designated purposes, for example, National Grid for Learning. The principles of best value are important in this small school and are well applied.

41. All staff are suitably qualified. They relate well and offer good support to each other. Classroom support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. The caretaker and midday staff work hard and contribute well to the smooth running of the school. The accommodation of the school is satisfactory in all respects. There have been some good improvements since the last inspection. These include refurbishment and decoration of the hall, toilets and main office. The roof has also had substantial repairs. Externally the school has a good hard surfaced play area and a large grassed field.
42. The school has good resources in most subjects. For information and communication technology they are good with eight multimedia computers and access to the Internet. Classroom based libraries have a good range of fiction and non-fiction material. Good use is made of educational visits to give pupils a greater experience of the wider world. However, some outdoor resources in the Foundation Stage need to be developed further.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43. To raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should focus their attention on implementing the following:
1. Raise pupils' attainment further in English and mathematics by:
 - reducing the differences in attainment between boys and girls;
 - providing more challenge for the more able pupils;
 - making more effective use of information gained from assessment.(Paragraphs: 2, 5, 31, 39, 55 and 63)
 2. Extend pupils' writing opportunities and plan in more depth a progressive approach in teaching drafting techniques.
(Paragraphs: 21, 60 and 61)
 3. Provide pupils with more structured opportunities for investigative work in mathematics.
(Paragraphs: 21 and 66)
 4. Build on the present good practice in information and communication technology by:
 - providing pupils in the infant classes with more opportunities to use databases;
 - and in the junior classes making more use of spreadsheets, control technology, monitoring and data logging.(Paragraphs: 6, 15, 17, 21, 85, 88 and 89)

In addition to these areas for development, the following less significant but nevertheless important aspects should be considered for inclusion by governors in the action plan:

- Drawing up a formal scheme of work for personal, social and health education. (Paragraph 23)
- Putting in place a policy for the induction of staff new to the school. (Paragraph 38)
- Providing more opportunities for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage. (Paragraphs 42 and 52)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	19	1	0	0	0
Percentage	0	26	70	4	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	107
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	9	12	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (80)	95 (90)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (80)	90 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Results for attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) are omitted due to the low number of pupils taking the test.

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	92
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	26.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	89

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000- 2001
	£
Total income	214,511
Total expenditure	209,786
Expenditure per pupil	2,331
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,187
Balance carried forward to next year	23,912

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	107
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	39	9	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	42	9	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	45	12	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	52	12	3	0
The teaching is good.	55	39	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	55	12	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	24	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	45	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	42	42	15	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	64	33	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	30	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	45	15	0	9

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

44. The previous inspection found that in the reception class children receive a good start to their education, and so it remains. The new Foundation Stage curriculum has been introduced successfully with effective assessment and recording of day-to-day progress.
45. Most children have had some experience of pre-school education before starting in the September of the academic year in which they become five. Their attainment on entry to the school is in line with that expected of children rising five and represents the full ability range. At the time of the inspection there were 15 children in the reception class.
46. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall and sometimes very good. The class is taught by two teachers as a job share, with the support of an experienced nursery nurse and together they make an effective team. Fundamentally, this is based on the belief that young children need to develop communication and thinking skills, to formulate ideas and opinions through first hand experience. They have very good classroom management skills and high expectations in terms of children's behaviour and independence. Parent volunteers and students on placement are used very well and give extra support so that children particularly in their language and mathematical development, are able to work in very small groups and receive a good proportion of one to one attention. Both teachers and the nursery nurse plan as a team. Because of this good teaching almost all children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage and make good progress. In literacy and numeracy a significant number of pupils are working on the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and are given good support to ensure that they are fully included in all activities.
47. There is a secure and caring atmosphere where the contributions of all the children are valued. A good range of activities keeps all children interested and involved. Their learning is highly active and all are busily engaged and show good levels of concentration for their ages. Relationships all round are good and children take turns and co-operate sensibly when moving between activities. The use of praise and acknowledgement of the children's good behaviour play an important part in the growth of children's self-esteem.

