

INSPECTION REPORT

HOUGHTON CHURCH of ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Carlisle

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112250

Headteacher: Mr S Donockley

Reporting inspector: Mr M J Mayhew
22197

Dates of inspection: 26 – 27 November 2001

Inspection number: 197947

Short 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 Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Jackson Road Houghton Carlisle Cumbria
Postcode:	CA3 0PA
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Doyle

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This voluntary controlled school is situated at the heart of Houghton, a village near to Carlisle. Although most pupils live in the village, about 15 per cent live in a local traveller establishment, and a few come from Carlisle. Currently, 17 pupils are from travelling families, although this number varies almost week on week, a factor that contributes to the high level of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the normal points of entry or exit. There are 121 girls and boys aged from 4 to 11 on the school roll, a few more than at the time of the previous inspection in 1997. Socio-economic factors are judged to be average. There are 21 pupils on the school's register for special educational needs. No pupils have Statements of special educational need, and no pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, at 9.9 per cent, is below the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the school covers a wide range, but is judged to be average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school in which pupils make good progress over time in English and mathematics, and achieve well. There is a good quality of education provided. The school is very well led and managed, and has made good progress in dealing with the issues raised at the previous inspection. Pupils have very good attitudes and enjoy coming to school, where they know that their achievements are valued. Every pupil, regardless of level of ability and background, has full access to what the school provides. When account is taken of all these features, and the average cost per pupil, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Pupils make good strides in their learning and achieve well in English and mathematics. Many pupils attain high standards.
- Pupils are very eager and willing. They have a high regard for their teachers and for each other, and most behave very well.
- There is very good leadership and management of the school.
- The partnership with parents is of a high standard and is very effective in supporting and promoting pupils' learning.
- The school works hard and successfully to provide a wide range of learning opportunities from which all pupils benefit.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The monitoring of teaching and learning to identify particular strengths, and to share them with all teaching staff in order to improve further the quality of teaching.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a good level of improvement since the last inspection in October 1997. At that time, standards at ages seven and eleven in English and mathematics were judged to match the national averages. The school has worked hard to raise standards, with the result that they are consistently above, and sometimes well above, the national average when pupils leave the school at 11. There has been good progress in dealing with the issues raised at the previous inspection, including the concerns about health and safety issues. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are much better than they were, and pupils have a much wider range of opportunities to learn and develop their skills in art. Improved management systems ensure that the headteacher and subject co-ordinators have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They have good oversight of the curriculum, although they do not all have enough opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The recently completed extensions to the building enhance the facilities for children in the reception class and for the teaching of ICT across the school.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

The numbers of pupils eligible to take the statutory tests at ages seven and eleven is always too small to make reliable and valid comparisons with national data. Additionally, there is a high level of mobility in the school; a high proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the normal point of entry, mainly during the infant stage. Many of these pupils join the school with below average levels of attainment, and are on the school's register of special education needs because they have learning difficulties. Despite making good progress, they do not always reach the expected Level 2 in English and mathematics by the time they are seven.

Most children currently in the reception class achieve in language and communication, and in number, what is normally expected for their age. Results of statutory tests in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils aged seven have been variable, with well above average results being attained in 2001 in reading and mathematics. For the past four years, the standards attained in national tests for pupils aged eleven have been consistently higher than the national average, and have risen at a rate above the national trend. Indeed, the proportion of pupils who attain higher than the expected Level 4 in all aspects of English and mathematics is usually higher than the national averages. A fairer measure of attainment is to gauge the progress made by individual pupils from the ages of eight to eleven. The 2001 results for pupils aged 11 show that they progressed well in English and mathematics. The school has difficulty in setting appropriate targets for pupils to achieve in English and mathematics at eleven because of the high level of pupil mobility. The inspection confirms that current pupils in Year 6 achieve well in English and mathematics. It is not possible to

make secure judgements about pupils' progress in other subjects, but observations of the few lessons seen, of work in pupils' books and on display, and talking to pupils would suggest that standards are at least what they should be for pupils' ages. This judgement includes art, in which the school has made good progress since the previous inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and take part enthusiastically in all that is on offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils listen very carefully to their teachers and to their classmates, and contribute sensibly to lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good, with pupils getting on well with each other and the staff. Personal development is good. Pupils develop into interesting and responsible individuals.
Attendance	Satisfactory; slightly above the national average.