Personal, social and emotional development

48. Most children have very good attitudes and show a willingness to learn. As a result, they soon develop positive relationships with each other and with their teachers and nursery nurse. Children play happily with each other in the home corner and in the sand and water areas. They share equipment and wait their turn patiently and this helps them to learn to respect others. The quality of teaching is very good and children are given a good range of opportunities to develop their self-confidence and independence. Lessons are planned for them to understand how they feel, for example, about the dark and exploring anger in role-play situations. They quickly get to know the routines of the class and become independent, choosing which activities they want to do at the start of each session. Children play a full part in school life and the daily routines and rules help them to develop an understanding of living in a wider community. They develop a respect for their environment and increasingly

understand what is right and wrong and why, for example, when searching the school grounds for litter. All staff and other adults are good role models and promote positive attitudes and values.

Communication, language and literacy

49. This is a strong area and has a high priority. Teaching is very good and the literacy strategy has been adapted well. Teachers have a lively and engaging approach, which encourages children to listen. They are given many good opportunities to talk and give their opinions in 'circle time'. They listen attentively to stories and poems and particularly enjoy 'Ketchup on your Cornflakes', 'Spider School' and 'The Selfish Giant'. They are encouraged to speak clearly when they answer the teacher's questions, showing a good degree of reasoning and thoughtfulness. Most children follow the text of a big book with the teacher and use a growing vocabulary to retell stories they have heard. Indeed, they enjoy books and most are developing a good knowledge of the alphabet and key words, for example, sounding out simple words and hearing rhyme patterns. New key words such as 'day' and 'all' are introduced regularly and asking children to look for them in the story reinforces these. Most children can write their names and, with help, copy write a simple sentence. The more able children can spell key words and write out simple stories with a degree of independence.

Mathematical development

50. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are well planned by modifying the National Numeracy Strategy and the Early Learning Goals so that all the children's needs are met. They include many practical activities and role-play situations where children have the opportunity to use their developing mathematical skills. Lessons start with a quick fire number session which makes children think hard. For example, counting to 20 and back and using addition cards to practise number bonds to five. Most children are developing an understanding of basic mathematical concepts. Many activities are practical, for example, in the class shop and using jigsaws to match numbers and shapes. In the sand and water trays, children use a variety of containers to develop their concepts of weight, capacity and space. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of children recognise two-dimensional shapes, such as circles and squares. They know the days of the week and sequence familiar events. Children compare their own heights and are introduced to vocabulary such as long, tall and longer and shorter. A minority of children understand the concepts of more and less, heavier and lighter to compare numbers and quantities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. Children are finding out about the world around them in and beyond their own environment. They look at the properties of different objects and materials such as when preparing honey sandwiches. Children quickly become familiar with the computer and use the mouse to show parts of a flower on the screen. They are given opportunities to develop problem-solving skills and to make decisions. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons to build on children's existing knowledge, for example, referring to the fact that as they are made up of many parts, so are plants. They look for minibests and look at ways in which they can improve the school environment, for example, by adding a swimming pool. Children are taught about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

Physical development

52. This is an area of learning children particularly enjoy. They learn to move confidently, control their bodies and handle equipment. They experiment with different ways of moving such as running, skipping and jumping and in dance move to the beat. They show increasing control of their fine motor skills in activities using pencils and brushes, and scissors to cut out shapes. Good examples of these skills were seen in a classroom display of paintings of snowdrops and snail spirals based on the work of Henri Matisse. They show developing co-ordination in their ball skills such as throwing and catching when working with a partner. Currently the school lacks a separate, enclosed outside space where children can enjoy using large outdoor equipment, and a variety of wheeled vehicles, to develop their physical skills and strength.

Creative development

53. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers provide many opportunities in lessons to teach skills such as cutting, sewing and threading to help the children gain safe control of these finer movements. Children are encouraged to listen carefully to music and enthusiastically join in with action rhymes and songs. There are good opportunities for them to participate in imaginative play; they have lively conversations and take on a variety of roles. Good opportunities are provided to experiment with colour, texture and shapes in their art and design work using a variety of tools and materials. They talk about the colours used by Van Gogh in his painting of 'Sunflowers' and compare these with those of Monet. Large construction kits, joining pieces with nuts and bolts, give children useful opportunities to make and build their own designs.

ENGLISH

54. Achievement overall in English is average although there are some variations. To be more specific, at the ages of seven and 11 most pupils attain the level expected for their age, with a number who reach a higher level. Pupils' attain above average standards in reading. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and this represents good achievement in relation to their abilities.
55. An analysis of trends over time supports these conclusions. The performance of pupils in reading and writing in Year 2 is above the national average for their age group, although there is a marked difference in the favour of reading. At age 11, it shows that since the last inspection the performance of pupils in English is in line with the national average for their age group. The school development plan identifies raising attainment for more able pupils, and closing the differences in attainment between boys and girls, particularly in writing.

Speaking and listening

56. Pupils achieve well in oracy. In all classes they are confident when speaking and listen carefully to each other and their teachers. This is because they are given good opportunities to talk about their work, discuss ideas and work together to share ideas and opinions. In the infant class, pupils listen to their classmates and talk about things that interest them such as items they have brought to school. At the end of lessons they talk about what they have learned and share this with their classmates and teachers. By the age of seven, pupils can talk and listen in different situations and show an understanding of the main points of a discussion. In the juniors,

teachers build on these ideas and look to making pupils independent. Pupils ask thoughtful questions and are confident to express their own opinions in a wide range of subjects. The school forum and assemblies give older pupils very worthwhile opportunities to speak and share their ideas with larger groups. By the time they leave the school they are articulate and willing to listen attentively to others, ask questions and consider their views.

Reading

57. Standards of reading throughout the school are good with almost all pupils attaining the expected levels appropriate to their ages. Indeed, there are a number of pupils who achieve a higher level. This is because pupils not only read in whole-class and group reading sessions, but younger ones especially also read regularly on an individual basis to teachers, classroom support assistants or parent helpers. Their confidence and motivation are significantly enhanced by this individual attention and by the extra help given by parents at home. Strategies such as the regular use of shared texts in the literacy hour and the wide use made of books for research are very effective in promoting more advanced reading skills, particularly for the older pupils.
58. Pupils in Year 1, leave the reception class ready to read and further develop their working phonic knowledge and sight vocabulary. Most are confident in recognising the high frequency words lists appropriate to their age. They read simple texts aloud and recognise familiar words easily and accurately whilst more able pupils are reading more difficult material. By the end of Year 2, they can read these easily in and out of context and are well launched into reading. Their reading of simple passages is usually accurate with those pupils reading at a higher level, well on the way to becoming fluent and confident readers. Most pupils in Year 2 are confident in finding words in a dictionary avoiding the confusion between similar words such as flour when finding the meaning of flower. More able pupils know that the contents and index in a book help find information.
59. Pupils in Year 4 read with confidence and are generally accurate. The more able develop a good degree of independence and read aloud with expression. Most pupils have their favourite authors, understand the main points in their stories, and can talk about the characters they have met. For example, a pupil explained why he likes the Harry Potter books; they are “exciting, dangerous and make me tingle”. They use their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar words such as tri-umph-ant. By the age of 11, most pupils are independent readers who read fluently and with interest. They are beginning to understand that what they are reading is not always straightforward and that sometimes they have to read between the lines. Those pupils who reach a higher level read with accuracy, fluency and an understanding beyond the literal. For example, in the story of The Minotaur, “the uncomfortable blackness that clutched at him like a hand” meant that it was as though “someone had put his hand over his eyes so he couldn’t see”. They choose to read more demanding texts such as ‘Black Beauty’, poetry and non-fiction because they are more complex and are a challenge to read. Pupils are developing a range of research skills. They find information using the contents and index, know that a glossary can be helpful and use skimming and scanning techniques in their research.

Writing

60. By the age of seven, most pupils are writing stories with properly organised sentences and simple structure. The meaning is clear and basic grammar and

punctuation are generally used correctly. Most pupils can write in story form showing a clear development. More recently pupils have been given opportunities to write at length and this allows them to experiment with ideas and the use of vocabulary, and to progress more quickly. More able pupils are putting together some interesting descriptive phrases such as "the scorpion fell backwards". The spelling of the most commonly used words is usually accurate. Pupils' handwriting commonly shows inconsistencies in letter formation. Although pupils have been taught how to join their writing, they are not sufficiently confident in its use to enhance their achievement at a higher level. Words are often inconsistent in size and formation and often mixed with printed letters.