Pupils' eagerness to learn is evident throughout the school. They take a responsible attitude to their work, which they usually complete with enthusiasm in lessons. Relationships are founded on mutual respect for each other, resulting from the high expectations of teachers for pupils to behave in a responsible way.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and shows improvement since the previous inspection, when some teaching was unsatisfactory. Nearly all the lessons have very good features, for example in the high expectations that teachers have for pupils to listen, and to answer questions designed to consolidate and extend their learning. The main characteristic of most lessons is the way teachers plan and provide work that is appropriate and challenging for pupils of all abilities and levels of attainment. Consequently, pupils concentrate in these lessons, work hard and make good progress. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well, and teachers give good opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in other subjects, for example in ICT, and in history. When they are available, teachers make good use of teaching assistants, who contribute significantly to the rate of pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; the curriculum meets all statutory requirements. It is broad and well balanced, and is greatly enriched by the good use the school makes of visits to places of educational interest. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The school caters well for the range of pupils' ages and abilities in the infants and juniors, thus ensuring that all pupils have equal access to what the school provides. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, which most pupils are keen to attend. The school is successful in providing a curriculum that offers a good level of challenge to pupils of all levels of ability.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; these pupils are well supported and make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' social and cultural development is very good, and is an improvement on the previous inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has a welcoming and hard working atmosphere, in which all pupils are given equal attention and high quality care. Because teachers know their pupils so well, they cater for their physical and emotional needs as well as for their intellectual ones. The school is a safe and comfortable place for pupils to learn.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work closely together and lead the school very well. They show concern for the pupils in all aspects of school life and put in place relevant strategies to enhance the quality of education. The rest of the staff support the management team by carrying out their responsibilities well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body, led by a competent and experienced chairperson, gives very good support that is highly valued by the school. The governors are fully involved in decision making, which is based on their detailed knowledge of the school, its resources, and the need to provide the best quality of education for promoting the highest standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, staff and governors regularly analyse the school's effectiveness, and set relevant targets for pupils to achieve. School and staff development planning forms a solid bedrock upon which school improvement is built. It is rightly the result of whole staff consultation and evaluation of the effectiveness of previous planning.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its resources. There is prudent management of the budget to ensure that all pupils' needs are met. The management seeks every opportunity to improve and extend the school's resources to a high quality.

The school aims, as published in the school prospectus, are strongly based on the need for all pupils to experience a wide curriculum and achieve their potential, both academically and personally. The quality of leadership and management results in the school being substantially successful in meeting its aims.

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 and behaviour is good. • Teaching is good, with the result that children progress well in their learning and achieve good standards in English and mathematics. • The staff and parents relate well to each other, and staff expect children to work hard. • The moral and social values that the school teaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parents are very pleased with what the school does. However, a few have concerns about the quality of leadership and management. The same parents feel uncomfortable when they need to discuss with the staff concerns about their children.

The inspectors agree wholeheartedly with the positive statements made by the parents at the pre-inspection meeting, in the returned questionnaires, and in discussion with them during the inspection. The inspectors judge the quality of leadership and management to be very good, and find the staff very approachable. They are easily accessible to discuss with parents any concerns they may have about their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils make good strides in their learning and achieve well in English and mathematics. Many pupils attain high standards.

1. When the school was last inspected in 1997, 11 year old pupils were judged to achieve levels in English and mathematics that matched national expectations. Since that time, standards in these two subjects have risen at a rate above that of the national trend. In the 2001 statutory assessment tests, standards in English were above the national average for all schools, whilst those in mathematics were well above the average. In both subjects, standards were well above average when compared with schools that take pupils from similar backgrounds.

2. Results of statutory assessments made when pupils are seven have been more variable, but were well above the national average in 2001 in reading and mathematics. They were in line with the average in writing.

3. Test results vary year on year because of three factors. Firstly, the number of pupils in each year group is small in comparison with most schools. For example, there were only 13 pupils in 2001 eligible to take the tests at age seven, and in 2000 there were 19. Secondly, a significant proportion of pupils, mainly in the infants, have learning difficulties and are on the school's register for special educational needs. Thirdly, there is a high level of pupil mobility to and from the school, mainly comprising pupils who come from travelling families. Twenty four pupils joined the school and 33 pupils left in the past year at times other than at the normal points of entry and exit. This factor places a considerable burden on the school in its efforts to maintain and improve overall standards. Indeed, the school has difficulty in setting realistic overall targets for the 11 year old pupils to achieve because of the considerable changes of pupils in each year group. For example, after setting targets, many of the children of travelling families have left by the time they are due to take the statutory tests, whilst others have joined the school. Nevertheless, data shows that those pupils who stay at the school in the juniors make at least good progress.