61. In the juniors, most pupils are developing a sound understanding of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Their writing is well structured and they use different styles according to their purpose. For example, a more formal style when writing a recipe to make bread and colloquialisms when writing about characters. They are confident when writing for different purposes with a particular audience in mind, for example, when writing persuasively about the merits of school uniform, or mobile phones. Some well-chosen phrases show an attempt at using more adventurous vocabulary for instance, "As the tiger watched the lion rip the meat apart, her eyes started to glisten and sparkle with tears". There is evidence of pupils drafting their work but little to suggest that the full range of techniques is being taught. As they move through the junior classes they are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their own 'style' of writing or to fully understand the writing process. A culture of evaluating their work and that of others, and being self-critical is important. Although pupils have the basics to write in a joined style, they are more secure in their everyday work to use a combination of joined and print styles.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Lessons are well introduced ensuring that pupils know what they have to do. Work is well planned and taught using the framework of the literacy hour. Teachers plan interesting lessons and wherever possible links are made with other subjects and because of this, pupils work hard and show interest. Questions are used well to test pupils' previous learning and to check their understanding with the effect of making them think. Good account is taken of previous learning, pupils are clear about lesson objectives and new learning is constantly identified and reinforced. They are able to work independently on set tasks enabling the teacher or classroom support assistant to focus help where it is most needed. Plenary sessions are used not only to reinforce and celebrate learning, but also to identify new targets and challenges. Assessment of what pupils can or cannot do in their lessons enables teachers to plan future work effectively. Marking of pupils' written work is good and particularly effective in Years 5 and 6 in telling pupils exactly what they need to do next in order to improve. Classroom support assistants and other helpers make a valuable contribution giving pupils with special educational needs, access to work at their own level. Information and communication technology plays an increasingly important part in developing pupils' literacy skills, for example, in word processing and when younger pupils practise their letter sounds.

MATHEMATICS

63. Standards in mathematics are improving. At the age of seven and 11, most pupils are on course to attain the expected level for their age with some to reach a higher level. Overall, this represents satisfactory achievement. In numeracy, all pupils are developing useful mental strategies and use these in their everyday work in the

numeracy hour. The school development plan identifies raising attainment for more able pupils, and closing the differences in attainment between boys and girls.

64. In Year 1, pupils read and say numbers to 20 and consolidate and practise subtraction of a single digit. They have a good understanding of one more than and one less than and can add and subtract coins to the value of 50p. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are secure in number bonds to 20 and recognise and understand place value to two and often three digits. They recognise words, such as subtract, minus and multiplication and are beginning to understand the concept of division. Pupils complete addition and subtraction equations using ten and multiples of ten on number lines and squares up to 100. They confidently recall the two, five and ten times tables. Their knowledge of the value of coins is good enough to find change from a £1. In their work on shapes, most pupils know the characteristics of basic two and three-dimensional shapes, such as a rectangle and triangle, cylinder and cuboid. Almost all pupils can tell the time to the hour and half past the hour. They measure lengths and quantities and are beginning to understand the basics of rotation.
65. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are developing an understanding of how mathematics works and the importance of the decimal point and place value of numbers. For example, they know how to apply these when converting pence into pounds and vice versa. They are building up a useful mathematical vocabulary and use this confidently when solving problems in groups. Good examples were seen when pupils calculated the number of food items eaten over a given period, and worked out the differences using column addition. In their work on shapes, they understand the concept of symmetry and know the properties of triangles. Some pupils in Year 5 and many in Year 6 can number the axes of symmetry in a variety of shapes and know that a parallelogram has no axes of symmetry because it has no right angles. The oldest pupils can add, subtract, divide and multiply large numbers with confidence, and use decimals, fractions and percentages to calculate answers. They recognise equivalencies between percentages, fractions and decimals and convert improper fractions to mixed numbers and vice versa. They can read and plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants, read and interpret a variety of graphs and understand mean, mode and range.
66. Pupils develop a good knowledge of proportion and ratio, for example they write their first names and list the proportion of vowels and proportion of consonants. They understand that probability is the chance of something happening. Almost all pupils use calculators confidently to solve problems involving money and measure. By the age of 11, their understanding of the four rules of number is well developed. However, pupils have limited opportunities to apply their knowledge to real-life situations which means that although pupils can often do calculations, they have insufficient opportunities to apply the same number rules in other contexts. A more structured approach to using and applying mathematics throughout the school is needed to further improve standards and pupils' understanding, ensuring that all the requirements of the Programmes of Study are fully met.
67. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. This is because all teachers have good subject knowledge enabling them to explain the work clearly to all pupils so that they understand what they are about to learn. They make their lessons interesting so that pupils want to learn. Lessons always move at a brisk pace, which motivates and keeps pupils interested. In the most successful lessons there is a very good level of interaction between pupils and teachers. Questioning is skilful and probes key areas, making pupils think for themselves. Teachers have high expectations of pupils'