4. Assessments of children soon after they enter the school at the beginning of the reception year in the Foundation Stage show that most are at levels of attainment in language and communication, and mathematics, that match or exceed levels normally expected of children this age. However, throughout the infants a significant number of pupils with less than average attainment in these subjects join the school. At all stages, the school quickly assesses these pupils and puts in place relevant strategies, as a matter of course, that provide for these pupils' needs. For example, a pupil who joined the school in the infants during the inspection week came under close scrutiny from the special educational needs co-ordinator in order to identify his level of attainment and needs. He was immediately given appropriate work within lessons as part of his induction to the school, and settled very quickly to learning.

5. Current inspection findings indicate that the school is maintaining higher than average standards. It is noticeable how well all pupils achieve during their time at the school, regardless of their prior levels of attainment: this includes both higher and lower attaining pupils. Pupils make good strides in their learning for a number of reasons:

- Teachers know their pupils' capabilities well because they assess them regularly, particularly through good questioning in lessons. The school has put in place a system to track more specifically each pupils' progress in the core subjects, but this is still in its infancy.

- Teachers almost always give pupils work to do that accurately matches their individual levels of attainment.
- The school uses to good effect the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Pupils have good opportunities to apply these skills in most subjects of the curriculum, for example in ICT, where pupils achieve good standards.

6. A good example of a lesson that combined all these factors was one in numeracy given to a class of Year 2 and Year 3 pupils. The teacher successfully raised pupils' levels of interest through a 'quick fire' mental session in counting in twos to 50. Strategies to teach pupils how to double numbers such as 12 or 25 were effective. The teacher included all pupils in discussion about the strategies, and in the ensuing work, which was done by pupils arranged in groups according to their prior levels of attainment. The work was demanding yet within pupils' capabilities, thus giving them confidence to attempt harder examples. For instance, she praised one lower attaining Year 3 pupil for almost doubling 13 correctly, and explained clearly how to do the work. The pupil learned well and was able to continue with both similar and more difficult calculations.

7. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils have made good progress in mathematics, and are skilled at using and applying number operations to a good range of tasks. For example, they use their knowledge of positive and negative numbers to quantify changes in temperatures, such as in extreme climates. They can explain the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages, and compute equivalents. They use calculators to work out distances involved in space travel, and find the costs of transporting goods by lorry.

8. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in reading and in speaking and listening, and attain better than average standards. This is because the teachers are skilled at teaching basic phonic skills. Pupils are successfully encouraged to listen to their teachers and to each other, and to contribute answers and opinions in lessons. By the time they leave the school, most are confident readers. They enjoy books, have little difficulty in reading unfamiliar words, and read fluently. However, few pupils read with good expression. Even the best readers read too quickly, often ignoring punctuation marks, with the result that some sentences are unintelligible to the listener. Nevertheless, most pupils understand what they read, and can interpret from their reading implied meaning, such as when a pupil talked about the environmental implications of a book entitled 'The Litter King'.

9. The quality of pupils' writing improves appropriately as they move through the school, and most achieve well. This is because teachers use the Literacy Strategy well to teach basic writing skills, and pupils have increasing opportunities, particularly in the juniors, to practise and extend their skills in long pieces of original work. Some fine examples of story writing, drafted and then finalised by word processing, convey humour, suspense and speech in interesting ways. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote long stories entitled 'The Battle with the Dragon' and used grammar and descriptive writing well to create atmosphere, such as 'They were woken by the ground shaking uncontrollably'. Pupils write well for a range of purposes and audiences. For example, Year 4 pupils write moving letters to the owners of the village shop following its recent destruction by fire. Older pupils write in the style of popular newspapers when they describe the murder of Duncan in Macbeth, using alliteration to entitle their pieces, such as 'Majesty's Mysterious Murder!'

10. The teachers' high expectations for pupils to produce work of good quality, and pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, contribute well to their successful learning in English and mathematics.

Pupils are very eager and willing. They have a high regard for their teachers and for each other, and most behave very well.

11. Pupils enjoy the work that they are asked to do, and take part in lessons with an increasing level of maturity as they become older. This is because the headteacher and his staff plan work that is invariably interesting and inclusive of all pupils. Additionally, the school makes very good use of teachers' assistants and volunteers to ensure that each pupil gets as much individual attention as possible. For example, a class of 24 pupils in a Years 1 and 2 English lesson were fully engaged in learning throughout the time allocated, partly because the teacher made very good use of her two assistants to inspire and support small groups.

12. A particular quality of most of the teaching is the high expectation of teachers for pupils to listen to them and their classmates during introductions to lessons. When the teacher in one class wants to gain all pupils' attention, they immediately respond in unison to her, "1,2,3" with "Empty hands, folded arms", and eagerly await instructions. Pupils usually set off on their tasks and pursue them with enthusiasm because they understand what it is they have to do. However, this is not always the case, as in a mathematics lesson in the juniors. The introduction to the main task was too fast, some pupils were confused about what they were required to do and, as a result, they wasted time.

13. Teachers expect pupils to work well, either individually or together in small groups. Nearly all pupils are willing to do so when required. For example, in a Year 2 ICT lesson about Mondrian patterns, all pupils concentrated on what they had to do. They carried out their teacher's instructions to the letter, experimented with the computers, and produced finished work of high quality within the time allocated.

14. As they become older, pupils discuss their work in detail and often help each other. This happened, for example, in a Year 4 physical education lesson, when pupils worked together in groups to design sequences of movement that included different turns, jumps, rolls, speeds and directions. In almost all cases, the pupils worked co-operatively, shared ideas and duly praised each other when they saw good work.

15. Most pupils are willing to answer their teachers' questions, and usually make sensible responses. Children in the reception class concentrate for long periods when they trace and colour pictures of holly and ivy leaves, and talk quietly with the teacher and her assistant about the differences between the colours of leaves in the summer and the autumn. By the time they are in Years 1 and 2, most pupils already meet the school's objective of inspiring them to work hard, a factor that the great majority of parents keenly acknowledge. For instance, they carefully tested in a science lesson different materials to see whether they transmit light. Some pupils were genuinely surprised when they could see the beam of a torch through the base of a bone china mug.

16. Pupils' behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around the school. Lunchtimes are pleasant occasions, when pupils enjoy each other's company over their meal in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The school rules show the expectations that the staff have of pupils' behaviour, and these are substantially achieved. For example, pupils show courtesy and respect to others when they spontaneously praise the work of their classmates in a physical education lesson. They clear away quickly at the end of lessons, and show respect for adults when they hold doors open for them. All pupils take a pride in their school because they understand that the staff go out of their way to help them. Most pupils respond by doing their best and, consequently, learn at a good rate.

17. When asked, pupils say that they enjoy school. They like going on visits to places of special interest, such as to Tullie House museum, and are particularly enthusiastic about after-school sports and lessons of a practical nature. They have a good knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses, and the older pupils are keen to achieve the personal targets that they have set in consultation with their teachers.

There is very good leadership and management of the school.

18. With the full support of his staff and governors, the headteacher has created a calm and productive working environment in which all pupils learn well and thrive. A notable feature of his leadership is his success in ensuring the inclusion of all pupils in what the school has to offer. The school is very evidently the centre of the local community, and is a focal point in which pupils, parents, staff and governors take pride. The set of six educational aims is evident in the way the school works on a day-to-day basis. These aims are substantially met.

19. The headteacher has a considerable teaching load, yet still manages to oversee most of the work of the school. He finds some time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, but agrees the need for a better system of managing this aspect of the school's work in order that teachers can more freely share strengths in teaching. Relationships between all staff and governors are very good. This promotes confidence and respect for each other's contributions. Most parents are rightly pleased with the way the school is led and has developed, and are grateful for the high level of attention given to supporting their children's education. They cite the openness of staff, and particularly the headteacher, as notable qualities of the school.

20. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are, in effect, partners in the day-to-day running of the school. They are both good classroom practitioners who set good examples to their colleagues. Both are equally well informed about the school through observation, and through discussion with each other, with the other members of staff, and with governors. They have a clear picture of what needs to be done to raise standards, not only in pupils' intellectual development but also in their personal development. They both meet once a week with the chair of governors to discuss school developments and to make any necessary decisions. As a result, decisions about the school are based on sound information.