behaviour and as a consequence they respond very well indeed. There is good support for individual pupils who need extra help to enable them to succeed.

SCIENCE

68. At the ages of seven and 11, most pupils attain the standards expected of their ages and make satisfactory progress. For a significant number of pupils attainment is better and they reach a higher level. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
69. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about magnets and magnetic forces. They successfully use Venn diagrams to place objects into two sets and an overlapping set common to both. They know about the importance of healthy eating and the effects on the body of exercise. They keep a food diary, conduct favourite food surveys and record their findings in simple graphs. Most pupils know about the characteristics of every day materials, and in their experiments, describe properties such as hard, rough, and smooth. Pupils in Year 2 design their own circuits using bulbs and buzzers. By the age of seven, pupils have developed sound investigative skills and are able to observe, think and discuss.
70. As they move through Years 3 and 4, pupils build on their existing knowledge, skills, and understanding. For example, they know that gravity is a force we cannot see and that it pulls things in a downward direction. The oldest pupils know that forces are measured in Newtons and understand basic facts about the Earth, Sun and Moon. They study the skeletons of humans and animals and note the similarities and differences. Almost all read and spell key words associated with their topics, for example, amphibian, mammal, habitat and vertebrae. Pupils in Year 5 discuss insect and wind pollination and know that seeds develop from a fertilised ovum. They conduct fair tests in germination and know, for example, that several seeds need to be used to obtain reliable evidence. Their knowledge of their own bodies is developing well; they discuss the circulation of blood, investigate their pulse rates, and record data. By the age of 11, pupils devise their own experiments and conduct tests, such as when investigating materials, the process of filtration or aspects of sound. They know that sound travels through solids, liquids and gases but not through a vacuum. Explanations of what they are going to do, what they did, and their results are expressed clearly both in spoken and written form.
71. The school has made a conscious decision to teach the subject through an investigative approach and from talking to pupils it is clear that they enjoy these lessons. The quality of teaching and learning in all classes is good. Well-planned, experimental work makes pupils think and discover facts for themselves and draw conclusions. A good example was seen when pupils looked at the harmful effect of micro-organisms, read about the work of Edward Jenner and discussed how our knowledge of the spread of diseases comes from scientific evidence. Good links are made with other subjects, such as art, design and technology and mathematics.

ART AND DESIGN

72. Although the quality of teaching in the single lesson seen in Years 1 and 2 was good, firm judgements on the overall quality of teaching and learning in the school are not possible. Lessons are planned with the intention of making art fun, creative and exciting. Because of this pupils clearly respond and concentrate on their work for long periods and work hard. Standards of art have improved since the last inspection, particularly those of junior pupils. The subject has a higher profile and from looking at

- portfolios of pupils' completed work and good quality displays around the school it is clear that at the ages of seven and 11, pupils attain standards appropriate to their age.
73. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught to use a variety of media. When painting, they mix colours and apply bright colours with bold brush strokes in patterns based on the work of Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso. They develop close observational skills and use pencils when sketching natural objects such as teasels in a pasta jar showing their 'eye' for detail. In their three-dimensional work they use a variety of materials and techniques when making collages based on these sketches. For example, they use string and wool for the wiggly patterns on a log and lolly sticks for the straight lines of shells. They are confident when using a computer art program to draw pictures of bicycles and self-portraits.
74. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn the rudiments of watercolour painting to make different effects such as in their reflections of a heron when it is standing in the water. Pupils investigate patterns and the different ways to portray relationships. Their collage of an Egyptian Pharaoh and making and painting globes provide good links with humanities. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, further develop their painting skills and use the tonal ranges of colours, line and texture effectively. A good example of their work in textiles is seen in an impressive wall decoration based on the classical story of 'Juno and the Peacock'. Working with a specialist teacher they showed their competence in a wide range of skills such as appliqué, drawn threadwork and block printing. The fineness of the detail is shown in the overlapping layers of different coloured mesh with sequins to represent the eyes in the peacock's tail feathers. Pupils study other artists such as Andy Warhol and use bright colours when copying his techniques in a study of John Lennon. They make coil pots with air-dried clay and decorated plaster picture frames. Art makes a useful contribution to pupils' cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

75. At the ages of seven and 11, standards of attainment in design and technology are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection, particularly for junior pupils. The youngest pupils in the infant classes develop skills in a range of activities including cooking, making models from a range of recycled materials and using construction kits. Older pupils use a variety of materials well, for example felt, wood, clay, salt-dough, card and disposable cartons to design a moving card, a weather box or tie-dyed costumes for a play. By the time they are seven, pupils can estimate, measure, mark out and cut simple shapes in a range of materials, accurately. They use a running stitch to sew things together, understand how hinges work and, fix, glue and fasten a selection of materials. All pupils evaluate and make sensible judgements about the end product of their work.
76. As a follow up to a visit from the fire brigade, pupils in Years 3 and 4 construct a variety of alarms using batteries, pressure pads and switches. They design and make a monster box with a nose that lights up when a switch is thrown. Most are developing good sewing skills, for example, when making a stand-up picture frame, a bookmark or advent calendar. They are beginning to investigate, disassemble and evaluate packaging. They know and explain, for example, how words and design influence what people buy. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 continue to develop their skills and produce cam driven, pop-up, turn around toys, and models of moving animals. They design and make controllable vehicles, using electric motors, wheels and pulleys and discuss how to determine speed and direction. Most pupils are developing good assembling techniques, for example, they understand the importance of grids to keep a chassis square, tight belt drives and secure electrical contacts. By the time they

are 11, pupils can confidently investigate, evaluate and discuss individual ideas leading to a design, and have a good understanding of the processes involved.

77. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils have good attitudes towards design and technology. They talk about their designs and models with enjoyment and enthusiasm. They listen well to suggestions and work collaboratively on tasks. Teachers plan interesting activities often linked to work in other subjects. There is a good range of large and small commercial construction kits, and a good selection of tools for measuring, marking, cutting and joining.

GEOGRAPHY

78. There were no opportunities to see geography taught during the inspection as it alternates with history each term. Through discussions with teachers, a limited scrutiny of their pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that a satisfactory programme is in place based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. There is insufficient evidence to make firm judgements about the quality of teaching and learning, or standards of attainment.
79. In the infant classes, pupils' first-hand experiences are used effectively as an important resource to develop their early geographical enquiry skills. They use the school grounds and the immediate locality for environmental investigation and map work. For example, pupils use rain gauges and thermometers when collecting information about the weather. Moving to a wider perspective, pupils increase their knowledge and understanding by studying a contrasting location in the United Kingdom. When studying an Island Home, pupils learn about the life of Katie Morag in her home on the fictional Isle of Struay in Scotland, based on the book by Mairi Hedderwick. In their map work they look at the location of the countries that constitute the British Isles.
80. Pupils in junior classes build on these foundations. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, look at differences in their lives with those in an Indian village. In Years 5 and 6, they look at holiday destinations abroad and the reasons behind people's choices. In their map work they use atlases to locate features such as the equator, the tropics, the continents and major oceans and seas. Pupils learn more about the poorer countries in the world by following the poverty relief work of CAFOD in South America. In their individual research they find out more about other countries such as the landscape and currency of Brazil. They use CD-ROM encyclopaedias and the Internet in their research. Trips to the local beach and Peel Island are very useful in enhancing pupils' understanding.