21. The school development plan comprises a précis of contributions from all staff and governors, and is a worthwhile document. It is also based on an evaluation of previous school development, and is used well as a tool to focus the school's actions towards improving the quality of education and pupils' learning. Staff development plays a prominent part in school improvement. Appropriate targets are set and action plans support well the proposed developments. These include a relevant programme of staff training to improve expertise, including that of teaching assistants. For example, the current plan targets further training for staff in ICT in order for them to take full advantage of the recently built computer facility.

22. Staff and governors are pleased with what they have achieved, but are never complacent. For instance, following the school's analysis of statutory assessment results, the introduction of an initiative to improve the quality of pupils' writing has already secured higher standards for seven year olds. Following this success, the strategies are to be applied further to ensure that all pupils develop their writing skills to their fullest potential.

23. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection in 1997. Led by the headteacher, the governors dealt fully with most of the key issues raised at that time. Standards in English and mathematics have risen by the time pupils are seven and eleven, supported by a better quality of teaching. Standards in ICT are higher, and work seen

around the school suggests that pupils experience a far wider range of experiences in art. There is still some action required to complete the improvement of provision for children in the Foundation Stage, but this is in hand.

24. The governing body consists of enthusiastic members with a good range of expertise. Governors fulfil all statutory requirements and take an active part in the day-to-day life of the school, rightly leaving its management to the headteacher and his staff. They are fully aware of the school's strengths and needs, and work efficiently to effect improvements. For example, they recently planned and oversaw the building of an extension to the reception class, and the building and equipping of the computer suite. There are governors with special curriculum responsibilities, who take their remits seriously, for example in literacy and science, and in special educational needs. Parents know the governors, both through day-to-day contact, through formal and informal meetings, and through social events. This helps to instil in parents confidence in the school and what it has to offer, as does the interesting and well-written annual report that the governors send to parents.

The partnership with parents is of a high standard and is very effective in supporting and promoting pupils' learning.

25. The positive partnership with parents is very apparent. From comments made at the meeting for parents, in the returned completed questionnaires and during the course of the inspection, nearly all parents agree that they are encouraged to become involved in the school. They are happy to approach the school with any problems or questions. Parents feel that the school is very open to them. They are welcomed into the school building at any time of the school day, and take every opportunity to talk to teachers about pupils' work and any difficulties that their children might be having. They appreciate the way that the headteacher makes himself available on the playground before school to welcome pupils and parents, and to talk to them, and the invitation for them to help in school on a voluntary basis, for example in extra-curricular activities such as netball.

26. Most parents feel that the standards of communication with them are better than they used to be. Through regular, monthly newsletters, the school keeps them well informed of school events, and the school brochure is an interesting and readable document. The recently implemented initiative to set individual pupil targets in English and mathematics is effective, and includes consultation with parents.

27. The school gives appropriate importance to the setting of homework as a way of extending pupils' learning and involving parents. Although not all parents are aware of the school's homework policy, despite its inclusion in the school prospectus, they appreciate the part homework plays in encouraging their children to take some responsibility for their own learning, and for giving them opportunities to extend their class work. Most parents are happy with the amount set, and the opportunity it brings for them to become further involved in their children's schoolwork. The home/school reading diary for the infants and the homework diaries for the juniors are good further means of communication between teachers and parents.

28. Teachers value opportunities to communicate with all parents, and difficulties discussed can often be resolved quickly. The school holds two formal evenings each year for teachers to discuss with parents their children's progress. Additionally, from time to time the school holds special evening meetings to inform parents about such aspects as the teaching of number or reading. Parents find these meetings very helpful in supporting at home the learning that takes place at school.

29. The governing body includes more than the usual proportion of parents of pupils in the school. This factor, together with a very active and supportive parent and friends association, gives the parent body a strong and informed voice in the work of the school.

The school works hard and successfully to provide a wide range of learning opportunities from which all pupils benefit.

30. The school has done much since the previous inspection to broaden and enrich the curriculum offered to its pupils, from which all pupils benefit. All aspects of the National Curriculum are taught, and the school keeps up to date with national initiatives. For example, the recent acquisition of a well arranged suite of computers, including a good range of appropriate software, is a positive step. It ensures that all pupils have easy access to information required for extending their knowledge in a range of subjects, and for them to practise their skills, for instance in writing, number and art.

31. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are well established in the school, and pupils benefit in these aspects from the expertise of teachers, particularly in the infant and junior classes.

32. The staff are ever mindful of the need for pupils to develop not only academically but also personally. To these ends there are very good arrangements made for pupils to experience, at first hand, appropriate activities both within the school and on visits to places of special interest. All pupils have French lessons on a weekly basis, taught by a part-time teacher. None of these lessons were seen during the inspection, but the evidence of written work and talking to pupils suggests that they gain valuable skills and knowledge, and an appreciation of a language and culture different from their own.

33. Visits to special places such as Tullie House museum in Carlisle and Beamish Industrial Museum in County Durham enhance the work pupils do in history, geography, art and English. For example, following a visit to Birdoswald at Hadrian's Wall, some of the juniors in their art lessons produced some fine examples of Roman mosaics, and included in their history written work valuable information about the Roman way of life. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 have opportunities to take part in a residential visit, to Edinburgh, Scarborough or Llandudno. The school undertakes these visits in partnership with a local school, which in itself is a valuable social experience. Pupils say they particularly enjoy these visits because they gain in knowledge and develop their independence. They learn about the world of nature when they see seals, puffins and guillemots in their natural surroundings, and gain a further sense of history when they study the Forth Road Bridge, for example. Pupils' awareness of religions and spirituality is enhanced beyond religious education lessons and assemblies through the school's good relationship with local churches and Buddhist temples, which they also visit on a regular basis. A programme of lessons in personal, social and health education support well pupils' knowledge of the world around them. For example, a challenging lesson given to pupils in Years 5 and 6 presented them with the concept of a democracy and how it is supported by properly constituted laws.

34. Special 'curriculum weeks', such as for science, health, music and literature, focus pupils' attention on specific subjects, and are effective in promoting parents' involvement in the work of the school. The staff work hard to provide the good range of extra-curricular activities, which include netball, football and chess, and learning to play recorders and percussion instruments. Most pupils are keen to take part in one or more of these activities, which are well supported, and open to all pupils as they go through the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The monitoring of teaching and learning to identify particular strengths, and to share them with all teaching staff in order to improve further the quality of teaching.

35. No teachers have left the school since the last inspection, and one teacher has joined the staff to work on a part-time basis, effectively increasing the teacher: pupil ratio, and giving the headteacher more opportunity to work with pupils other than those in his own class. Since the last inspection, he has begun to monitor the quality of teaching, both as part of the performance management strategy and through procedures connected with the school's success in gaining the national 'Investors in People' award. These strategies promote the setting of targets for individual teachers to achieve in their work, but do not necessarily focus on teaching techniques that directly influence the quality of pupils' learning. The headteacher has undertaken observations of some lessons, and has rightly given teachers feedback about their work. However, there are no formal records of these observations to act as reference points, nor are all teachers clear about what it is they need to do to improve their effectiveness in order to increase pupils' rate of learning. At present, monitoring of teaching is not rigorous enough across the school to evaluate the effectiveness of lessons, to identify where teaching needs to be improved, or to provide ways for teachers to share effective classroom practice, which is so evident in the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36. The school should now:

- improve the effectiveness and regularity of the monitoring of teaching and learning by;
 - * Including in the staff development programme the training of selected staff in techniques of monitoring, including the formal recording of observations made.
 - * Within the resources available to the school, make arrangements for teachers to observe lessons and to identify those aspects of teaching that have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
 - * Regularly share amongst teachers the identified strengths of teaching.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	8	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0	14	57	29	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

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)	132
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	21

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	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	5	8	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above		12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (79)	92 (79)	100 (95)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (89)	77 (89)	92 (89)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	9	9	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Total	15	14	16
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	83 (100)	82 (93)	89 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Total	15	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	84 (93)	83 (93)	89 (93)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes:****YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	24

Education support staff:**YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	239,775.00
Total expenditure	249,087.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,887.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,912.00
Balance carried forward to next year	9,600.00

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

120
47

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	36	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	51	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	60	4	0	2
The teaching is good.	77	21	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	40	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	17	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	26	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	51	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	68	23	9	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	34	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	47	6	0	9

Other issues raised by parents

The school has improved considerably since the last inspection. This is seen, for example, in the higher standards that pupils achieve in English and mathematics, the provision of a very well equipped computer suite that is used effectively, and the increase in well-trained teaching assistants.