HISTORY

81. Opportunities to see history taught during the inspection were limited to lessons in the juniors. However, together with a scrutiny of pupils work, it is possible to draw conclusions that at the ages of seven and 11 pupils' attainment is appropriate to their age. Since the last inspection there have been several improvements such as in the quality of teaching. A scheme of work based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance is in place ensuring that pupils' knowledge, skills, and understanding are built up as they move through the school. Consequently, pupils have a better understanding of how history impacts on their everyday lives.
82. Infant pupils are taught to develop an understanding of chronology and use their own lives as a starting point. They study the lives of famous people and important events

in British history and widen their experiences as they look at different ways of transport.

83. In the juniors, pupils increasingly understand about life in the past. In Years 3 and 4, they compare the similarities and differences between their own lives and those in Tudor times, and the main events of the period. They look closely at the culture and legacy of the peoples who invaded and settled in Britain. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, look at the lives of children in Victorian times and in the 1940s. To gain a wider view of world history, all junior pupils study the ancient civilisations such as the Egyptians and Greeks. They have opportunities to interpret history by looking at reliable sources such as photographs, diaries and other artefacts. Studying the history of the local area gives pupils good opportunities to develop their historical enquiry skills, such as using place name evidence. Visitors to school such as Gaudy Jack, and visits to Levens Hall bring history to life.
84. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are planned in detail with a range of activities. A conscious effort is made to fully involve pupils in their learning. A good example was seen in a lesson about the Indus Valley when pupils were asked to identify the uses of a range of terracotta pots. This resulted in a good deal of discussion and made them think hard and share their ideas, such as "a flat bottom means it must have stood upright and the holes in the side are for ventilation or to let water run out". Opportunities are taken to involve other subjects, for example, art when pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked with Keith Alexander, a local artist, and made a banner to hang at Dalton Castle. Pupils study the poem 'Dulce et Decorum' to get a feeling of a soldier's life in the trenches in the World War I. They use CD-ROMs and the Internet when researching topics: further use of simulations will extend pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

85. Since the school was last inspected, the quality of resources in terms of new computers and software is much better through the grant from the National Grid for Learning and parental contributions. The accommodation has been improved and access is much better, in two separate areas next to the main teaching areas with a small number in classrooms. Teaching time has been increased and a commercial scheme of work is now in place to ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills, and understanding are built on as they move through the school. Standards are improving but the school recognises that they are not as high as they should be. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment is mainly satisfactory but there are some areas, most notably in the junior classes, which should be further developed. The school has this improvement as a priority in its school development plan.
86. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are confident when using computers. They use a word processor to write simple sentences and older pupils use it to write their stories, use the keyboard to delete mistakes and the most able change the font and its size. Pupils use the spray, shape and colour tools in art packages to draw pictures of themselves and bicycles. By the age of seven, pupils confidently use a CD-ROM dictionary to find words and programme a floor robot to move forward, backward and turn through a right angle.
87. Pupils in the juniors further develop their use of art packages. When word processing, they alter the type, colour and size of font so their work is well presented and cut, paste and use the spellchecker to edit text. A good example was seen where pupils used desktop publishing software to produce a newspaper, the 'Our

Lady of the Rosary Review', including clipart and examples of their own work. They use simulations in science to explore the body. Pupils use CD-ROMs to research information about their topics in history and science, and have recently extended this to include the Internet. Another recent development is the establishing of a link to another school by e-mail. The school recognises that is an important area for development and looking to widen its links to enhance pupils' multicultural development. Information and communication technology is used to help pupils with special educational needs develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

88. Although pupils in all classes were seen working on computers, little actual teaching was seen, so an informed judgement on the quality of teaching in the school is not possible. Pupils have the support of a knowledgeable classroom support assistant who works with small groups of pupils. It is clear that pupils enjoy working with computers and a significant number have access to them at home. They all show good levels of interest and concentration, and work well together individually and in groups. Most teachers are confident in teaching information and communication technology and use it in their every day work to save time. However, there are some areas where their expertise could be improved and these have been identified and plans are in hand to meet them. Further development of the scheme of work is part of the school's planned review and planned links with other subjects will bring pupils' work alive and deepen their understanding. An audit of existing software will be helpful in their identification.
89. The potential to raise standards is there. Priorities include making more use of databases in all classes, and in the junior classes providing pupils with more opportunities to use spreadsheets, control technology, and monitoring and data logging using sensors.

MUSIC

90. Judgements on music during the week of inspection are based on the two lessons observed, a scrutiny of documentation and discussions with pupils and staff. From this evidence it is possible to conclude that at the ages of seven and 11, pupils attain standards expected of their ages.
91. In the infant classes, pupils listen attentively to music and sing, by heart, a good range of songs, confidently and tunefully. They identify between fast and slow pieces from listening to 'Hot Potato', 'Shake it' and 'Working away' by D H Corbett. Almost all have looked at 'setting' and listened to 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice'. They play games to identify the sounds of a variety of instruments and discuss ways in which musical sounds can be changed. Pupils understand the difference between loud and soft tones and how these can express character and mood. Most have a sound grasp of musical elements and are able to keep time and recognise rhythm. By the time they are seven, the majority of pupils can compose simple percussion pieces using cymbals, chime bars, tambourines and castanets.
92. The youngest pupils in the junior classes continue to compose tunes using a variety of instruments, including drums, guiros, Indian bells, glockenspiels and keyboards. They listen to a piece of music, for example, 'America' by Leonard Bernstein identify, the repeated pattern and tap their fingers in time with the music and understand that this repeated pattern is called an ostinato. Older pupils listen to Dave Brubeck's 'Unsquare Dance', discuss the pulse and rhythm and identify the instruments they hear. All pupils enjoy listening to music at the beginning and end of assemblies and many can recognise pieces by famous composers, such as Bach, Beethoven and

Mozart. Almost all pupils have a good knowledge of musical ideas and understand words, such as crescendo, diminuendo, dynamics, tempo, tone and pitch. Many are beginning to understand note values and can read simple notation. They can hold and compose a rhythm, follow dynamics, perform together and practise pieces.

93. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers ensure that all pupils take part in music making. Pupils are actively encouraged to learn to play a musical instrument, in this case the recorder, and to be self critical of their performance. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to sing and perform music for example, in the local church of Our Lady of the Rosary. Opportunities are also provided for pupils to sing and perform during morning assembly. They provide experiences from other cultures, for instance, a visiting musician to demonstrate African instruments. Throughout the school pupils have good attitudes to music. They are very enthusiastic and enjoy participating in musical activities both individually and in groups. The curriculum, is enhanced by specialist teaching, and additional lessons in guitar.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

94. Standards of attainment at the ages of seven and 11 are in line with what is expected of pupils of these ages. Pupils are taught games, gymnastics, athletic activities, outdoor activities and swimming. By the time they leave school all pupils can swim at least 25 metres. Dance takes place to music such as 'The Sailor's Hornpipe', 'The Clog Dance' and 'Riverdance'.
95. The youngest pupils are well used to the warm up activities at the beginning of each lesson. They particularly enjoy the 'Baked bean game', where they listen, stop and change when instructed. They soon become proficient in a range of movements and can travel both on the floor and on apparatus using a variety of methods. They develop good control when completing movements in dance. By the time they are seven, all pupils can find a space and perform a series of controlled movements, for example, travelling with a partner, rolling and retrieving a ball. They make good progress in dribbling skills and throwing and catching. They enjoy team games, such as, 'Hot Potato Shoot'. They are aware of each other's movements and can look and move in relation to everyone else.
96. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, are developing good throwing and catching skills, for example, in preparation for cricket. They know that to be accurate they must bowl between the batter's knee and shoulder. In Years 5 and 6, they know that cricket is a side on game and quickly become proficient in aligning a ball for bowling and holding a bat for striking. By the time they are ready to move to the next stage of their education, pupils have practised, improved and refined their performance through increasingly complex sequences of movements in individual activity, working in pairs and working in groups. They have also developed good co-operative skills in ball games and athletics.
97. Pupils have very good attitudes to physical education and respond enthusiastically in lessons. They enjoy evaluating what they have done and appreciate individual examples of expertise demonstrated by their peers. All pupils dress properly, behave well, concentrate on their work and show confidence in performances. From an early age pupils are taught to put out and tidy away items of equipment and this assists the organisation and pace of lessons. It also makes them aware of the safety rules and the need to give other members of the class due consideration.

98. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers work hard to provide interesting opportunities for pupils, for example, games and competitive sport within the school cluster. Extra-curricular activities such as dance, tennis and athletics, and the residential visit to Great Tower help to sustain and enhance provision.